

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 19 August 2008, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. German MUNDARAÍN HERNÁNDEZ (Venezuela)

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): I declare open the 1114th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Nagasaki Peace Messengers and to the citizens of Nagasaki who are now displaying a banner and who are here in this room bringing with them petitions calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. It is encouraging for the Conference that the young generations of Japan have for years demonstrated a deep interest in arms control and disarmament and in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome you and we thank you for your interest in this forum.

Since this is the first time that I am addressing this forum as President of the Conference, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words. Distinguished delegates, I wish to convey my appreciation to my predecessors in the post of President in 2008, the Ambassador of Tunisia, Samir Labidi, the Ambassador of Turkey, Ahmet Üzümcü, the Ambassador of Ukraine, Yevhen Bersheda, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, John Duncan, and the Ambassador of the United States of America, Christina Rocca, for their tireless efforts to move the work of the Conference forward.

I should also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and through him the entire secretariat team for the support which they provide for our work. It is also timely to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the seven Coordinators, Ambassadors Juan Martabit of Chile, Sumio Tarui of Japan, Marius Grinius of Canada, Babacar Carlos Mbaye of Senegal, Petko Draganov of Bulgaria, Dayan Jayatiloka of Sri Lanka and Wesaka Puja of Indonesia and that of all the delegates to the Conference.

Venezuela appreciates the honour of presiding over the Conference on Disarmament and has pleasure in reiterating its commitment to the institutions and agreements which exist in the field in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We believe that this forum is an essential part of the multilateral system in the field and is called on to play a major role in the historic period we live in. The Conference on Disarmament, whose birth and development were of such great importance, must return to the right path and develop the activities appropriate to the attainment of its objectives. We believe that activities are under way to make up for lost time and that efforts are being made to ensure that the Conference can reflect the desires of our peoples. This perception of growing strength that we have today is based on the growing interest in our subject matter, in the expectations it gives rise to and in the many visits to this forum by dignitaries in recent times.

Ours is a time of great political complexity that is reflected all around us. We have the task of living with the complexities without losing sight of the objective of strengthening the international legal order in the field of arms control. The mission that we have requires of us unswerving political will based on a dialogue that is constructive, transparent, participatory and capable of appreciating all positions. The commitment to peace, disarmament, development and the human rights of our people oblige us to get the Conference out of deadlock. We know that we are living in times of great political complexity, but we also know that multilateral bodies are by nature the places where to work for peace and international security.

(The President)

To confront the challenges and uncertainties which threaten us, the Conference on Disarmament annually approves an agenda reflecting the main issues in the field of disarmament and arms control. Nuclear disarmament is regarded by many delegations as the *raison d'être* of the Conference. Indeed, the first resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly contained an appeal for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Until such time as nuclear disarmament is achieved, it is necessary that negative security assurances be provided against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. A consensus must be reached on the best means of ensuring that such assurances are granted. The negotiation, signature and entry into force of a treaty on prohibition of the production of fissile material for explosive purposes would be an important step towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. While no delegation has refused to negotiate such an instrument, there nevertheless remain details on which consensus is required. The preservation of outer space as the heritage of humanity for peaceful purposes is a priority for this Conference. Everything would suggest that it is necessary to strengthen the legal regime to guarantee it.

Among the responsibilities that Venezuela assumes with the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament is the essential task of preparing, negotiating and submitting in October this year to the United Nations General Assembly the report on the activities carried out by the Conference on Disarmament during 2008. We hope to fulfil this task with the greatest possible range of consultations and with humility and effectiveness. We are confident of having the cooperation of all of you in achieving a positive result. We will be presenting the draft annual report in accordance with the provisions of section XIII of the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament, within the periods and time-limits specified therein.

Venezuela's position with respect to the proposed programme of work to be found in document CD/1840 is prompted by the conviction that it can provide a basis for getting out of the stalemate. We are aware of the difficulties in attaining consensus in this kind of pluralist, diverse body. For us, it is vitally important to agree on a programme of work, which we view as a minimum basis for making progress and emerging from this period of inaction. It would be the best mechanism for ensuring the strengthening and the very existence of the Conference itself. We recognize that all human handiwork is perfectible and we invite all the members of this forum to enrich the proposed programme of work, to improve it by proposing realistic, constructive and responsible amendments reflecting the concerns we all have in this regard. With respect to document CD/1840, we suggest that all initiatives be approached with the idea that this instrument - one forged by collective endeavour - should include us all and with confidence that a programme of work which has such characteristics will be robust enough to gain the trust the task requires. No one should feel excluded.

Thanks to the steps taken this year there are grounds for optimism if we compare the progress of the present with the achievements of the past. For that reason, among others, we value and appreciate the contribution by the platform of our six Presidents. We feel that its work has reinvigorated the Conference, providing continuity, coherence and participation and helping to muster consensus. We are convinced that progress has been made towards overcoming the obstacles and we have witnessed repeated appeals to push for final agreement. It is necessary to give those words substance and the effort of all is essential.

(The President)

Before I give the floor to the speakers on the list for today's meeting, I would like to take this opportunity to bid farewell on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf to our distinguished colleagues Ambassador Kahiluoto of Finland and Ambassador Dobelle of France, whose terms of office in Geneva are coming to an end. On behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I would like to convey to them our appreciation for their many valuable contributions to our endeavours during their tenure, as well as our sincere wishes for success and satisfaction in their new assignments.

Now I would like to turn to the question of the speakers for today. The list contains the following delegates who wish to take the floor: Ambassador Jean-François Dobelle and Ambassador Khan of Pakistan. I give the floor to Ambassador Dobelle of France.

Mr. DOBELLE (France) (spoke in French): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to thank you for the kind words that you addressed to me. I would also like to congratulate you and your country on your accession to the presidency and assure you of the French delegation's full support in the difficult task before you.

Mr. President, I will speak here in a purely personal capacity and on my own responsibility alone. The fact that the Conference on Disarmament holds its meetings in the Council Chamber, the most beautiful room in the entire Palais des Nations in Geneva, is certainly not by chance. It may be seen as symbolic in at least two ways. Firstly, this room is also known as the Francisco de Vitoria Room in tribute to the work of the theologians and jurists of the Spanish school of natural law and the law of nations. Vitoria, who belonged to the Dominican Order, is regarded as one of the founding fathers of public international law. A visionary, he became the promoter of a new international ethic which could be extended to all of the nations of the world and was valid for all human beings, consistent as it was with the fundamental unity of humankind. He regarded the world as a political unit, an orbis, which was capable of making laws applicable to all nations and all people. In the eighteenth century, a turbulent age marked by great discoveries, religious conflicts and the wars of conquest in the New World, he stated in particular that "difference of religion is not a just cause of war", nor is "desire for empire" or "the glory" or "any other profit of the prince". He believed that there would be neither peace nor concord until violence was eliminated as a tool of law.

In the 1990s, the Conference on Disarmament undeniably accomplished work that Francisco de Vitoria would not have rejected. It negotiated at least two very important conventions constituting decisive progress in the development of international disarmament law. I am, of course, referring to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the latter of which has unfortunately still not come into force.

Another very significant symbol is the murals in this room, produced during the interwar years by the great Catalan artist, José María Sert. He was Europe's best-known mural painter in the first half of the twentieth century. A close friend of the French poet, playwright and diplomat, Paul Claudel, and a resident of Paris, his baroque, mannerist art is characterized by a propensity to the grandiose, the things and beings of real life portrayed through a hyperbolic, emphatic language. There are dense, winding crowds full of movement and vigour. Sert's work is marked by a sense of theatricality and chromatic simplicity, colour being sacrificed to sculpturality. In

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the case of the straining Titans around us, mood is expressed more through the tenseness of their bodies than the expression on their faces. This strange haunting work, where one can perhaps see the influence of Veronese, Michelangelo and Goya, conveys both a sense of mystery that sows confusion in the mind of the observer and an inner tension that points to an inexpressible dissatisfaction.

By their subject matter and the date of their painting, these murals are a lesson in meditation for all diplomats dealing with disarmament, for the themes discussed here are those of war and peace, justice and social progress. Several of the great trompe-l'oeil draperies in this room, entitled "The Conquerors" and "The Conquered" are an allegory of war. As the winner of the 1933 Nobel Peace Prize, Sir Norman Angell, said, the vanquished are never conquered enough not to wish with all their hearts to resume the struggle, and the victors are also losers. Against the inexorable cycle of infernal war the painter sets the optimistic future of humanity. Thus, the other paintings in the room represent the victory of man over the scourges of the world and man's genius in the service of faith in a better condition. These paintings illustrate hope, the progress of science, social progress and technical progress. For its part, the famous ceiling takes us back to Francisco de Vitoria, since it depicts the "Lesson of Salamanca", that humankind is meant to follow and the figures around the cathedral tower are the precursors of modern international law. The five colossi, which symbolize the five parts of the world, have joined hands and their union is the allegorical keystone of the room.

In other words, in these paintings the artist, using just three colours: gold, grisaille and sepia, sought to illustrate both what separates men (war, hatred, cruelty, vengeance, injustice, slavery and oppression through labour) and what unites them (peace, the end of slavery and hard labour, the spirit of equality and concord). From this antithesis was to emerge, as the painter saw it, a new vision of future history, one made of harmony and justice among peoples, that the League of Nations upheld and to which the artist subscribed. How can one not think here of the famous words uttered a few years earlier, also in Geneva, by Aristide Briand, but alas so quickly given the lie by events: "Away with the rifles, the machine guns and the cannon!"

Nevertheless, there is no denying that the first impression from this work is, rather, a tragic vision of history and of the world. One is reminded of the myth of Sisyphus so dear to Albert Camus because it illustrated his theory of the absurd, Sisyphus being condemned to push up a hill a boulder that always rolled back before he reached his objective. What first strikes one in this grandiose tableau, where Danteau figures reminiscent of those in Rome's Sistine Chapel writhe and strain, are the apocalyptic scenes in a cold decor, tormented people with knotted muscles raising their arms to the sky in attitudes of despair.

How can one not, when looking at this work, think of the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which also goes through cycles, periods of intense activity that are, alas, too brief alternating with others that are far too long where one has the feeling of forever going back to the beginning, where deadlock and stagnation prevail, rhetoric which has little connection with reality being unable to deceive for any length of time. A few months after I began my functions here, many of my colleagues thought the Conference on Disarmament, thanks in particular to the

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diligence of its various presidents, was about to experience a fresh awakening after lengthy slumber. Unfortunately after a few months the hopes fell again and nobody could say today when this forum will be able to return to its initial calling, the negotiation and conclusion of international agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation.

The date of completion of these paintings was also marked by tragedy. These murals were painted between March 1935 and May 1936. Two months before their inauguration came the start of the Spanish Civil War (which would lead, for that matter, to the destruction in a fire of another major work by José María Sert, the murals in Vich Cathedral). Three years later came the start of the bloodiest war humanity has ever known, marking the collapse of all the hopes that had been placed in the pacificatory virtues of the League of Nations. The most abject barbarity would forever tarnish the image of Europe.

However, like the painter, we must, if not imagine Sisyphus happy, at least remain hopeful. I am convinced that the Conference on Disarmament, even if it has disappointed greatly, remains an irreplaceable instrument which, including in the low-water phase that it has too long been in, retains real utility in that it reflects in its fashion the tensions and the fault lines which continue deeply to fracture the international community (and perhaps “society” would be more appropriate than “community”) and that it enables each of its member States to express openly its concerns, priorities, ambitions and aspirations. In this sense, the Conference is to a certain degree the barometer of the state of the world. It remains the case that the Conference on Disarmament could and should do a good deal more. I would like to set out a few personal thoughts in this connection.

First, there is no doubt that the state of international relations has a direct impact on the work of this forum. It was not by chance that the Conference was more active in the 1990s, a decade which, despite very serious tragedies in several regions of the world, including Europe, was marked by relative optimism following the end of the cold war and of the division of the world into two blocs. Nor is it mere coincidence that the pace of its work has slowed since at the start of the present decade. An international situation marked by a, to say the least, uncertain future is not really conducive to spectacular efforts in the field of disarmament. Be it the advent of mass terrorism, the occurrence of two major non-proliferation crises, the persistence of serious areas of tension in the Middle East and Asia, or the emergence of new poles of power or of doubts in some circles concerning the virtues of multilateral diplomacy, none of these factors is likely to encourage States, which are rightly concerned to preserve their safety, to relax their vigilance.

The second thing I would say is this: diplomats, however talented they may be, cannot do everything. They are dependant on the instructions they receive from their capitals and in the fields dealt with by the Conference on Disarmament those instructions are often very strict and leave only a small margin for manoeuvre. There comes a time where inevitably even the most ingenious procedural inventions or stratagems run into obstacles of substance. Now, the fundamental principle according to which new progress in the field of disarmament should not

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lead to a reduction in security for anybody justifies the maintenance of the rule of consensus, from which it would not be wise to seek to free ourselves, even if it can lead to paralysis. On the other hand, every subject should be examined on its merits and any attempt to establish links between one theme and another can only be a factor of blockage.

The third thing I would say is that, if we leave rhetoric aside for a moment, there can be no real progress in nuclear disarmament unless the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty comes into force and negotiation finally starts on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons, as the 1995 NPT Review Conference well understood. One can only hope that consensus will emerge one day on the proposals for compromise wisely drawn up by the collegial presidencies of 2007 and 2008, which represent a no doubt imperfect point of balance, but the one closest to what could become - at the right time - the object of general agreement.

My fourth comment is that the fact that the Conference on Disarmament cannot agree on a work programme covering inter alia the first four items on its agenda (an agenda that is, for that matter, quite artificial and in certain respects obsolete) should not dispense it from giving more sustained attention than it is currently doing to certain subjects relating to conventional disarmament, if only better to make the international community more aware of the major, not to say for a certain number of countries the vital issues of subjects such as illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and dissemination of portable anti-aircraft systems (MANPADS). In this connection the seminar organized last June by UNIDIR showed that there is a real need which has not yet been met.

As I prepare to leave in a few days, I would like to emphasize how much I have appreciated the opportunity to build a relationship of trust and friendship with the vast majority of my colleagues, including those with whom I did not always agree on the substance.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all of the successive presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 and 2008 with whom I have had the honour and the pleasure to work. My thanks also go to the Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the secretariat of the Conference and all of those whose task is sometimes underestimated but without whom this forum would not be able to operate, starting with the interpreters, to whom I hope I have not caused too much alarm, except perhaps today.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): I thank Ambassador Dobelle of France for his statement, for his contributions and for his kind words to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Khan of Pakistan.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): Mr. President, we congratulate the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and you, Ambassador Germán Mundaraín Hernández, on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. The expression may sound trite but you are being literally baptized by fire as you take this responsibility shortly after joining your post in Geneva. We are confident that you will successfully preside over the consultations and negotiations on the year-end report of the CD. In this effort, you will have the full support of the Pakistani delegation. We particularly welcome your opening remarks for their balance and wisdom.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

On this occasion, we also want to compliment your predecessor, Ambassador Christina Rocca of the United States, for her dynamic leadership of the Conference. She accelerated the pace of the CD's activities by reviving the third round of informal discussions. More importantly, she conducted the business of the Conference in a fair, wise and skilful manner.

For us, today is a sad day, as we listened to the farewell speech of Ambassador François Dobelle. We are all losing a good colleague and a good friend. He leaves behind with us vignettes of his personal warmth, his sharp intellect and his tenacity in defending his brief. We wish him success in his future assignments. We also say farewell to Ambassador Kari Kahiluoto, who ably led the European Union during the second half of 2006. We understand that soon he will be back in Geneva as part of the Mission in a different capacity. We also welcome the guests from Japan sitting in the gallery. Their cause is worthy and their goals noble. We express our fullest empathy towards them.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, while addressing the Conference on 23 January this year, reminded us that in setting priorities CD members had no constraints as to how to conduct their work, other than to proceed on the basis of consensus. On 25 June, while addressing this body, the European Union's foreign policy chief, the Honourable Javier Solana, said that the EU had carefully listened to the difficulties a few countries had with the proposal CD/1840 and would be open to discussing any specific security concerns. We welcome such discussions with the EU, in order to go deeper into the issues and explore consensus. A day earlier, on 24 June, a very thoughtful statement was made by the Ambassador of South Africa, in which, in her characteristic elegant style, she pointed out that the structure, the secretariat support, funding and the rules of procedure - none of them were hampering the work of the CD.

Six questions still need to be answered on the rule of consensus, the quest for a "perfect formula", compromise, prejudgement, preconditions and ripeness. I should like to respond to them.

Is the rule of consensus being misused? What constitutes a misuse? The misuse of a rule will be to invoke it when it serves one's national interest and deny it to others when it serves theirs. In the recent past, would it have been a misuse to uphold the rule of consensus in its entirety in the case of the A-5, but to give innovative interpretations to it in the case of CD/1840, which is far from being an agreed document?

Is the perfect the enemy of the good in the CD? Sure, it should not be. In the CD, one is not looking for the perfect. But what is "good"? CD/1840? Maybe "good", but not "good enough", because it is riddled with inbuilt conditionalities, as it moves the goalposts of the CD 180 degrees. The document drops verification as a goal for an FMT, ad hoc committees as negotiating subsidiary bodies, and balance between the four core issues. It proposes to set aside the agreed basis that had been negotiated after concerted work spread over decades. Some well-meaning delegates believe that all of these elements can be revived and restored once we start work. We are sceptical that we can do a year from now what we cannot do now.



(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

Is CD/1840 a compromise? CD/1840 is a compromise, but a lopsided compromise, among broadly like-minded countries. It does not meet the basic minimum concerns of all CD members. It has not given concessions to all sides. In all fairness, the proposal has moved forward to some extent compared to last year's L.1, but in its present form, it does not represent a breakthrough.

Is there a prejudgement? We are of the view that the paper prejudices the outcome. Consensus until recent years was that the CD would work for a verifiable fissile material treaty. That key ingredient is absent from CD/1840. Why? Because the principle of verification in this instance is being shelved or probably mothballed. The paper also foreshadows outcomes of substantive discussions on the other three core issues.

Are there no preconditions? We do not agree with the premise that CD/1840 does not have preconditions. It has, as stated earlier, three explicit or implicit, stated or unstated preconditions - no verification for FMCT, no ad hoc committees for negotiations, and a differentiated treatment of the three core issues, otherwise the ball will not roll. We appeal to all concerned to remove these preconditions and restore verification into the mandate for an FMT.

Are all core issues not ripe for negotiating? There is no agreement on the question as to which issue is mature, or which is not, for negotiations. The determination of the ripeness is in the eye of the beholder, or, shall we say, the taste buds of the food connoisseur, depending on policy imperatives. We believe that NSAs, PAROS and nuclear disarmament are all as ripe for negotiations as the proposed FMCT. As we have given detailed arguments during the informal discussions to prove this point, we do not want to repeat them here.

We all know that negotiations on FMT were started in 1998 on an agreed basis and within an agreed programme of work, following hard work of five years to develop and pursue the Shannon mandate. At that time, the commencement of negotiations was made possible by addressing issues, not by sidelining them. Yet, in recent weeks, some national statements have supported CD/1840 in the plenary sessions. In its statement on 17 June, Pakistan expressed its reservations on the proposal in its present form. Since then, there has been no significant development in bridging the differences in key areas, though some very informal consultations have taken place on the points raised by Pakistan. On 2 August 2007, the National Command Authority of Pakistan stated:

“The NCA reviewed the current status of negotiations on disarmament issues in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, including regarding the proposed FMCT. The NCA reiterated Pakistan's position in favour of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty, taking into account the security concerns of all States.”

In the light of this direction: (a) Pakistan will sign on any dispensation or mandate that is non-discriminatory; (b) Pakistan will propose that the CD should work on a mandate for a verifiable FMT.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

We will be able to endorse CD/1840, if it is revised to address the following issues stated in CD/1843:

- A commitment to negotiate a “non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable” fissile material treaty. This is key
- Creation of space for addressing the question of existing and future stocks of fissile material
- Balance among all four core issues - nuclear disarmament, FMT, PAROS and NSAs
- Using ad hoc committees or any other subsidiary bodies as mechanisms for negotiations, in accordance with the CD’s rules of procedure
- A differentiation between the role of the coordinators to facilitate informal discussions and the functions of formal CD subsidiary bodies to conduct negotiations in the context of the programme of work. The coordinators have so far worked informally under the authority of the CD Presidents. Formalization of their role as the CD’s subsidiary bodies for the core issues will require open and full-fledged discussions in the CD. This cannot be done indirectly by amalgamating the role of the coordinators with the proposed programme of work

For Pakistan, incorporation of international and effective verification into the proposed mandate is of critical importance. It stems directly from our vital national security interests, as we define them. Without verification, an FMT would promote neither disarmament nor non-proliferation. On other points, we are ready to negotiate.

On the basis of these points, Pakistan is ready for formal and informal discussions. We will also be ready to table an amendment to CD/1840 or a separate proposal containing elements for an acceptable formula.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): My thanks to Ambassador Khan for his statement and I appreciate his words of recognition of the work of the presidency. The secretariat informs me that Ambassador Pinter of Slovakia has placed his name on the list of speakers. I give him the floor.

Mr. PINTER (Slovakia): Mr. President, I, at the beginning of my statement, would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the last presidency of 2008 and look forward to working with you and your team in the weeks to come. I wish to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Christina Rocca, and all the members of the P-6 for their tireless efforts and for bringing the CD back on the track to fulfilling its primary function.

With regard to the most recent plenary session, I am instructed to bring to the attention of the Conference the statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia of 14 August related to the situation in Georgia. The position of the Slovak Republic on settlement of the current conflict in Georgia stems from long-term respect and support of the sovereignty and territorial

(Mr. Pinter, Slovakia)

integrity of Georgia in the framework of their internationally recognized borders. All steps which threaten this principle are unacceptable to Slovakia. Slovakia has always refused, and will refuse in future, the use of force by any of the parties in the settlement of conflicts and of open issues, including the disputes concerning South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Slovakia fully supports the mediation efforts of the French presidency of the EU concerning the solution of the conflict in Georgia. Slovakia's position is fully reflected in the conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 13 August. As a part of the settlement of the situation in Georgia, Slovakia will, among other things, support the dispatch of the EU peacekeeping mission in the country. In the interest of the settlement of the humanitarian crisis, Slovakia has provided humanitarian aid of 5.6 million Slovak crowns for all the citizens of Georgia suffering from the armed conflict, including the refugees from South Ossetia.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): Thank you very much, Ambassador Pinter, for your statement and for your kind words on my assumption of the presidency.

We have an opportunity for further speakers. I see a request for the floor by the representative of New Zealand. He has the floor.

Mr. MACKAY (New Zealand): Mr. President, could I also join other colleagues who have congratulated you and complimented you on your assumption of the presidency and who have also paid tribute to the work which has been done by previous Presidents? I think that we would all wish to acknowledge that work and express our confidence in the prospect of the CD moving forward under your presidency. I would also like to join others in paying tribute to departing Ambassadors for their contribution to the CD during the time that they have been here.

We have heard this morning a number of interesting interventions that have ranged across quite a wide area, and in fact, certainly two of them have been linked. The interventions of our distinguished colleague from France and our distinguished colleague from Pakistan have been linked in the sense that they both address the inability of the CD to get down to negotiations, which has of course long been the subject of comment in this chamber. In fact, it has been so I think over a period of about 11 years. I wanted to just specifically take up some of the points raised by our distinguished colleague from Pakistan because I think it is important that the record be presented on this subject in a way that reflects not only one viewpoint but also other viewpoints within the chamber.

The viewpoint that I represent, that my country represents, is the viewpoint of a country that is not in possession of nuclear weapons, that has forsworn ever acquiring nuclear weapons, that is totally committed to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, both horizontally and vertically. I think our record stands very strongly in that sense. We have spoken on many occasions on that in this body and also in others. I can understand therefore that the perspective that we have on the inability of the CD to move forward on a work programme on an FMCT may be somewhat different from the perspective of our Pakistani colleague, obviously, coming from a country that does possess nuclear weapons and has not entered into the commitments of the sort that I have indicated that my country, as a non-nuclear-weapon State and a party to the Nuclear

(Mr. MacKay, New Zealand)

Non-Proliferation Treaty, has done. Certainly I think from the statement that our distinguished colleague from Pakistan has made in the chamber this morning, the difference in those perspectives, I think, comes through quite clearly. I would just like to go through briefly the six points that he has elaborated this morning in support of his position.

With regard to the first point, is the rule of consensus being misused? Obviously, the terms “use” or “misuse” are something that can be bandied about at great length, and clearly there is a consensus rule in the CD, clearly it is up to States to take advantage of that rule to prevent the work proceeding in the CD if they judge that they wish to do that. However, this body is I think probably unique in the level of safeguards that are built in with regard to the use of consensus in the CD. For example, a consensus is required on the work programme. Once one has agreed on a work programme and has actually got down to work - unfortunately we have not been able to do it for 11, or is it 12 years? I lose track - once one gets down to work, one needs a consensus in the chamber to actually agree to particular outcomes. So, we have a second consensus safeguard built in. Then, there is a consensus obviously required in the CD to adopt an instrument as a whole. So, we have a third level of safeguard built in. Then, of course, all States have the sovereign right to decide whether or not they are going to become party to the outcome in the CD. The mere fact that the CD has adopted an outcome does not mean that all States are going to become party to that outcome, that they have to become party to the outcome. So, we have a fourth level of safeguard built in. So I would suggest that, in a situation where you have such a succession of safeguards available, States should in fact take a flexible approach with regard to the first stage of this process, which is actually agreeing on a programme of work, because they then have, through the application of the consensus rule here, and ultimately through the application of States’ sovereignty, a lot of safeguards built in that will ensure that they will not become party to an outcome that does not meet their national interests, even if the judgement of the international community as a whole is that it meets the collective interests of the international community. So again, as I say, I would suggest that one should actually approach the invocation of the consensus rule at the initial stage when one is actually agreeing or disagreeing to a programme of work, one should approach that with an open and flexible manner, and I have to say that, unfortunately, all of the evidence is not that we are in that situation and that that has been done.

With regard to the second point, is the “perfect” the enemy of the “good” in the CD? I totally agree with our distinguished colleague from Pakistan that it should not be, and indeed, as I say, we are not actually looking for the perfect. We should not be looking for the perfect when we decide to commence work. What we should be doing is looking for a basis on which to commence work, and then we can negotiate our national positions in the context of those negotiations. That is what normally happens elsewhere. One does not simply block the adoption of the work programme to prevent that first stage being implemented and prevent the testing of other countries’ positions and one’s own national positions to see how they stand up on the substance. Certainly, as far as our national position on the substance is concerned, I would say that certainly it is probably not very much different from the substantive position put forward by Pakistan this morning. We also believe that there could be international and acceptable verification. We also believe that there should be non-discrimination. We also believe that existing stocks should be included in the treaty that is produced, but we are willing to have our positions and our arguments put to the test on this, as happens in all negotiations, and we believe

(Mr. MacKay, New Zealand)

that everyone in this chamber should be willing to have their positions put to the test, to be negotiated, to see how they stack up, rather than simply trying to establish preconditions and predetermined outcomes on issues which are clearly not the subject of overall agreement at this stage.

The third point: is CD/1840 a compromise? Well, yes, it is a compromise. Is it a lopsided compromise? I do not think it is a lopsided compromise. I think that the successive Presidents of the Council have done an extraordinarily good job in presenting an outcome that should be acceptable to all. Does it meet our national position? Our preferred national position? No. But that is the nature of a compromise. A compromise is an outcome that is a fair position that then enables all arguments to be put forward in the substance, and in our view, this outcome from the Presidents clearly meets that criteria. It certainly does not meet the national position of any one country, and nor should it, whatever the status of country, whether it has nuclear weapons or does not have nuclear weapons. We see this as a nuclear disarmament issue. Other countries may not. But we need to get these things out on the table, out on the floor, and until we commence work, we are not going to be able to test these things.

Is there a prejudgement? Well, there is a prejudgement in CD/1840 in the sense that it does not actually prejudice anything. If one is looking for a prejudged outcome in CD/1840, I guess you can say that it is a prejudgement for CD/1840 not to contain prejudgements. But I think that is a somewhat arcane and circuitous argument. The fact is that CD/1840 enables all issues to be discussed, but it does not set out in advance what elements have to be contained in the eventual outcome. In my view, objectively, that is not a prejudgement. If one does require certain outcomes, then as I say, I guess one can mount an argument - I do not think it is a convincing one - that because the outcomes that one particular country wants are not specifically referred to as outcomes in the mandate it prejudices things. But as I say, I do not accept that argument.

I think similarly the same point applies with regard to preconditions.

The sixth point: are all core issues not ripe for negotiations? Certainly, again speaking from a New Zealand perspective, we would be happy to see negotiations on any of the major items that are on the agenda of the CD. We would be very happy to negotiate on NSAs, on PAROS, on nuclear disarmament and on FMCT. What we do not believe, and again this is an area in which I would disagree with our distinguished colleague from Pakistan, is that you can deal with all of them equally and equitably at the same time. The reality is that when the CD has negotiated its treaties, be it the Chemical Weapons Convention, be it the CTBT, it focused on one particular issue and negotiated it. If, in fact, it had been focusing on four or five or six issues at the same time, I think one can say with complete confidence that we would never have produced a Chemical Weapons Convention and we would never have produced a CTBT, and the international community would be that much the poorer for it and our collective national security would be that much the poorer for it. The reality is that even for large delegations it is not possible to negotiate everything at the same time. That is certainly true for smaller delegations, not because of a lack of commitment, but simply because at the practical level it would not work.

(Mr. MacKay, New Zealand)

So we need to start somewhere, and the judgement, I think, of virtually all the delegations in this chamber - it is our judgement - is that the one that is closest is an FMCT, and, as I say, we actually see it as a nuclear disarmament measure, so it actually fits in quite well with the other issues that are dealt with here. Obviously, the nuclear armament issue is a nuclear disarmament issue. NSAs are clearly related to nuclear disarmament. So FMCT, I think, is a logical place to start.

I certainly welcome the indications by our distinguished colleague from Pakistan of a willingness to engage further in informal consultations with regard to the draft mandate in CD/1840, but again I come back to the point that we should not be seeking to stipulate in advance what the particular outcome of an FMCT negotiation will be. As I say, in substance, I think that we and Pakistan are very close from the things that Pakistan has said. But we do not believe that we should be trying to somehow set out in advance what the outcome of the negotiation is before we embark on a negotiation. I have never heard of that sort of process being undertaken elsewhere, and I think it did not happen in the case of other negotiations. I think we need to be very careful going down that route.

So again, I apologize for speaking at some length, but it seemed to me that it was necessary, given the very frank and forthright statement from Pakistan, and we thank Ambassador Khan for that. I think it was necessary to go through and just deal with the particular issues that he had raised from the other perspective, or at least one of the other perspectives, that I think is very much present here in the CD, and I hope that just as we will certainly reflect very closely on the points that he has made in his statement, I would earnestly request Ambassador Khan and Pakistan to reflect very closely on the points and perspectives that I have made in mine.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): Thank you, Ambassador MacKay, for your thinking and for your contributions and, I am very grateful for your kind words to me. Continuing the meeting, I shall now give the floor to Ambassador Loshchinin, representing the Russian Federation.

Mr. LOSCHININ (Russian Federation) (spoke in Russian): Mr. President, I could not but take the floor since I very much wish to congratulate you on assuming the functions of President. We wish you every success and you may count fully on the support of the Russian delegation. We would also like to thank Christina Rocca, your predecessor, and the other members of the P-6. We would also, of course, like to express our warmest thanks and our best wishes to our colleagues the Ambassadors who will soon be completing their mission here in Geneva.

Since I have taken the floor, I cannot, of course, not touch upon a subject that, to the extent we know, is affecting the activities of the Conference, just as it has attracted the attention of all the States of the world community and of the international community as a whole. I am speaking of Georgia's aggression against South Ossetia and the consequences to which it has given rise.

This is the twelfth day since that aggression started. Regrettably, we have to note that, instead of a serious analysis of the reasons for this tragedy and a search for ways of ensuring a

(Mr. Loschinin, Russian Federation)

lasting peace in the Republic, Western media are continuing to disseminate false information that grossly distorts the true situation. That applies above all to determining who is guilty of aggression. It would be appropriate here to look at the chronology of events.

On 7 August, at 22.35 hours, Georgia began an offensive operation against South Ossetia under the slogan "Restoration of constitutional order in the conflict zone" - using force. On 8 August, at 00.20 hours, an artillery bombardment of Tskhinvali and villages in South Ossetia began, with the use of "Grad" multiple-launch rocket systems. These are, in essence, cluster munitions that hit area targets. Russian peacekeepers found themselves in the firing zone. They were fired upon directly - and this is particularly regrettable - by Georgian peacekeepers. At 01.20 hours, Georgian troops, tanks and infantry, began to move towards Tskhinvali. On the morning of 8 August the Georgian air force struck peaceful towns and villages in South Ossetia. By midday on 8 August, Georgian forces had taken partial control of the capital of South Ossetia, Tskhinvali, and of eight South Ossetian villages that were literally wiped from the face of the earth. All this led to a large number of casualties among the civilian population of South Ossetia and peacekeepers. Among peacekeepers alone, 18 were killed and over 70 injured. In the second half of the day, following all these events, on 8 August, in conditions of a continuing threat to the lives of Russian citizens in South Ossetia and in keeping with the right to self-defence, Russia sent troops into South Ossetia to support the Russian peacekeepers and to protect the civilian population.

These are the facts. It is clear to everyone that it is the leadership of Georgia that launched the aggression. That it engaged in ethnic cleansing and pursued a policy of genocide. All this was given a deserved, firm rebuff. It was necessary to do that. Russia basically saved the people of South Ossetia from genocide. We must call a spade a spade. I understand it is not pleasant for everybody to hear these words and this type of assessment, particularly those who prepared the Georgian leadership, who sent weapons there and who "nurtured" this regime, trying to present it as a "showcase of democracy" in the post-Soviet space. If that is democracy, it is hardly the kind anybody needs. And of course the activities of the Georgian leadership cast a shadow on democratic values and on everything we are working on, be it in the Human Rights Council or elsewhere in the United Nations. And instead of condemning those acts by Georgia, some are defending them and accusing Russia of excessive use of force and even of aggressive acts. We hope that justice and truth will prevail.

By the joint efforts of Russia and the President of France, six principles for settlement of the Georgian conflict were agreed in Moscow on 12 August. On 18 August Russia began to withdraw some detachments of its armed forces which had been sent to Georgia to reinforce and protect the Russian peacekeepers in the face of the Georgian aggression. We note with concern that there has so far been no confirmation of the full return of Georgian troops to their original positions, as provided for in the principles. Naturally, the speed of our further steps will depend on how conscientiously Georgia does what is required of it. However, on the basis of the information to hand, Georgia is by no means hurrying to fulfil its obligations. This is evidenced by the mendacious statements by the Georgian delegation at the Meeting of Experts of States Parties to the BWC. There they tried once again to present events in such a way as to make Russia the aggressor. Yet again everything is turned upside down.

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The problem is also - and it seems to us that this should be thought about, and thought about seriously - that during these events the Georgian leadership and Mr. Saakashvili himself repeatedly accused the West and NATO of not providing the necessary support and assistance to the Georgian actions. In response, it is true, there were statements to the effect that Georgia would receive the necessary support, that there would be assistance - military assistance - for Georgia and that as a result Georgia would be stronger than it was before the events took place. That is, statements of such a kind as if somebody was trying to return to the same situation as existed before these sorry events. The need is not to strengthen Georgia militarily. The need is to think how to strengthen the Georgian leadership's understanding of its responsibility to the world community. They need some basic education, some culture; that is where the resources need to go and what needs to be done to bring the Georgian leadership back to reality.

There have been reports today that the NATO Council is meeting in Brussels at Foreign Minister level. There have been indications that statements may be made at this meeting to the effect that the doors are open for Georgia to enter this organization. Let us just think what that might lead to. I have already said that, by calling for assistance from NATO and certain countries, from the West in general, Georgia was trying to involve the NATO countries and Russia in the conflict. One can imagine what would come from all that. It is extremely dangerous. If this type of proposal is indeed made, and it is difficult to conceive of that, then it would, in our view, be a matter not merely of double standards but of a lack of any standards at all. Georgia has violated all of the basic obligations ensuing from its membership of international organizations. It has flouted the Helsinki Final Act, the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and the Charter for European Security and it has grossly violated the humanitarian and political obligations deriving from its membership of the Council of Europe. The cornerstones everywhere here are the principles of non-use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes. But Georgia has also breached the obligations it assumed in connection with its rapprochement with NATO and the European Union although they are embodied in the corresponding documents signed between Georgia and those organizations. That is a direct enumeration, a straightforward enumeration of Georgia's obligations and of its failures to understand that it has to fulfil these obligations. It seems to us we must all work together to explain this unacceptable situation to the Georgian leadership.

In conclusion, I would like to state that Russia is working on a large scale to help the refugees and to restore housing and infrastructure which was destroyed by military action in South Ossetia. There is a press release from our mission containing detailed information about that on the secretariat table. If that is of interest to you, you can get a copy there. I will tell you - these are just a few figures - that Russia initially decided on an allocation of 500 million roubles and that yesterday the decision was taken to allocate an additional 540 million. To make things clearer, I am speaking about the earmarking of 45 million dollars to give direct assistance to refugees and the population. Moreover, a decision has been taken to allocate 10 billion roubles - that is over 400 million dollars - to restoring the destroyed infrastructure, homes and housing there. I must say that substantial humanitarian assistance is also being given by the international community through the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and other United Nations organizations. Every day thousands of South Ossetians, of South Ossetian refugees, are returning to their country. Clearly, restoring what has been destroyed by the war



(Mr. Loschinin, Russian Federation)

cannot be achieved overnight. The important thing, however, is that peaceful life is returning to South Ossetia, and Russia will spare no effort or resources to ensure a calm and safe life for the people of that Republic.

I am being asked by my colleagues what is to be done in this situation? How should we act? What measures could be taken? Of course, there must immediately be a peace offensive with the support of the entire international community. I would like to recall that, of the six principles that were approved by Presidents Nicolas Sarkozy and Dmitry Medvedev, the first is the non-use of force. So the very first task now is quickly to prepare and sign and ratify a legally binding instrument on the non-use of force. Such a document is, indeed, the basis for the realization of all of the other principles. Only it can create the conditions for the establishment of a lasting peace in the region, and it is that which should be the focus of the efforts of all of us and of those of our partners in NATO and the European Union and not calls to bring Georgia into the politico-military bloc that is NATO.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): Thank you, Ambassador Loshchinin. I will now give the floor to Ambassador Soares of the Federal Republic of Brazil.

Mr. MACEDO SOARES (Brazil) (spoke in Spanish): Mr. President, the first point which I would like to address - and it could not be otherwise - is to express the satisfaction of Brazil at seeing the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, the closing presidency of the 2008 session, occupied by a representative of Venezuela, a country and brother nation with which Brazil shares much more than a long frontier. Without false modesty, this is for the delegation of Brazil a special moment, a period of work in which we are confident the Latin American presidency will impart a different direction, a vision. We have as the first proof of this the oldest denuclearized zone and an essentially peaceful continent.

During your period of office, and this is the second point I wish to address, we will have to approve the report of the Conference for the year. Clearly this is no easy undertaking and, without wishing to add a further burden to your responsibilities, I would like to say that, while the report will of course be objective, my delegation hopes that it will not simply be a static, rigid photograph of the current state of the Conference, but will contain - and this can be done because it is a written document and any written document can have a style - a projection for the year to come, some indication that we are not ending in a state of impasse and will be resuming from zero but that we can instead move ahead with what we have tried to build through the leadership of all the Presidents who have presided over the Conference this year.

As my third point, I would like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement, which was as always based on deep thought and presented with great clarity. I am not, obviously, going to go into all the points he made, but I would like to say that I agree in general with what was said by the distinguished Ambassador of New Zealand. But I would like to add one particular point: for my delegation, any negotiations on a treaty about fissile material for explosive purposes should cover verification provisions. In the view of my delegation, it is not so important for this specific issue to be in a mandate because even if it was we would have no

(Mr. Macedo Soares, Brazil)

certainty as to what kind of clauses there would be in the document as ultimately negotiated. Negotiation obviously involves the advancing of ideas and the confronting of opinions between the participants.

For my last point I would like to switch to French. (continued in French)

Ambassador Jean-François Dobelle gave us with his farewell address a final demonstration in this Conference, in this room, of the depth and clarity of his thinking. I would like to say that in a body devoted to negotiating, the only body with that particular task in the field of disarmament, one of course requires diplomats, but, as has been said, diplomats, from the political point of view, follow instructions, but in negotiating international legal instruments there is also a need for legal expertise, legal experience, and it is that, apart from many other qualities, we in the Conference are losing with the departure of Ambassador Dobelle. We are losing a skilled jurist, and I would like that noted in the record at today's meeting.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): Thank you, Ambassador Soares, for your comments, your views and your generosity towards my country. I give the floor next to Ambassador Khan of Pakistan.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): Thank you, Mr. President. I think Ireland wants to speak, and I can speak after Ireland.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): Since Ambassador Khan is yielding the floor to the representative of Ireland, I call upon Mr. O'Shea of Ireland.

Mr. O'SHEA (Ireland): Mr President, first of all, permit me to congratulate you on your assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament and to bid you welcome to Geneva. I can assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your duties. I would also like to express the gratitude of my delegation to your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Rocca, Permanent Representative of the United States of America, and the other members of this year's P-6, for their assiduous efforts to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work. I cannot but express sorrow at the imminent departure from Geneva of the Permanent Representatives of France and of Finland, Ambassador Dobelle and Ambassador Kahiluoto, both of whom have greatly enriched our discussions during the time of their presence here.

I would like to associate my delegation with the eloquent remarks of the distinguished Permanent Representative of New Zealand, which expresses also the position of my delegation on the question of getting the Conference on Disarmament back to work. As he said, the position of New Zealand, and the same could be said for Ireland, is very close to that of Pakistan on the various questions of substance relating to the content of a treaty on fissile material.

I would like to refer briefly to the statement of the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Loshchinin.

(Mr. O'Shea, Ireland)

I do not propose to comment on the wider context of the events of the last 10 days in the south Caucasus - Ireland's position is set out in the Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations meeting of the Council of the European Union of 13 August, and in statements by Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mícheál Martin.

I would like to ask a question for the purpose of clarification, since we are on the record. The distinguished Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation referred to the use by Georgian forces of the multiple-launch rocket system "Grad", and said, if I heard him correctly, that this type of weapon is a cluster munition, which hits not targets, but areas. As delegations will be aware, the issue of cluster munitions is one to which my delegation pays close attention. As far as I am aware, the rockets of the "Grad" system can have a number of different types of warhead, including unitary high-explosive warheads, warheads containing submunitions, and others. I would like to seek clarification from the delegation of the Russian Federation on whether it is being alleged that "Grad" rockets equipped with cluster warheads, in other words, warheads containing submunitions, were used by Georgian forces on 8 August.

I thank you, Mr. President, and I thank the delegation of the Russian Federation in advance for its consideration of this request.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): At the request of the representative of Ireland, I will give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to answer the question put by the representative of Ireland.

Mr. LOSCHININ (Russian Federation) (spoke in Russian): Very briefly, I said that Grad systems can be considered as a weapon corresponding to the definition of a cluster munition. Can be considered. We still need to resolve the question of the definition of cluster munition. But the most important thing is that Grad systems really do not hit point targets - they destroy everything: living things and infrastructure. In the case in question, they were used to fire on a peaceful town, on the civilian population, which is entirely unacceptable.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): It's always appropriate to correct shortcomings. I did not thank the representative of Ireland for his statement. I thank him now for his views and his contribution. I understand that Ambassador Khan had yielded the floor, but without withdrawing his request to speak. I give him the floor.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): Mr. President, I appreciate the interventions that were made by New Zealand, Brazil and Ireland. I particularly appreciate the civil and courteous tone in which the reservations were expressed by New Zealand and Brazil. I also welcome and appreciate the very thorough analysis made by the Ambassador of Brazil of the points that I raised and his response to those points. New Zealand has been a passionate advocate of commencement of work in the Conference on Disarmament, and we can fully associate with that sentiment.

My feeling is, after having heard the arguments and responses, that I was partially heard, and therefore the responses from New Zealand and Brazil were partial. We still have not gone to the heart of the matter, but it was good to hear the perspective of New Zealand and Brazil and their prescription for a preferred solution. I particularly welcome the offer of engagement by the

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

Ambassador of New Zealand, and I can assure the Ambassador of Brazil that Pakistan has carefully noted his remarks about the contents and the tenure of the report which will be drafted by the CD, and of course, we are open to suggestions, and we think that we should not give a signal that the Conference on Disarmament will have to start from scratch next year.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): My thanks to Ambassador Khan for his statement. I now give the floor to Ambassador Dayan Jayatilleka, the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. JAYANTILLEKA (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, while I wish to associate myself with all those who thanked your predecessor, Ambassador Rocca, for what I would consider an exemplary guiding of our deliberations during her stewardship, I also wish to join those, especially my colleague the Ambassador of Brazil, in welcoming you, the Ambassador of Venezuela, to the presidency of the CD. Sri Lanka has the highest regard for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for its leadership and its revolutionary process. We are also happy that Latin America is in a state of creative and constructive ferment, providing social and democratic alternatives to the crisis that the world is enveloped in. As such, Sri Lanka is convinced that under your presidency, a fresh spirit, a new perspective, will be brought to bear, and you will be able to synthesize the different, sometimes contradictory views that have been aired in this forum, particularly with relation to the programme of work. I wish you all the best and congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): Thank you, Ambassador Dayan Jayatilleka. It seems there are no other speakers on the list. Excuse me, I did not see that the People's Republic of China was asking for the floor. I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of China.

Mr. WANG Qun (China) (spoke in Chinese): First of all, I should like to congratulate Ambassador Hernández of Venezuela on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. China also expresses its appreciation to your predecessor, Ms. Rocca, the distinguished Ambassador of the United States of America, for her work and to all the other former Presidents for their efforts and their contribution to the Conference.

We are also grateful to the departing Ambassadors of France and Finland for the work they have done for the Conference. We have taken note of the important statements concerning the work of the CD made by the distinguished Ambassadors of Pakistan, New Zealand and Brazil, and by other delegations. These statements contain important elements, and China will give them serious consideration.

Speaking for myself, however, I would say that from the statements I have just heard, especially the statements by Pakistan and New Zealand, we must face the fact that differences persist in the CD as to how the Conference should proceed in its work. These differences concern both procedure and substance. At the same time, however, we must also realize that even though each side has its own view, we all share the same goal. All parties hope that the Conference will make progress and hope that this progress will be given impetus. What is important in this situation is how the differences in the Conference are dealt with. I believe that only constructive dialogue - and not criticism - will help us solve these problems and bridge these differences rather than broaden them. This is the only approach that can help us reach

(Mr. Wang Qun, China)

agreement on a programme of work as soon as possible. We are of the view that under these circumstances any steps we take should contribute to an early consensus on the programme of work. During this process the rules of procedure of the Conference should be respected. China is ready, as always, to work with all the parties concerned to achieve the aforementioned objective.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I thank the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China for his contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We do not appear to have any more speakers. Would any other delegation care to take the floor? It seems not. As a result, we now conclude our work for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 26 August, at 10 a.m., when we will be presenting the draft report on the work of the Conference on Disarmament for 2008.

The meeting rose at noon.