

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 10 March 2005, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Tim CAUGHLEY (New Zealand)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 977th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, let me welcome warmly the women representing the NGO Working Group on Peace of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women who, as in previous years, have organized a seminar to mark International Women's Day. Members of women's non-governmental organizations who participated in this year's seminar, entitled "Woman say no to nuclear", are with us today, and in keeping with a long tradition, they have addressed a message to the Conference on Disarmament.

That message is as follows:

"Since 1984, a group of Geneva-based NGOs, together with members of the NGO Working Group on Peace, have held a seminar to mark International Women's Day - 8 March - in tribute to the tireless work done by women around the world for the achievement of justice, peace and security. We again use this opportunity to engage the public and governments to look holistically at issues of peace and security, and to recognize the centuries-old demand of women for nations to totally and universally disarm.

"Women mobilize support for disarmament and peace. In the last century alone, educational and petition campaigns, such as the more than 9 million signatures collected and sent to the 1926 disarmament conference in Geneva, or the one initiated in 1959 by the European Movement of Women Against Nuclear Armament, have rallied wide public support for general and nuclear disarmament. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, along with many other organizations, refused to accept the cold-war barriers and worked to break them down through East-West dialogues and many other shared events to end the arms race and build peaceful cooperation. Women demonstrated against the build-up of multilateral nuclear forces in Europe, as they did, for example, at the NATO conference in the Netherlands in 1964. In the 1960s, 100,000 women in 110 American communities left their homes and offices in a national 'strike' for a nuclear test ban, sparked by Boston physicians' documentation of the presence of Strontium-90, a by-product of nuclear tests, in the teeth of children across the United States and beyond. Millions of women and men rallied in the cities of Europe and marched across borders to mark their opposition to the deployment of nuclear missiles and radiological weapons. We all remember how the women of Greenham Common left their homes to dedicate themselves to peace, as men have often left their homes to fight wars.

"Let us be clear: we do not assert that women are 'by nature' more peaceful than men. Women are socialized to be the caretakers and nurturers of their families and communities; yet in countries the world over - from developed to developing nations - many men assume the role of 'protectors' and 'defenders' and often seek to maintain this role through the possession of weapons, while women in their nurturing role often encourage this step towards 'manhood'. We recognize that women are also actors in conflict - women take up arms, engage in conflict and even perpetuate it. It is not enough

(The President)

for us to bring a few more women into security discussions and negotiations; just as men differ vastly in their perceptions of issues of importance, just one participant in negotiations cannot represent women in all their diversities.

“Furthermore, increased dialogue with and participation of NGOs in all disarmament efforts will facilitate a much broader, more comprehensive understanding of security, one that can form the basis of a windfall of new security agreements and treaties. The stalemate in moving disarmament forward must be broken now.

“Women have developed an expanded expertise on these issues over the years and are eager, along with many other members of civil society and non-governmental organizations, to work with you and your ministries in capitals to move forward. In 1997, a model nuclear-weapons convention was submitted to the General Assembly by Costa Rica, stating that the model sets forth ‘the legal, technical and political issues that should be considered in order to obtain an actual nuclear-weapons convention’.

“South Africa submitted a working paper to this body in 2002, outlining some suggestions and food for thought on a fissile materials treaty. The time is ripe to negotiate this treaty now in order to address the problems of nuclear proliferation. Large sectors of world civil society stand at the ready to do whatever they can to assist in these negotiations. You in the CD have the power to open your doors to us. Paragraph 41 of the rules of procedure recognizes that the Conference may decide to invite specialized agencies, IAEA and other organs of the United Nations system to provide information. We are prepared to accept your invitation, and look forward to receiving it.

“This body has struggled for eight long years to move forward. It will not be able to make substantive breakthroughs as long as governments continue to equate security with armaments. We have not seen an increase in global security that matches the global increases in military spending; rather, we have seen increased proliferation of weapons, increased threats from non-State actors, and decreased human security.

“Our focus during this year’s seminar was on nuclear weapons, on the role that these ecocidal, suicidal and genocidal weapons play in a world struggling to recognize and move towards a holistic perception of security - one that includes environmental protection, protection of all actors affected by all phases of conflict, and that integrates and understands the reasons that make people pick up arms in order to disarm.

“In a large part, the NGOs that monitor your discussions here, the NGOs that will flock to New York to monitor and bring public attention to the NPT Review Conference, the NGOs that have organized massive demonstrations in opposition to nuclear weapons, the NGOs that have brought organized pressure on governments to negotiate the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty - many of these NGOs comprise women, whose dedication to the abolition of nuclear weapons is based on their unique understanding of the evil of these weapons.

(The President)

“While we laud the CD’s decision taken last year that codifies the basic rules of engagement with disarmament NGOs, we urge you to review NGO participation and access to all international disarmament forums, and to understand, as Croatia has said in the General Assembly, ‘the growing beneficial role that civil society plays in the field of disarmament ... [which] may give additional impetus to initiatives to break the deadlock and finally move the multilateral disarmament agenda forward’. We urge you to heed the advice of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who called for ‘more organized and sustained dialogue with the NGO community’, recognizing that more effective engagement with NGOs increases the likelihood that United Nations decisions will be better understood and supported by a broad and diverse public.

“The culture of militarism that has gained ground the world over is pushing the cornerstone of the disarmament regime, the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, toward a dangerous precipice. We are all aware of the significant backsliding from key advancements made at the 2000 Review Conference, and know that drastic measures are needed in order to arrest this development.

“The Conference on Disarmament has a unique opportunity to do so at the forthcoming seventh NPT Review Conference, addressing the concerns and priorities of all States parties, and working to strengthen both the non-proliferation and the disarmament obligations of the Treaty. If the CD is able to adopt a programme of work and start substantive discussions on nuclear disarmament, a fissile materials treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and/or other items on the proposed agenda, you will be endowing the Review Conference with a much needed head start on its own work. No other body, no other diplomats, have the opportunity that you do to influence a positive start at the review, to erode the paralysis that blocked the Preparatory Committee.

“Time is growing short. In the next few months, all actors within the international disarmament community must do everything they can to use this Conference as a tool for ensuring the human security of all peoples, everywhere.”

That concludes the statement, and on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my behalf, I would like to thank the participants in the seminar marking International Women’s Day for their message and for their tireless and determined efforts aimed at achieving justice, peace and security for all. And may I say in my national capacity that I look forward to the day when this Conference is able to fully heed the advice of the United Nations Secretary-General of which we have just been reminded, and that this general statement can be delivered in person.

I have the following speakers on my list for today’s plenary meeting: the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, followed by Algeria, followed by Norway. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Mr. AN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, this is the first statement of my delegation under your presidency. On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and hope to see tangible progress in the work of the CD under your able guidance. I would also like to express my delegation's high appreciation to the former President, the Ambassador of the Netherlands, for his active efforts and approach to get the CD back on track.

I would like to present views and thoughts on the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

As all of us are aware, the CD is now almost paralysed. It is no exaggeration to say that the fate of the CD is at risk. The CD has not presented any results to humankind for almost 10 years. Of course the absolute majority of member States have made continuous efforts to adopt a programme of work and to start substantial discussions on the main issues, during which balanced proposals, such as the "five Ambassadors' initiative", have been presented. However, all these efforts have been in vain. The CD is now bogged down in a situation where it cannot take a step forward.

My delegation believes that all of us must feel a sense of guilt towards the international community. How much time, labour and money have we wasted for almost 10 years? It is deplorable that the CD has wasted almost 10 years discussing inconclusively a programme of work. And yet, it is more deplorable that there is no guarantee that the same 10 years will not be repeated. Should we really not feel a sense of guilt?

Then, what is the main problem to be addressed in getting the CD back on track? Which knot should be untangled first in order to untangle other relevant knots?

My delegation does not think that the problem lies in procedure or any other working method. There is a big political obstacle before the CD. This political obstacle is the existence of political will to block progress in the CD's work. The CD is the multilateral negotiating forum. Multilateral negotiation should be based on a spirit of multilateralism. Only when one presents one's views and listens to others' views and tries to understand them in a sincere and positive manner on the basis of a shared desire to achieve genuine peace and security will multilateral negotiations proceed in the right direction. Any form of multilateral talks or negotiation will surely fail if a unilateral policy or position is pursued or insisted upon. The CD will be subject to failure if one does not listen to others and only continues to say "no". The DPRK has tasted such unhappy results of talks through its own experience.

The CD is not a forum where one side's policy should be unilaterally pursued. If the paralysed CD is to be revived, the negative political approach should be decisively changed. If any of us desire to have a silver bullet to get the CD back to work, move it forward and save its fate, a bold change of the negative political position will be the only one.

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

My delegation believes that we can say we have a real political basis on which to proceed to achieving agreement on a programme of work only when each and every CD member demonstrates its political will collectively to advance the work of CD in the interests of all humankind. As long as the CD is without this political basis, it will suffer setbacks no matter how many meetings and discussions it holds, and any proposals tabled before it will be difficult or impossible to be agreed upon. This is the lesson learned from the reality of the CD that has spent 10 years in vain.

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. My delegation sincerely hopes that a breakthrough will be made in the work of CD this year, and in this regard, with your permission, Mr. President, my delegation appeals to all delegations to make every effort to reach a solution.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. An Myung Hun, for his statement, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Algeria.

Mr. JAZAIRY (Algeria) (translated from Arabic): On behalf of the Arab States members of the Conference on Disarmament and the observer Arab States, I should like to stress the importance which our Arab region attaches to the subject of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President, I previously congratulated you on behalf of Algeria on assumption of the presidency of this Conference. I now have the pleasure to congratulate you once again, but this time on behalf of all the Arab States. We will all rally round you to bring an end to the deadlock which has hampered this Conference for so long. I should also like to extend our thanks to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, the Secretary-General of the Conference, and his deputy, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, and all the members of the secretariat.

Through this statement we should like to express our firm and sincere desire to work for security and stability in the international and regional spheres in order to guarantee the happiness and prosperity of all peoples, including our Arab people. The Arab Group reiterates its commitment to the resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, including resolution 59/69 of 10 December 2004, which affirms that multilateralism is the core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. This confirms the universality of this issue, which requires collaboration from all States on an equal footing.

The growing scale and seriousness of the security challenges and dangers which face us at the regional and international levels make us more committed than ever to using this framework to find solutions to the problems before us. They also reinforce our attachment and commitment to the Conference on Disarmament.

The Arab States are fully convinced that the Non-Proliferation Treaty is one of the most important treaties to have been concluded and that it has proved effective in controlling the proliferation of nuclear weapons for more than 35 years. The fact that the majority of States have acceded to the Treaty shows that they understand its importance in averting the threat of

(Mr. Jazairy, Algeria)

nuclear war. It was on this premise that the Arab States rejected the nuclear option by joining the NPT. Given their keen attachment to non-proliferation, they accord the utmost importance to the disarming of this lethal weapon, and they therefore call upon the nuclear States that are party to the Treaty to bear their responsibilities, to provide the security assurances required to create a climate of trust and to implement the resolutions of the General Assembly and of the disarmament review conferences.

The Arab Group hopes that nuclear States will honour their commitments, including those undertaken at the sixth Review Conference held in 2000, particularly, the “13 practical” steps. We hope that the seventh Review Conference due to be held in May will offer these States an opportunity to reaffirm and strengthen these commitments.

Nuclear disarmament through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free regions represents a very important stage in confidence-building, the elimination of nuclear rivalry and the achievement of full and complete disarmament. The proliferation of these weapons, particularly in the Middle East, threatens peace and security and has a destabilizing effect at the regional and international level. Hence the Arab States have endeavoured in all multilateral forums to draw attention to the risks of nuclear proliferation in the region and to the need to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons. The Arab States regard the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review Conference as part and parcel of the Treaty.

We should also like to remind you that the final document of the sixth Review Conference of the Treaty was very explicit about the need for Israel to accede to the Treaty and to subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Our States urge that this vital resolution adopted in 1995 be given a further boost at the seventh Review Conference with a view to its implementation. This is in keeping with the spirit of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), article 14 of which calls for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, and with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and sponsored by the Arab Group every year. As you know, these Arab initiatives led the General Assembly to adopt, at its fifty-ninth session, resolution 59/63 and resolution 59/106 on this subject. We should also like to remind you of the draft resolution submitted by the Arab States to the Security Council in 2003. The draft resolution, which is still before the Council, aims at making the Middle East an area free of weapons of mass destruction, most importantly of nuclear weapons.

International peace and security rely on the spread of a disarmament culture. In this regard, the League of Arab States works very closely with UNIDIR, organizing joint conferences, training courses, seminars and research on the spread of a disarmament culture, a topic which is close to our hearts.

Finally, these decisive challenges demand determined action from everyone at this Conference. Unfortunately, we, like the rest of our colleagues, can see that the work of this Conference has been stalled for many years because of some intransigent positions. In order to

(Mr. Jazaïry, Algeria)

end this deadlock, the Arab States will do everything possible within the framework of the Group of 21 to provide a new impetus for the resumption of the negotiations and of the work of the Conference. As you know, the most recent initiative was a positive response to the recommendations of your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Chris Sanders, regarding the appointment of special coordinators. We hope that other member States on their part will show the necessary political will, flexibility and realism to enable us to reach a consensus on a programme of work that will take account of the security needs of all groups of States.

We should also like to confirm that the Arab Group is committed to proceeding on the basis of the Final Document adopted by the General Assembly at the 1978 special session on disarmament, the agenda which the Conference agrees every year, and the Conference's own rules of procedure.

We should like to reiterate once again that the Arab Group is ready and willing to cooperate and work constructively in order to establish a programme of work that will balance the interests and needs of all sides.

In conclusion, we should like to underscore the fact that, while there are many forums that discuss disarmament issues, our Conference is the only multilateral forum which drafts treaties and conventions on these topics. This makes it imperative for us all to work in order to maintain this asset and to use it to build a new international legal order which guarantees lasting peace and security throughout the world.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Algeria, Ambassador Idriss Jazaïry, for his statement on behalf of member and non-member Arab States, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Norway.

Mr. PAULSEN (Norway): I listened with considerable interest to the NGO statement delivered by you, Mr. President, at the beginning of this meeting. It is our hope that in the future the Conference on Disarmament can listen to voices from civil society directly from the source. Today's practice is - to put it mildly - quite peculiar and very difficult to understand. The CD is, for the moment, a deadlocked body, but we should, nevertheless, dare to invite representatives of civil society occasionally to our podium and listen to their concerns.

I also listened with interest to the statement made by the distinguished representative of the DPRK. I fully share his view that irresponsible unilateral approaches pose a threat to the multilateral disarmament machinery. As a first step to remedy the current negative state of affairs, it would be helpful if the DPRK rejoined the NPT and extended full cooperation to IAEA, as a verifiable non-nuclear-weapon State.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Norway, Mr. Kjetil Paulsen, for his statement, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Ireland.

Mr. FALLON (Ireland): I would just like to join the comments made by my Norwegian colleague in relation to the participation of civil society in this forum. One cannot but notice on a day which is also intended in this forum, at least, to mark International Women's Day, that we are in a forum where women are thin on the ground and men are thick on the ceiling, and it may be a coincidence that the NGOs are situated halfway between the floor and the ceiling, but the world does not seem to have changed much since the tableaux in this room were initially painted. I would share the views expressed both by Norway and by the Chair that we come to the day when the spirit of the panel of eminent persons on civil society on United Nations relationships, and even of the very United Nations Charter itself, is reflected in allowing NGOs, regardless of their chromosomes, to have a direct input at this forum.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Ireland, Mr. Richard Fallon, for his statement, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. SANDERS (Netherlands): I have asked for the floor in order to support what has just been stated by my distinguished colleagues from Norway and Ireland. The Netherlands, too, is convinced that civil society must and can be heard in this body directly. I also wish to recall the advice of Secretary-General Kofi Annan in this respect, who called for more organized and sustained dialogue with the NGO community, and I think we should take those words to heart.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Chris Sanders, for his statement, and I would inquire of delegates whether any other member wishes to take the floor at this stage. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Germany.

Mr. HEINSBERG (Germany): Mr. President, I would like to join the statement you in your national capacity made on the issue and just made by Norway, Ireland and the Netherlands.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Germany, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg, for his statement, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. AN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I think I would like to respond to the statement made by Norway. I think there is a little digression from the main point. I hope that the delegation of Norway understands that there is a challenge, a political problem, that always compels the DPRK to do something that we really do not want. I hope you get the main point.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. An Myung Hun, for his statement.

I see no other delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage. We might move on to the remaining matters of business, which are twofold, I think. I first want to give members an outline of the schedule of meetings for next week, which is a particularly busy one, and then I

(The President)

want to, after that, give the Conference an update on my consultations to date. If I go on, then, to the schedule of meetings for next week, as you will recall, at the beginning of the 2005 session, the then President of the Conference, Ambassador Chris Sanders, and the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, sent letters to Foreign Ministers of the member States of the CD inviting them to consider the possibility of addressing the Conference on Disarmament during their forthcoming visits to Geneva, in particular during the time coinciding with the session of the Commission on Human Rights, which begins next week.

As of today, the secretariat has received communications from a number of member States informing them about the intentions of their Ministers for Foreign Affairs to address the Conference. I shall just run through this list, which involves three days next week and 10 Ministers. On Monday, 14 March, at 11 o'clock, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada will address this Conference. The following day, Tuesday, 15 March, at 10.30 a.m., the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru, followed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, followed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, followed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, and followed fifthly by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Then, a week today, on Thursday, 17 March, at 10 a.m., we will be addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, followed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, followed by the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan, and fourthly by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

In accordance with previous practice of the Conference in such cases, I would like to propose that the Conference holds three plenary meetings next week, on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, in order to accommodate these specific requests. Since our distinguished speakers will have a very tight schedule on these days, I intend to convene these meetings as punctually as possible, and I really would like to appeal to all delegations to be present in the Council Chamber on time.

Finally, if there are no comments on that section of this morning's business, I would, as I indicated earlier, like to update the Conference on my consultations to date, and I will ask the secretariat to circulate my comments to you as I speak.

Although my bilateral and other consultations are continuing, I want to offer the Conference a rather more complete progress report than I was able to do last Thursday. In putting forward what may amount to tentative conclusions, I am conscious of the CD's busy schedule next week, its high-level political focus, and the fact that I have still to talk bilaterally to a small number of delegations.

Mindful of an impending event of considerable significance and importance - the NPT Review Conference - I set myself from the outset of this presidency the task of trying to identify positive rather than negative elements in the CD's current predicament.

The "food for thought" non-paper put forward informally by my predecessor, Ambassador Chris Sanders, has served a useful purpose in that regard. In the tradition of

(The President)

continuity forged by successive Presidents in the past year or so, I pursued the “the food for thought” paper in my consultations. I must report that I encountered several hesitations about securing firm instructions on the basis of a paper that has no formal status. But I am glad to say that an overwhelming number of delegations responded to my efforts and provided me with valuable insights into the degree of their flexibility. That is the first positive matter to report, and I will come back to this element of flexibility several times in what follows.

The second positive aspect has been the readiness of delegations to get down to serious work on the basis of one or more of the four priority or core issues. That desire is virtually universal. This, as many previous Presidents have reported, is not new, but there was very widespread consolation that the “food for thought” non-paper, like several previous formal proposals, encompassed the notion of four priority issues.

That very widespread reaction needs, however, to be seen against the full spectrum of views. At one end of the spectrum, the readiness to consider agreeing to a work programme that includes more than one of the four core issues is conditional on there being agreement that negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty gets promptly under way. Such a negotiation would, for at least one of these few States, seemingly need, as things currently stand, to be on the basis of an unqualified mandate.

At the other end of the spectrum, the readiness to negotiate an FMCT is conditional on there being a mandate that contains certain minimum requirements, especially verification, as part of a work programme that contemplates discussion, in some shape or form, of the other three core issues. It was made very clear to me that until the flexibility that has been shown over the years, for instance in relation to the nature of the mandate on negative security assurances, the coverage of new and additional issues and the identification of four special coordinators - until that flexibility was reciprocated - the prospects for a meeting of the minds would be precluded.

On the face of it, this is not a positive development but simply represents the status quo, that is, the current deadlock. I'm inclined, however, to take a more positive view of the situation, for these reasons. The number of States who are showing flexibility between the positions at either end of the spectrum has increased both in terms of numbers and the level of flexibility. In addition, while not every member of the Conference wants to begin negotiation of an FMCT (in any shape or form), no one said to me in so many words that such an outcome would be insuperable.

And, while not every member of the Conference is currently able to agree to a work programme that includes core issues other than FMCT, I have discerned a readiness to discuss those other issues as being implicit in the conditionality to which I have referred. Moreover, it may be significant in relation to further testing the flexibility of those States that negotiation of an FMCT, albeit on certain terms, is seen as a matter of some urgency by them. On the other hand, to secure the acceptance of others, that readiness to discuss the other core issues would need to be demonstrated simultaneously with the settling of the FMCT mandate.

(The President)

Let me try to relate the remarks I have just made to specific proposals that are before this Conference. The five Ambassadors' proposal retains a very strong following, but for some time a degree of pragmatism surrounding its evolution has been present in this body. Whether the "food for thought" paper, if tabled formally, will ultimately gather the same degree of support, on the strength of my consultations to date it is too early for me to say. Unless I am encouraged from all quarters of the CD during the week ahead, I do not myself intend to test those waters in that way. As many colleagues have pointed out, the Conference's problem is not the shortage of proposals or any deficit of diplomatic ingenuity but the lack of political will.

The final positive sign that I wish to mention relates to the future of this body. Concern about its relevance and credibility is widely shared. Members are very anxious, as one delegate stated to me, to see it "kick-started". It was clear to me also that the CD's relevance and credibility is much more intimately bound up with its ability to negotiate and/or address the core issues than it is to embark on discussion of new or additional issues of importance but of lesser moment. No new or additional issues were put forward that would, in any event, be capable of securing consensus for inclusion in a programme of work.

The three or four positive indications or impulses that I have identified lead me to put forward for reflection several baldly stated equations, in no particular order. Let me emphasize that these equations do not reflect every member's position but represent my understanding of the main sticking points. I may be merely stating the obvious, but I wish nonetheless to try, on the basis of what delegations have said to me bilaterally, to set out the main - and I emphasize "main" - negotiating fault lines.

- Securing agreement on an FMCT mandate without conditions may entail the acceptance of discussion mandates on the other three core issues. And a corollary of this equation - securing agreement on discussion mandates on the three core issues - appears to entail acceptance of an FMCT mandate without conditions;
- And the other equation: the readiness to accept the negotiation of an FMCT entails the need to ensure that that negotiation encompasses, as a minimum, the inclusion of a verification mechanism. By the words "as a minimum" I am alluding to the concerns of some States that a work programme that meets this need would also include discussion mandates on the other core issues.

It is relatively easy to state the nature of a problem. It is much harder to suggest an answer. As members of this Conference know, especially those who were here during the Finnish presidency, our rules of procedure envisage the adoption not only of a programme of work but also of a schedule of activities. I would like to believe that if we could agree on a mandate for FMCT - and I'll come to that shortly - we could develop a schedule of activities running over the balance of the year that would provide assurance that alongside the negotiation of an FMCT, the other three core issues would be addressed in a sequential or rotational manner, or both, that met the needs of those States for whom engagement on those issues is essential.

(The President)

And, in parallel with the negotiation of such a schedule of activities, I would like to believe that we could also find a procedural way forward on the content of the mandate for the negotiation of an FMCT. This would entail a means by which it would be understood that the subsidiary body on FMCT had an unencumbered mandate except in one vital respect. That subsidiary body would be obliged to establish a group of experts to advise it on matters relevant to the effectiveness of the proposed treaty, the precise meaning of which would need to be the subject of a clear understanding.

Members of the Conference will have other ideas on the best way forward. My concern has been to sharpen the focus on the impasse through the prism of what to me have been the positive elements that have emerged during New Zealand's presidency to date. To the extent to which I have jumped to conclusions, no doubt members will correct my misapprehensions. I can only hope that when they do so they will put forward constructive suggestions on how consensus can be forged.

In conclusion, to return to the "food for thought" analogy from my progress report last week, the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. It will not be a particularly palatable pudding, but it will restore to the CD its credibility as a negotiating body, and more importantly, by addressing non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through the negotiation of an FMCT, it will contribute to the security of every nation.

That, unless I have any further speakers before I adjourn, concludes the business for today. If there are no further speakers, the next plenary will be held on Monday, 14 March, starting sharp at 11 o'clock.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.