

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.986
23 June 2005

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 23 June 2005, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Wegger STRØMMEN (Norway)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 986th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before proceeding to our debate, I should like to bid farewell to our distinguished colleague, Ambassador Chris Sanders of the Netherlands, who will soon leave Geneva to assume new important responsibilities. You will agree with me that Ambassador Sanders has been and is an exemplary figure in the field of disarmament. Throughout his tenure as Ambassador of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament since August 1999, he has not only demonstrated remarkable diplomatic skills and professional knowledge in many disarmament bodies, but he has also succeeded in forging his ideas into concrete action, in part due to his energetic and firm personality. We sincerely appreciate his strong commitment and determination to overcome the impasse in the CD. During his presidency of the Conference at the beginning of this session, Ambassador Sanders explored new avenues of revitalizing the Conference in his “food for thought” paper. For years Ambassador Sanders also played an active role as coordinator on explosive remnants of war. He eventually spearheaded negotiations on an internationally legally binding instrument in this field, which in 2003 culminated in the adoption of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War to the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention. Ambassador Sanders has been equally active in the field of anti-personnel mines. In 2003 and 2004 he chaired the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Ottawa Convention. His professionalism, dedication and commitment to the goals of the Treaty has played a crucial role in the success of the Convention. I hope that his legacy as an “honest broker”, as he is likely to call himself during many negotiations, will reverberate for a long time, especially within our august body. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, on my own behalf, and on behalf of the CD secretariat, I should like to wish our distinguished colleague Ambassador Chris Sanders much success in his new assignment and happiness in his private life.

I will now give the floor to Ambassador Chris Sanders.

Mr. SANDERS (Netherlands): Mr. President, thank you very much for those very kind words.

Today's meeting of the CD will be the last one for me, which is sufficient reason to say a few words. My predecessor tried to establish a rule for the duration of farewell speeches at one page per year spent in the CD. This rule has been almost forgotten by now, and this is fortunate, because I certainly do not intend to make a speech of six pages.

If I said that the CD is in a bad condition, you would probably say that I have a remarkable gift for stating the obvious. Many, many hours have been spent inside and outside of this room, discussing why this is the case and how to remedy the problem of the CD.

I hope you believe me when I say that there is no simple answer. The need to agree on a programme of work by consensus is often seen as the problem. But this rule has always been there, and has not prevented the CD from working in the past. Some time after the conclusion of the CTBT in 1996, different members of the CD developed different priorities for the programme of work. In the past, this programme provided for the establishment of several

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subsidiary bodies that could work in parallel without being linked. As from the end of the 1990s, this approach was no longer possible, as the establishment of certain ad hoc committees was no longer acceptable to all members of the CD. Some called in linkage, others called it balance, but the sentiments in a few important capitals were sufficiently strong to prevent any agreement on a compromise solution.

It is too easy to blame the rule of consensus. Real underlying political differences and security interests have been at stake, which is of course legitimate. It is my feeling at this stage, however, that the most recent ideas about a possible programme of work have made the political and security arguments less and less convincing. I will not repeat what I said in my concluding statement as CD President in February this year. But I continue to have difficulties in understanding how a programme of work based on my "food for thought" paper, maybe in a slightly amended form, could ever harm anybody's security interests. I still believe that the "food for thought" paper offers a fighting chance to reach a compromise, if some of us are prepared to go the extra mile.

So much for the CD and its programme of work. There are two other subjects I would like to address briefly. One is the increasing misuse of the rule of consensus in the United Nations system for relatively minor issues; the other is the broader dimension of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

As I have said, consensus is a legitimate and necessary principle when we make decisions on issues that affect our core security interests. We will not accept being outvoted if those interests are genuinely at stake. I am deeply concerned, however, to see that a small number of countries increasingly use the rule of consensus to veto proposals on minor issues. Consensus is a vulnerable but precious good. A consensus decision is important, because it enjoys the maximum support possible. Consensus should be found in the final stages of negotiation, when compromises on major outstanding differences are being made. I see, however, that some are playing games with the need to reach consensus. They take a maximalist approach to block prematurely even relatively minor issues, where an overwhelming majority sees no problems. To claim that those minor points would pose unacceptable risks to their security interests is not credible. It is a grave exaggeration, and in fact even a bit ridiculous. I really wonder how long the international community can continue to accept such a course of action by responsible negotiators and governments. If we believe in effective multilateralism as the ultimate guardian of our security interests, we need to remedy this.

My third point today, as I have said, is the vitality of the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole. As we all know, the present machinery was established by the first special session on disarmament of the General Assembly in the late 1970s. I am not an expert on how and why decisions were taken at that time. I know that the CD was meant to be the principal body for negotiating multilateral legally binding instruments, and that the universal United Nations Disarmament Commission was supposed to develop creative politically binding recommendations to bring the cause of United Nations disarmament forward.

(Mr. Sanders, Netherlands)

Clearly the existing United Nations disarmament machinery was created under circumstances that are very different from today's. It performed reasonably well for some decades. But if we look at the present situation, where both the CD and the United Nations Disarmament Commission are more or less moribund, it would make sense to see whether a review of the machinery could at least clean up old structures that are dysfunctional, and hopefully replace them with something more effective.

As regards the CD, we must realize that this body is not a protected hunting ground for making multilateral treaties on disarmament-related issues. Such treaties have been made elsewhere, and will probably continue to be made elsewhere. The most recent example is the treaty that was made by the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly on WMD and terrorism. Why do we need the CD and the United Nations Disarmament Commission? Why could we not settle for one single universal body that would perform all the necessary functions we need on disarmament at the present time. Could the First Committee fulfil such a role, just as some other Committees seem capable of negotiating treaties?

I am not saying that this would be a panacea for all the outstanding political problems, but it would at least streamline and simplify the situation, and we could also work out for what type of decision consensus would be required and those for which a vote would be appropriate. Such a simplification of the machinery might also save us some money, which is from the Dutch point of view of course not something unimportant.

The conservative view is that as it was SSOD-1 that created the Decalogue and the machinery, we cannot change it, and we need to stick to it for ever. This is obviously not true, because a new SSOD can undo the decisions of its predecessors. In fact, any General Assembly can make our machinery more up to date and more responsive to actual developments.

Still, I have found that there is strong resistance to having an overhaul of the existing machinery, either because of vested interests or, even worse, because of fear of losing control of the process. Fear of change, however, is one of the worst counsels in a world that continues to change dramatically.

The logical and simple conclusion would be to convene an SSOD-4 to discuss these issues and to decide on how to do things better. I know there are some problems on agreeing to convene an SSOD-4, but these do not seem to be insurmountable. Maybe the upcoming United Nations Summit can mobilize the necessary political support for overcoming these obstacles.

These have been a few observations that I wanted to share with the CD before leaving you. I am grateful for having been a member of the Conference for so long. The quality of the debate has always been excellent. The professionalism of colleagues has been outstanding. I would like to thank you, all the members, for your cooperation and friendship. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, and all your predecessors, who have made so many efforts to

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get the CD back to work. I also thank our Secretary-General, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, and all the other colleagues from DDA and the secretariat. Last but not least, I thank our interpreters, and I apologize to them for having spoken so many times without a prepared text.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Sanders for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I have a list of speakers of almost 30 delegations. This is likely to mean that we will have to reconvene this afternoon. I will go straight to the list of speakers. The first speaker on my list is the delegation of Japan. Ambassador Mine.

Mr. MINE (Japan): Mr. President, I have just heard the statement of Ambassador Chris Sanders with a sense of great loss. He has made an invaluable contribution to our work, and I would like to reiterate that we support the contents of the process which was initiated and presented in his unofficial “food for thought” paper.

Now on nuclear disarmament, Japan’s efforts for nuclear disarmament are expressed in our resolution submitted to the First Committee of the General Assembly, namely “A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons”.

Some progress has been made in the field of nuclear disarmament. Japan highly values the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions (the Moscow Treaty), and encourages both Russia and the United States to work towards its full implementation and to consider building on the Treaty to realize further reductions by recognizing it as a basis for the future, not an end in itself. There is, however, a need for more transparency and steady progress in the process of nuclear disarmament.

It is extremely regrettable that the NPT Review Conference did not agree on any substantial document. It was an important opportunity to move forward in the area of nuclear disarmament.

The CD, now, should continue to play a pivotal role to achieve concrete disarmament measures, and Japan supports the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in conformity with paragraph 2 of document CD/1693/Rev.1, as specified in the “food for thought” paper drafted by the Netherlands presidency.

Taking related factors into account, Japan is considering redrafting its First Committee resolution this year with fresh eyes, and we would like to call for support and cooperation on a national basis, regardless of existing group settings, from all like-minded States that can share our views expressed in the draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Japan for his statement, and I give the floor to the representative of Egypt, who will speak on behalf of Arab States members and observers to the CD.

Ms. GABR (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to congratulate you on behalf of the Arab States participating as members or observers in the Conference on Disarmament on your assumption of the presidency. We assure you of our full cooperation and wish you every success in your difficult task. I should also like to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, the Deputy Secretary-General and the secretariat. My delegation also thanks Ambassador Chris Sanders for his excellent work as President of the Conference, and wishes him every success with his ongoing activities in this domain.

Mr. President, the continuing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament greatly concerns the Arab Group, given the increasing seriousness of the security challenges facing the international community at the regional and international levels. In spite of radical changes in the security environment, both regionally and internationally, the hopes which many States, including Arab States, have placed in multilateral disarmament remain unchanged. This is reflected in our continuing attachment to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. In this connection, the Arab Group endorses the statement made by the Group of 21 on 15 March 2005, together with the statement which the Ambassador of Ethiopia will make shortly.

Nuclear disarmament remains a priority for the Arab Group in the context of regional and international disarmament. We are convinced that as long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, there can be no real regional and international security and stability. We are disappointed, therefore, that the Conference has not responded to the two appeals made by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference of 2000 to set up a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament and to initiate negotiations on the FMCT, including stockpiles of fissile materials, taking account of the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, I should like to reaffirm that we attach the utmost importance to the outcome of the NPT Review Conference of 2000 and to our commitments to the goals set out in the Final Document of the Conference including, particularly, the “13 steps”, which are as relevant as ever.

While the Arab Group underlines the importance of international nuclear disarmament, the current situation in the Middle East causes it particular concern. The Arab States chose not to develop nuclear weapons by joining the NPT. In 1995, the Arab States parties agreed to the indefinite extension of the Treaty, because they were convinced that the implementation of the resolution on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would guarantee regional security. The Final Document of the sixth Review Conference clearly reasserted “the importance of Israel’s accession to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East”. The Arab States insist on the need to reactivate this vital resolution on the Middle East in order to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and to implement Security Council resolution 687 (1991), paragraph 14 of which calls for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, a call reiterated in resolutions sponsored by the Arab States and adopted annually by the General Assembly.

(Ms. Gabr, Egypt)

As you are aware, several Arab initiatives led to the adoption by the General Assembly, at its fifty-ninth session, of resolutions 59/63 and 59/106. We would also like to remind you of the draft resolution which the Arab States submitted to the Security Council in 2003 and which remains before the Council. That resolution aims at making the Middle East a region free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. As for the most recent Review Conference, held in New York, the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement called, from the very beginning, for an honest and genuine review of the NPT. We believe that there is a need for a balanced and objective review of the three pillars of the NPT, namely nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses, since they all form part of a whole. We urge the parties to the Treaty to implement these provisions on these pillars and to accord them all equal importance.

In this connection, the Arab Group would like to express its disappointment at the failure of the Review Conference to achieve the desired result of securing universal adherence to the NPT, a commitment to implementing the Conference's resolutions and to honouring the commitments made at the 1995 and 2000 review conferences. We call on the Conference on Disarmament to reach a consensus on a programme of work, including the establishment of a subsidiary body to negotiate comprehensive and full nuclear disarmament. I would also like to refer to the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as presented by Malaysia in the working paper submitted to Main Committee I at the most recent Review Conference. We hope that the paper will help to inform the Conference's work on nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for her statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the delegation of China. Ambassador Hu.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr President, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and believe that your efforts can help facilitate the work of the Conference; you can count on our full support.

Today, the Chinese delegation will respond to your decision by sharing with you and other delegations some of our thoughts on the issue of nuclear disarmament. Firstly, what has led to the present stalemate in the multilateral nuclear disarmament process? Nuclear disarmament matters to international peace and security. In recent years, it has been a hotly debated issue in multilateral forums while it embodies a variety of contradictions and differences. These are reflected in the fact that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet carried out any substantive work on nuclear disarmament; that the recently concluded seventh NPT Review Conference did not produce any substantive proposals on the three pillars of the NPT, including that of nuclear disarmament; that the CD could not agree on the need for discussing the nuclear disarmament issue; that SSOD-4 could not even be held, nuclear disarmament again being one of the contentious points.

What has caused such a situation? On the one hand, the United States of America and the Russian Federation have made some progress in bilateral reductions of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, we are witnessing the abolition of the ABM Treaty, once regarded as the cornerstone of international strategic planning and stability; the failure of the CTBT to enter into force; difficulties in initiating negotiations on FMCT; and a growing danger of the

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weaponization of outer space. Coupled with this, there is now a growing tendency to stress non-proliferation while playing down nuclear disarmament. The traditional non-proliferation regime, with export controls at its centrepiece, is gradually giving way to counter-proliferation characterized by such military means as pre-emptive strikes and interdictions. Demand for a legally binding international instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States has been rejected. The right of nuclear-weapon States to make peaceful use of nuclear energy has been curtailed. A missile defence system undermining international strategic stability has reached the initial stage of deployment. Important principles and disarmament measures adopted at previous NPT Review Conferences have been called into question.

Obviously unilateral, bilateral and multilateral approaches and objectives now encompass broad differences rather than complement each other. Indeed, the above phenomena are indicators of a deepening conflict between those who favour disarmament and those who are focused on non-proliferation.

How can the international nuclear disarmament process be moved forward? Firstly, a secured international environment and strategic stability is the foundation. To advance nuclear disarmament, one must deal with both the symptoms and the root causes of the problem. Nuclear disarmament cannot take place in a vacuum. Creating a healthy and positive international security environment and maintaining the international strategic balance constitutes the very basis for progress in nuclear disarmament. It should be stressed, however, that efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space and to bring about nuclear disarmament go hand in hand. In this perspective, it is of crucial importance for nuclear disarmament that no missile defence system undermining strategic stability should be developed and that no weapon should be deployed in outer space. It is hard to imagine that once a full-fledged missile defence system is put in place, or weapons have been introduced into outer space, there can be business as usual in nuclear disarmament. At best, such moves will never be conducive to nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, a balanced approach to nuclear disarmament and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is a condition. Efforts to bring about nuclear disarmament and prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons are mutually complementary. The indefinite extension of the NPT does not mean that the nuclear-weapon States can hold on to their nuclear weapons for ever. The fulfilment by nuclear-weapon States of their disarmament obligations in good faith is an indispensable guarantee for the maintenance of international nuclear non-proliferation regime; preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is a major aspect of the global nuclear disarmament process. Only if nuclear-weapon States thoroughly destroy their nuclear weapons at an early date, and non-nuclear-weapon States stick to their pledges not to acquire such weapons while both groups of countries make steady efforts towards nuclear disarmament and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, can we achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, the observance of the basic principles in nuclear disarmament is a guarantee. Nuclear disarmament should be a just and reasonable process of gradual reduction towards a lower balance. Countries with the biggest nuclear arsenals bear special responsibility for nuclear disarmament and should take the lead in drastically reducing their arsenals. The Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference put forward a number of principles and measures for

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nuclear disarmament, among them that reductions in nuclear weapons should be carried out in an effectively verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner; all nuclear disarmament measures, including various intermediate measures, should be guided by the principle of protecting global strategic stability and undiminished security for all States, and should contribute to international peace and security.

The Final Documents of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences are still highly relevant today. A pick-and-choose attitude towards their content is not desirable. These principles should still guide efforts in nuclear disarmament.

Fourthly, appropriate intermediate measures of nuclear disarmament are supplementary and beneficial. Under present circumstances, the implementation of various practical intermediate measures of nuclear disarmament will supplement and be beneficial to the multilateral nuclear disarmament process and increasing trust among nations. The nuclear-weapon States should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies, abandon the nuclear deterrence doctrine based on the first use of nuclear weapons and give up the policy of lowering thresholds for using nuclear weapons. Every nuclear-weapon State should make a commitment not to target its nuclear weapons on any country nor to list any country as a target for nuclear strikes. All nuclear weapons deployed outside their own territories should be repatriated. The policies and practice of nuclear umbrella and nuclear sharing should be abandoned. Easy-to-use, low-yield nuclear weapons should not be developed. Nuclear-weapon States should take all necessary steps to prevent accidental or unauthorized launches of nuclear weapons. All nuclear-weapon States should undertake that at any time or under any circumstances, not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, nor to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and conclude international legal instruments to that effect. This is the most practical and reasonable intermediate measure of nuclear disarmament.

Although the above measures cannot replace concrete reductions in nuclear weapons, they can serve to increase trust among nuclear-weapon States and between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. They can reduce the risk of a nuclear war, thereby creating the necessary conditions for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

Fifthly, the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as a platform to promote international nuclear disarmament efforts. It is imperative to break the deadlock in the Geneva CD. China favours an early agreement on a programme of work based on the "five Ambassadors' proposal" so as to start substantive work on nuclear disarmament, FMCT, PAROS and negative security assurances. As for the mandate of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, China supports the reasonable position of the G-21.

China's nuclear weapons are purely for self-defence. Over the decades we have exercised great restraint in the development of nuclear forces, have never taken part in the nuclear arms race, have deployed no nuclear weapons abroad and have kept our nuclear forces at the minimum level necessary for self-defence. China stands for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, pursuing a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons,

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and undertakes not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones under any circumstances. China supports the early entry into force of the CTBT, is committed to an early ratification of the treaty and is ready to negotiate an FMCT within the comprehensive work programme of the CD. China's nuclear policies have contributed positively to the international nuclear disarmament process.

As always, we will make unremitting efforts, together with the international community, to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons at an early date and to realize the noble objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Skotnikov.

Mr. SKOTNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference. We would like to wish you success and assure you of our full support and cooperation. I would also like to echo the words which you addressed to our colleague and friend Chris Sanders.

Russia is sympathetic to your initiative to have a series of four consecutive formal plenary meetings of the Conference to consider the issues of nuclear disarmament, a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and also security assurances to non-nuclear States. We agree with those who feel that agreement on these four issues could serve as a basis for the long-awaited compromise on the CD's programme of work. We hope that the upcoming plenary meetings will be conducive to progress in achieving this objective.

In a display of goodwill, we have previously stated that we would not object to the possible compromises on the CD's programme of work as proposed in the well-known "five Ambassadors' initiative" and the "food for thought" paper by Ambassador Sanders, although of course the establishment of an ad hoc committee on PAROS with only a discussion mandate falls well short of what we wanted. We would not object, of course, if dealing with the issues of nuclear disarmament were to become part of the programme of work as indicated in these initiatives. We should also like to mention that the Russian side has already engaged in rather thoroughgoing and substantive consideration of the issues of nuclear disarmament within the framework of the NPT review process. Russia made numerous detailed statements on these issues during the seventh NPT Review Conference last month. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate some of the key elements of our approach.

The Russian Federation is committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the NPT. In this regard we proceed from the understanding that the complete elimination of nuclear arms can be achieved only through gradual phased movement towards this ultimate objective on the basis of a comprehensive approach with participation by all nuclear Powers and, of course, in a context of continuing strategic stability. Russia is fulfilling all of its

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commitments with respect to reductions in nuclear weapons. The process of these reductions - and this is a highly labour-intensive, technically difficult and costly task - is moving forward successfully and consistently, without any interruptions. As a result of joint and concerted efforts by Russia and the United States, fewer and fewer nuclear weapons remain on earth.

As far as Russia is concerned, its total nuclear arsenal has been reduced fivefold since 1991. Russia's non-strategic nuclear weapons have been reduced fourfold. Under the Moscow Treaty, by the end of 2012 Russia and the United States of America must further reduce the levels of their strategic warheads approximately threefold, as compared to the thresholds established by the START Treaty at the end of 2001.

As President Putin has noted, we stand ready to take further constructive steps in this field. In particular, Russia has stated on numerous occasions that it is prepared to continue to reduce its strategic nuclear arsenal to an even lower level than that envisaged by the SORT Treaty. We are committed to the principle of the irreversibility of nuclear weapons reductions. Russia attaches special importance to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The Russian Federation, which ratified the CTBT in 2000, is pursuing a principled policy aimed at ensuring the earliest possible entry into force of this treaty.

Our contribution to irreversible nuclear disarmament also includes a programme for converting 500 tons of highly enriched uranium removed from Russian nuclear weapons into fuel for nuclear power plants. Half of this amount will be processed by this autumn in cooperation with the United States.

Our steps towards nuclear disarmament are accompanied by structural changes in the Russian nuclear weapons sector. We have cut in half our defensive production capacity as being redundant. In cooperation with the United States, we are working towards shutting down Russian industrial uranium-graphite breeder reactors capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium. The material produced by these facilities is not used for military purposes. Moreover, our country long ago halted the production of uranium for nuclear weapons purposes.

The Russian Federation supports the beginning of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on the drafting of a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Russia ensures the technical safety and secure storage of its nuclear weapons in an appropriate manner. I would like to point out that all of our nuclear weapons are centrally held at storage facilities exclusively on Russian territory. Russia has developed and introduced a set of measures to counter terrorist actions. Periodic comprehensive checks are carried out at all facilities that could pose nuclear and radiation risks to ensure their safety and preparedness against terrorist actions. Thus Russia is demonstrating its resolve to bring about real reductions in nuclear weapons and disarmament and, more importantly, it is putting this into actual practice. We call upon all other nuclear nations to join in this process.

These are only some of the essential elements of Russia's position on nuclear disarmament. We listen carefully to realistic and balanced views expressed by other States on this issue. We would be prepared, if necessary, to provide further relevant information in any future CD ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament issues.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

Under the NPT, which is of unlimited duration, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation represent, so to speak, two sides of the same coin (naturally, we do not neglect the issue of cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but this is clearly a matter for the NPT review process). In this connection, let me say a few words about the outcome of the recent NPT Review Conference. Despite the lack of substantive recommendations for the future on strengthening the NPT, it is not justified to speak about the failure of this Conference. We believe that it accomplished useful work. The Conference definitely revealed a wide variety of opinions on the ways in which our obligations under the NPT are being implemented. This is natural, given the serious changes which have occurred in the field of international security in recent years. At the same time, matters of principle shared by all parties to the Treaty were reconfirmed. Nobody said that the Treaty was obsolete. No one suggested drawing up a different instrument to replace the NPT. All the participants emphasized the vitality of the Treaty and its importance as the foundation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We believe that everything points to the fact that the NPT can and should continue to be the basis for addressing all the new challenges that the nuclear non-proliferation regime has recently been facing. In our view, during four weeks of work the Conference succeeded in conducting an objective and balanced analysis of the Treaty in all of its main aspects. All the parties to the Treaty reaffirmed their commitment to strict compliance with their obligations in the area of non-proliferation, disarmament and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The need to strengthen the system of IAEA safeguards as an important element in enhancing confidence in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and compliance with the non-proliferation regime was unanimously emphasized.

Finally, in conclusion, one comment concerning the work of the CD. If this would help to reach a compromise on the CD's programme of work, we would be prepared to study a possible package solution envisaging the consideration of security assurances to non-nuclear States in the framework of a CD ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. Such suggestions have already been put forward.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland, Ambassador Whelan.

Ms. WHELAN (Ireland): I wish to begin by thanking the Norwegian President of the Conference for his proposal to allocate specific time for delegations to make statements about issues relevant to security and disarmament. This affords all delegations a means of sharing views on issues which reflect their respective policies. The long list of speakers inscribed for today suggests that this item is still very relevant to the agenda of the Conference. The Conference on Disarmament, as we know, was established as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body. The process of negotiation has many aspects. Before negotiations can begin, consensus has to be developed. To build consensus, discussion is necessary. Yet here at the Conference, there is a reticence to engage in the type of discussions which could facilitate the development of consensus on many aspects of the agenda. Along with the discord which marked the seventh NPT Review Conference last May, our collective failure to adopt a programme of work at the CD casts a long shadow on proposals for effectively discharging our mandate.

(Ms. Whelan, Ireland)

Ireland continues to regard the Conference on Disarmament as having the potential to serve as an important tool in maintaining international peace and security. We remain convinced that multilateral cooperation is in the interests of all. We have placed our faith in the multilateral regime of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. We are committed to implementing and strengthening these instruments and to pursuing the universalization of their norms. We believe that the validity of this collective rules-based approach persists, notwithstanding the new security permutations which have emerged since the end of the "cold war". We are not into consideration. But we are not attracted to throwing away the rule book, we do not wish to ignore adverse to approaches which are innovative or otherwise take new challenges our agenda and the objectives of this Conference.

A rules-based international order and strong international institutions are also of fundamental importance to the European Union, of which Ireland is proud to be a member. A commitment to strong multilateralism remains central to the Union's common foreign and security policy. Ambassador Chris Sanders has, in his statement on behalf of the European Union to this Conference on 9 June, reaffirmed these convictions as applied to the 2005 NPT Review Conference and by the relevant European Union common position. He has also reiterated the European Union's commitment to continuing its cooperation programmes for non-proliferation and disarmament. At the May Review Conference the European Union has reaffirmed its support for the decisions and the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and for the Final Document of the Review Conference held in the year 2000.

In his report, "In larger freedom", the United Nations Secretary-General pointed out that "the unique status of nuclear-weapon States also entails a unique responsibility". "They must do more," he has said, "including but not limited to further reductions in their arsenals ... and pursuing arms control agreements that entail not just dismantlement but irreversibility." This perspective has a deep resonance for non-nuclear-weapon States, especially here at the Conference on Disarmament. Its fuller realization would provide an unshakable foundation for lasting nuclear disarmament. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Mr. Dermot Ahern T.D., speaking in New York on 5 May 2005, reaffirmed that since July 1968, Ireland's highest priority in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation has been support for the NPT and ensuring full respect for all its provisions. Consistent with this approach Ireland continues to support the establishment of a subsidiary body of this Conference to deal specifically with the issue of nuclear disarmament. We also support work beginning on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Indeed, we attach a special importance to the Practical Steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the NPT - particularly the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Ireland remains convinced that disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Ignoring one of the processes could undermine progress on the other. Disarmament should be a key component for our efforts in facing down the challenge of proliferation.

(Ms. Whelan, Ireland)

Of course, all members of the CD have not ratified the NPT. But the CD can provide a forum where these countries can meaningfully engage in nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation issues, and we would urge them to exploit its potential in this regard.

In helping stem the further development of nuclear weapons the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) can be a vital cornerstone of non-proliferation. The negotiation of a CTBT has been one of the greatest achievements of this body. We look forward to the Article XIV Conference which is to take place in September. We hope that it will provide an impetus towards the Treaty's entry into force. We continue to appreciate and support the moratorium on testing while recognizing that this cannot be a substitute for legally binding obligations enshrined in the Treaty.

The comments made by the Norwegian presidency at our last meeting about the need to garner the necessary "political willingness" to make this Conference function properly have made resonance with many delegations. While this Conference may not yet be able to achieve a binding political consensus on future negotiations, it should play a more active role in creating the necessary shared understanding to achieve this. Ireland, therefore, will continue to take a flexible approach to initiatives aimed at getting the Conference to work. We have seen a number of such initiatives including that of the five Ambassadors and more recently the "food for thought" paper. In the course of these initiatives, small but not insignificant compromises have emerged. These should be built upon, not buried.

And finally, before closing, let me express my good wishes to Chris Sanders and say that we will miss him at the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ireland for her statement and for her kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, Ambassador Ja'afari.

Mr. JA'AFARI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): At the outset, the delegation of my country would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Egyptian delegation on behalf of the Arab Group and with the statement which the distinguished delegate of Ethiopia will deliver on behalf of the Group of 21.

Allow me, Sir, to express my deepest thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Chris Sanders, for the tremendous efforts that he made during his presidency of the Conference. On behalf of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and assure you of our full cooperation in leading this Conference, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament issues, out of the impasse in which it has been stuck for several years. We are quite confident that Norway's experience in the field of collective international action will be of great assistance to us.

This formal plenary of the Conference comes after the failed seventh NPT Review Conference held in New York last month. We feel compelled to recall certain facts about nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Ja'afari, Syrian Arab Republic)

Firstly, at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, the States parties approved the indefinite extension of the Treaty. They also adopted a resolution on the Middle East aimed at turning the region into a zone free of nuclear weapons. The 1995 Review Conference was devoted to strengthening the Treaty, ensuring its universality, adopting the principles and objectives aimed at its implementation and establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, similar to those established by the Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Antarctic treaties.

Secondly, during the period between the 1995 and 2000 review conferences, the remaining Arab States that were not parties to the NPT acceded to the NPT, thanks to the positive outcome of the 1995 Review Conference and thanks to the adoption of the Middle East resolution and the commitments which had been undertaken in 1995.

Thirdly, Israel remains the only country in the Middle East which has not acceded to the NPT and which refuses to subject all its nuclear installations to comprehensive IAEA safeguards, even though those installations pose a grave threat to the security of the countries of the region, especially Israel itself.

Fourthly, the 2000 Review Conference, inter alia, welcomed the accession of all the Arab States to the NPT, demanding that Israel, the only country in the Middle East not to have acceded to the Treaty, accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear installations to comprehensive IAEA safeguards. However, as you know, Israel benefits from the clear and open support of one major nuclear Power and from the conspicuous indifference of other nuclear States both in IAEA and the Conference on Disarmament. It continues to defy the international community, even causing the visit by Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the Director General of IAEA, to fail, in spite of many hopes that the international community had pinned on the visit.

Fifthly, at its most recent session, the General Assembly adopted, by consensus, for the twenty-fifth consecutive year, a resolution calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The aims and objectives of this annual resolution are consistent with the aspirations of the States of the region and the resolutions of IAEA and the Security Council.

Sixthly, the General Assembly has adopted the resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", by an overwhelming majority. The most recent resolution was resolution 59/106, in which the General Assembly expressed concern about the threats posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the security and stability of the Middle East, and noted that Israel was the only State in the Middle East that had not acceded to the NPT. The General Assembly also reaffirmed the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and placement of all its facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

Seventhly, through the League of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and through the adoption of numerous resolutions and initiatives, Syria has made serious endeavours to rid the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. In this regard, we would like to refer to the numerous Arab initiatives, that

(Mr. Ja'afari, Syrian Arab Republic)

have been launched, the most recent being the draft resolution which Syria submitted to the Security Council in January 2003 on behalf of the Arab Group. The draft resolution, which aims at making the Middle East an area free of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, is still before the Security Council.

In spite of all these constructive efforts by the Arab States and Syria, Israel still refuses to join the NPT and to allow IAEA inspectors to inspect its installations, which, according to numerous reports, including Israeli reports, represent a time bomb that could cause an environmental and humanitarian disaster. Israel also continues to bury nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan in contravention of international conventions and norms.

Syria has joined the consensus on an integrated and comprehensive programme of work based on the A-5 proposal. We still believe that initiative provides the most appropriate basis for our work. We believe that nuclear disarmament remains our first priority and that the creation of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament is the minimum that we should expect from the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Syria for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the delegation of Ethiopia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 21. Ambassador Yimer.

Mr. YIMER (Ethiopia): Mr. President, since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time under the presidency of Norway, allow me to congratulate you upon assuming this post. Please rest assured of my delegation's full support in discharging your duty.

Given the importance that the member States of the Group of 21 grant to nuclear disarmament, my delegation has the honour to speak on behalf of the Group.

Mr. President, we welcome your initiative to convene four formal plenary meetings, so that members of the Conference on Disarmament may address the four main issues contained in the A-5 proposal. We hope that this process will facilitate the adoption by the Conference of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work in order to commence substantive work.

The Group of 21 expresses its concern that, due to the lack of political will, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to take up substantive work on the basis of an agreed programme of work since 1999, in spite of the demonstrated flexibility shown by the Group of 21 towards a number of formal and informal proposals introduced.

Stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, the Group of 21 reaffirms its proposals, as contained in documents CD/1570 and CD/1571 on the programme of work and on a draft decision and mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, including a nuclear-weapon convention.

(Mr. Yimer, Ethiopia)

The Group emphasizes that nuclear disarmament remains, as before, the highest priority for the Conference on Disarmament. It stresses the importance of the elimination of the possibility of nuclear war, the threats to humanity derived from the continued existence of nuclear weapons. It underscores the need to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons and emphasizes, in this regard, the urgent need to commence negotiations without delay.

The Group of 21 further expresses its serious concern about the lack of expected progress following the unequivocal undertaking by nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament made during the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

G-21 States parties to the NPT deeply regret the lack of political will that prevented the 2005 NPT Review Conference from achieving substantive results. In this perspective, the Practical Steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed by the 2000 NPT Review Conference remain valid and require accelerated implementation.

In conclusion, I wish Ambassador Chris Sanders, who is leaving us, all the best in his future endeavours, and the Group of 21 wishes to express its deep appreciation for his indefatigable effort during his term of office as President of the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ethiopia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the delegation of Pakistan, Ambassador Khan.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): Mr. President, I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We wish you success and assure you of our full support in your endeavours. We have benefited from Ambassador Chris Sanders' insights and perceptive remarks.

We appreciate that, despite the deadlock in the CD, you have invited member States to speak on the four core issues relating to security and disarmament. Positions on these issues and political configurations are more or less known here. Yet repetition, reiteration or reinforcement of our views can help us understand our perspectives which may well be undergoing a change. The situation is not static. It is evolving. Well, your method of kick-starting an exchange of views, in the most elementary sense, is innovative and deserves our commendation.

Today, there are three main concerns about nuclear disarmament: (a) the pace of disarmament is not fast enough; (b) there is no movement on interrelated issues of test ban, fissile materials, outer space and negative security assurances; and (c) the debate and dialogue on disarmament is completely stalled.

In this context, I will talk about *five* challenges: The *first* thing that comes to mind is the creeping institutional deficit or, more appropriately, a gradual emaciation of the existing multilateral forums. The Conference on Disarmament itself has not been very active in the business of disarmament.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his report “*In larger freedom*”, says that we must revitalize our multilateral frameworks “to ensure continued progress on disarmament and to address the growing risk of a cascade of proliferation, especially in the nuclear field”. Are we doing that? Can we do that? Is there a way to go past the rituals of exhortation and self-flagellation?

We believe that multilateral legal norms and instruments enjoy universal legality and acceptance. Decisions taken in exclusive or non-institutionalized multilateral forums will not have legitimacy in the long term. We must therefore reaffirm our strong commitment to multilateralism and multilateral approaches towards disarmament.

In order to show seriousness about disarmament, some life will have to be put back in the CD so that it can play its role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We must also fully involve the First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament Commission in addressing issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. These forums should not be turned into empty, cosmetic shells. That said, the working methods of the disarmament machinery must be improved and made more effective.

The *second* challenge is to resolve the tension between nuclear *legality* and nuclear *reality*. This has at least three dimensions.

One, five nuclear-weapon States have undertaken legal commitments to achieve nuclear disarmament. Some progress has been made. More needs to be done. There is a perception that the nuclear Powers intend to retain their nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future. We believe that a credible programme of work for nuclear disarmament, within a reasonable time frame, is essential to revalidate the “bargain” between disarmament and non-proliferation and to safeguard the vital security interests of a majority of States.

Two, there are three other nuclear-weapon States, which are also not likely to renounce their capabilities in the foreseeable future outside the framework of a programme of global nuclear disarmament or regional arms control and conflict resolution. IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei has called for the inclusion of the three non-NPT nuclear States in future talks on non-proliferation and disarmament. Such calls should be heeded. Pakistan is a de facto nuclear State. In this context, legality has to match reality. De facto needs to be changed to de jure.

Three, cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should continue to enjoy international sanction. The questions related to the sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle should be addressed equitably and in a non-discriminatory manner.

We can go a step further and convene an international conference to resolve these tensions between legality and reality.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

The *third* challenge is to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. Disarmament and non-proliferation are the two sides of the same coin. They cannot be separated. The delicate balance between them must be maintained and preserved. The primacy of nuclear weapons in national security policies has a demonstration effect and a spillover impact on disarmament.

The *fourth* challenge is to fight terrorism and deny WMD access to terrorists.

And I would say the *fifth* challenge is to promote a genuine dialogue between the *haves* and the *have-nots*, because in the current environment they are talking past each other.

From the mid-1970s to 1998, when Pakistan became an overt nuclear Power, we proposed several regional disarmament measures, but they were not supported by our primary interlocutors. Post-tests, for our national defence and security, we opted for a minimum credible deterrence.

Today, realistically speaking, South Asia may be a long way from disarmament, but Pakistan is against an open-ended strategic or conventional arms race in our region. We will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We support international arms control and disarmament initiatives and efforts.

Pakistan is observing a voluntary, unilateral moratorium on further nuclear tests, and we are ready to participate in negotiations on a fissile material treaty in accordance with the Shannon mandate.

Pakistan is pursuing with India a strategic restraint regime which has three constituents - nuclear and missile restraint, conventional balance and conflict resolution. We are making some headway. Last year Pakistan and India affirmed that their respective nuclear capabilities, based on their national security imperatives, constitute a factory of stability. Beyond declaratory statements, we are also working on strategic stability, confidence-building and risk reduction. We are engaging India to find a win-win, just and lasting solution of Kashmir.

Today, the Conference on Disarmament faces a crisis of relevance and functionality. The CD has faced and survived similar crises of inaction and self-doubt in the past. The reasons for the present hiatus are political, not procedural. In order to energize the CD, we need to understand the enormity of the threats posed by WMD and demonstrate willingness to address them collectively. To achieve this objective, we should break the political deadlock through debate and dialogue. Procedures will then fall into place automatically. To move on to substance, we need clarity of purpose, political will and resilience.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Streuli.

Mr. STREULI (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, your invitation to delegations in this Conference to focus their statements over the next few weeks within a thematic structure calls for the full cooperation of my delegation. Switzerland supports all multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament and arms control that seek to achieve concrete and verifiable results. For Switzerland the NPT is the sole global legally binding instrument for the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is thus an essential tool for international peace and stability. Switzerland stresses that the emphasis currently being placed on nuclear proliferation should not lead to neglect of the two other pillars on which the NPT rests, including that of nuclear disarmament. Consequently, Switzerland stresses the need to respect the compromise that made possible the conclusion of the NPT between States renouncing nuclear weapons in exchange for a commitment on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to continue their efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Whereas the vast majority of non-nuclear-weapon States have respected their commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons, we call on the nuclear-weapon States to continue the step-by-step implementation of their disarmament obligations. Undeniably there have been positive developments since the 2000 Review Conference. Thus the SORT Treaty should lead to a considerable reduction in strategic nuclear weapons - a step in the right direction that should be commended. Nonetheless, Switzerland is of the opinion that, if it is to be credible, any measure of nuclear disarmament, whether bilateral or unilateral, should espouse the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verification.

In the area of non-strategic nuclear weapons, the situation remains ambiguous. We note a big gap between unilateral promises and actual achievements.

Switzerland stands by all the commitments entered into in the Final Documents of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. Regarding what was agreed in 1995, Switzerland emphasizes the importance of observing the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament", and in particular the following points, which have begun to take shape: the prompt ratification of the CTBT by the States concerned in annex 2 of the Treaty; the setting up of an ad hoc committee in the CD to begin negotiations on an FMCT treaty; the negotiation of a binding multilateral instrument in the framework of the CD to provide negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon State parties to the NPT. In short, Switzerland supports proposals for an exchange of views on practical measures that could be adopted to move forward systematically and progressively so as to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament. In doing so, my country will consider different approaches to multilateral work that could be undertaken in the future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Switzerland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Macedo.

Mr. MACEDO (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference and assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Mexico in carrying out your work. I would also like to express the best wishes of my delegation and my personal best wishes to my very good friends Ambassador Chris Sanders and his wife Marianne, whom we will miss very much in Geneva. I am sure that they will be successful in their new assignment. *Tot ziens*, Chris.

My delegation fully supports the statement made by the distinguished delegate of Ethiopia speaking on behalf of the G-21. I would like to add a few brief comments which are of particular interest to my Government. As we have already said, Mexico welcomes your suggestion that the Conference should take up in a structured way the four main issues contained in the five Ambassadors' initiative. We hope that this exercise will make it possible to continue the dialogue which began last year during Mexico's term as President and will lead us to the swift adoption of a programme of work, thus overcoming the intolerable deadlock in which the Conference has found itself for the past eight years.

The international community hopes and demands that this body should comply with its obligation to negotiate. Negotiating does not necessarily mean arriving at an agreement. Reach an agreement we may, but negotiate we must. Achieving an agreement is our prerogative, and negotiating is our obligation. My delegation would like to reaffirm that it could support any initiative leading to a balanced programme of work, and in this context it supported the five Ambassadors' proposal, which, although it does not satisfy us in every respect, we believe would be a good basis for starting our work. We are still waiting for those delegations which have difficulties with it to present acceptable alternatives.

Mexico's position in favour of the elimination of nuclear weapons is well known. My country is convinced that a collective system of security which can establish, maintain and consolidate genuine and long-lasting international peace and security cannot be built on the basis of a system of balanced deterrence or doctrines of strategic security involving the accumulation or development of nuclear weapons.

We reaffirm the vital need to start a dialogue which can lead us to future multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament agreements. Again in this context the five Ambassadors' proposal provides us with a framework which, though limited, is still appropriate and flexible: that of an ad hoc committee in which views will be exchanged on all the aspects of nuclear disarmament, including the development, production, innovation, storage, transfer and use of nuclear weapons in all circumstances, as well as the implementation of the principles of irreversibility, transparency and verification of the measures that are adopted.

We would like to point out that during the informal plenaries held last year during Mexico's term as President, we took note of the proposal put forward by the delegation of Sweden regarding an evaluation of what has been achieved in the area of nuclear disarmament, the actions that have been taken against horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons,

(Mr. Macedo, Mexico)

and what remains to be done. We remain convinced that an exchange of this type might be a good starting point for systematic and serious consideration of the issue. On repeated occasions we have heard the nuclear-weapon States claiming that they are complying with their obligations under article VI of the NPT. In the view of my delegation, they could take this opportunity to outline to this forum their plans for the destruction of their nuclear stockpiles.

Mexico remains strongly committed to the regime established under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and, in this context, cannot but express its profound disappointment at the lack of substantive results during the recent Review Conference. The Treaty is the cornerstone of the international security system, and we as its signatories must ensure strict compliance with each and every one of the commitments and obligations deriving from the Treaty. In the area of nuclear disarmament - which is an essential component of non-proliferation - the unambiguous commitment on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and the 13 Practical Steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference are of particular importance, and their implementation should be speeded up, as has just been pointed out by the coordinator of the Group of 21, and as General Assembly resolution 59/75 provides.

It is necessary for this Conference to once again take seriously the fundamental role entrusted to it by the international community a quarter of a century ago, as Ambassador Sanders pointed out just now, and to resume its negotiating work. We have the competence, the knowledge and the talent to do so. Let us show the necessary political will to put all of them into practice and not continue letting down those who have placed their trust in us.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. My next speaker is the delegation of Italy. Ambassador Trezza.

Mr. TREZZA (Italy): Mr. President, last week we already expressed our support of your suggestion to initiate substantive debate on the core issues which are debated in the CD, and we are very pleased about the discussions we have had so far this morning. This is also the moment to pay tribute to Ambassador Chris Sanders and to the key role that he played both in the CD and in other forums here in Geneva.

We are pleased to participate today in a discussion focused on nuclear disarmament, an issue to which a significant number of countries attribute priority in the CD. We believe that this discussion is timely in the light of the results, or rather the lack of substantive results, of the seventh NPT Review Conference. Nuclear disarmament is one of the pillars of that Treaty. In spite of our efforts, no consensual indications were reached at the Conference in New York on how to proceed on this theme. The fact that two working papers, respectively of the Chairman of Main Committee I and the Chairman of its subsidiary body, were attached to the Main Committee's report can be of no guidance since these papers were not consensual and did not reflect the views of States parties.

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

After the conclusion of the NPT Review Conference, the ball of nuclear disarmament is, more than in the past, in the court of the Conference on Disarmament. In spite of the inconclusive results - and here I share the views expressed by Ambassador Skotnikov of the Russian Federation - we believe that there was an evolution in New York on nuclear disarmament, and we in the CD should take stock of it.

Being a member of the European Union, Italy wishes to focus first of all on the value added given by the European Union. We will not enumerate all the provisions pertinent to nuclear disarmament which are contained in the European Union common position established in view of the Review Conference. The distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the European Union presidency, presented the conclusions drawn by the European Union from the Review Conference to the CD last week and introduced our common position as an official document. The positions expressed include support for the decisions and resolution and Final Document of the two previous review conferences, support for article VI of the Treaty, non-strategic nuclear weapons, the concept of irreversibility and the relevance of the G-8 Global Partnership as a new additional feature of nuclear disarmament.

But other significant developments took place in New York. Both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States reconfirmed their engagements under article VI. An effort was made by nuclear-weapon States to present in a more transparent way figures on their nuclear arsenals and on their reduction. An increasing, yet insufficient, number of countries reported on their implementation of article VI and other relevant NPT provisions on nuclear disarmament. We also took good note of the priorities and preoccupations expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement, which reiterated its long-standing position of principle on disarmament taken at the Summits and Ministerial Conferences, the latest of which was the Ministerial Conference of Durban in August of last year.

There was, moreover, a broad appreciation of some trends and recent developments in nuclear disarmament: acknowledgement of nuclear arms reductions after the cold war, the welcoming of the Moscow Treaty, Libya's renunciation of its nuclear programmes, the Global Partnership. Major concerns were also widely shared: the withdrawal from the Treaty by one country coupled with the alarming announcement of its possession of nuclear weapons, the nuclear terrorist threat, long-standing undeclared nuclear activities and clandestine networks, also the nuclear activities of countries which still have not joined the NPT.

In spite of some diverging positions reflecting different priorities on nuclear disarmament, we believe that significant common ground emerged from the general debate and the substantive discussions at the NPT conference. Unfortunately it was shadowed by an unreasonably long and controversial procedural debate. All of us in the CD, including member States not party to the NPT, should now work on the basis of that common ground, including the European Union common position.

We share the aspirations of those who advocate more efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons and we will continue, together with our European Union partners, to encourage progress in this field. In order to find an understanding on a realistic way forward in the CD, we could therefore agree on the establishment of subsidiary bodies, one of which would deal

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

with nuclear disarmament. Within this body, information and views would be exchanged on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to attain the objective of nuclear disarmament, and in doing so, approaches towards potential future work of a multilateral character would be examined.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker is the delegation of Canada. Ambassador Meyer.

Mr. MEYER (Canada): Mr. President, let me first extend my congratulations and those of my delegation to you on assuming the presidency of this Conference, and we wish you every success in steering the CD back into productive channels.

Canada appreciates your invitation to CD members to participate in a structured exchange of views in the plenary, which we hope will bring us all forward towards a consensus programme of work, so that discussion and negotiation can begin in earnest.

In the interim, we welcome this occasion to focus on an important issue for all of us, that of nuclear disarmament. It is an issue clearly deserving of multilateral discussion - and more. In the aftermath of the NPT Review Conference, Canada believes that the reactivation of multilateral activity in this area is a key priority.

The CD potentially has a major role to play here. We must use the opportunity this forum offers, ideally in an ad hoc committee, to consider pressing issues in the realm of nuclear disarmament. The proposed mandate for this Committee, contained in the A-5 proposal and the "food for thought" non-paper, calls for it to exchange information and views on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to attain the objective of nuclear disarmament and the cessation of the arms race. We think negotiations under this broad mandate could benefit from a more focused approach that would take up specific topics and measures relevant to the nuclear disarmament effort.

We would welcome, for example, explanations of nuclear doctrine and policy - including from non-NPT States. These would help dispel confusion and misunderstanding that is much in evidence in this area, and would contribute to building the confidence and trust that is so vitally needed. Also of wide interest would be sharing information about plans for implementing nuclear disarmament, challenges and impediments encountered, measures undertaken or being considered.

Other issues for our attention could be the consideration of compliance, how best to implement principles of irreversibility and transparency and addressing the verification dimension, where we might consider further the interesting work undertaken by the United Kingdom in this field. Confidence-building measures like de-alerting and de-mating could also be examined. Non-strategic nuclear weapons is another issue of wide interest, for nuclear disarmament as well as regional and international security, that would benefit from a focused exchange here.

(Mr. Meyer, Canada)

We can thus make good use of an ad hoc committee, and of any discussion in plenary prior to the finalization of a programme of work. All States can participate in such an exchange, explaining actions and measures undertaken, bringing forward ideas for discussion, including some of those proposed during the recent NPT Review Conference.

While not a substitute for actual disarmament action, at the very least, such a dialogue would sustain ongoing attention to nuclear disarmament, encourage transparency, and enable substantive discussion of specific issues and approaches. We all need to be cognizant of the disappointment of so many, inside and outside governments, at the lack of a substantive outcome from the Review Conference. While the CD is not an NPT subsidiary body, it is nevertheless a primary multilateral instance seized with issues of nuclear disarmament. We owe it to ourselves and to our publics to make best use of our forum in addressing the very real problems and possibilities associated with the nuclear disarmament enterprise.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker is the delegation of Sweden. Ambassador Borsiin Bonnier.

Ms. BORSIIN BONNIER (Sweden): Mr. President, welcome to the Chair. It is very good to see a good friend and neighbour in the Chair. There are many ways to deal with neighbourly problems. I think Norway and Sweden did a good job. These days - you don't know perhaps, but these days we are happily celebrating together our 100th anniversary of a very peaceful and good divorce.

To departing Chris Sanders, I will just say, enjoy your next life. You deserve it.

We should remember that serious efforts are being made to reform the United Nations and other international organizations so that they can more effectively meet the challenges of an ever more globalized world. In a few months' time our heads of State and government will focus on these issues when they meet in New York. This will include matters related to international peace and security.

It is only a question of time before the disarmament machinery established by SSOD-1 in 1978 will also be up for review. The existing machinery is not working very well, but we do need effective multilateral, global instruments to address serious global threats and challenges to our common security. Both new and old ones. And as my Foreign Minister stated in this hall a few months ago, the long-standing impasse in the CD is of grave concern. The failure to break the deadlock and to get the CD back to work is not diplomatic. It is political.

The recently concluded NPT Review Conference is another missed opportunity to effectively use the multilateral instruments available to us. Again the failure was not diplomatic, but political. But the Treaty itself and its norms, including the outcomes from previous Review Conferences, remain valid and constitute benchmarks for our further work. And further work is called for.

(Ms. Borsiin Bonnier, Sweden)

I commend your initiative to invite member States to address the subject matters identified in the “food for thought” paper in a structured and focused manner. I think today’s list of speakers is remarkable by CD standards. We need to consider the contribution the CD could make to substantive global security concerns and we need to discuss substance, while waiting for a few capitals to come around to agreeing to a programme of work based on this paper. And it is only fitting that the first subject matter for these plenaries is nuclear disarmament.

We have seen a very welcome reduction in the arsenals of the nuclear-weapons States, mainly in the huge stocks of the United States and Russia. But the remaining nuclear stockpiles are still enormous, and the threat they imply remains a serious global security concern. The international community needs to feel confident that the nuclear-weapons States are well on their way towards the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Doubts do prevail.

At the same time we are also faced with a number of disturbing new developments. Interest is shown in developing more modern, smaller and more usable nuclear weapons. Serious challenges to the NPT regime have been made from several quarters, including withdrawal in an attempt to achieve nuclear-weapon-State status. And the risk of even non-State actors acquiring nuclear weapons has become a distinct possibility.

So what could we now do in the CD to “deal with” nuclear disarmament in a way that takes into account both old and new threats? First and foremost, we should at long last get down to negotiating an FMCT, meeting both disarmament and proliferation concerns. But since this will be the main topic at a later plenary meeting, I will not now further elaborate on that.

The “food for thought” paper we have before us suggests the establishment of an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament. According to the proposed mandate, the committee should inter alia “exchange information and views” as well as “examine approaches towards potential future work of a multilateral character”. What might this entail?

In the informal session that we had on 13 May 2004, I outlined some possible ways to approach the issues at hand, and I thank our Mexican colleague for recalling that a few minutes ago. This is, of course, not a full Swedish disarmament agenda, but rather some approaches on how we can get started.

I believe it would be useful if the CD could take stock of what disarmament efforts have already been made or are ongoing in other contexts. As things stand today, despite more information lately, we do not have a clear and global picture of the reductions that have actually been made, which ones are being planned and what remains. It might seem like basics, and I think it is. This approach implies that, while respecting the need to protect vital security interests, all States possessing nuclear weapons are willing to engage in such a trust-building and confidence-building exercise with a high enough degree of transparency.

Secondly, I brought up in May, and I am pleased that my Canadian colleague has also brought our attention to this issue: it would also be useful for the CD to discuss the role of nuclear weapons in the military and security doctrines of today, and in the foreseeable future.

(Ms. Borsiin Bonnier, Sweden)

What kinds of threats would possibly yield a nuclear response? And what are the concerns that prompt States to preserve or seek or keep open the possibilities of a nuclear option? Such a discussion in the CD could be of particular interest since the CD membership includes a number of nuclear-capable States, both parties and non-parties to the NPT.

It would also be useful to consider if there are any nuclear disarmament measures which would be particularly pertinent also from a non-proliferation perspective, not least to reduce the risk of existing nuclear weapons falling into the hands of non-State actors. Could priority be given to specific kinds of nuclear weapons, such as relatively small and portable non-strategic ones?

These are some thoughts. There are many other things one could add, but these are some thoughts where I think deep discussion of these issues would open the way in a serious manner to dealing with these issues. And it is within the proposed mandate.

The PRESIDENT: I thank my neighbour, the representative of Sweden, for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and my country. The next speaker is the delegation of Chile. Ambassador Martabit.

Mr. MARTABIT (Chile) (translated from Spanish): On behalf of the delegation of Chile, Mr. President, allow me to convey to you our congratulations and pleasure at seeing you chairing our work, and to assure you of our full cooperation. We join in the cordial tributes to Ambassador Chris Sanders, whose creativity and constancy are deeply appreciated, and we wish him success and good luck in his new endeavours.

First of all I would like to express our support for the statement made by the Ambassador of Ethiopia on behalf of the Group of 21, and also to state that the delegation of Chile supports your proposal to convene four formal plenary meetings in order to invite delegations to make statements on those issues on the agenda that have been identified in the "food for thought" paper.

Our country, however, thinks that the Conference's first task is to give concrete form to its programme of work and tackle substantive work. This is so given the fact that the Conference is characterized by its role as a negotiating forum, and not merely a deliberative one. Chile understands this type of initiative and supports it as an action that is complementary to our efforts to break the stalemate in this main multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament instruments. We feel this is a useful effort for maintaining a forum for dialogue and reflection among the member countries, but in no way is it to be seen as a substitute for the main endeavour, which is the adoption of a programme of work and the early initiation of substantive negotiations. We have said this many times, but we will have to keep repeating it. Over these eight years of inactivity a critical mass has been growing, around which efforts have been made to explore and promote consensus. In that regard the five Ambassadors' initiative is a proposal that has enjoyed substantive support in the Conference, as we have also seen once again today,

(Mr. Martabit, Chile)

and thus we continue to maintain that it can serve as a basis for generating the political will necessary for getting it going. We firmly believe in the importance of the Conference on Disarmament and the need to act accordingly so as to restore its leading role in the building of world peace and security.

Without prejudice to the above, one could well wonder whether the time has not yet come to allow some space for thinking about the future role of the Conference in the light of the decisive factors in the international context, and I am sure that this exercise you have invited us to take part in can provide a great deal of light in that connection. We are aware that now is not the time to take up this issue, but we will be doing so on a future occasion.

We are here now to deal with the issue of nuclear disarmament. In taking up this issue, as in the other areas that we will be tackling later on, Chile draws on humanist principles and values channelled through a realistic and pragmatic policy. For our country, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which highlighted the “obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations [on] nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict ... international control”, constitutes a solid doctrinal basis in this area, which cannot and should not be sidestepped. Progress towards complete nuclear disarmament is a priority for Chile. This ultimate objective that we share should not cause us to lose sight of the sense of opportunity offered by the completion of specific concrete actions. We recognize that there is an indissoluble link between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We are convinced that if there is no concrete progress in this second dimension, the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons will become increasingly remote.

We also take a realistic approach to the 13 Practical Steps towards nuclear disarmament contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. We continue to support the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We support the initiative of holding a conference of States parties with a view to promoting its entry into force. We endorse the moratorium on nuclear tests pending the entry into force of the above-mentioned instrument. We would like to see the early initiation of negotiations on the prohibition and storage of fissile material. We continue to support the start of negotiations on the basis of the Shannon mandate. We reaffirm the need to establish a subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Despite the above, this is a prerequisite for the adoption of a programme of work of the Conference. We insist on the application of the principle of irreversibility to the process of nuclear disarmament, and to all related mechanisms. We insist on the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear States to carry out the complete elimination of nuclear stockpiles, as stipulated in article VI of the NPT. In this area, we recognize the progress that has been made, as referred to this morning, regarding the reduction of nuclear warheads and the lowering of alert thresholds. We reaffirm that the ultimate goal of the efforts of States parties is general and complete disarmament under effective international control. We firmly support Security Council resolution 1540, which strengthens regimes for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly as regards the danger of nuclear terrorism. In this area, I am also pleased to report that Chile has ratified the 12 universal United Nations conventions against

(Mr. Martabit, Chile)

terrorism, and hopes to accede to the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which is to be opened for signature on 14 September this year. At the same time, we will be supporting the amendments proposed to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material at the conference which will be taking place to that end in Vienna from 4 to 8 July. We welcome the impact of the Hague Code of Conduct and the action against the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles. We reaffirm the importance of non-treaty regimes against proliferation, such as the MTCR and the Australia and Wassenaar groups. We emphasize the significance of regional and subregional mechanisms in achieving nuclear disarmament.

Before I conclude, allow me to point out that nuclear-weapon-free zones such as those established under the Antarctic, Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba treaties, as well as the unilateral declaration by Mongolia, have made a vital contribution. My country hopes that these initiatives will extend to new areas such as the Middle East and Central Asia. The recent international conference of States parties and signatories of treaties establishing such zones, the first of its kind, held in Mexico, offered an opportunity to endorse the importance of such efforts as an effective mechanism in achieving progress towards nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, we are in favour of the negotiation of a universal, legally binding instrument that would assure non-nuclear-weapon States or those which have renounced the possession of such weapons that such weapons will not be used against them.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and kind words to the Chair. The next speaker is the delegation of Germany. Ambassador Heinsberg.

Mr. HEINSBERG (Germany): Mr. President, may I just congratulate you on assuming your office and commend you on your initiative for a thorough discussion, in formal plenaries, of the main issues before the CD, including the new issues?

I would also like to take the opportunity to put on record my high professional and personal appreciation and esteem for our distinguished colleague Chris Sanders, who is leaving the CD today, and express my best wishes to him and his family.

Foreign Minister Fischer underlined explicitly in his speech at the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that the aim of German policy remains a world that is free of the threat of nuclear weapons. There is general agreement on the final goal of the process of nuclear disarmament, that is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That goal was formulated in the Final Document of SSOD-1 in 1978 and was made explicit again in the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, in which the nuclear-weapon States subsequently declared their "unequivocal undertaking ... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals" as part of the 13 Practical Steps to implement article VI of the NPT.

(Mr. Heinsberg, Germany)

These decisions did not occur in a vacuum. It is the end of the cold war, the end of the East-West confrontation, which has brought with it these new opportunities for practical and concrete measures in the field of nuclear disarmament reflected in the commitments of those documents. At the same time, the international security situation has in many ways become even more complex. Especially at a regional level, the conflict potential has increased. The threats posed by the continuing proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery have become more pronounced. Developments during the last years have given rise to mounting concerns regarding continuing proliferation and non-compliance with the non-proliferation obligations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The possible risk of nuclear weapons programmes being pursued under the cover of civilian nuclear programmes are matters of particular concern.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Both are fundamentally important, both are priorities and none of them should be dealt with at the expense of the other. The NPT is the most universal multilateral treaty. It is of paramount importance to maintain its authority and its integrity in all its aspects. Furthermore, pursuing universal adherence to the Treaty stands for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and thus contributes to enhanced regional and international security and stability.

We observe growing frustration regarding the slow progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. Germany regrets that the 2005 NPT Review Conference has contributed to that frustration instead of giving new impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament.

The complete elimination of nuclear weapons can only be achieved by an incremental approach, with the 13 Practical Steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of article VI adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference as the performance benchmark for the disarmament process. Continued tangible progress towards irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament is indispensable.

First and foremost, we have to start negotiations in the CD on a fissile material cut-off treaty. In this context, I recall paragraph 36 of the common position of the European Union relating to the 2005 NPT Review Conference, which “[appeals] again to the Disarmament Conference for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, without preconditions, and bearing in mind the Special Coordinator’s report and the mandate included therein”. An FMCT would constitute a new substantial nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measure, an earnest of effective multilateralism and an essential building-block of our international security system.

As part of the overall nuclear disarmament process, non-strategic nuclear weapons as well must be reduced in a verifiable and irreversible manner on all sides. In Germany, there is a serious public debate on this issue which calls for practical steps. The European Union common position on the 2005 NPT Review Conference also highlights this aim. In it, the European Union takes up a step-by-step approach that was advocated in a working paper that Germany presented to the first Preparatory Committee for the seventh NPT Review Conference.

(Mr. Heinsberg, Germany)

An incremental approach is needed, first with rather modest confidence-building measures as, for example, the reaffirmation of the 1991-1992 Presidential nuclear initiatives by the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as well as a voluntary exchange of information by all nuclear-weapon States on existing holdings of non-strategic nuclear weapons, taking into account the protection of confidential information.

Furthermore, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty at the earliest possible date is of key importance for any progress in this field. That is why Germany calls upon all States that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty, and in particular those whose ratification is required for early entry into force, to do so without delay and without conditions.

Germany fully supports the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body in the CD to deal with nuclear disarmament as called for in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and as contained in the A-5 proposal as well as in the “food for thought” paper.

The Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference also agreed “that legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the [NPT] strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime”, and furthermore noted “the establishment in March 1998 by the Conference on Disarmament of the Ad Hoc Committee on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons”. Therefore, and in line with paragraph 38 of the European Union common position, Germany also supports the establishment of a CD ad hoc committee as provided for in paragraph 1 of the revised A-5 proposal, as contained in document CD/1693/Rev.1.

Let me emphasize, in concluding, that overcoming the stalemate of the CD would give a decisive impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and kind words to the Chair. The next speaker is the delegation of India, Ambassador Prasad.

Mr. PRASAD (India): Mr. President, please accept my delegation’s warm felicitations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are most happy to see you in the Chair and assure you of our fullest support. We would like to associate ourselves with the tribute you paid to Ambassador Chris Sanders in your opening remarks. We are going to miss his commitment and energy in Geneva.

We are conscious of the burden you bear and the challenge on your hands while presiding over the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament that has not actually carried out any substantive work since 1999. This has happened not for want of exertion on your part or on the part of the past CD Presidents but because we, the members of the Conference on Disarmament, have been unable to arrive at a consensus on a programme of work. We would like to assure you of the constructive cooperation of our delegation in seeking a way out of the CD’s current impasse.

(Mr. Prasad, India)

Unfortunately, some of the current diagnosis of the CD's present predicament locates the problem in process rather than politics. Some say the CD's crisis of relevance results in part from its dysfunctional decision-making procedures that have been said to paralyse the Conference on Disarmament. Others say that this body has outlived its utility and should be disbanded forthwith and that, instead of having a single multilateral negotiating body, the Security Council should set up ad hoc bodies to take on discrete tasks. Such a prognosis and advice could be counterproductive. In 1933, some countries withdrew from the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of the League of Nations. This presaged their withdrawal from the League of Nations itself, as also the demise of the World Disarmament Conference, if not also the outbreak of the Second World War. The historical context is different today, but the disbanding of our body will not bode well for global peace and security.

The lack of agreement on the CD's programme of work is symptomatic of the decline of the multilateral ethic. More specifically, it is reflective of the lack of political will. Moreover, this is not a reflection of a simplistic absence of resolve on the part of some of the key constituents of the Conference on Disarmament. It is the consequence of their assessment that the time is perhaps not right or that it is not perhaps in their national security interest to engage in negotiations or deliberations over the issues on the agenda of the CD. The fact is that specific national positions could be both protected and reconciled for the larger common good through the course of negotiations conducted on the basis of consensus. A case in point is the success in New York less than a week ago of the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly in concluding negotiations on an international instrument to enable States to identify illicit small arms and light weapons. We now have an instrument that provides universal standards for the marking of all small arms and light weapons and for international cooperation for the tracing of the illicit ones. The consensus principle helped rather than hindered the process of reaching agreement on the instrument. There is no reason why it should come in the way of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament.

In view of the growing impatience with this body's lack of productive work, our task remains, besides appealing to good sense and wisdom, to generate ideas that could persuade member States to establish a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament that reflects the concerns and priorities of all its member States and is responsive to the expectations of the international community. It is in this specific context that India is supportive of the A-5 proposal. We continue to believe that it could form the basis for reaching consensus on the CD's programme of work.

Our delegation has taken the floor in response to your invitation to delegations to speak on the core issues of our agenda, in the hope that interventions could spur ideas on how we could proceed further in commencing negotiations within this body on these core issues. Otherwise, our debate will be meaningless, since our national positions are well known and adequately articulated. Speaking about the same issues and delivering general statements on them is in no way a substitute for the adoption of a programme of work, which remains our critical objective.

(Mr. Prasad, India)

While articulating his vision of free India's foreign policy, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, once said in the Constituent Assembly: "It is well for us to say that we stand for peace and freedom, and yet that does not convey much to anybody, except a pious hope." By itself, he explained, such an assertion had no particular meaning, because every country is prepared to say the same thing, whether it means it or not. All members of the Conference on Disarmament, indeed the entire membership of the United Nations, agreed, by consensus, on a set of goals to secure peace, security and disarmament, reflected in the Final Document of the General Assembly's first special session on disarmament in 1978. These constitute, essentially, the core agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. The test of our commitment to peace, security and disarmament is the willingness to undertake negotiations to accomplish the given objectives. Without a movement in that direction, all expression of pious hopes is but empty talk.

The Final Document of SSOD-1 recognized that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and that effective measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war have the highest priority. Twenty-seven years later, when the cold war has ended, we will not profit by quibbling on this postulate. It would suffice for us to remember and reiterate it. Many colleagues here have acknowledged that the concept of mutually assured destruction is anachronistic today. The dictum that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought, enunciated by President Reagan at the United Nations General Assembly in 1983, is accepted now as conventional wisdom.

In the informal discussions on nuclear disarmament last year, and in Ambassador Skotnikov's statement earlier today, we heard upbeat assessments about the receding threat of a bilateral nuclear arms race between the United States and the Russian Federation. They have significantly reduced their strategic arsenals by improving inventory management and rationalization of their nuclear weapons. We welcome the prospect of more radical reductions. This bilateral process, well begun, must be taken to its logical conclusion, by completely ridding the world of nuclear weapons, through a time-bound programme of nuclear disarmament.

India fully subscribes to the position of the G-21 on the programme of work, clearly enunciated in statements made by Ambassador Naéla Gabr of Egypt in the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 15 March 2005 and by Ambassador Yimer today. Ambassador Gabr expressed also the G-21's reaffirmation of its proposal on nuclear disarmament, as contained in document CD/1570.

The idea of implementing a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework was the core idea of the action plan unveiled by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1988 at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The action plan provided for the elimination of nuclear weapons of all categories, tactical, medium-range and strategic. It brought within the fold of nuclear disarmament all the nuclear-weapon States as well as the nuclear-capable States. It also provided for relevant collateral measures, including the dismantling of doctrines that have

(Mr. Prasad, India)

underpinned the nuclear arms race and their replacement by new doctrines based on non-violence and cooperation. It also spelt out the parameters and principles that could govern a nuclear-weapon-free world order. The core principle of the plan has continuing relevance today.

As a nuclear-weapon State, India is conscious of its special responsibility towards nuclear disarmament. Our defensive security posture is marked by responsibility, restraint and predictability, and is predicated on a minimum credible deterrence that precludes the doctrines of first use or pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons, or the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We have continued to advocate legally binding international instruments to enshrine these commitments, as also to negotiate a legally binding instrument on assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States. Until we reach agreement on a phased and time-bound programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons, which is indeed the best way to eliminate the dangers both of nuclear war and nuclear proliferation, we support, as an interim measure, a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. We remain committed to our unilateral moratorium on nuclear weapons testing and to participate in negotiations on a multilateral, non-discriminatory and effectively and internationally verifiable fissile materials cut-off treaty. In sum, India's commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament remains undiminished.

We also share the concerns of the international community concerning the possible connection between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. There is a danger of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists, euphemistically covered by the term "non-State entities". We emphasize in this regard State responsibility and accountability for combating terrorism, eliminating its support infrastructure and preventing proliferation. Our own record in preventing the proliferation of sensitive goods and technologies has remained impeccable.

As members of this multicultural negotiating body, we remain strong votaries of multilateralism in global disarmament efforts. Rule-based, multilaterally negotiated and legally binding verifiable and non-discriminatory instruments provide the best mechanism to deal with disarmament and arms control. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is a global issue and needs to be addressed in a multilateral framework.

The A-5 proposal for the CD's programme of work provides for a less-than-negotiating mandate for the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. Our acceptance of the A-5 proposal in no way diminishes our commitment to the immediate commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We have accepted the A-5 proposal in a spirit of flexibility and constructive approach in order to have the Conference on Disarmament adopt a programme of work, enabling the commencement of negotiations. The success or otherwise of these plenary meetings will be judged against the yardstick of whether this happens or not. Any proposal to do less than that would not further our objectives.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for his statement and kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker is the representative of South Africa, Ambassador Mtshali.

Ms. MTSHALI (South Africa): Mr. President, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are confident that through your diplomatic skills and good understanding of issues in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, we will have fruitful deliberations. I want to assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation in this endeavour.

I would also like to join other delegations in expressing our sincere appreciation to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Nigeria, for the able manner in which he presided over our deliberations during his tenure. We also join other delegations in wishing Ambassador Chris Sanders well, wherever he is going.

South Africa also associates itself with the statement presented by Ethiopia on behalf of the G-21.

South Africa, and we believe most other delegations in this chamber, are very disappointed with the failure of the NPT Review Conference. This leaves us in a precarious situation of questionable prospects for nuclear disarmament. While not seeking to use this meeting to interpret the failure of the NPT Review Conference, it is, however, important to underscore that this failure is an indictment that we have not risen to the challenge posed by nuclear weapons.

The present lack of political will is a serious impediment to nuclear disarmament. It manifests itself in many different ways, such as the selective application of the consensus rule by some delegations and the tendency by some nuclear-weapon States to systematically and determinedly oppose all attempts to be involved in a substantive engagement on nuclear disarmament. Regrettably, the lack of political will continues to prevent some of the major multilateral frameworks for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control from reaching agreement on procedural issues, such as their agendas and programmes of work. The deadlock in the CD on its programme of work and the time spent at the NPT Review Conference to reach agreement on its agenda are perfect examples that illustrate this point. South Africa urges delegations to avail the necessary political will that would advance the implementation of previous agreed-upon nuclear disarmament commitments and undertakings.

South Africa believes that any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States is incompatible with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security. It is our view that continuous and irreversible progress in nuclear disarmament and other related nuclear arms control measures remains fundamental to the promotion of nuclear disarmament. The complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again therefore remains the only assurance against their use, and this should remain our goal.

Selectivity, avoidance or even minimization of certain issues in the disarmament discourse also undermines the foundations of multilateralism. As in many other multilateral forums, South Africa urges delegations to take into consideration the interests and concerns of others. In the event that such concerns are not compatible with those of specific role players,

(Ms. Mtshali, South Africa)

the delegations affected should offer credible alternatives that will advance our common objective, namely, nuclear disarmament. The give-and-take basics of multilateralism should inform our approaches in this regard, because multilateral solutions are sustainable and have the potential of advancing in earnest international peace and security.

My delegation is strongly of the view that challenges facing international peace and security today require from us all innovative ways of enhancing the implementation of nuclear disarmament. In meeting this expectation, South Africa would like to draw attention to a proposal on the following 12 interrelated measures contained in its statement in the general debate of the NPT Review Conference, which is as relevant now as it was then. All States should:

Spare no efforts to achieve universal adherence to the NPT, and the early entry into force of the CTBT;

Address the proliferation threat posed by non-State actors;

Further reinforce the IAEA safeguards norm as a means to prevent proliferation;

Discharge the special responsibility that rests on States who have the capability to develop nuclear weapons to build confidence with the international community that would remove any concerns about nuclear weapons proliferation;

Fully comply with commitments made to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and not act in any way that may be detrimental to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation or that may lead to a new nuclear arms race;

Accelerate the implementation of the 13 Practical Steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament agreed to at the 2000 Review Conference;

Resume in the Conference on Disarmament negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable fissile material treaty, taking into account both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives;

Establish an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament;

Recognize the imperative character of the principles of irreversibility and transparency for all nuclear disarmament measures, and the need to develop further adequate and efficient verification capabilities;

Enter into negotiations on legally binding security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties.

(Ms. Mtshali, South Africa)

Nuclear-weapon States should:

Take further steps to reduce their non-strategic nuclear arsenals, and not to develop new types of nuclear weapons, in accordance with their commitment to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in their security policies;

Complete and implement arrangements to place fissile material no longer required for military purposes under international verification.

These measures are premised on our belief that we need to focus our attention on reaching consensus agreements on what we believe to be implementable and achievable in advancing nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of South Africa for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker is New Zealand, Ambassador Caughley.

Mr. CAUGHLEY (New Zealand): Mr. President, the New Zealand delegation is delighted to see you chairing this body, and we echo your tribute and farewell to Ambassador Chris Sanders, our neighbour. We congratulate our other neighbour, Nigeria, on all its efforts as President of the CD.

We welcome your initiative, in the exercise of the Presidential prerogative, to structure our work in the way you foreshadowed last week. We view the schedule of meetings and topics that you have proposed not as a substitute to the elusive programme of work but rather as designed to help the Conference resolve the issues over that programme.

And, as my delegation noted on 1 February this year, we have no difficulty expressing our views on the formal record of the CD. We believe that it is appropriate to the standing of this forum and its gravity of purpose that as many of our deliberations as possible be conducted under the critical eye of the public.

In that vein, it is salutary to address nuclear disarmament in a formal manner as an issue in its own right rather than simply as one of the components of the CD's potential programme of work. It offers an opportunity to get to the roots of this fundamentally important subject - why it continues to be the first agenda item of this Conference as well as a principal ongoing concern.

As an aside, let me make a comment in relation to the CD's agenda. It might have a cold war orientation, as with other aspects of our work practices, including the regional groupings, but in case there were any doubt, the more crucial point is that in terms of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the obligation to negotiate effective measures on nuclear disarmament is unaffected by that orientation.

(Mr. Caughley, New Zealand)

The question why nuclear disarmament occupies such a central concern for the CD can be addressed on several levels: nuclear disarmament remains an agenda item because nuclear weapons continue to exist in extraordinary quantities, many times in excess of any credible perceived deterrent value with which they might be invested.

Nuclear disarmament continues to be an ongoing concern because progress in the rate of elimination of these weapons remains controversial. Full realization of the potential of the Moscow Treaty will undoubtedly be significant, but the concern of the international community over the very high number of nuclear weapons still remaining when that point is reached will not be sufficiently assuaged. Nuclear disarmament will continue to be a core issue for a long time yet.

Another level on which to address the question of why this subject continues to be a principal agenda item and of ongoing concern is the legal level. Here there are several strands. There is, of course, article VI of the NPT and the long-standing obligation to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”. The NPT, as we all know, entered into force over 35 years ago.

And there is also the ICJ’s advisory opinion of almost nine years ago to the effect that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict and that the nuclear-weapon States had not demonstrated any circumstances justifying legal use.

In addition, of course, there are the agreed outcomes of the NPT Review Conferences of 1995 and 2000, particularly the effective measures, Practical Steps and unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Bearing these various elements in mind, my Government was concerned at the efforts, ultimately unsuccessful, of several such States throughout the most recent NPT review process to undermine formally agreed steps towards nuclear disarmament, including the unequivocal undertaking to which I have just referred.

That was a major problem in the NPT Review Conference. Unfortunately, there is a parallel in the Conference on Disarmament. There is an unwillingness amongst several members of the CD to embrace nuclear disarmament in any manner that is commensurate with the obligations and legal precepts just mentioned.

This is a serious state of affairs in each instance, but to the extent that the same nuclear-weapon States that are unwilling to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament in the NPT are pursuing a similar policy in the CD their good faith is called doubly into question.

(Mr. Caughley, New Zealand)

The term “good faith” is not one that my delegation bandies round lightly. But we are all aware of the requirement of international law that a treaty must be interpreted in good faith in accordance with the ordinary meaning to be given to its terms in their context and in the light of its object and purpose.

The context for the purpose of the interpretation of a treaty comprises, in addition to the text, its preamble and annexes. In this regard, let me conclude this part of the statement on the legal implications of the current state of affairs with an additional reference in the Non-Proliferation Treaty to an intrinsic element affecting good faith. The preamble of the NPT urges the cooperation of all States in the attainment of the objective of nuclear disarmament.

My delegation urges the cooperation of all members of this Conference in agreeing to a work programme that deals with nuclear disarmament as one of its central components. It will be apparent from what has just been said that the readiness of delegations such as mine to agree to a work programme that contemplates treatment of nuclear disarmament in a manner, at least initially, that falls short of the commencement of actual negotiations represents a major compromise.

Such a compromise is possible only because of the importance we attach to addressing urgently current threats of proliferation through the negotiation of a fissile materials cut-off treaty. But our patience has limits. Far from accepting the rationalization that the current international security environment is not conducive to a greater rate of elimination of nuclear weapons, my delegation sees no signs of evidence that the existence of 1, 10, 20 or 30,000 nuclear weapons have made, or is making, this world a safer or better place. Quite the reverse.

What might help make a difference to international security would be the cooperation of all States, as envisaged in the preamble to the NPT, to develop and agree more effective nuclear disarmament measures in this Conference or in a more universal and procedurally less constrained manner. I make this point in the knowledge that delegations could expect, in addition, to be taking up here or elsewhere - and more or less contemporaneously, though not necessarily in equal measure - non-proliferation and other core issues long regarded as central international concerns covered by the CD's agenda.

In conclusion, my delegation's hope is that your initiative in scheduling these formal meetings will do two things. First, that it will elicit from delegations who have been unable to accept any of the work programme proposals to date not a repetition of what is unacceptable but a clear statement of a prescription that offers a realistic prospect of compromise. And second, that it will condition the CD to the reality that if that is not forthcoming, we must look to the United Nations Summit in New York in September to determine whether multilateral disarmament and arms control diplomacy needs to be returned to the drawing boards and new parameters set. Whatever the outcome, the obligations to negotiate effective measures for nuclear disarmament will remain to be discharged.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of New Zealand for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair. The last speaker of this morning's meeting is the representative of Peru, Ambassador Rodríguez.

Ms. RODRIGUEZ (Peru) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking the Chair of this Conference and to pledge the support of my delegation for the efforts you are making to ensure that the Conference adopts a programme of work which is satisfactory to all. I would also like to join those who have expressed appreciation to Ambassador Sanders for his major contributions to the work of this Conference, in particular during his term as President, and to wish him all the best in his new duties.

My delegation supports the statement made by the Ambassador of Ethiopia on behalf of the G-21 and would like to place on record once again the concern felt by the Government of Peru at our inability to reach agreement in order to overcome the difficulties that have been facing the Conference for the last eight years in agreeing on a programme of work.

We support your initiative of convening four formal sessions of the Conference to deal with the four elements assigned priority by all member States, and we hope that this exercise will promote the resumption of the substantive work of the Conference. In accordance with what was agreed in last week's session, I will confine myself to dealing with the elements that we believe should be included when we deal with the question of nuclear disarmament.

Peru continues to consider the Non-Proliferation Treaty to be the cornerstone for avoiding proliferation and achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament. We deeply regret the failure of the Review Conference last May and the fact that various States parties did not show the political will which would have allowed substantive documents to be adopted with a view to strengthening the three fundamental pillars of the Treaty, that is, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, like the United Nations Secretary-General, we believe that this outcome does not call into question either the importance or the survival of the Treaty itself. The fact that the enormous nuclear arsenals have not been reduced and that new nuclear States have emerged has created a dangerous situation in terms of the large number of these weapons in existence which could be used by terrorist groups. In this context, and in the light of the failure of the Review Conference, we think it is essential to implement the 13 basic steps adopted during the sixth Review Conference in 2000. The decisions of 1995 and in particular those of 2000 continue to be valid, since no new agreements were formally reached in 2005. The Government of Peru believes it is urgent to negotiate a treaty which will halt the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

A number of trends which have emerged in recent years and the growing uncertainty that surrounds the nuclear issue make it increasingly necessary to have a legally binding instrument which will provide the non-nuclear countries with legal assurances that they will not be subjected to the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. Let us point out here that in the particular case of Latin America and the Caribbean, Additional Protocol I to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which has been accepted by the nuclear-weapon countries, has established a system for the regional application of negative security assurances. Peru, as the driving force behind the negotiation and subsequent adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco for the Prohibition

(Ms. Rodríguez, Peru)

of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, believes that it is of vital importance to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as to consolidate those that already exist, which will make it possible to progressively reduce the possibility of these weapons being used.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate my country's interest in the swift entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we hope will contribute to the progressive reduction and eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons. The lack of political will displayed in New York last May is nothing other than a reflection of what has been happening in the Conference on Disarmament for over eight years. As the Foreign Minister of Peru said in his statement on 15 March, we cannot go through a ninth consecutive year of deadlock in the substantive work of the Conference. We are prepared to work hand in hand with all the members of the Conference in looking for alternatives and solutions that will make it possible to adopt a programme of work which is satisfactory to all as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Peru for her statement and for her kind words addressed to the Chair.

We have concluded 20 speakers, 20 delegations have had the floor this morning. I will now suspend the meeting until 3 o'clock this afternoon. The first speaker this afternoon will be Brazil, followed by France and Argentina.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m. and resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: I now resume the 987th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. The first delegation to speak is Brazil. I give the floor to Ambassador da Rocha Paranhos.

Mr. da ROCHA PARANHOS (Brazil): I would like to start by expressing to our good friend Chris Sanders the best of luck, success and happiness in his new assignment, as well as to say that the Brazilian delegation fully endorses the statement that was made this morning by the distinguished representative of Ethiopia on behalf of the G-21.

Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your initiative of inviting us to make statements on nuclear disarmament, which is the utmost priority for Brazil in this forum.

Brazil was responsible in 2000, in the person of the current Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Celso Amorim, for the presentation of the "Amorim proposal" which is contained in document CD/1624 and which puts great emphasis on nuclear disarmament. This notwithstanding, and with a view to trying to help get consensus, including from those States that are resistant to any compromise, Brazil is flexible with regard to a programme of work. As a compromise offer, we have since 2004 supported the "A-5 proposal", which puts less strength on nuclear disarmament if compared with the proposal made by Brazil, and, more recently, indicated that the "food for thought" paper presented by Ambassador Chris Sanders, as an informal derivation of the A-5 proposal, could be a good basis for discussion in order to lead us to the adoption of a programme of work.

(Mr. da Rocha Paranhos, Brazil)

The nuclear-weapon States made an “unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals”, which must be honoured.

Brazil sees the pursuit of nuclear disarmament as a fundamental tool in addressing the international community’s concern about proliferation. Our focus must be on systematic, continuous and progressive efforts to implement the obligation in article VI of the NPT to pursue negotiations on effective measures on nuclear disarmament. Our endeavours in the Conference on Disarmament should be compatible with the letter and spirit of the NPT, including the decisions, resolutions and outcomes of all its previous conferences.

The 1995 Review Conference of the NPT as we all know, agreed on the indefinite - but not, I would stress, eternal - extension of the Treaty. In other words, the permanence of the NPT is directly linked to its accountability. Brazil favoured at the last Review Conference due consideration of several issues that would facilitate the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Alas, due to a lack of the necessary political will from different quarters, it was not possible to appropriately discuss substantive issues in the seventh Review Conference, much less to agree on a final substantive document. In spite of that, we are still of the firm opinion that the next Review Conference and the preparatory process that will begin in 2007 should undertake a thorough review of the implementation (or lack thereof) of the 2000 NPT document, including the agreed “practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty” and paragraphs 3 and 4 (c) of the 1995 Decision on “Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament”. We also call on those few remaining countries that remain outside the NPT to accede unconditionally to this Treaty.

We are of the belief that the commitments of the signatories of the Moscow Treaty should be further enhanced, such as transforming this agreement from a downloading to a disarmament treaty, with the dismantlement of weapons in a transparent way, undertaking not to develop new nuclear weapons and removing “tactical” weapons from their stockpiles. We also strongly believe that the expeditious negotiation by the Conference on Disarmament of a fissile material treaty is a necessity. Different positions on verification should not impede the start of negotiations. Brazil also calls on all States that have failed to sign and ratify the CTBT to do so without delay and to refrain from any activities harmful to the Treaty.

By highlighting these suggestions and recommendations, Brazil is being consistent with its long-standing posture of promoting multilateral and non-discriminatory agreements on security issues.

Brazil participated actively and had a leading role in the launching of the initiative to create the very first international nuclear-weapon-free zone in an inhabited part of the world, which would later be consolidated under the Treaty of Tlatelolco (Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean). The Treaty was opened for signature in 1967. Since 1968, after ratifying it, Brazil has abided by all its rules, although the legal document was only brought into full force in 1994, after all the necessary ratifications.

(Mr. da Rocha Paranhos, Brazil)

Back in 1980, Brazil and Argentina established a landmark in their relations by signing the first agreement on cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In the following years, additional bilateral exchanges and further strong bonds of mutual understanding and confidence were developed.

The Brazilian Constitution states that nuclear energy in the country can be used for peaceful purposes only. Very few countries, if any, have made a similar commitment at the highest domestic legal level.

In August 1991, Brazil and Argentina signed an Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy, which created ABACC (the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials). With the creation of the bilateral agency, both countries pioneered a scheme for bilateral nuclear inspections that is widely seen and recognized as a model for various other regions of the globe.

In December 1991, Brazil, Argentina, the bilateral accounting agency and IAEA signed a Quadripartite Safeguards Agreement, which came into force in 1994. Accordingly, all nuclear materials in all nuclear facilities in both countries were put under strict international safeguards. The Brazilian nuclear programme has thus been under IAEA's comprehensive safeguards since 1994, and there has never been any doubt about the complete fulfilment of all our international obligations.

Brazil is of the opinion that the NPT remains, and should continue to be, the cornerstone of our global security regime. The chairmanship of the seventh NPT Review Conference by Ambassador Sergio Duarte, a senior and very experienced Brazilian diplomat, was additional proof of our strong commitment to the Treaty.

In 1998, Brazil was one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are active members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Brazil is a special case of a country totally committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, we strongly advocate the fundamental right of any State party to develop the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as enshrined in article IV of the NPT, and in accordance with its articles I, II and III.

In approaching the end of my statement, I would very much like to say that it was a good occasion this morning to hear so many delegations in favour of the resumption of our work, of the adoption of a programme of work, which would comprise an ad hoc working group on nuclear disarmament. I would encourage you, Mr. President, to pursue consultations and to exert all your best efforts so that we cannot only agree on a programme of work, but that we could start this ad hoc working group on nuclear disarmament, which is a great priority for the majority of the membership here.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the delegation of France, Ambassador Rivasseau.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, you invited us last week to give our views on the important items for our agenda. We spoke of new issues last Thursday, and today I am taking up the invitation to speak about nuclear disarmament. First of all, I must point out that the French approach is in line with the common European position, which the 25 States approved for the purposes of the NPT Review Conference. This document, which binds our 25 States, was presented here two weeks ago by the Netherlands presidency in its capacity as holder of the European Union, and is now an official document of the Conference. I am not going to repeat all the relevant elements in detail. I will simply emphasize that France, like our partners, considers that the resumption of substantive work by the Conference is particularly important in the light of the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We will return to this in more detail next week.

The European Union emphasized at the seventh Review Conference the need to preserve the integrity of the NPT, to strengthen its implementation, to work towards universal participation, and more specifically set out a number of considerations of importance to our work here, in particular on the subject of nuclear disarmament. In keeping with this approach, France reaffirmed on the occasion of the Review Conference its commitments in the framework of general and complete disarmament. My country has demonstrated that it respects its obligations under article VI in good faith. When discharging these commitments in practice, France is guided in particular by the programme of action that we adopted when we extended the NPT indefinitely in 1995. Let me remind you of the three points of this programme: the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its entry into force; the negotiation of the treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; and a determination to move forward systematically and progressively with a view to reducing nuclear weapons overall and working for general and complete disarmament.

My country has decided to refrain from conducting nuclear tests. My country has acceded to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Even before the Treaty entered into force, France had already decided to act accordingly, and had dismantled its Pacific test centre. My country is the only one of the nuclear Powers to have done so. France no longer has any facilities at which it could carry out nuclear explosions. France also strongly supports the preparatory work for the entry into force of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. My country is directly involved in the establishment of a verification regime for the treaty. However, we note and greatly regret the fact that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has still not entered into force.

France has contributed as strongly as it could to the overall reduction of nuclear weapons. On the one hand, it possesses them, and has always possessed them, for its deterrent force, which is a fundamental underpinning of our security and based on a logic of strict sufficiency. On the other, it has reduced the number of its delivery systems by two thirds since 1985. A brochure in French entitled “Combating proliferation, arms control and disarmament: France’s contribution” deals with these issues and is available to delegations and members of the public who wish to learn more about this.

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

My country supports the continuation of efforts to achieve global reductions in nuclear arsenals, foremost among which today is the process embarked on by the United States and Russia, which possess nuclear weapons out of all proportion to those of other nuclear-weapon States. France is also participating in specific activities beyond its borders. In particular, we intend to make a technical and financial contribution to the programme in Russia to destroy Russian military plutonium declared to be in excess of defence needs, as part of the agreement currently being negotiated by the multilateral group dealing with the destruction of plutonium.

Over the past two decades, several States parties which had committed themselves under the NPT to renounce nuclear weapons, and had acceded to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, have violated their obligations, developed clandestine nuclear programmes and made false statements in review conferences. Their actions, and those of the networks which have assisted them, would have continued were it not for recent revelations and were it not for our shared determination to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

France is all the more determined to pursue the implementation of all the provisions of the NPT. Proliferation crises today are the major challenge to international security, and that is why we encourage the Conference on Disarmament to play its full role in general and complete disarmament, including the nuclear dimension. My country is fully aware of its responsibility as a nuclear-weapon State and of its obligations under article VI. France has made commitments in this connection, has discharged them and reaffirms for the future its determination to continue to contribute to nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

Let us now turn to our programme of work. We decided at the seventh NPT Review Conference that the review process for the treaty, to which the Conference on Disarmament must make a full contribution, should continue in the light of the decisions and the resolution of previous review conferences. In this spirit, we must point out that our Conference has a mandate, today as yesterday, to discuss nuclear disarmament, in order to identify as a result subjects which are ripe for negotiation. This identification process is, for the most part, complete because one subject, that of the "cut-off", to which we will return next week, has been identified as a priority for 10 years now, in particular since decision No. 2 in 1995. And we are committed to the decisions of 1995. But the FMCT Treaty, the treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive purposes, does not account for the totality of our Conference's general discussion and reflection mandate, as can be seen, for example, from the debate we are having today, and, like Brazil, I am happy that this is a rich and interesting debate.

Along these same lines, we have noted the ideas put forward by the Netherlands in its capacity as holder of the European Union presidency on the issue of nuclear disarmament and the "cut-off". We have also noted the reading given by New Zealand during its term of office. We believe that it is in the interest of all of us to pursue these discussions in order to clarify and refine these fundamental issues in good faith with a view to facilitating an overall agreement on a programme of work. France is prepared, in keeping with the common European position that we approved at the seventh Conference, to contribute constructively to this work.

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

Before concluding, I should like to say how sad I am to see Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands leaving us - Ambassador Sanders, with whom we have held so many discussions, waged so many battles to bring about greater international security. I would like to wish him good luck. But I would like also, and perhaps most importantly, to express my sadness at learning that next week we will also be losing Ambassador Volker Heinsberg of Germany. Unfortunately, I will not be here next week to bid him farewell, but I should like to say goodbye to him and thank him. He has always been my neighbour in our forum, and he has been of great assistance to me, frequently through his lucid and friendly observations. Here too, he has fostered French-German links.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker is the representative of Argentina. Mr. Marcelo Valle Fonrouge.

Mr. VALLE FONROUGE (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me in this first statement, this declaration by our delegation, to congratulate you on taking the Chair and to assure that we shall help you to make progress towards fruitful work in negotiating these instruments for arms limitation and disarmament.

For more than 50 years, the Argentine Republic has been using nuclear energy. It has never given up nuclear weapons because it never intended to possess them or develop them. In this way it has contributed to stability, not only in the region and in the southern hemisphere, but in general. In line with that experience, Argentina supports general and complete nuclear disarmament and maintains that making legal instruments on non-proliferation and disarmament universal should be the goal to be achieved in the first decade of this twenty-first century, because only in this way will it be possible to lay the foundations for mutually guaranteed security as a primordial objective.

There are a series of practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement this objective. These steps include appeals for the signature and ratifications necessary for the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the immediate beginning of negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material. In this context, Argentina is concerned that nine years after the adoption of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, it has still not yet been ratified by a dozen of the 44 countries whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty to enter into force. For this reason, we urge all those States that have not yet done so to take the necessary steps as early as possible in order to ensure that this instrument becomes universal. It is also particularly important for the nuclear-weapon States to undertake not to refine those weapons further through the continuation of nuclear tests. That being so, we reaffirm the need to maintain a moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests. We deplore the formulation of new security doctrines which do not rule out the use of nuclear weapons. These policies can affect the efficacy of horizontal non-proliferation.

It is disconcerting that the Conference on Disarmament, although it is the sole multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament, has not yet begun negotiating a treaty for the prohibition of fissile material, nor has it established an appropriate subsidiary body with a

(Mr. Valle Fonrouge, Argentina)

mandate to tackle nuclear disarmament, because of a lack of agreement on a work programme. The setting up of this subsidiary body entrusted with nuclear disarmament will constitute progress in efforts to implement article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

While we consider it desirable for progress in nuclear disarmament to take place in the framework of the relevant disarmament forums, we welcome any progress made in reducing arsenals, including progress at the bilateral level. We hope that greater efforts will be made and that the international community will be informed of new actions and of the interim measures adopted pending the complete elimination of nuclear arsenals. Argentina rejects the arguments whereby progress in the field of nuclear disarmament depends upon progress with conventional weapons. Accordingly, Argentina, as has been stated throughout the years and in all competent forums, hopes that the nuclear-weapon countries will hold negotiations in good faith which reflect the unequivocal commitment to the objectives of nuclear disarmament, which will not be fully met until nuclear weapons are completely eliminated.

By way of conclusion, I and this delegation should also like to join in bidding farewell to Ambassador Sanders with respect and great regard, and wish him success in his future work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on the list is the representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Park.

Mr. PARK (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I would first like to congratulate you on your assumption of the important and challenging task of chairing the Conference on Disarmament at this delicate juncture. Under your leadership, I hope that we can find ways to overcome the current stalemate.

Your invitation to discuss the four main issues is very timely and relevant in the sense that they should be addressed in one way or another by the international community, including the CD, in order to effectively tackle the new proliferation challenges facing us. This is especially true in the wake of the seventh NPT Review Conference, which failed to adopt a final agreement on the substantive issues. Considering the complicated nature of the issue of nuclear disarmament and reflecting the reality of international politics, the most practical approach forward seems to be the pursuit of a combination of unilateral, bilateral, regional and global measures. However, I fully agree with the Italian Ambassador who properly pointed out that the ball is now in the CD's court, in the wake of the NPT Conference. In this sense, my delegation is ready to engage in early discussions on any constructive formula to get the CD back to work. In particular, given the divergent views among member States on a programme of work, we consider the initiative by Ambassador Sanders to be a very realistic foundation for resuming substantive work at this stage.

It is noteworthy that the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament proposed by the two main initiatives will only be for discussion. Therefore, the main function of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament will be to exchange information and views on practical steps

(Mr. Park, Republic of Korea)

for progressive efforts to attain the objective embraced in agenda item 1 of the CD. In this context, as an interim measure before a programme of work is to be agreed upon, we would like to pay attention to such practical ideas as holding sessions in the CD either on strategic security doctrines or the nuclear policy of nuclear-weapon States or inviting the relevant parties of the trilateral initiatives to share their current status and future plans.

We note that significant commitments on nuclear disarmament have been made in various multilateral forums, including the United Nations General Assembly and the NPT Review Conference. My delegation believes that further progress needs to be made in this area with every effort to implement the previous commitments of the nuclear-weapon States in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. We will also continuously keep an eye on bilateral, trilateral and multilateral arrangements to deal with excess material, such as the Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement, the trilateral initiatives and the G-8 Global Partnership programmes.

On the CTBT issue, my delegation reiterates that the CTBT has to enter into force without further delay and that the moratorium on nuclear test explosions should be maintained pending the entry into force of the CTBT. We welcome the initiative by the United Kingdom in the NPT review process to present its study paper on various aspects related to the verification of dismantled nuclear warheads. We would also like to encourage member States to elaborate more upon them so that CD member countries can more readily be prepared to discuss the issues involved.

What is missing now is not the creativity to improve upon the language of the work programme, but rather the political will to move forward in the evolving security situation. I hope we will be able to pool our collective wisdom to bring all players on board and thus reactivate the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Algeria, Mr. Khelif.

Mr. KHELIF (Algeria) (translated from Arabic): Since this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference and to assure you that my delegation intends to cooperate with the other member States in efforts to revitalize our work. I also wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency the Ambassador of Nigeria, for his efforts as President of the Conference and I would like to join the previous speakers in wishing His Excellency the Ambassador of the Netherlands all the best for the future.

At the outset, I would like to associate myself with the statement made by Her Excellency the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Arab Group and the Arab States parties and observers, and with the statement made by the Ambassador of Ethiopia on behalf of the Group of 21.

(Mr. Khelif, Algeria)

The continued existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat not only to international peace and security but also to the survival of all mankind. This is why the elimination of these weapons should be our top priority; we should deal with it once and for all through United Nations multilateral forums, especially the Conference on Disarmament.

The United Nations is about to celebrate its sixtieth anniversary. It is aware of the grave threat which these weapons pose and the fact that they are totally at odds with the purposes and aims of the Charter. It is for this reason that the United Nations has always been so determined to eliminate nuclear weapons. It is not coincidence that the Organization devoted its first resolution at its first session to this issue, establishing a committee to study the problems arising from the discovery of atomic energy and to submit recommendations to the Security Council on the elimination of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction.

If the dangers of nuclear weapons were understood in 1946, what should we say today, when these weapons are even more threatening? We are living in an extremely tense environment in which the possession of nuclear weapons is endlessly being justified, where nuclear deterrence is being promoted and there have been fundamental changes in the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. At the same time, there has been a qualitative and quantitative evolution in nuclear weapons. Military budgets are expanding, together with the threat of international terrorism, and the risk that these weapons may fall into the hands of terrorist groups.

The international community has failed to respond effectively to these challenges and dangers. Mechanisms concerned with nuclear disarmament are breaking down, our Conference is in a regrettable state of deadlock, and the disappointing outcome of the seventh Review Conference offers the clearest evidence of a retreat from commitments to nuclear disarmament.

Algeria is fully aware that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are interdependent and that lack of progress in one area will lead to failure in the other. The radical solution to these problems is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, a task for which nuclear-weapon States bear special responsibility, since they have committed themselves to eliminating their nuclear arsenals. There is no longer any justification for the continued distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear States. The indefinite extension of the NPTs at the 1995 Review Conference was not meant to give nuclear-weapon States the right to retain these weapons indefinitely. Likewise, the continued practice of justifying the possession of nuclear weapons on strategic security grounds, while neglecting the security of other States, is incompatible with the principle of security for all States. If at the time of its adoption, the NPT acknowledged the status of the five nuclear-weapon States, it did so because the five States had undertaken to comply with article VI of the Treaty. This was an exceptional arrangement intended as a temporary and objective response to the ideological and political divisions prevailing during the cold war. Since that era has ended, the five nuclear States must remedy the situation, since the distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States is no longer warranted.

(Mr. Khelif, Algeria)

The nuclear disarmament approach has been clearly defined. The Final Document of the 1978 special session on disarmament and programme of action clearly identify the steps which must be taken. Briefly, these are: to put an end to the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons/systems and their use; to put an end to the production of all nuclear weapons and delivery systems and of fissile material; and to set up a comprehensive, time-bound and phased programme to reduce stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems with a view to their total elimination at the earliest opportunity.

While the responsibility for nuclear disarmament falls on all States, nuclear States have a special responsibility in this area. Article VI of the NPT stipulates that all States must pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. This article provides the legal framework for compliance by nuclear States with nuclear disarmament goals. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1996 also established that States must pursue negotiations in good faith in order to bring about nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Paragraph 4 (c) of the decision on “Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament” also refers to the programme of action, to which France, as the distinguished Ambassador of France reminded us, is fully committed. Paragraph 4 (c) also calls on the nuclear-weapon States to pursue systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons with the goal of their total elimination. At the sixth Review Conference held in 2000, the States in question gave an unequivocal pledge to implement the “13 Practical Steps” in accordance with article VI of the NPT and the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review Conference.

In order to deal with the issue of nuclear disarmament at the Conference, Algeria supports the proposals made by the Group of 21 as contained in documents CD/1570 and CD/1571 concerning a programme of work and the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to bring about negotiations on a phased programme for nuclear disarmament, as well as the conclusion of a convention on nuclear disarmament.

Algeria is committed to negotiations on nuclear disarmament and has made relentless efforts to enable the Conference to carry out its tasks. It contributed to the “A-5 proposal”, which is based on a number of compromises that take account of the priorities of all countries. Although the proposal to set up an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament is not what we would have hoped for, we agreed to sponsor it in order to end the stalemate at the Conference.

Finally, we hope that our work at these meetings will energize the Conference and help us to reach agreement on a complete and comprehensive programme of work based on the “A-5 proposal” as well as other proposals which take into account the demands and priorities of all member States.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Cuba, Mr. León González.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Before reading the speech I have prepared, I must say that if we could congratulate nature itself we might perhaps do so, because apart from the importance of the subject before us, it seems that the heat outside today has given rise to this long list of speakers.

Mr. President, since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time during your term of office, allow me to convey our congratulations to you for having taken on this responsibility and wish you every success. I extend these congratulations to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Nigeria, for the excellent way in which he led our debates. I also take this opportunity to join those who expressed their appreciation to Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands for the work he accomplished in the area of disarmament when carrying out his tasks. We acknowledge above all his objectivity, intelligence and spirit of inclusiveness. We wish him success in his new tasks.

Cuba fully endorses the statement made on behalf of the Group of 21 by the Ambassador of Ethiopia this morning. Cuba considers that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is illegal in any circumstance and on any occasion. The International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 8 July 1996 concerning the legitimacy of the threat or use of nuclear weapons is a historic document in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and constitutes an important legal precedent which requires proper follow-up. The very existence of nuclear weapons and what are known as the doctrines of nuclear deterrence create an atmosphere of instability and insecurity at the international level. The only solution to prevent the occurrence of new nuclear disasters is the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons and their prohibition for ever.

As agreed amongst all the Member States of the United Nations in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which was held in 1978, Cuba considers that nuclear disarmament has the highest possible priority in the field of disarmament. Paragraph 50 of the aforementioned Final Document, concerning the need to carry out urgent negotiation of agreements for cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear-weapon systems, cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, and of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, and a comprehensive, phased programme with agreed time frames, whenever feasible, for progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their ultimate and complete elimination at the earliest possible time, is still fully applicable. The Millennium Declaration adopted by heads of State and government on 8 September 2000 included the express commitment to "[eliminate] weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers". Cuba supports the holding of such a conference as early as possible.

Although we are in the midst of a dangerous international situation with ongoing hostility being exercised against our country by the main nuclear Power and the only one on the American continent, in 2002 Cuba became a State party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, more commonly known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

(Mr. González, Cuba)

Furthermore, on 27 May 2004 Cuba ratified the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and also the relevant additional protocol. This constitutes one more sign of Cuba's political will and our country's firm commitment to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth.

The situation as regards the multilateral machinery for disarmament and arms control is increasingly worrying. The Conference on Disarmament is still paralysed. The Disarmament Commission was unable even to begin to look at substantive issues this year. The First Committee continues to adopt resolutions which very often are not complied with, particularly those concerning nuclear disarmament. Attempts are being made to replace disarmament by questions of horizontal non-proliferation. Attempts are being made to impose the approach that non-proliferation is an objective in itself, whereas in fact it should be seen as a contribution to the efforts being made to achieve the ultimate objective, which is disarmament. While this is happening, outside the traditional disarmament machinery initiatives are being put forward which have dangerous implications, without the vast majority of States having the slightest opportunity to play a role in shaping them.

This is the case, for example, of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Those who promote the Proliferation Security Initiative argue that it is intended to effectively combat the threat of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction. Cuba shares the concern at the risk of linkages between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, including their means of delivery, and fully supports legitimate international efforts to prevent their acquisition by terrorists. The creation and strengthening of an international coalition of all States in order to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists is in the shared interest of the international community. But the Proliferation Security Initiative, instead of contributing to international unity concerning this theme and strengthening of the role of the United Nations and the relevant international treaties such as the NPT, weakens it.

Why is an attempt being made to impose a mechanism which is selective in its composition, which is not transparent and which is acting outside the United Nations and international treaties, instead of considering proliferation concerns by making use of the multilateral legal framework offered by treaties and the mandate of relevant international organizations? Why are the United Nations General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention being ignored? Under the Proliferation Security Initiative actions could even be carried out which run counter to key provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, such as those relating to the right of innocent passage of vessels through States' territorial waters and the regime governing jurisdiction over the high seas contained in the aforementioned Convention. There would be absolutely no guarantee that the prerogatives which the PSI participants have granted themselves cannot be manipulated, particularly by the States with the greatest military power, in order to intervene improperly against vessels and aircraft of other States for reasons of various kinds. The possibility of terrorist attacks with weapons of mass destruction cannot be eliminated through a selective approach such as that being promoted by the Proliferation Security Initiative, which confines itself to combating horizontal proliferation and ignores

(Mr. González, Cuba)

vertical proliferation and disarmament. The multilateral and non-discriminatory approach is the only effective way of combating the possible use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists and by States. The prohibition and complete elimination of such weapons, including nuclear weapons, would provide the only guarantee that such weapons will not fall into the hands of terrorists.

As far as Cuba is concerned, the setting up of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to undertake negotiations on nuclear disarmament is a fundamental step of priority importance. This opinion is in line with the commitments my country entered into in becoming a State party to the NPT and the Treaty of Tlatelolco. But at the same time we are ready to negotiate a ban on the production of fissile material which is verifiable and takes account in some way of existing stocks of such materials. Negotiations on the cessation of the arms race in outer space and an agreement on negative security assurances also enjoy our backing.

In summary, Cuba supports the adoption of a balanced programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament which would meet the interests and priorities of all its members. We hope, Mr. President, that thanks to your initiative for holding formal debates on the four fundamental items on the Conference's agenda, we shall be moving closer to achieving agreement on this type of programme.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the delegation of the United Kingdom. Ms. Paterson.

Ms. PATERSON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the CD. I assure you of the fullest cooperation of the UK delegation.

I would also like to associate this delegation with thanks to Chris Sanders for his fulsome contribution to the CD, and to wish him and his family every happiness and success in the next posting.

In your statement before the CD on 16 June, Sir, you said you were intending to convene a series of formal plenary meetings at which delegations were invited to make statements about issues relevant to security and disarmament. You proposed that we might address matters related to nuclear disarmament today. In the light of your invitation, the United Kingdom is ready to contribute to all the discussions.

The United Kingdom has made substantial progress with regard to our nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the NPT. I make no apologies for repeating what will be familiar to a large number of those present. But, as we have given full accounts of our work on nuclear disarmament in previous informal sessions and at last month's NPT Review Conference, I will simply make the following points. The United Kingdom has reduced its reliance on nuclear weapons to one system, that of Trident. It is the only nuclear-weapon State

(Ms. Paterson, United Kingdom)

to have done so. Only a single Trident submarine is on deterrent patrol at any one time, and it is normally retained at a reduced alert status. The United Kingdom holds fewer than 200 operationally available warheads as a minimum nuclear deterrent. We completed the dismantling of our Chevaline warheads in 2002. In total we have reduced the explosive power of our nuclear forces by over 70 per cent since the end of the cold war. We have also been pursuing a programme to develop United Kingdom expertise in verifying the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons internationally, with the overall aim of having potential methodologies which could be used in a future nuclear disarmament verification regime.

As delegations will be aware, the United Kingdom announced in 1995 that we had stopped the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the fact that several other nuclear-weapon States have taken the same step, and we call upon others, including those States not party to the NPT, to follow this example.

In 1998 we were the first nuclear-weapon State to declare the total size of these stocks. We then voluntarily placed fissile material no longer required for defence purposes under international safeguards, where they are liable to inspection by IAEA. We remain committed to the transparency of our fissile material stocks.

We will have more to say on the FMCT in the meeting you have set aside for this purpose on 28 June.

As is well known, the United Kingdom has both signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and remains firmly committed to that Treaty. We have not conducted a nuclear explosive test since 1991.

In September 2004 the United Kingdom signed the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT in New York. This committed us to take measures to facilitate the signature and ratification process of the CTBT, and dedicated the United Kingdom to realizing the goal of the entry into force of the Treaty. We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it as soon as possible. We look forward to a productive and successful Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT (the Article 14 Conference) in September in New York, and we encourage the broadest possible high-level participation at the Conference.

The United Kingdom will continue to work towards a safer world free from the dangers of nuclear weapons. We hope our recent work on the verification of nuclear disarmament shows our commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons internationally.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The last delegation on my list of speakers is the delegation of Malaysia. Mr. Wan Yusri.

Mr. WAN AZNAINIZAM YUSRI (Malaysia): Mr. President, since this is the first time Malaysia is taking the floor under your presidency, allow me at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Malaysia, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and to assure you of our full support and cooperation in Norway's endeavours to move the Conference forward and begin its substantive work. Malaysia would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered earlier by Ethiopia on behalf of the G-21.

Malaysia is deeply concerned with the Conference's lack of progress in nuclear disarmament over the last seven years. Progress in the negotiations on nuclear disarmament remains negligible. Despite the fact that changes in the international security environment and the growing erosion of multilateralism have further threatened the nuclear disarmament process, thousands of nuclear weapons continue to be stockpiled in the arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States and research and testing have been undertaken on the qualitative improvement and development of new types of nuclear weapons.

Malaysia is of the strong conviction that for the survival of mankind, all nuclear weapons must be eliminated and the ongoing development of new types of nuclear weapons needs to be urgently addressed. No one should be in possession of nuclear weapons. The end of the bipolar confrontation has not removed the danger of a possible nuclear catastrophe. In fact, in the context of the doctrine of pre-emptive action, the risks of a conflict involving nuclear weapons may have even increased. The stated willingness to use nuclear weapons in response to another's use of weapons of mass destruction, be it nuclear, chemical or biological, and even conventional weapons, should be a major cause of concern for all of us. The nuclear-weapon States must find other means of achieving security instead of through the doctrine of nuclear deterrence for the sake of the security of mankind.

Malaysia strongly believes that international peace and security cannot be achieved through the doctrine of deterrence or strategic superiority, since the prolonged existence of nuclear weapons increases the sense of insecurity among States. Failure to eliminate nuclear weapons would not only aggravate international tension but also increase the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We believe that the only sustainable way to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons is through the total elimination of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States.

The second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995 agreed that the indefinite extension of the Treaty does not accord the nuclear-weapon States the privilege to possess nuclear weapons in perpetuity. The nuclear-weapon States are obliged to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date, and to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The nuclear-weapon States have a positive role to play in this regard and should demonstrate leadership by committing themselves to nuclear disarmament through a phased programme of reduction of their nuclear arsenals within a specified period of time, culminating in their total elimination.

(Mr. Wan Aznainizam Yusri, Malaysia)

The advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 8 July 1996, remains a historic and resolute decision in the field of nuclear disarmament. The decision of the ICJ constitutes an authoritative legal call to eliminate nuclear weapons. The ICJ unanimously concluded that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective control. This unanimous decision is consistent with the solemn obligation of States parties under article VI of the NPT.

Malaysia is strongly of the view that the systematic and progressive reduction of nuclear weapons, with the ultimate goal of their complete elimination, should remain the highest priority on the global disarmament agenda. In this context, Malaysia has continued to co-sponsor resolution 59/77 on nuclear disarmament and resolution 59/83 on the follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, which were adopted respectively by a majority vote of 117 and 132 at the fifty-ninth United Nations General Assembly in 2004.

As one of the co-sponsors of these resolutions, Malaysia shares the deep concern expressed by other co-sponsors regarding the growing danger posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The development of new types of nuclear weapons as well as plans for their possible use in future military conflicts is alarming, since it may lead to a new arms race. In this regard, Malaysia urges the CD to address this dangerous situation in a concerted and non-discriminatory manner that is consistent with the commitment to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the creation of a nuclear-free world, a goal we affirmed 26 years ago at the special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD-1).

The current impasse in the CD is eroding the credibility of the body. Malaysia regrets that the continued inflexible postures of some of the nuclear-weapon States continue to prevent the CD from establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. We would like to underline the necessity of commencing negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, including the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention. In this regard, Malaysia would like to reiterate the call made by the heads of State and government of the Non-Aligned Movement at the Kuala Lumpur thirteenth Non-Aligned Movement summit for the CD to establish as soon as possible, and as the highest priority, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. This concludes my list of speakers. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case. This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held on Tuesday, 28 June 2005, at 10 a.m. in this conference room.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.