

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 25 March 2004, at 10.20 a.m.

President:

Mr. Pablo MACEDO

(Mexico)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I call to order the 954th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before we begin our work today, I would like to extend to the delegation of the Netherlands our sincere condolences on the death of Princess Juliana, who was Queen of the Netherlands for a little over three decades. As a monarch, Queen Juliana will be remembered for her very active role in social matters and her interest in the problems of the developing countries. I would appreciate it if the delegation of the Netherlands could transmit our condolences to Queen Beatrice, Prince Bernhard, the Royal Family and the Government of the Netherlands.

Today we are preparing to hear the farewell statement by our distinguished colleague, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi, who is leaving Geneva after representing her country, Japan, in the Conference on Disarmament for almost two years. During her tenure Ambassador Inoguchi articulated and upheld the policy of her Government with distinctive authority and with exquisite elegance. She used her vast academic experience creatively in the pursuit of new ideas aimed at helping the Conference to emerge from the stalemate on its programme of work.

When Ambassador Inoguchi took the Chair of the Conference, she led us with determination and persistence through the process of negotiation and adoption of the Conference's report and the corresponding United Nations General Assembly resolution. Moreover, the intensive consultations that she conducted during the intersessional period prepared the ground for a smooth start to this year's session. Her diplomatic skills earned her the well-deserved post of Chairman of the First Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, a function which she discharged with her usual dedication and unique diplomatic talent. I am quite sure of the importance of her new tasks, and I wish her every success in them.

I would also like to bid farewell to Ambassador Jorge Voto-Bernales, who will soon complete his duties as Permanent Representative of Peru to the Conference on Disarmament. I would appreciate it if the delegation of Peru could convey to Ambassador Voto-Bernales best wishes for success in his new appointment.

On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I should like to wish Ambassador Inoguchi and Ambassador Voto-Bernales every success in their new assignments and happiness in their private lives.

The following speakers appear on the list for today: Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan, Ambassador Doru Romulus Costea of Romania, Ambassador Mohamed Salah Dembri of Algeria, and Ambassador Jackie Sanders of the United States.

Once we have reached the end of the list of speakers, I shall make a statement as the President of the Conference. I now give the floor to Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi.

Ms. INOBUCHI (Japan): Mr. President, at the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency, I trust the Conference will be guided most efficiently under your able leadership and diplomatic skill, and assure you of the full support of my delegation in your efforts to lead the Conference out of its current impasse.

I will shortly complete my appointment as disarmament Ambassador in Geneva. During my term of two years in this capacity, the restoring of multilateral disarmament has been our standing challenge. In order to achieve peace and security, multilateral instruments, given their universality and broad time frame, are of fundamental importance. Indeed, in some cases, multilateral disarmament forums are serving the common objectives of the international community well.

Small arms and light weapons, as you kindly mentioned, Mr. President, is one area in which multilateralism in disarmament is indeed functioning. The 2003 United Nations First Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms and Light Weapons, at which I served as Chairperson, succeeded in the adoption, by consensus, of its final report, despite differences in the positions of respective States. It offered a landmark opportunity to strengthen partnerships for action and enhance our collective sense of ownership and responsibility in the lead-up to the Second Biennial Meeting in 2005 and the Review Conference in 2006.

Another area worth mentioning is that of certain conventional weapons. The Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons adopted the fifth protocol to this Convention on explosive remnants of war, last November. This protocol is a significant measure to deal with the major humanitarian problems in post-conflict situations.

The Convention the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines is yet to achieve universality, but it has had a significant impact worldwide. Mine actions, including mine clearance, have been truly strengthened though the momentum gathered by the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention process, and we are greatly anticipating the First Review Conference later this year.

Thus, multilateralism is working in some specific areas, particularly in the humanitarian field. However, the same cannot be said for comprehensive multilateral disarmament, which is being pursued by the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference is neither executing its agenda provided by the special session of the General Assembly in 1978, nor embarking on addressing those issues which have most recently emerged. Member States have been making a concerted effort to resolve the stalemate, with a strong commitment to multilateralism. A breath of fresh air is needed for the Conference, a new ray of light, a new way of thinking.

The cross-group effort initiated by the five Ambassadors has introduced a new momentum. During my term of office, I too have tried a number of avenues for breathing fresh air into the Conference. Through plenary meetings, for example, I have endeavoured to deepen the debate on the substance of the fissile material cut-off treaty, and last August I submitted a working paper on the FMCT to further substantive discussions in the CD.

(Ms. Inoguchi, Japan)

The most memorable experience I have had in my time here is that of working on the annual report as the last President of the 2003 annual session, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all delegations for their cooperation and assistance in this regard, which was essential for me in order to fulfil my mandate. That report, containing some substantial elements, is a subtle step toward finding common ground concerning a programme of work. I believe that my statement at the informal open-ended consultations on 19 December last year was a further step to create a new direction, whereby the Conference will be able to comprehensively and effectively respond to current international security problems. In response to requests from colleagues here, and to facilitate reference to the document, I have requested the Secretary-General to issue and circulate this statement as an official document of the CD.

This year's annual session has only just begun, and we are still at the anticipatory stage, waiting for the arrival of a critical turning point. I hope this moment will come soon, and that it will really mark the reinvigoration of multilateral disarmament.

The CD is a prominent body, which has created a number of important disarmament treaties, including the NPT and the CTBT. However, looking back through the history of the CD, there have been times when ideas were exhausted and a new momentum was needed to spur the Conference into action. I believe the Conference is currently going through such a challenging period. At the same time, however, we should remember that we need to keep pace with the current world climate and not be defeated. As confirmed recently by several Foreign Ministers, including the Japanese Foreign Minister Mrs. Kawaguchi, who addressed the Conference on 4 September last year, the international community has high expectations for this body to overcome its current impasse and initiate substantive work. All of us here in this room are tasked with the responsibility to create such a breakthrough.

In the current world of globalism and interdependence, challenges are transnational. In order to address such challenges and increase security in such a modern world, multilateral efforts are indispensable. Multilateralism is not a matter of choice, but rather a matter of necessity.

Before concluding, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all my colleagues for having enriched my experience and knowledge during my term here. Geneva has provided me with an excellent and stimulating environment in which I have been able to benefit greatly from many intellectual interactions with you. I have enjoyed friendships with each and every one of you, fostered through countless cordial occasions, and I will take with me many fond memories of this city.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Japan, Ambassador Inoguchi, for her statement and also for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I would like to reiterate to her that we will miss her in this Conference. I now call on the distinguished representative of Romania, Ambassador Doru Romulus Costea.

Mr. COSTEA (Romania) (translated from French): Mr. President, as this is the first time I have had the honour of taking the floor since you began your term as President of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to begin by congratulating you on taking up this important post during this increasingly critical period in our activities. You can be assured of the unswerving support of my delegation and myself in discharging your duties. I would like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan, and to thank her for her active contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Please accept my best wishes for your important future tasks.

I would like to express appreciation for the presence of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Canada, Ireland, Bangladesh, Sweden, the Netherlands and Sri Lanka here last week. In all of their statements I was able to detect a firm commitment to the cause of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, as well as very frequent references to the political will which is essential to initiate the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today, at the end of the first part of this year's session, we have to reflect once again about the risks of perpetuating the lack of activity in the Conference. These risks cause us to lose the very high level of competence and talent of the "best club in town", and to fail in our quest for common solutions to the threats - old or new - to international peace and security. I hope that the intersessional period will be very helpful, with the coming of spring, in bringing about a thaw in the work of the Conference.

(continued in English)

The CD has to move on in order to keep abreast of other developments occurring nowadays in the field of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Yet it is not my intention to review achievements undertaken elsewhere, but to focus on recent Romanian progress in this matter.

I am extremely pleased to inform the Conference on Disarmament that as we speak, at this very moment of my intervention, a ceremony entitled "Romania free of anti-personnel landmines" is taking place in Cislau. Cislau is the very same town in central-east Romania where, three years ago, the destruction of almost 1 million anti-personnel landmines began. This event marks the official completion of the elimination of our stocks of this type of weapon, one year ahead of the deadline set forth by the provisions of the Ottawa Convention.

The event is, indeed, a well-deserved gift on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force, as well as a significant and concrete step on the way towards the "Nairobi Summit on a Mine-free World", to take place at the end of the year.

Romania's political commitment to the humanitarian goals of the Ottawa Convention has been proved once again. It is our hope that in the near future we will be able to enhance our contribution to another major pillar of the Convention, that is, victims' assistance and rehabilitation.

(Mr. Costea, Romania)

I would like to take this opportunity to announce also that, at the beginning of March this year, Romania finalized the internal procedure for the ratification of the United Nations Firearms Protocol. The instruments of ratification are to be deposited with the Secretary-General in the shortest time.

Our country considers the United Nations Firearms Protocol an instrumental tool for fighting against the illegal production and trafficking of this kind of weapon and the associated munitions. We strongly believe that the provisions of this instrument will establish a necessary norm in combating transnational organized crime as well.

At the end of this intervention today, I should like to reiterate Romania's interest in taking an active part in the efforts of the international community aimed at providing a secure and safe environment, with a particular interest in the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished Representative of Romania, Ambassador Costea, for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I am pleased now to invite the distinguished representative of Algeria, Ambassador Mohamed Salah Dembri, to address the Conference.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on taking the Chair and assure you of the complete support and full cooperation of my delegation in your efforts to bring the Conference on Disarmament out of the stagnation in which it presently finds itself. I would also like to associate myself and my delegation with the condolences which you conveyed to our colleague Chris Sanders following the death of Queen Juliana.

I also take this opportunity to commend your predecessors in the Chair, Ambassadors Amina Mohamed of Kenya and Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia, who also pursued praiseworthy initiatives and spared no effort to try to put the Conference on Disarmament back to work. And how could I fail to mention our distinguished colleague from Japan, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi, for the admirable presidency with which she honoured us and the quality of the term of office she discharged? I would also like to join those who have expressed regret at the departure of our colleague Jorge Voto-Bernales, the Ambassador of Peru. He played a major role here and we will miss him, but, at the same time we wish him good luck in his new duties.

At the end of this first part of the 2004 session of the Conference on Disarmament, what results can we see from our work? To be sure, we still have no programme of work, but the spirit of dialogue remains because we have had very interesting discussions, in particular at an informal session which enabled delegations to express their ideas and their expectations concerning the Conference on Disarmament. These discussions, relevant as they are, if they take place again, will necessarily have to constitute the foundation on which we must build to draw

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

up and begin work on a programme of work agreed by all and for all, and thus to break with the years of stagnation and not inactivity, years of stagnation which have caused great harm to this unique multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. For that reason we must be fully aware of our responsibilities and of the mandate we have been given, as well as the spirit in which the CD was created. We are accountable to the international community for our successes as well as our failures.

Certainly, every country represented in this forum has its own priorities and its own concerns, but we are required expressly on the basis of the mandate which has been entrusted to us to go beyond our most immediate interests and to transcend any parochial vision in order to resolutely create a programme of work in accordance with the agenda which has been established for us, in a spirit of compromise and synthesis, without being captives of our national or - dare I say it - nationalist postures. This derives from our collective concern to spare no effort to shield human civilization once and for all from any threat of weapons of mass destruction and any threat of annihilation.

The member States of the Conference bear special responsibility in the area of maintaining international peace and security, and first and foremost the nuclear-weapon States, because it must be clearly understood that these States, which have not received this status on a permanent basis, have undertaken and are subject to a number of obligations and commitments in accordance with the provisions of the NPT.

All of us here can see that, unfortunately, we are living in a world which is increasingly uncertain and where there are many unprecedented threats. For example, the world is currently confronting bloody international terrorism, terrorism which prompts genuine concern for the world as a whole. The attacks which recently shook the Spanish capital reminded us that this threat is omnipresent and can manifest itself anywhere in the world at any time. And in this regard, terrorism has neither religion nor nationality.

The other threat confronting us is nuclear proliferation - both horizontal and vertical. In the face of this threat, there is no doubt that the best response the international community can provide is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and their components, because it is very clear that non-State entities which want to acquire such weapons will go looking for them where they are produced. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland rightly noted during his statement to this very room on 16 March "what does not exist cannot proliferate". Therefore, we are deeply concerned at these questions and others additional to our agenda. The development of certain doctrines which do not exclude the use of weapons of mass destruction, whether preventively or not, the militarization of space, for which ambitious programmes are under way, as well as the improvement of all types of weapons are in flagrant contradiction with the conclusions of the tenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1978, which clearly called for the cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of new types of nuclear-weapon systems.

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

Confronted with this panoply of ever more sophisticated weapons capable of destroying the entire planet, I would like to cite the words of the well-known physicist, Albert Einstein, who declared with great prescience: "I don't know what kind of weapons will be used in the third world war. But I can tell you what the fourth world war will be fought with - stone clubs."

If we are to break out of this destructive logic and offer the coming generations a more promising future than a return to the Stone Age, how can we fail to show our devotion to the cause of disarmament and arms control by concluding irreversible and verifiable multilateral treaties? In this undertaking, nuclear disarmament must constitute our greatest priority, in order to rid our planet of the nuclear apocalypse once and for all and really reap the "peace dividends" that have not yet fully borne their fruit. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime and, as such, should be strengthened through irreversible measures on our part.

The nuclear States must translate into reality their commitments towards nuclear disarmament undertaken at the last review conference. The seventh conference, to review this treaty, scheduled for next year, should be an opportunity for all of us to elaborate on the 13 practical steps under article VI of the NPT and ensure that they begin to be applied. It would also be highly desirable for this treaty to achieve universal membership before that event. Those countries which have not yet acceded to the NPT are urged to do so as non-nuclear-weapon States, as non-nuclear States. Furthermore, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which has still not managed to collect the number of ratifications necessary, is also a part of the objective of nuclear disarmament. A treaty on fissile material would also be one of its important components, linking non-proliferation with disarmament.

With regard to the question of stockpiles, two great physicists, George Charpak, the Nobel physics prize laureate, and Richard Garwin, a great American who participated in the development of all the American nuclear programmes, explicitly indicated in their book published four years ago, *Feux follets et champignons nucléaires*, that stockpiles of nuclear weapons do not correspond to any reasonable national strategy and that drastically reducing them must be a priority for the human race. They added that a dozen warheads would be enough to ensure the greatest possible deterrence for those countries which wish to rely on that doctrine - that is, the doctrine of deterrence.

We welcome the signing by Iran and Libya of the Additional Protocol to the NPT. That decision will certainly help to establish a climate of confidence in their two regions and will contribute to the strengthening of the NPT. In the same vein I should note the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are part of the same effort to reduce the risk that nuclear weapons will be used. In this regard, the creation of such a zone in the Middle East has been unduly delayed by the refusal of the State of Israel, which has shown no readiness to accede to the NPT or to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA supervision. This is particularly strange, and here I would like to endorse the words spoken the day before yesterday by the Director General of IAEA, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, on this specific question of Israel's nuclear potential.

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

The security assurances owed to the non-nuclear-weapon States by the nuclear-weapon States by virtue of their having renounced such weapons are of vital importance because they constitute a right following the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. The implementation of this measure is slow in arriving, and leaves the non-nuclear States with little confidence now in unkept promises.

As for outer space, that is a common asset of all mankind and should be safeguarded against any use for military purposes. A treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament should enshrine its use for strictly peaceful purposes once and for all.

It was an awareness of all these dangers threatening our planet and a conviction on our part, myself and my colleagues, of the validity of the cause of disarmament and arms control that gave rise to the five Ambassadors' proposal. It is the result of a creative effort and a desire to go beyond the narrow framework of national attitudes, and its line of descent is to be found in all the proposals which preceded it, highlighting the points of convergence of each of them.

As you know, this proposal is the result of a collective effort bringing together five Ambassadors from various regions of the world - Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Sweden and Algeria - and that is what gives it its originality and added value, and here I would like to repay a debt of gratitude to our colleague from Germany, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg, who was one of the elements who prompted the development of this initiative. This initiative, officially presented on 23 January 2003, offers the advantage of covering all the points on our agenda under a balanced and progressive approach which in the long run should culminate in negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on four mandates concerning negative security assurances, nuclear disarmament, with, as a corollary, a treaty on fissile material and the prevention of the arms race in outer space. This constitutes a package which should be adopted as it is, because, following its adoption, the Conference will decide to consider those issues which are agreed to by the member States.

From the moment when our proposal was presented, we indicated that we remained open to any proposed changes and any suggestions, and we have always encouraged delegations to give us their comments in writing. Thus, China informed us of its proposed amendment on the mandate relating to PAROS; that amendment was accepted and led to a revised version of the five Ambassadors' proposal dated 5 September 2003 with the symbol CD/1693/Rev.1. The Russian Federation has also joined the dozens of members which supported it.

The five Ambassadors' initiative has received broad support, broad support from the delegations represented here, which see it as a serious proposal with a view to the adoption of a programme of work. Many of them have stressed that, even if this initiative does not fully meet their national priorities or concerns, nevertheless they are prepared to adopt it in a spirit of compromise and concern to make progress in the cause of disarmament. For many of them the items relating to nuclear disarmament and security assurances are rightly of the greatest importance, because they carry within them the fate of our planet, and for that reason today I appeal to all delegations which so desire to become co-sponsors.

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

Among the many Foreign Ministers who spoke last week in this forum, many had high praise for the five Ambassadors' proposal because we must recognize that we have never been so close to consensus and that only a few delegations have not expressed their views on our proposal. How should we interpret this silence? - and it must be said that the rule of consensus which governs the Conference on Disarmament should stipulate that silence means consent because consensus is a means of reaching an agreement, a compromise, but it is not a means to reach a deadlock. Therefore we must have recourse to a well-founded legal opinion to establish whether silence means consent or whether silence means rejection. For that purpose, the Chair should envisage all possible ways and means of bringing views closer together and promoting mutual understanding of the questions on our agenda. In this regard, as you know, we have always been in favour of the President having an important role to play. The Chair must hold the necessary consultations so as to secure as soon as possible the adoption of a general and balanced programme of work acceptable by all, and for all, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security for all.

Working for disarmament and arms control is imperative if we want to build a safer world. The creation of vast arsenals, the tremendous build-up of weapons and troops, the competition pursued in the improvement of all types of weapons using scientific resources and technical progress diverted for such purposes, plague our work. United Nations General Assembly resolution 34/83 of 11 December 1979 clearly states that in a world of finite resources there is a close relationship between expenditure on armaments and economic and social development. Resources released as a result of the implementation of the disarmament measures should be devoted to the economic and social development of all nations and serve to close the economic gap which separates the developed countries from the developing countries. Under that same resolution, a working group under the supervision of the United Nations Secretary-General was invited to submit reports periodically to the General Assembly on the economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security. That request should be reactivated in order to enable the international community to gain a precise idea of the impact of military expenditure on the area of economic and social development. UNIDIR - the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research - could also undertake studies on that issue.

My country has always worked for the universality of the Conference on Disarmament, convinced as we are that to gain credibility and effectiveness it must be open to the rest of the international community and close once and for all the period of the cold war which forged its structure and its image. Similarly we have always called for the Conference to be more attentive to the concerns and grievances of civil society. It was in that context that we supported the proposal made by our distinguished colleague from Ireland, Ambassador Mary Whelan, concerning greater and better participation by non-governmental organizations, and we would like them to be with us in this room and to be able to speak from the Presidential rostrum, and that is why, in this spirit, we supported the text on that issue presented by the Ambassador of Kenya, Mrs. Amina Mohamed, as President of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Algeria, Ambassador Dembri, for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I am pleased now to give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador Sanders.

Ms. SANDERS (United States of America): Let me offer the very best wishes of the United States to Ambassador Inoguchi as she returns to Japan and the next exciting chapter of her life.

Late next month many of us will participate in the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We expect the Committee to complete the necessary procedural and administrative preparations for the 2005 Conference and to engage in constructive exchanges on the many ideas and proposals for strengthening the implementation of the NPT and achieving its universality. If we focus on accomplishing what is possible, this session of the Preparatory Committee will prepare us well for our task at the 2005 Review Conference.

Since becoming the Special Representative of the President for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, I have been impressed with the seriousness of purpose that virtually all NPT parties bring to any discussion on this vital treaty. We need that seriousness of purpose, as the NPT is facing critical challenges. Certainly, developments related to the NPT over the past three months have been dramatic. Libya's decision to forgo its nuclear-weapons programme and come into compliance with the NPT is of great importance and significantly advances the Treaty's goals. However, the startling revelations about nuclear black market activities and Iran's continued unwillingness to cooperate fully with IAEA are matters of serious concern to the international community. My Government has worked with many States represented in this room at IAEA, in the Security Council and in bilateral and multilateral discussions to address these and other NPT compliance questions, including North Korea's nuclear programme. We do not always agree on the same approach, but I am confident that we will continue to work together for the same common purposes. The NPT will continue to serve our collective security only if we insist on strong verification and enforcement measures.

I look forward to a constructive dialogue on these issues at the upcoming session of the Preparatory Committee, including the proposals put forward by President Bush on 11 February. Of particular importance is the need to strengthen IAEA further as an effective tool for ensuring compliance with NPT safeguards undertakings. Equally vital to the NPT's future is the need to find a way for parties to continue to enjoy the benefits of peaceful nuclear programmes without undermining the NPT's central purpose of preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. The United States will have more to say about these fundamental issues at next month's session of the Preparatory Committee. We will offer a number of recommendations designed to curb the abuses of recent years by NPT parties that have sought enrichment and reprocessing capabilities not for peaceful purposes, but to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons in violation of their NPT undertakings.

(Ms. Sanders, United States)

The main purpose of my remarks today is to underscore the strong commitment of the United States to meeting all of its obligations under the NPT. The United States delegation to next month's session of the Preparatory Committee will provide more detailed information on what the United States has done and is doing to meet these obligations. Under articles I and III, the United States will continue to ensure that its cooperation with non-nuclear-weapon States does not assist them in the manufacture or acquisition of nuclear weapons. Similarly, we take very seriously our obligations under article IV to assist other NPT parties in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in conformity with the Treaty's non-proliferation undertakings. The United States is the largest contributor to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme, which is increasingly responsible for making the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy a reality for some developing countries. Whether bilaterally or through IAEA, the United States is proud of its numerous programmes that contribute to the development and nuclear energy needs of nations around the world.

On article VI, the United States has already offered considerable information at the first two sessions of the Preparatory Committee on its actions and policies relating to nuclear disarmament. We will continue that practice at next month's session in New York. Today, I will provide a brief overview of the strong United States record on article VI.

In the first instance, we must remember that article VI applies to all NPT parties. While the nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility to pursue measures related to nuclear disarmament, all parties can contribute meaningfully toward that goal by helping to fashion an international environment that is conducive to a reduced reliance on nuclear weapons and to their eventual elimination. Moreover, we must also not forget that article VI further requires NPT parties to negotiate a "treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control". Today we focus on a step-by-step approach to that seemingly distant goal. Even then we can all attest that progress is difficult and the task is one necessarily requiring the full cooperation of all nations.

Second, achieving nuclear disarmament is a gradual process that will be long and difficult. Political realities and changes in science and technology are among the factors that make it so. The end of the cold war led to the cessation of the nuclear arms race between the United States and the former Soviet Union, an important milestone in the implementation of article VI. It also led to progress in ridding the world of large nuclear stockpiles. Many nations are cooperating in this momentous task, and we can all rejoice in their accomplishments. Yet events of the past few years have introduced a new and destabilizing unpredictability into world affairs. I have already mentioned the nuclear activities of some States in violation of the NPT. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the deadly menace of terrorism have brought new dangers to all of us. The nexus of these threats poses a risk to the very pillars of civilization. This unhappy truth of our age should steel our resolve to move as one against this gathering threat.

These developments do not mean the nuclear disarmament process needs to stop; indeed, the United States and the Russian Federation continue to reduce stockpiles even as these new threats intensify. But it illustrates the obvious point that disarmament of any type does not take place in an international security vacuum, and reinforces the conclusion that sweeping,

(Ms. Sanders, United States)

unfocused approaches to disarmament, such as a nuclear weapons convention or setting timetables, are illusory and will not work. As history teaches us, progress will come only through incremental approaches that take account of States' threat perceptions. The challenge is to foster real changes in regional and global security conditions that afford the opportunity for sustained, step-by-step disarmament of all kinds, nuclear and conventional. The trend lines are positive in this regard, but much work remains to be done; let us make an ally of perseverance and eschew manoeuvring for political advantage.

We can all take satisfaction in the realization that unparalleled progress on article VI has occurred since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The political ramifications of that event and subsequent developments led to historic cooperation between the United States and Russia to halt the nuclear arms race, reduce the number of nuclear weapons, and remove tons of fissile material from military stockpiles. Large numbers of United States non-strategic nuclear weapons were withdrawn from deployment in the last decade, and the last of these withdrawn weapons was dismantled last year. The United States alone has dismantled more than 13,000 nuclear weapons. The United States and Russia have removed enough fissile material from military stockpiles to build 30,000 nuclear weapons.

President Bush took a dramatic step forward on article VI by announcing in 2001 that the United States would unilaterally reduce its nuclear forces to the lowest levels in decades. The President's approach reflected the reality that the cold war was over and that our relationship with Russia needed to be transformed. President Putin followed President Bush with a similar announcement. Ultimately, they codified their decisions to reduce nuclear forces in the Moscow Treaty, which was signed by them in 2002 and entered into force on 1 June of last year. It calls for strategic nuclear warheads to be reduced to 1,700-2,200 on each side by 31 December 2012, a reduction of almost two thirds below current levels. The implementation of the Treaty has begun, and we will provide details in connection with the next session of the Preparatory Committee. It is of symbolic and substantive importance that the preamble of the Moscow Treaty declares that the United States and Russia are "mindful of their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons". This reflects a commitment at the highest political level in both countries to article VI implementation.

Many other United States policies and actions continue to reinforce progress in the implementation of our article VI commitments. The President's decision to transform deterrence into a new "triad" of offensive forces, defences, and a revitalized defence infrastructure represents an historic break from the past. We are integrating our non-nuclear strategic capabilities into our offensive forces and thereby reducing dependence on nuclear weapons. The development and deployment of active and passive defence capabilities will afford new means for the United States to deny an aggressor the ability to achieve its objectives. And an improved defence infrastructure, including nuclear facilities, will demonstrate to any adversary that an attempt to secure strategic advantage against the United States will ultimately fail and will help dissuade it from such an endeavour. In the words of Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld when forwarding the Nuclear Posture Review to the Congress in 2002, "these investments can make the United States more secure while reducing our dependence on nuclear weapons".

(Ms. Sanders, United States)

There is much more we can and will relate on our compliance with article VI. There is growing cooperation among the United States and other nations in disarmament activities. Cooperative threat reduction programmes have yielded enormous dividends to our collective security over the past decade. The risk that States or terrorists might acquire WMD has added new urgency to this effort. The Global Partnership adopted by the G-8 countries in 2002 is expanding amid a growing realization that dedicated efforts to identify, secure and dispose of WMD and related materials in Russia and other former Soviet States and beyond are essential to the security and safety of all our people. The resource commitment by the United States to disarmament at home and abroad is extraordinary and continues to grow. Our pledge at the 2002 G-8 Summit of \$10 billion over 10 years for the Global Partnership is one notable example.

The policies and actions I have outlined today are the results of decisions and directions from the highest levels of the United States Government. They reinforce the NPT and make the world a safer place. In their totality, they provide an unambiguous record of strict compliance with our obligations under article VI. We look forward in the coming weeks to providing more details about ongoing United States policies and actions that are further strengthening the NPT and implementation of article VI.

I conclude by reaffirming the commitment of the United States to the NPT and to its enduring preambular undertaking “to make every effort to avert the danger of [nuclear] war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples”.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the United States for her statement. Ambassador Sanders is the last speaker I had on the list for today. Before I make my statement as President, I would like to ask whether any other delegation wishes to take the floor at this stage. The distinguished representative of Peru has the floor.

Mr. SALINAS (Peru) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, on behalf of Ambassador Jorge Voto-Bernales I would like to thank you for the kind words you addressed to him as he completes his assignment as representative of Peru at the Conference on Disarmament. I will be very pleased to transmit your kind message to him soon. He was not able to come to this plenary meeting because today he will shortly be receiving the Foreign Minister of Peru, who is arriving in Geneva to attend the Commission on Human Rights. Through me, Ambassador Voto-Bernales wishes to express his great appreciation for the cooperation and support he has always received over the past six years from his colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament, and especially from the secretariat.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Peru for his statement. The distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has the floor.

Mr. JANG (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I have asked for the floor to react to what the representative of the United States said, singling out my country in a statement as if it is a nuclear proliferator.

(Mr. Jang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

It is ridiculous that the United States talks about NPT compliance by the DPRK because the DPRK is free from the obligations of the NPT with its withdrawal from the Treaty. I will not repeat on this issue further, as I had already made it clear last time. As already known, the nuclear issue between the DPRK and the United States is a product of the hostile policy of the United States.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula was initiated by the DPRK. We are making every effort to this end. That is why in the second round of the six-way talks held in Beijing in February, we made clear our willingness to scrap our nuclear programme based on the proposal for a spontaneous package solution for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and put forward a proposal as regards measures for the first-phase actions. But unfortunately, this second round of the six-way talks ended without substantial result.

By nature, the United States is the biggest nuclear State in the world, which used nuclear weapons for the first time in the world against human beings and now is seeking the most dangerous and nuclear policy. That is why the proliferation of nuclear weapons is entirely attributable to the unilateralism of the United States, which adopted pre-emptive nuclear attack on other sovereign countries as its national policy.

If the United States had not threatened the existence of humankind with nuclear weapons, there would not have been a nuclear arms race in the world, and the DPRK and the United States would not have had an actual nuclear crisis such as it is today.

As the nuclear issue between the DPRK and the United States was caused by the United States, it should be settled from A to Z by simultaneous actions based on the proposal for a package solution. The settlement of the nuclear issue between the DPRK and the United States entirely depends on the will of the United States to make a switch-over in its policy towards the DPRK.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The distinguished representative of Canada has the floor.

Ms. POLLACK (Canada): I wanted to use this opportunity to remind all colleagues here of the seminar that begins this afternoon on "Safeguarding space for all", sponsored by UNIDIR, a number of non-governmental organizations, and my country at 3 p.m. in room VII. This seminar, which focuses on an issue of relevance and pertinence to our agenda and programme of work from a broad perspective and with a number of viewpoints, we hope will be an occasion to stimulate reflection among all of us in the intersessional period, and we do encourage you to come, to listen and participate actively.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Canada for her announcement. The distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the floor.

Mr. ESLAMIZAD (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, since this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you, as the representative of a country with a shining record in fighting for nuclear disarmament, on your assumption of this post. I wish you success and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in carrying out your task.

I would like to very briefly react to references made to my country by the distinguished Ambassador of the United States. For years we had heard allegations on Iran's peaceful nuclear programme raised in different forums. It is ironic to hear them again after their being refuted through the appropriate international mechanisms and based on evidence. Indeed, IAEA was very explicit in admiring Iran's full cooperation with the Agency in the last report of the Director General. This accusation is yet another proof that the United States is at odds with the findings of the relevant international bodies.

The continuation of raising such unfounded allegations is a clear proof of our long-standing suspicion that there are ulterior political reasons involved, certainly far from the expressed desire for non-proliferation.

We do not believe the Conference on Disarmament to be the appropriate place to deal with this issue. However, just for the sake of the record I would like to reiterate that the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully committed to the cause of non-proliferation, as it is committed to the cause of nuclear disarmament, which we will hopefully all vigorously follow in the Conference on Disarmament and also within the NPT review process.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? If not, I shall make a brief statement as President of the Conference.

Today marks the conclusion of the first part of the 2004 session of the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the first stage of Mexico's term in the Chair. On this occasion I would like to submit to the Conference, on my own responsibility, the initiative I announced a week ago, about which I have been consulting with various delegations. The initiative I am presenting today is not completely new: it falls within the framework of the various proposals that have been made by those who have occupied this Chair. I shall refer only to the valuable activities undertaken by my three immediate predecessors, Ambassadors Inoguchi of Japan, Amina Mohamed of Kenya and Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia.

As you will all remember, Ambassador Inoguchi, whose term at the head of the Conference ended in December 2003, carried out very intensive consultations in an attempt to secure the adoption of a substantive programme of work that would give the Conference an opportunity to resume its work on the important topics that are on our agenda. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her on her efforts and once again to bid her farewell, wishing her every success in her future work.

(The President)

In January it fell to Ambassador Amina Mohamed of Kenya to open the 2004 session. With her in the Chair, following intensive consultations in which the President displayed her diplomatic skill and tact, the Conference was able to adopt its agenda along with a Presidential statement that is part of its record. Ambassador Mohamed then took a step from which I draw inspiration in trying to inject some new life into our Conference. I would like to pay tribute to her dedication, her patience and her skill.

Finally, under the leadership of Ambassador Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia, the Conference held a very useful informal exchange on the programme of work which helped to shed light on a number of points and enabled us to understand each other better. The assessment of the exercise which was carried out by the President also appears among the documents of the Conference and forms part of the record of the Conference. I am grateful to Ambassador Rajmah Hussain for her efforts, which inspired my own.

This is a very brief account of the activities that have inspired me to present, on my own responsibility, a tentative schedule of informal plenary meetings to deal with each of the items of the agenda that we adopted in January in a systematic and organized way. You will note that the dates proposed go beyond 21 May, which is the date when the second and last stage of Mexico's term of office comes to an end. It would therefore be up to my successors in this post to continue the exercise in order to make it possible for us to consider all of the items of the agenda. I have held consultations with the distinguished representatives of Mongolia and Morocco, who will occupy the Chair after 23 May, and I am pleased to inform you that both have expressed their agreement to pursue this initiative.

Taking into account the positions that have been expressed, we must conclude that the priority of the Conference continues to be the adoption of a definitive programme of work which will make it possible to resume the substantive work which has been interrupted for such a long time. The exercise that I have now decided to undertake is a way of initiating a dialogue with a view to facilitating the adoption of a programme of work, and it would end when the happy moment arrives when we have achieved agreement on the definitive programme of work. Along the same lines, in addition to the informal plenary meetings, I firmly intend to continue consultations in whatever format is necessary in order to achieve this objective which we all share.

I would like to pinpoint two items that I feel are important. First of all, the timetable which has been circulated is purely tentative and subject to any changes of date that are considered necessary. Furthermore, the items on the agenda that we have adopted are very broad and offer an opportunity for any delegation to raise questions it considers important and relevant in respect to what is being examined at a particular time.

This is the modest initiative that I have decided to put forward to trigger a dialogue that we should never have interrupted. In spite of intensive efforts and very constructive and creative initiatives by many representatives who have occupied the Chair, the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to adopt a programme of work since 1997. We are embarking on the eighth year in which this sole body for multilateral negotiations in the field of disarmament has not been able to produce any substantive agreements as it used to in the past. This situation

(The President)

has been generating a climate which is not very favourable. Unnecessary mistrust has been created which, in my opinion, has contributed to a great extent to the stalemate in the Conference. It would appear that we have forgotten how this forum used to work, and it is difficult for us to imagine now how it could once again play an important role in developing multinational disarmament instruments. Now that we are beginning our break, I would like to invite you to think deeply about the causes that prevent us from moving forward and how we can reverse this trend. We have to re-establish a climate of trust in which the dialogue is productive and consistent with the mandate that we have been given by the international community.

Thank you for your attention.

If no delegation wishes to take the floor at this stage, I will take it that we have concluded our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 13 May 2004 at 10 a.m. in this room. It will be followed by an informal plenary meeting on the following topic: Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.