

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 4 September 2003, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Ms. Kuniko INOUCHI (Japan)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 939th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is an honour and gives me particular pleasure to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference to Her Excellency Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Her Excellency Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi has served as Foreign Minister of Japan since February 2002. Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to Her Excellency for having come all the way to address the Conference on Disarmament despite her various commitments in the capital at a juncture where the expectation of the international community to see this body finally resume its substantive work is increasing.

Before becoming Foreign Minister, Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi served her Government as Minister of the Environment. In that capacity she not only dealt with domestic environmental issues but also participated in negotiations held at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Bonn in July 2001, and, indeed, played a key role in crafting important decisions. At an earlier stage in her professional career, she was also a high-ranking official at the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Juan Antonio Martabit Scaff, and the new Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Clemencia Forero Ucros, and to assure them of our cooperation and support in their new assignments.

I also have on my list of speakers for today the representative of France, the distinguished Ambassador François Rivasseau; the distinguished representative of Cuba, Mr. Oscar León González; the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Eui-Yong Chung; and the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador David Boucher.

I now invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Her Excellency Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, to address the Conference.

Ms. KAWAGUCHI (Japan): It is a great pleasure for me to address this august body, the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to express my sincere congratulations to Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi on her assumption of the presidency of the Conference. Recognizing the great responsibility held by the country presiding over the Conference on Disarmament at this particularly important juncture, I have decided to join you all here today.

I would like to take this opportunity to state Japan's basic stance on disarmament and peace. After the Second World War, Japan chose to establish its position in the international community as a nation dedicated to peace, with a strong determination that the devastation of

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war would never be repeated. Since then, deeply convinced of the philosophy of peace, Japan has pursued the following policy goals: achieving economic development through peace, not through military build-up, increasing the welfare of the Japanese people, and promoting international peace and stability as a prerequisite for these aims.

From this viewpoint, Japan considered it important to demonstrate that Japan itself would not pose a threat to the world, and hence renounced the option of nuclear armament. In 1955, Japan enacted the Atomic Energy Basic Law, which limits nuclear activities in Japan exclusively to peaceful purposes. Subsequently, in 1967, Japan announced the “Three Non-Nuclear Principles”, of “not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan”, and has upheld these principles. Successive cabinets in Japan, including the present Koizumi cabinet, have repeatedly articulated the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, and there is no change in the position of the Government of Japan in that it continues to uphold these principles.

Japan’s accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1976 was an important security decision. Japan joined the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State, and internationally promised to renounce the option of nuclear armament. And now the regime of international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, with the NPT as its cornerstone, is a fundamental pillar of Japan’s security. At the same time, Japan accepted the IAEA safeguards to provide transparency in its nuclear activities. Japan promptly concluded the additional protocol in 1999. It is clear that Japan attaches crucial importance to the NPT regime for its peace and prosperity, and is convinced that this recognition is shared by an overwhelming majority of the international community.

Japan has been making active diplomatic efforts aimed at realizing a peaceful and safe world free of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date. This is the tenth year since Japan submitted its draft resolution on nuclear disarmament to the United Nations General Assembly in 1994 for the first time. This year again, Japan is preparing for the submission to the United Nations General Assembly of the draft resolution on “A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons”.

As a concrete step to strengthening the NPT regime, Japan is seriously committed to promoting the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Yesterday, I attended the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in Vienna, at which I emphasized once again the importance of achieving this goal.

In order for the NPT regime to serve as a cornerstone underpinning international peace and security, its universality is essential. Japan welcomes the fact that Timor Leste, immediately after its independence, became the 189th State party to the NPT in May this year. Nevertheless, there are countries still remaining outside the NPT. I myself have seized every opportunity to convince these countries of the importance of acceding to the Treaty.

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Nuclear-weapon States should take seriously the fact that, to date, almost all countries have committed themselves to renouncing the option of nuclear armament under the NPT regime. In this regard, it should be recalled that the decision in 1995 to extend the NPT indefinitely was an integral part of a package with “Principles and objectives”, which includes the promotion of nuclear disarmament. Nuclear-weapon States must respond to the resolute determination of the non-nuclear-weapon States which constitute the overwhelming majority of NPT States parties, by demonstrating tangible progress towards nuclear disarmament.

Japan is currently tackling the question of peace and disarmament from a new perspective. Following the end of the cold war, the international community underwent the hardships of numerous regional conflicts and civil wars, and we have learnt from past experience that the cessation of conflicts does not necessarily result in sustainable peace. Today, Japan is eager to play a more proactive role to make peace sustainable. I refer to this approach as “consolidation of peace”. As a precondition to consolidating peace and promoting reconstruction, the population must be guaranteed a secure living environment. Addressing the problems of anti-personnel landmines and small arms and light weapons is essential to this aim. In this view, the Official Development Assistance Charter, which lays out Japan’s fundamental principles of ODA policy, places the concept of “consolidation of peace” as one of its top priorities.

At this point, I would like to reflect upon the last 10 years’ history of disarmament and the Conference on Disarmament. After the end of the cold war, the Conference made a significant contribution to building new disarmament norms. In 1991, immediately following the end of the Gulf war, the then Foreign Minister of Japan, Dr. Taro Nakayama, addressed the Conference, pointing out issues which remained unresolved at that time, expressing his strong desire for their early resolution. The Conference went on to adequately meet his expectations. Achievements included the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1992 and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996. The historical importance of these treaties cannot be overvalued.

Since that time, the Conference has been unable to accomplish any concrete results. However, even in this period when Conference negotiations have stagnated, enthusiasm among the international community for tackling disarmament and non-proliferation issues has not wavered. Various developments have taken place outside the Conference.

Firstly, important disarmament steps have been taken by some nuclear-weapon States. In December 2001, Russia and the United States declared the completion of the implementation of their obligations under START I. Subsequently, in June this year, the Moscow Treaty, whereby Russia and the United States agreed to reduce their strategic nuclear warheads by about two thirds, entered into force. Another great achievement was the agreement on “13 practical steps for nuclear disarmament”, as contained in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which includes “an unequivocal undertaking” by nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals.

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Secondly, the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation was launched last November. This constitutes a significant step forward as the first international norm which promotes the non-proliferation of ballistic missiles and calls for maximum self-restraint in the development, testing and deployment of such weapons.

Thirdly, the adoption of the Anti-Personnel landmine Ban Treaty in 1997 and the adoption of the Programme of Action at the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects are, among others, examples of substantial developments which have been made in the field of conventional weapons. In July this year, under Japan's chairmanship, the First Biennial Meeting on small arms and light weapons was successfully concluded.

Despite these positive developments, we must also recognize the severe situation we are currently facing.

Firstly, problems of non-compliance with multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, including the NPT, have become more acute. Non-compliance cases which pose challenges to those treaties must be rectified in order to maintain their credibility and legitimacy. Japan is strongly concerned that problems of non-compliance with the NPT, or related suspicions, have emerged over the past year.

In particular, Japan is deeply concerned about North Korea's declaration of its intention to withdraw from the NPT. Japan cannot accept, by any means, any development, acquisition or possession, test or transfer of nuclear weapons by North Korea. Japan strongly urges North Korea to comply with all its obligations under the NPT and, consequently, obligations under the safeguards agreement with IAEA, to refreeze its nuclear-related facilities and to take prompt action to dismantle its entire nuclear-weapons programme in a verifiable and irreversible manner. Japan welcomes the convening of the first meeting of the six-party talks, which has given us a clue to solving the problem through dialogue.

States parties need to work actively to demonstrate their compliance with treaties to the international community. A high level of transparency can contribute to confidence-building among States parties. This is particularly relevant for States which undertake, or are planning to undertake, advanced nuclear activity. From this viewpoint, Japan has called upon Iran to fully cooperate with IAEA and to promptly and unconditionally conclude and implement the additional protocol.

Secondly, the problem of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) must be addressed. The terrorist attacks of 11 September brought about a complete change in people's "threat awareness", bringing to light the imminent danger that such non-State actors as terrorists can threaten States' security. In particular, the magnitude of the threat of WMD falling into the hands of terrorists is immeasurable. The international community has taken new steps to

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respond to this “new threat”, and Japan has actively participated in these efforts. Moreover, Japan has contributed to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan, through the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law. In order for such new steps to be truly effective, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes must function effectively. It is now more important than ever to uphold and strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

I would now like to touch upon the current situation of the Conference on Disarmament. Since the formulation of the CTBT in 1996, the Conference has been unable to enter into substantial negotiations. This stalemate must be resolved promptly. Japan strongly hopes that the Conference will agree on a programme of work as soon as possible and begin substantive discussion. Japan supports any constructive efforts to break the current stalemate of the CD.

Japan, in particular, places great importance on the commencement of negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). It is highly regrettable that the Conference has failed to commence FMCT negotiations, despite the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We believe such negotiations should begin without further delay. With this aim Japan held a workshop here in Geneva in March this year, and has recently presented to the Conference a working paper on the FMCT (CD/1714). We sincerely hope that this working paper will deepen the discussions on the substantive issues involved in the FMCT and facilitate the early commencement of negotiations. Japan also believes that all States concerned, including the nuclear-weapon States, should declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, pending the entry into force of the FMCT.

I would now like to outline the priority issues for Japan in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

First of all, Japan is aiming towards a peaceful and safe world free of nuclear weapons based on a realistic and incremental approach, by building up concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament. Every year, the draft resolution on “A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, which reflects Japan’s position, has been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly with overwhelming support.

Secondly, as the only country that has experienced the devastation caused by nuclear bombing, Japan takes it upon itself to ensure that the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain in the memories of mankind. Over the past 20 years, Japan has invited to Hiroshima and Nagasaki a total of over 450 diplomats as a part of the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme. I am pleased to learn that alumni of the Fellowship Programme are present here among the delegations today. Japan will continue such efforts in the future.

Thirdly, in order to advance disarmament and non-proliferation, it is essential to gain the understanding and support of young people who will lead future generations, and of civil society as a whole. To that end Japan puts great emphasis on disarmament and non-proliferation education, and is making active efforts, including inviting disarmament educators from overseas.

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Regional disarmament conferences are effective means to enhance awareness of the importance of disarmament at a regional level. I am pleased to note that a United Nations disarmament conference has been held every year in different cities of Japan since 1989. Japan highly appreciates the meaningful discussion which took place during the disarmament conference in Osaka last month.

We must take action to promote disarmament. In addition to traditional approaches, which focus mainly on establishing rules and norms, concrete actions are required such as the disposal and collection of landmines or small arms and light weapons, and the dismantling of weapons of mass destruction.

From this point of view, Japan has been actively engaged in denuclearization cooperation in Russia as a part of the G8 Global Partnership. In June this year, I visited Vladivostok and actually saw a decommissioned nuclear submarine which is to be dismantled under Japan-Russia cooperation projects. These projects were named “Star of Hope” by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

Japan has also been actively involved in cooperation in mine clearance and the collection of small arms and light weapons. From an early stage, Japan has been engaged in demining projects in Afghanistan through United Nations organizations. When I visited Afghanistan last year, I realized the seriousness of the landmine problems and was moved by the enthusiasm of local staff members toiling toward this lofty goal.

Surplus small arms and light weapons have hindered efforts in humanitarian aid operations and reconstruction and development activities by the United Nations and other organizations in the post-conflict phase, and they contribute to reigniting conflicts and facilitating crime. Japan has implemented a weapons collection project to counter this problem entitled “Weapons for development” in Cambodia.

Japan is committed to further promoting such concrete actions toward disarmament.

Disarmament and non-proliferation has never been so important for the peace and security of humankind, and the international community has great expectations for the Conference on Disarmament to fulfil its role. We therefore owe it to ourselves to meet these expectations.

Japan ardently hopes that, making use of the wisdom of humankind, the Conference will contribute to peace and prosperity for the generations to come. I can assure the Conference that Japan will continue to make every possible effort to promote disarmament and non-proliferation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan for her important statement and for the very kind words addressed to the Chair.

With your permission, I would now like to suspend the meeting for 10 minutes in order to escort the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and resumed at 10.50 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 939th plenary meeting is resumed. I thank you for your patience. I now invite the distinguished representative of France, Ambassador François Rivasseau, to make his statement.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Madam President, allow me to congratulate you on the way in which you are discharging your duties and to convey to you France's best wishes for success in carrying out this difficult task. Allow me also to thank you for making it possible for us to listen to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, who delivered an important message.

It is the privilege of a newly appointed ambassador to take the opportunity to present, or reiterate, the main lines of his country's policy in the area of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, as well as the hopes he has for the unique forum of the Conference on Disarmament. This is a privilege; it is also a duty.

Today France is living in peace. Like the neighbouring European countries with which it is linked, France is experiencing an unusual period. Possibly for the first time in our history, it is not directly confronted with a specific geographical threat from a given country, but instead it is facing new dangers. There could be no greater mistake than to believe that we now enjoy increased security. This is not so. Globalization and the development of global threats mean that our interests can be affected by a crisis wherever it breaks out in the world. This is true of France and each of the countries that you represent, dear colleagues. Here more than elsewhere, we must, like lookouts, be the first to assess the costs in security terms of mutual dependence, interconnectedness, technological complexity and the highly serious pollution risks that may result from the smallest conflict that arises in the world. These risks are not limited to the warring parties. Hence, more than ever, we must mobilize. Need we mention also cross-border threats, like those we are very familiar with - those posed by non-State players who are capable of spreading desolation and death all over the world through terrorist actions? We know this situation, and we are facing it with our eyes open. But this situation - need I recall? - corresponds to a difficult stage in multilateral disarmament. The spread of proliferation and its corollary of practices based on mistrust are part of a more unpredictable world, in which new players are emerging with new demands and expectations.

France believes in the virtues of the law. We look favourably on everything that can help to enhance the effectiveness and the multilateral nature of the processes of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In this regard, we think it is necessary to move forward and make headway in the following areas in particular. Regarding conventional weapons - those that claim the most victims - my country is aware of the particular scourge of light weapons, which are so deadly today. France is in favour of continuing work in this field. Together with Switzerland, in keeping with our joint initiative, we hope that the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly will decide to launch negotiations on the tracing and marking of small arms at the beginning of next year. This would be a first step towards the global control of illicit trade in

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such weapons, in accordance with the conclusions of the Panel of Experts that met in New York in June, and the Biennial Meeting of States parties to the programme of action that met under your chairmanship, Madam President, in July.

You also know of my country's commitment to the fight against anti-personnel landmines. France signed the Ottawa Treaty at the outset, and intends to pursue energetically its efforts to eliminate anti-personnel landmines in the world. As an illustration of this commitment, a symposium will be organized on 12 and 13 March next year at the international conference centre in Paris on the added value constituted by the existence of a national forum for dialogue in charge of guiding work against anti-personnel landmines. We are hoping to compare the measures adopted at the national level for implementing the Ottawa Convention and to draw the relevant lessons from them. Under the Act of 8 July 1998, France has set up a National Commission for the Elimination of Anti-Personnel Landmines, and is hoping in this way to make a useful contribution to further progress towards this fundamental humanitarian goal. In this context, we think it is important to try to make an initial assessment here and now of the five years of implementation of the Ottawa Convention, in order to better gauge the successes achieved, but also to evaluate its shortcomings honestly. We will not be content with a situation where the main countries that manufacture and use anti-personnel landmines ignore the Convention, with only too well-known dramatic consequences in areas of crisis and conflict, where legal or illegal landmines are widely used, as France had occasion to observe first-hand recently in Africa. International trafficking and trade in anti-personnel landmines deserve special attention. We must analyse this problem without excluding any areas; we must be guided by the appeal and reproach embodied by the Broken Chair that still stands in front of the entrance to the Palais des Nations, before the wall of our clear conscience. As Dominique de Villepin recently pointed out, the French Government, vested with new responsibilities, notably as regards assistance for victims of anti-personnel landmines, intends to pursue the efforts begun already to rid the world of this scourge, without neglecting any of the tools available to it to reaffirm the foundations of its own policy in this area. Our practical participation in the preparations for the first Review Conference, to be held in 2004, should be viewed in this context. Given the scale of the challenges we all face, the objective for all of us should be to encourage the implementation of the Ottawa Convention in the broadest and most effective way possible, rather than to revise its objectives.

Lastly, I would like to touch on a third important subject, that of explosive remnants of war. Here again, this is a matter of humanitarian urgency. Here again the international community is faced with several dilemmas. Do we need a far-reaching, legally binding standard that would be ratified by only a few countries, to begin with at any rate, or one which is vaguer, hence not necessarily legally binding, but which might aim at near-universality? France's position on this subject stems directly from the fundamental principles it has adopted. Our first objective is to achieve specific results, which are sufficiently tangible to preserve the credibility and durability of the 1980 Convention, which serves as the framework for ongoing discussions on this issue. This implies that, together with our partners in the European Union, we will pursue a text which is as legally binding as possible and as universal. In order to resolve this apparent contradiction, France will work for a protocol to be annexed to the 1980 Convention, setting out simple and effective general standards to remedy the tragic consequences of war, in

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accordance with the fundamental principles of the existing law of armed conflict. And if I may be allowed an observation in passing, we believe, here as elsewhere, that any attempt to link progress in this area to other negotiations should be scrupulously avoided.

Turning to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, France is combating them with all means at its disposal. In the diplomatic arena, we are relying on a combination of vigorous, concerted actions involving prevention and precaution - the Hague Code of Conduct is one example - in strict compliance with the international law and legitimacy of which the United Nations system is the sole custodian.

Last Friday the French President once again stressed that this issue of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was one of the gravest threats of our time. Allow me to quote his words:

“A number of countries are failing to live up to their international commitments and are seeking to create facts on the ground. In gambling on a division of the international community, they have miscalculated.

“We expect North Korea to dismantle its military nuclear programme completely, verifiably and irreversibly. France hopes that the current discussion process, brought about thanks to China’s efforts, will pave the way for an overall settlement of the North Korea issue.

“Iran’s nuclear policy also raises serious concerns. To establish confidence, Iran must demonstrate the full transparency required. And we expect it in particular to sign and implement unconditionally and immediately a strengthened safeguards agreement with IAEA. We hope that the intentions expressed by the Iranian authorities in this regard will be followed by action.”

“Strict compliance with international commitments is the prerequisite for dialogue and cooperation to ensure access to nuclear energy for civil purposes.

“In efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the more united the international community is in pursuing common objectives, the stronger it will be. To this end, I propose that the various initiatives taken in such forums as the G-8, the European Union and the Proliferation Security Initiative should be discussed in the near future by the leaders of the member countries of the Security Council. They could hold a summit meeting aimed at bringing about a true United Nations plan of action against proliferation.”

This proliferation, together with the rise of international terrorism, is the main threat jeopardizing our security, as the European Union recalled on 20 June this year in Thessaloniki, in a declaration which has now become our guide in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

At the interface of these two threats, a special debate is required. France welcomes the work conducted in this field by various foundations, including UNITAR here this week, to spur on the international community.

The first question is how to make a diagnosis. In order to prepare the ground, we need information gathered by a great variety of the most efficient intelligence sources, but we also need a multilateral capability to evaluate it, assess it, validate it, so as to guarantee the truth and legitimacy of the assessments made on this basis. Then and only then will the international community be able to mobilize in circumstances conducive to success. As France sees it, one of the keys to success involves giving priority to a political approach, in other words, tackling the roots of the problem and not only its outward manifestations.

Committed as it is to the NPT and the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, France will pursue its efforts to promote universal accession to these treaties, which are the foundations for non-proliferation and disarmament. More than ever before, IAEA, OPCW and CTBTO deserve our active support. It should be remembered that the balances struck by the NPT and guaranteed by IAEA rest first and foremost on good faith, mutual confidence and cooperation with the Agency. Concealment, partial violations and lies are not trivial matters, and they call for the utmost vigilance. It should be remembered also that withdrawal from a treaty following prior violations does not free the country concerned from its responsibilities towards the international community.

It was in this context that Mr. de Villepin put forward the idea of working for the creation of a corps of inspectors. As the Minister said on 28 August in Paris, "France would like to see the creation of a disarmament corps composed of permanent inspectors to meet the new needs highlighted by the present risks of proliferation, from Iran to North Korea. This body could be at the disposal of the United Nations Secretary-General under the authority of the Security Council". There is a need to draw the lessons from and build on the momentum that, over the past 15 years, has led the international community to acquire increasingly effective and sophisticated tools such as verification of the CFE Treaty, IAEA, OPCW, UNSCOM and UNMOVIC.

Madam President, you have successfully completed the difficult task of finalizing the drafting of the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament, which will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in New York as it is every year. Allow me to say that you have earned our trust and our deepest thanks.

Allow me at this time, which is always a delicate one, to enumerate France's expectations and hopes where the Conference on Disarmament is concerned.

As a loyal champion of multilateralism, France hopes that the Conference on Disarmament will survive. Its expertise is unique. The guarantees it offers to the smaller delegations are unparalleled. It is the only forum where member States can negotiate on a genuinely equal footing with each other.

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

And yet the Conference on Disarmament has been meeting for the past seven years without managing to agree on a work programme. Outside this prestigious meeting room, there is a world in turmoil, and this world will not wait.

We observe with every passing day that the post-cold-war era will resemble preceding post-war eras: it constitutes a world unto itself. Every passing day will define it more in terms of what it is than in terms of what came before.

Yet the Conference on Disarmament has remained true to its faith of bygone days, set rigidly in a different century and different times. I will take only one example: its agenda was drawn up in 1978 and has remained unchanged since then. Should we be content with this lack of action, this fossilization?

As a French philosopher put it not so long ago, every era is marked by a “collective horizon of expectations” which gives meaning to the world and motivates men and women of good will. This is true also of all the institutions created by men to meet the real and sometimes immediate needs of citizens.

The Conference on Disarmament has achieved great things in the course of its history. It should not remain outside our “horizon of expectations”. Let us, dear colleagues, set the past aside for a moment and ask ourselves some straightforward questions. What are the threats facing the world today? What do we expect today, in 2003, in terms of security? How can the Conference on Disarmament meet these expectations?

France favours some traditional issues. We support the immediate commencement of “cut-off” negotiations on the basis of the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein (CD/1299). We also hope that States which have not yet done so will proclaim a moratorium on the production of fissile material for explosive military purposes.

We also continue to support the setting up of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of the militarization of outer space - an idea first put forward by France.

Lastly, we are striving to abide by our commitments under article VI of the NPT and to implement the programme of action adopted in 1995 when the Treaty was extended indefinitely. Everyone knows that, among the nuclear Powers, France has gone particularly far in this direction. As was said in 2000, it is necessary to continue to strengthen international stability and to work on the basis of the principle of undiminished security for all.

But is this enough? Should we not introduce a sense of current events into this forum and restore to this Conference a vocation in keeping with the real needs of today’s world? Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, compliance with and implementation of treaties, verification and evaluation of new threats - these are the areas in which the Conference should make a contribution, in one form or another. This wish has been expressed by several delegations, including my own, during the consultations that have taken place this year.

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

If you will allow me to express a personal hope, instead of walking in my own footprints five years down the road - instead of rereading the statements I made in this same place in 1998 alongside my deputy Permanent Representative and finding to my great displeasure that they are still relevant, I would like the windows of this room to open wide onto the winds of storms to come, and I would like us to prepare our response, a useful response. For responses to the new threats can only emerge collectively.

Then and only then will we break this deadlock.

If the members of the Conference on Disarmament were to go off in search of those responsible for the deadlock in this single forum for disarmament, there is no doubt that at the end of that road they would find themselves, that is, all of us.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of France, Ambassador Rivasseau, for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair as well. I now invite the distinguished representative of Cuba, Mr. Oscar León González, to make his statement.

Mr. LEON GONZALEZ (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, allow me to congratulate you on the way in which you have been carrying out your task. I should like to reiterate our best wishes for your efforts to be crowned with success. Similarly, I thank you on behalf of my delegation for giving us an opportunity today to listen to Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of your country.

We have asked for the floor to announce that Cuba will host the eighteenth regular session of the General Conference of the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, better known as OPANAL, which will take place on 5 and 6 November 2003 in Havana as agreed by the OPANAL Council.

Following the recent decision by the Republic of Cuba to become a party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the holding of the General Conference in Havana is yet one more sign of the importance and priority attached by the Government of Cuba to all questions related to nuclear disarmament, as well as an affirmation of Cuba's political will to contribute actively to the full implementation of international instruments related to this issue. The eighteenth General Conference of OPANAL will no doubt offer a new forum for Latin American and Caribbean countries to renew their commitment to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and will provide a special opportunity to endorse the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as the first inhabited area of the planet which is completely free of nuclear weapons. It will also constitute an appropriate framework for exchanging and strengthening contacts between OPANAL and other intergovernmental bodies or organizations, whether global or regional, which work directly in the field of disarmament in general, particularly nuclear disarmament, or have noteworthy activities in the regional framework.

(Mr. León González, Cuba)

We hope that all the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean will be represented at the General Conference at the highest possible level. Invitations have also been extended to States linked to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. My delegation wishes to remind you that all States interested in participating in the General Conference as observers may submit requests to OPANAL, which will be processed in accordance with the rules set by the organization.

Humanity continues to be threatened with extinction because of the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons on the face of the earth. According to the latest report of the International Institute in Stockholm, which carries out peace studies, the nuclear Powers recognized by the NPT alone have more than 16,500 nuclear weapons deployed and approximately 36,500 nuclear warheads. A colossal force for destruction.

In the meantime the Conference on Disarmament has been forced into a situation of stagnation and inability to address these problems adequately, while nuclear weapons continue to be refined. As has been said on many occasions, as far as Cuba is concerned the only lasting solution to the issue of nuclear weapons is the complete elimination of these weapons. Words are not sufficient to fulfil those aspirations: practical actions are required.

With Cuba's accession to the NPT, the ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and now the holding of the eighteenth regular session of the General Conference of OPANAL, my country is confirming its commitment to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and once again demonstrating the peaceful vocation of its people and Government.

Lastly, I wish to state that we have asked the Secretary of the Conference to publish an information note concerning the holding of the eighteenth General Conference of OPANAL in Cuba as an official document of this body. We have been informed that this document has already been issued under the symbol CD/1715 of 2 September 2003.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Cuba for his very important statement, and also for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now invite the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Eui-Yong Chung, to take the floor.

Mr. CHUNG (Republic of Korea): Before presenting my general statement, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Her Excellency Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, for taking the trouble to attend our Conference today, despite the enormous demand for her presence around the world, and deliver such a wide-ranging and comprehensive statement, to which we listened with great care. Minister Kawaguchi's statement touched upon several important disarmament issues of our times and contained points that merit closer examination by the whole membership. I believe that the statement she made to the Conference today has greatly encouraged our efforts to overcome the current stalemate in the CD and to revitalize its negotiation process as soon as possible.

Madam President, at the outset, may I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Your assumption of the presidency has come at a critical juncture when we have yet to break the impasse that has for too long frustrated the

(Mr. Chung, Republic of Korea)

adoption of a programme of work. I have every confidence that you will be able to take full advantage of your extended term in office until the end of this year, and that under your leadership we will make real progress and recommence substantive work in the Conference starting next year. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

As the Conference prepares to conclude its seventh annual session without any tangible outcome since 1997, more energy and efforts should be devoted to exploring the possibility of agreement on a programme of work that will allow the Conference to recommence its substantive work. Successive efforts to that end have recently culminated in the proposal of the five Ambassadors as contained in CD/1693, and as amended by the Ambassador of Belgium in June this year on behalf of the five Ambassadors. The Government of the Republic of Korea considers the proposal of the five Ambassadors, as amended by Ambassador Lint, to be a constructive framework for compromise. My delegation also welcomes the fact that China and the Russian Federation, among others, have recently shown flexibility by indicating that they are prepared to join the consensus on the A-5 initiative on the programme of work, as amended. While placing top priority on the prompt initiation of the FMCT negotiations, my delegation expects that this flexibility will generate momentum leading to the adoption of a programme of work.

The Republic of Korea has placed the highest priority on the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference at the earliest possible date. As we are all aware, it was agreed during the 2000 NPT Review Conference that negotiations on an FMCT would be completed within five years, and the Conference on Disarmament has been in agreement on the negotiating mandate for an FMCT since 1995. It should also be noted that at the second Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, held in Geneva this year, a considerable number of delegations stressed the importance of an early start to the negotiations on an FMCT in view of the fact that an FMCT is both an important non-proliferation step and an essential prerequisite for disarmament.

In this regard, it is our view that nuclear-weapon States might voluntarily declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes, even before the negotiations on an FMCT are concluded. They could go further by implementing arrangements to place fissile material that is no longer required for military purposes under the IAEA verification regime. In order to secure the universality and effectiveness of the FMCT, it will be essential to require the participation of non-parties to the NPT as well as all member States of the Conference on Disarmament.

In the current stalemate in the Conference, my delegation would appreciate any and all efforts to sustain the momentum for the future negotiations on an FMCT, such as open-ended meetings or workshops on an FMCT for informal and educational purposes. My delegation hopes that those initiatives will make substantial contributions to our future work, although such discussions on an FMCT will not constitute negotiations.

As for the substantive issues, I would like to give my delegation's preliminary views at this stage on the scope and verification of the Treaty.

(Mr. Chung, Republic of Korea)

First of all, concerning the scope of the Treaty, there have been two different groups: one which insists that “existing stocks” should be included in the Treaty, and the other which does not want such a provision. My delegation believes that the early achievement of agreement is important, although transparency about stocks and monitored reduction and conversion would also be of vital importance for nuclear disarmament. Therefore, we need to study the South African proposal, contained in CD/1671, as a possible alternative to resolving differences about the past production of fissile material. In particular, my delegation sees merit in the South African approach to include nuclear-weapons material declared as excess and closed-down/decommissioned production and associated facilities. In addition, it may also be worthwhile to discuss stock issues as voluntary confidence-building measures until consensus can be reached on this issue.

Second, a ban on the production of fissile material should be adequately verified through cost-effective measures. In relation to the option of a comprehensive or a focused approach, my delegation believes that the verification system should enhance its reliability by establishing an effectively verifiable mechanism. At the same time, the FMCT verification regime should be based on the present system of IAEA safeguards, including the additional protocol, to ensure the coherence of the verification of all fissile material. In addition, for reasons of expertise and cost-effectiveness, IAEA would be the appropriate organization to be charged with the verification of the FMCT. A separate organization does not seem to be necessary.

It is acknowledged that one of the greatest challenges in the field of conventional arms is the illegal proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons. The international community achieved significant progress in this work by adopting the Programme of Action to fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects in 2001. By embodying agreement on a number of measures related to the manufacturing, marketing, tracing, record-keeping, export control, stockpile management, surplus reduction and destruction of these weapons, the Programme of Action has substantially contributed to the establishment of a mechanism for the effective control of the illegal proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

We are still at the beginning of the long process of implementation of the Programme of Action. However, we were set off in the right direction this July at the first Biennial Meeting of States, in large part thanks to your skilful leadership, Madam President, as the Chairperson of that meeting. My delegation believes that, thanks to your strong commitment, meaningful steps were taken in the consideration of the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Republic of Korea submitted its national report to this meeting, and this report contains its national positions on how to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. I also welcome the recommendation of the Group of Governmental Experts on the issue of tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, and look forward to the negotiations on an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons.

(Mr. Chung, Republic of Korea)

Since joining the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in May 2001, the Republic of Korea has participated in various efforts to further develop the CCW regime. My country also deposited its instrument of acceptance of amended article 1 of the CCW early this year.

It should also be noted that the ongoing negotiations for an instrument on explosive remnants of war (ERW) have made substantial progress this year. I hope that on the basis of the past and future proposals by the Coordinator, Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands, we will make further progress in narrowing differences on several controversial issues by the end of this year. My delegation also supports the start of negotiations for a legally binding instrument on mines other than anti-personnel mines.

The Republic of Korea stands for the comprehensive prohibition of biological and toxin weapons and opposes their proliferation. In this respect, my delegation views the first Meeting of Experts held last August as meaningful and useful for the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and hopes that it will function as a good basis for the more focused Meeting of States Parties in November.

Let me take this opportunity to share with you some positive moves that have recently been made with regard to North Korea's nuclear issue. The first round of the six-party talks was held in Beijing last week in an effort to find a comprehensive solution to North Korea's nuclear issue. The Beijing talks, as a starting point in a long process, created the conditions for the management of the situation. The six parties to the talks reaffirmed the principles of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue through confidence-building and dialogue. The Government of the Republic of Korea will continue its endeavours on the path to the eventual resolution of the nuclear issue and the establishment of permanent peace on the Korean peninsula.

The Republic of Korea, owing to its unique geopolitical security environment, has been, and will continue to be, committed to the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation. My delegation, therefore, will do its utmost to contribute to the continuous endeavours of the international community to achieve these goals. In concluding, let me renew my delegation's determination to make valuable contributions to the early start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea for his very important statement, and also for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I will certainly communicate to the Foreign Minister of Japan the kind words addressed to Her Excellency. I would now like to invite the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador David Boucher, to take the floor.

Mr. BROUCHER (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Madam President, let me start by congratulating you on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. We very much appreciate the way in which you are approaching this task, and I have no doubt that the Conference is in good hands. I pledge the support of the United Kingdom

(Mr. Broucher, United Kingdom)

delegation in your difficult task. May I also say that it was very encouraging to see your Foreign Minister taking an interest in our work. She made a number of very pertinent points, and we will be studying that carefully.

With your permission, Madam President, I would like to make a short statement about FMCT.

The United Kingdom welcomes the working paper tabled by Japan on 14 August on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices (CD/1714). We regard this as a helpful and positive contribution to the debate.

We agree with the basic substance of the Japanese working paper. Like Japan we are ready to start work immediately based on the Shannon mandate (CD/1299). As I have previously informed the Conference, pending the start of negotiations, the United Kingdom is maintaining a moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapons, and we hope that those who are still producing fissile material for weapons will join us in this.

We welcome the Japanese suggestion for dealing with the issue of stocks, which we find a constructive contribution. In particular we agree that linkage between the issues of future production and existing stocks will only complicate the debate and harm the negotiations process. We believe that this kind of linkage is in fact one of the obstacles to the Conference getting back to work.

The United Kingdom does have some reservations about establishing a group of experts before the negotiations begin, as proposed in the Japanese working paper. We have a number of queries, which we would ask the Japanese delegation to kindly address. Unlike the CTBT technical groups, for example on seismic monitoring, an FMCT technical group would not be working with clear parameters. It would run the risk of getting into policy debate rather than genuine scientific contribution. This would need to be avoided. It would also be difficult for such a group to discuss verification when the scope had not been agreed. We also wonder about the composition and status of the group.

Despite these reservations, we continue to believe that there is a close identity of view between the United Kingdom and Japan on the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty. We also welcome the forthcoming meeting on 26 September, which is being organized by the distinguished representative of the Netherlands. We hope that all delegations will feel able to participate in this process. It is only by talking about the issues that we will be able to reach a deeper understanding leading to the start of work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Broucher, for his very important statement, and I also thank him for the kind words addressed to the Chair and will communicate to the Foreign Minister of Japan the kind words addressed to Her Excellency. I believe that the Japanese delegation will study the points raised in His Excellency's statement and I believe the Japanese delegation will be able to respond to the questions raised.

(The President)

This includes my list of speakers for today. I thank the Conference for the very positive and very forward-looking statements made today. It is my very strong wish that we can keep this momentum so that we may be able to commence substantive work next year in this Conference.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this point? I give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. JANG (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am sorry, but I have to respond to what the Japanese Foreign Minister said.

I am taking the floor in response to the statement made by the Japanese Foreign Minister in which she touched upon the DPRK by urging it, though it is not a member State of the NPT, to comply with its obligations under the Treaty. Above all, I cannot but doubt the real intention of the Foreign Minister of Japan to make such a statement at this forum, while ignoring the real situation and a source of danger in the region. I think that Japan well knows the reason why the DPRK withdrew from the NPT. If Japan takes an attitude of goodwill towards the DPRK, without any provocation, it has nothing to fear from our self-defence measure. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea withdrew from the NPT as a measure to defend its sovereignty and vital right in order to cope with the serious situation created due to the grave threats to the DPRK.

My statement in this regard can serve as a reaction to the statement made by the distinguished French delegate. I would like to add that any coercive measures unacceptable to sovereign States, like the so-called "disarmament corps" initiated by France, cannot solve current problems in a peaceful and negotiated way, but would rather make things worse and complicated.

The Foreign Minister of Japan welcomed the first round of the six-way talks held in Beijing last week. However, we are disappointed at the attitude and behaviour taken by Japan at the talks. As for the participation of Japan in the six-way talks, the DPRK allowed Japan to participate in the talks on the Korean peninsula. So Japan as a participant in the talks should have made efforts to orient the six-way talks to a fair solution to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. But far from doing so, Japan sought to spoil the atmosphere of the talks by bringing up unreasonable issues. If Japan is truly concerned about security and wants the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, it should not take up issues that cannot help solve the problem. I will not go into further details, but I think Japan needs to make an objective and proper assessment of the situation compared with its own point of view.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement.

As President of the Conference I will certainly communicate to the Foreign Minister of Japan the statement that the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has made.

(The President)

If you will allow me to speak very briefly in the capacity of head of the delegation of Japan to the Conference, it is my firm conviction that Japan participated in the six-party talks with a very strong commitment to solve very important issues in a peaceful manner in a spirit of sincerity and goodwill and to solve regional problems as well as bilateral problems through dialogue, with the utmost and very strong commitment to solving all issues in a peaceful manner.

In my view, on the basis of such a spirit, there is a lot of room in the international community for a lot of problems to be solved positively and productively, and all of us engaged in this forum as experts on disarmament and representatives dealing with disarmament issues in my view carry the burden and the mission to prove to the world that such a spirit will indeed produce positive and productive results, in the region as well as in the global community, and for the generations to come.

It is my understanding that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea shares such views, and it is my understanding that it is the hope of all parties involved in these historic six-party talks to continue such a process and prove to the world that there is enormous room to solve some of the most difficult issues in a peaceful way. I am sure we share that and I believe that we share that.

Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor at this point?

Before concluding, let us recall that on Tuesday of this week we completed the consideration of the draft annual report to the United Nations General Assembly, as contained in document CD/WP.531, and thanks to the spirit of cooperation and accommodation of all delegations, we were able to adopt it provisionally as a whole. I thank all delegations in this regard. It is my intention to formalize the provisional agreement reached at that informal plenary and to adopt the draft annual report at our last plenary meeting on Tuesday, 9 September 2003.

In order to facilitate the adoption of the draft annual report, I requested the secretariat to issue a document containing all amendments to the draft report that were considered and subsequently provisionally adopted. The document has been issued as CD/WP.532. It has been placed in the delegations' pigeonholes today as well as being distributed in this conference room a while ago.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 9 September 2003, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.