
Conference on Disarmament

20 May 2014

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and sixteenth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 20 May 2014, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Toshio Sano (Japan)



The President: I call to order the 1316th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before proceeding, on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament I wish to express our deep sadness to the bereaved families after the recent ferry tragedy in the Republic of Korea, and our sincere condolences to the people of Turkey for the mining accident. These two misfortunes resulted in the loss of hundreds of innocent lives, and we bestow our deepest sympathy.

I would also like to bid farewell to Ambassador Khabbaz Hamoui of the Syrian Arab Republic and Ambassador José Luis Balmaceda of Chile, who will soon be relinquishing their posts as Ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament. On behalf of the Conference, I wish them success in their new assignments.

Before turning to the list of speakers for today, I would like to mention that in accordance with the decision contained in document CD/1978 of 26 March 2014, the informal meetings under the schedule of activities will begin tomorrow on agenda items 1 and 2, focusing on nuclear disarmament. I would like to inform you that Egypt will invite an expert from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) for the meeting on Thursday, 22 May. I am notifying you all now, since the informal substantive meetings will start tomorrow and I assume no one has any objections to this.

I will now turn to the list of speakers for today, and give the floor to the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Møller.

Mr. Møller (Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Conference): I am very pleased to address you today. I have now served as Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to this body for six months, and I am grateful for the support that you have all extended to me in those months.

I thought that the six-month mark would be a good opportunity to share some reflections based on my interactions and observations over the past months on how we can further promote disarmament and eventually re-energize the negotiating mandate that the international community has bestowed on the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me begin by recalling some of the recent disarmament successes as a reminder that it is possible to reconstitute the international social contract that has helped to establish some of the key pillars of international security, including this Conference.

In the area of weapons of mass destruction, the use of chemical weapons in Syria last year was met by a robust diplomatic response. As a result, over 90 per cent of the country's chemical weapons have been removed so far, even though the conflict itself endures with terrible humanitarian consequences.

Last year's signing of the Arms Trade Treaty has established a regulatory regime on all major categories of conventional weapons that together rank as the number one killer in the history of humankind. While the Treaty does not address all the conventional arms-related challenges, its entry into force — which I hope will be soon — will be a milestone in the history of disarmament and arms control.

I also wish to commend two recent processes in which many of you have been involved: the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and the informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems — held within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional

Weapons — which last week engaged States parties and external experts in a productive exchange of views on this emerging category of weapons.

Although these processes are taking place outside of the Conference on Disarmament, their positive results may well contribute substantially to advancing the agenda of the Conference and promoting international peace and security. But much more needs to be done, particularly in realizing our common vision of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Nayarit conference last March on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, building on the 2013 Oslo conference on the same subject, heightened the awareness of the catastrophic toll that any use — deliberate or accidental — of a nuclear bomb would have on every aspect of human life. For humanity, real security and freedom from fear will never come about as long as nuclear weapons exist.

Many of you have just returned from New York, where you took part in the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The NPT regime continues to be challenged by slow progress in nuclear disarmament. Engineers would tell us that a clogged machine needs an overhaul every now and then. This is also true in the world of diplomacy and politics, where treaties, constitutions and resolutions that are no longer in tune with realities are reviewed and eventually updated. The disarmament machinery — and the Conference on Disarmament in particular — has been clogged for much too long. Your work in this chamber has not gone beyond mere discussions and deliberations on the agenda items for too many years.

While pondering on the ambitious goal of revitalizing the broader disarmament machinery, I continue to believe that, with the shared political will of its members, the Conference, even in its present form, can build on its recent renewed momentum.

Let me elaborate in more detail what such further momentum could entail.

First, although there is no consensus on starting negotiations on any of the Conference's four core agenda items — nuclear disarmament, a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space — there are areas of agreement and common ground on each issue.

I continue to believe — fully acknowledging that not everyone agrees with me — that we do not have to wait for full consensus on everything to emerge before negotiations begin. I would like to invite you to consider negotiations on areas of common ground with a view eventually to produce framework conventions to which substantive protocols could be subsequently added. This is not a new idea. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons with its five protocols is a living example. The Brazilian proposal in 2010 of an umbrella treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons is another.

One objective of the schedule of activities which you have recently adopted could therefore be to identify and turn over to the informal working group areas of common ground on each of these core issues.

Secondly, to make a difference, the Conference on Disarmament does not have to aim at negotiating legally binding instruments only, even if this is the ideal goal and expectation of us all. There can be merit also in exploring issues for which voluntary, politically binding regimes may be negotiated.

Thirdly, concerning the working methods of the Conference, which are seen by many as being at the root, or at least part of the cause, of the protracted inactivity, I would like to reiterate my predecessor's call for the establishment of a subsidiary body

on this issue. As you will be meeting during the remainder of the 2014 session largely in the informal setting of the informal working group and the schedule of activities, you may wish to consider having focused discussions on a review of the Conference's working methods during the slots reserved for the plenary meetings.

Such a review should not be meant to redraft every rule of procedure, many of which have successfully governed the work of this body over many decades. It would instead provide an opportunity to codify some of the best practices that have emerged. Since the beginning of this session, we have all welcomed the spirit of cooperation and continuity that has characterized the work of the six Presidents of the Conference's 2014 session irrespective of their regional groupings. In the absence of a presidency of a longer duration that many have called for, such continuity can ensure that maximum attention and greater support by all Presidents is given to the Conference, thus providing maximum coherence for its work. I therefore would like to call on you to support a proactive and coordinated role for the six Presidents, even if the grouping is not given formal status, so that we can continue to benefit from the positive impact of the understanding during this session.

Fourthly, last year's Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations provided an opportunity for cross-fertilization of ideas between member States and civil society organizations. Many have referred to that experience as one of the useful models that should also inspire the work of the Conference. In this regard, I suggest for your consideration, as a first practical step before the end of the year, the holding of an informal Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum, hosted by the Secretary-General of the Conference. If the experience is a constructive one, you could then decide to have it as a recurring event until such time as you may decide to adapt the Conference's rules of procedure to allow for greater and more formal interaction with civil society.

These are a few ideas for your consideration and further discussion, offered with my strong belief in the value of the Conference as the sole standing forum for multilateral disarmament and in a spirit of shared responsibility for allowing it to fulfil its mission.

As we consider rules of procedure, institutional issues and processes, we must never lose sight of the overarching objective of the Conference, which is to contribute to a better world. The failure to do so over the past 18 years is not only a stain on the Conference and on the United Nations, but it risks undermining further the faith that those we serve have in the value and relevance of multilateralism.

The Conference does not exist in isolation, and we are not meeting in a vacuum here in Geneva. The consequences of the inability to agree in this chamber go far beyond the Palais des Nations and even beyond the issue of disarmament. The work of the Conference is an integral part of the broader efforts to build a safer and more secure world where countries and communities can prosper.

It is our moral obligation to ensure that the Conference contributes to that collective effort.

The President: I thank Mr. Møller for his statement. The next speaker on the list is Mr. Vasiliev of the Russian Federation, who will inform us about the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities, which completed its work last year.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It is a great pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament today. I am also grateful for the opportunity to meet old friends from my previous life as a diplomat and to welcome new colleagues to this historic venue. Although I am seated behind the nameplate of

the Russian Federation, I shall now don the hat of the President of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities and share with you the results of the Group's work in 2012 and 2013.

(spoke in English)

For that I will switch to English. Although the report is the product of 15 experts representing Brazil, Chile, China, France, Italy, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Russia, it is also the result of inputs from many other States which presented their views in response to General Assembly resolutions on transparency and confidence-building measures in space and directly to the Group of Governmental Experts, as well as the Group's interaction with other international organizations and bodies, such as those here in Geneva — the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) — and the Vienna-based Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. As some of you may recall, I briefed the Conference on Disarmament and the annual United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) Space Conference last year on the Group's deliberations; I have received responses from some delegations and from non-governmental organizations, which were considered by the Group.

The Group's report was adopted in August 2013 and was later approved by the United Nations General Assembly by consensus through resolution 68/50. I would like to stress that this was the first consensus reached on this issue; also worth noting is the fact that the original draft resolution was sponsored by the United States, China and the Russian Federation.

The study, undertaken 20 years after the previous report of the United Nations Secretary-General on this matter, reflected the growing dependence of humankind on uses of space and the dramatic increase in the number of actors in outer space activities. Today, there are more than 1,000 operational satellites in orbit; more than 60 States, Government consortiums and entities own or operate those assets. More and more States are becoming spacefaring nations or are increasing their capabilities and resources linked to space.

Much is in place already, and we did not try to reinvent the wheel. The Group acknowledged existing international instruments and treaties on outer space containing several transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs). We also have bilateral exchanges of information among major spacefaring nations and entities. Organizations like ITU and WMO maintain procedures to regulate their spectrum of space assets. At the same time, experts agreed that there are lacunae in the existing mechanisms and that further measures are needed to address challenges pertaining to outer space activities.

The Group noted the work that was under way on several tracks. This included the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space working group on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, the European Union-led work to promote an international code of conduct and the discussions in the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly. We also have initiatives by some States, or groups of States, with regard to space security. And of course, the Conference on Disarmament has an agenda item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects was introduced in this forum by Russia and China in February 2008.

As an outcome of three sessions of discussions and extensive intersessional work, the Group came up with a report that contained an overview of the general characteristics and basic principles of outer space TCBMs as well as a series of

measures to enhance them. I encourage you to read the report, which is contained in document A/68/189. I understand that it was forwarded already by the United Nations Secretary-General as requested in the respective resolution.

Let me touch upon the basics. The Group identified categories of and criteria for TCBMs. It also agreed that the proposed measures should be of a voluntary, non-legally binding character, without prejudice to the implementation of those measures that are part of existing obligations by Member States that are parties to such arrangements.

TCBMs cannot serve as a substitute for legally binding arrangements. States should consider accession to all relevant arrangements.

The report contains specific recommendations to enhance the transparency of outer space activities. These include: information exchange on space policies, the principles and goals of a State's outer space policy, on major military outer space expenditure and other national security activities; information exchange and notifications such as on orbital parameters of outer space objects and potential orbital conjunctions, on forecast natural hazards in outer space and spacecraft launches; risk reduction notifications, including on scheduled manoeuvres, uncontrolled high-risk re-entry events, other emergency situations and of intentional orbital break-ups.

An important confidence-building measure is contacts and visits to space launch sites and facilities. The Group recommended that stronger coordination and interaction should be established between participants in outer space activities, including national space agencies, international organizations with specific mandates, as well as commercial operators.

The deliberations in the Group demonstrated that many issues of relevance can be resolved through interaction and dialogue. It was also concluded that the Group itself served as a good vehicle of confidence. For me personally it was an opportunity to see the diversity of missions — political, technical and scientific — that are being carried out by different organizations and United Nations bodies in addressing space security issues. I came out with a strong conviction that a lot can be achieved if we establish synergy between them.

My fellow experts in the Group always stressed that, being ambitious, we must be realistic if we want this study to be seriously considered by the United Nations Member States, as well as by the operators. With this in mind we tried to put forward proposals that were practical and implementable and did not undermine sovereign rights or the security of States. From that perspective I wish once again to stress that the measures contained in the report are of a voluntary nature, and many are part of existing instruments.

I will now turn to the conclusions and recommendations of the Group.

The Group encouraged States to review and implement the proposed TCBMs through relevant national mechanisms.

The Group recommended universal participation in and adherence to the existing legal framework relating to outer space activities.

The Group recommended that the General Assembly should decide how to further advance TCBMs in outer space, including by referring the above recommendations to, *inter alia*, the Conference on Disarmament for consideration.

The Group called upon the United Nations Secretary-General to circulate the report to all relevant entities and organizations of the United Nations system in order that they may assist in effectively implementing its conclusions and recommendations.

Of course now comes the eternal question: to be or not to be? Will the study and report serve their purpose or will they be just another file on the shelf in the archives? To look at that perspective, I would prefer to put on my national hat and share with you some of my thoughts.

(spoke in Russian)

The Group's report and the TCBMs proposed in it obviously are not a holistic solution to the security challenges existing in outer space. In my view, the measures should function as a kind of catalyst for further work in multilateral forums — and the Conference on Disarmament is, of course, one such forum — as well as for consideration by other bodies examining issues related to security in space. I wish to stress again that this is a sort of à la carte menu from which the international community can select those measures that is ready to assume and prepared to carry out.

In its resolution 68/50 the General Assembly encouraged United Nations Member States to review and implement the proposed TCBMs through their corresponding national mechanisms. I am of the opinion that those States with capabilities in outer space and which run space programmes should be the ones to take the lead and then report on what they have done in this area.

The Russian Federation committed in 2004 to a policy of not being the first to deploy weapons in outer space. Some time later, we were joined in this commitment by member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and a number of other countries. The most recent example is Brazil. We will continue these efforts in various international forums, including within the United Nations.

In the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Russia proposed further measures to improve the long-term viability of space activities, particularly building on proposals contained in the Group's report. For example, the amendments specified in the Group's report may become the foundation for an international system for information and data exchange. We also proposed examining the possibility of establishing, under the aegis of the United Nations, a comprehensive centre for monitoring near-Earth space and criteria that could be used to remove objects from space orbit. This is extremely relevant to the effort to control space debris. It goes without saying that, here in the Conference, we stand ready to continue the dialogue on TCBMs for issues concerning security in outer space. Among other things, we believe that these discussions could also contribute to the universal accession of United Nations Member States to existing international conventions relating to space security.

Alongside our colleagues from China, Russia will continue its efforts to promote the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space. We have prepared a new version of the document, which reflects comments received from member States during the consultations held a few years ago here in Geneva. As in the original version of the draft Treaty, TCBMs will be part of the mechanism for the monitoring of and compliance with the eventual treaty. We are also following the efforts under way within the European Union to promote an international code of conduct and stand ready to participate in this.

In reference to synergy, I would like to call on delegations, and also on the secretariats of the Conference on Disarmament and of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, to consider one of the recommendations of the report, specifically, the organization of a joint session of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly to look at general issues of space security that are of significance both for their military and their civilian aspects.

As you can see, we have quite an ambitious agenda for ensuring space security and, obviously, a lot lies in your hands.

In conclusion, I thank you for the opportunity to take the floor and I look forward to a substantive debate during the upcoming thematic discussions — which it would of course have been good to see conducted as part of a programme of work.

The President: I thank Mr. Vasiliev for his statement. The next speaker is Ambassador Golberg of Canada, who will give us an overview of the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Ms. Golberg (Canada): Mr. President, please allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your role as President. We certainly look forward to working with you in this capacity.

Before I take up comments with respect to the Group of Governmental Experts, let me also just share in your expressions of solidarity around the recent tragedies that have taken place in Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

I would also like to take note of the comments that have been made by the Acting Secretary-General, and we certainly look forward to studying them more closely. We all have a desire, as the Secretary-General noted, to return the Conference on Disarmament to fulfilling its mandate as the world's single multilateral negotiating body. On first blush I appreciate his inclusion of proposals to review the procedures of the Conference. This is something that Canada has called for for some time, and we certainly look with favour at his suggestion that there be a special Conference on Disarmament/civil society meeting, but we look forward to looking at the written version of his remarks.

Now, if I put my hat back on as the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts, Mr. President, thank you for providing this opportunity for me to discuss our work. The Group of Governmental Experts established by the United Nations General Assembly to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein met from 31 March to 11 April in Geneva. I was honoured to be chosen by the members of the Group to act as its Chair. It is in this capacity that I address you today. However, I wish to stress that the summary I will provide constitutes my own impressions of the work of the Group; it does not represent an agreed position by the 25 experts participating in the Group, and it is of course without prejudice to our final deliberations and recommendations.

The Group's first session was substantive and highly interactive. It was the first time that many of the issues reviewed had been addressed in such technical depth by States in almost two decades. Bearing in mind that the Group itself will not negotiate a treaty, as Chair I have encouraged the Group to focus its work on the value added that it can provide to negotiators by undertaking a fact-based and policy-neutral analysis of all aspects of a future treaty. When appropriate, we have also sought to understand the broader political context in which we are operating.

In its first week, the Group heard initial presentations of expert perspectives on a range of potential aspects of a future treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices, and considered also the views that had been conveyed in the United Nations Secretary-General's report A/68/154 and A/68/154/Add.1 by the 17 States or entities that are not members of the Group. There was wide agreement that a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for

nuclear weapons or other explosive devices should remain a priority of the international non-proliferation and disarmament community. Experts reaffirmed the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein, including its focus on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty. Indeed, I saw a number of issues on which the views of most, if not all, of the experts were quite similar. There were, of course, also issues where differing perspectives were shared, and a few where positions diverged significantly. These issues will merit further discussion and analysis as the Group proceeds in its work.

In its second week, the Group focused in technical detail on definitions and some aspects of verification. While we concentrated on these specific issues, there was broad recognition that there is in fact a dynamic correlation between the definitions, scope and verification of a treaty and that no issue can be addressed completely in isolation from the others. In its next session, therefore, the Group will engage in further detailed discussion on the scope of a treaty as well as discussing verification in further detail, and will likely return to other issues touched on in a preliminary fashion.

Overall, I felt that the Group's first meeting was extremely productive, although considerable work remains to be done. Our next meeting will take place in August, followed by two additional sessions in 2015. It is therefore far too soon to speak of results. I am confident, however, that the Group will be able to thoroughly explore all aspects of a treaty, and I am optimistic that this examination can lead to a report to the Secretary-General which will serve as a valuable reference for future negotiators.

In conclusion, I would note that one sentiment that was clear from most if not all the experts present was regret that a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices is not already under negotiation or even concluded. Many experts stressed the importance that the Conference on Disarmament be the body that should negotiate this treaty, within the context of a balanced programme of work. Indeed, as valuable as I see the work of the Group to be, I continue to hope that — should the Conference agree to and implement a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that includes the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — the work of the Group would end and its efforts would be transmitted to the Conference. Until this occurs, however, the Group will continue its deliberations with a view to making a substantive contribution to global peace and security.

The President: I thank Ambassador Golberg for her statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. Next I would like to give the floor to Ambassador Dengo of Costa Rica, who will inform us about the work of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons that was conducted in Geneva in 2013.

Mr. Dengo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me to extend my congratulations to you for your work as President of this important body. It is an honour to address the Conference on Disarmament as the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. This past 14 May marked one year since the launch of the Working Group and I must say that, for my country and myself personally, it has been a very gratifying experience that gives cause for optimism about the future. I am pleased to see in the room today many of those who collaborated in this process as well as many of the Working Group's active participants. I have missed you. Without your collaboration and input, we could not have put together the report that I am presenting

today. I am also pleased to see representatives of other countries who decided not to take part in the Working Group but who are vital to any nuclear disarmament process.

In December 2012, in response to the widespread frustration at the Conference's paralysis since 1997 and the lack of commitment on the part of nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligation to work towards disarmament as set out in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the General Assembly adopted — by a large majority — resolution 67/56 on the establishment of an open-ended working group to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations; the working group would sit for up to 15 days in Geneva over the course of 2013.

On 14 March 2013, after being nominated by Chile, the Working Group elected me as its Chair. I took that as a recognition of the track record and moral authority of Costa Rica in the nuclear disarmament sphere. Between 14 March and 30 August, when the final report was adopted, countless hours and immense effort were devoted to the Working Group, whose proceedings can be divided into two phases. The first phase, which lasted until 24 May, was what I consider the assessment phase. As this was the first time that a General Assembly working group of this nature was meeting in Geneva, there were no established procedures. Furthermore, the resolution had been drafted in such broad terms that the Chair had wide scope for organizing the group's work. I decided that, prior to starting on the proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, it was necessary to take stock of relevant doctrine, international instruments and national or regional stances. This would serve to level the playing field for many of the delegations that had never sat down to discuss or negotiate nuclear disarmament. In the period from 14 March to 14 May, and taking advantage of the second session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which met here in Geneva in April, I met with over 20 country and civil society representatives to hear what they expected from the Working Group. I was able to identify potential speakers for the May meetings as well as moderators for the programmed discussions. From 14 to 24 May, the first meetings and a series of interactive panels were held in order to take stock of the input already received. The panellists, whom I thank for their participation, are listed in the report that I am presenting today and which bears the symbol A/68/514; therefore, I will limit myself to mentioning the theme of each panel.

The panels were as follows: (a) multilateral obligations regarding nuclear disarmament; (b) nuclear-weapon-free areas; (c) other initiatives and proposals; (d) lessons learned in transparency, confidence-building and verification; (e) perspectives on the necessary framework to achieve and sustain a nuclear-weapon-free world; (f) international law relevant to the use of nuclear weapons; (g) approaching nuclear disarmament from various angles; (h) roles and responsibilities in nuclear disarmament; and (i) nuclear disarmament education. I should point out that this last panel was held during the August meeting. Thanks to the high quality of the panellists and of the speakers who took the floor and to the informal atmosphere in which the meetings took place, the meetings can be qualified as the most substantive series of discussions held on nuclear disarmament in recent years. Perhaps because of the event's novelty, or because of expectations, many researchers and analysts travelled from a wide range of countries or postponed prior commitments to come and express their ideas and share their knowledge at the panel discussions. Many of them said that it was a great privilege to have been considered. My thanks and appreciation go out to them.

The second phase is what I call the proposal phase. At the end of the last meeting on 24 May, I announced that we would begin with the submission of proposals. I issued a call for working papers, which could be either individual or submitted by

groups. On 27 June, we held a morning meeting at which Angela Kane, the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, made an address and we took the opportunity to present those working papers that had already been prepared. I repeated the call for proposals so that other countries and civil society organizations might submit additional papers. During the summer, we worked on structuring the August meetings and identifying Friends of the Chair to act as moderators during the discussion of the proposals. In the week from 19 to 23 August, all the proposals on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations were studied and the work was divided into six main themes: (1) how to take forward the multilateral negotiations; (2) factors to be taken into consideration in nuclear disarmament; (3) review of the role of nuclear weapons in the twenty-first century security context; (4) the role of international law in taking the negotiations forward; (5) the role of States and other actors in taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations; (6) other practices. Once these meetings ended, I undertook, with the invaluable help of a group of Friends of the Chair, to draft a final report, which I presented on Tuesday, 27 August, and Friday, 30 August, and which, although time had run out, was adopted.

Mr. President, if you will allow me, I would like, in my personal capacity, to draw a couple of conclusions regarding this exercise. The outcomes of the Working Group are overwhelmingly positive; the expectations of all those involved were met and exceeded. One salient aspect was the participation by civil society in nuclear disarmament discussions on an almost equal footing with States. For countries like mine, which are not members of the Conference but aspire to be, it was an excellent showcase and underscored the need for the Conference to discuss broadening its membership. It was also clear that countries that do not possess nuclear weapons, like Costa Rica, also have an important role to play, given that nuclear disarmament is everyone's business. My impression is that the Working Group has been a breath of fresh air for nuclear disarmament efforts. We have seen how, since last year, the Conference has set up a series of working groups that have begun to discuss items on the agenda. I think that the Open-ended Working Group has in a way contributed to this. I invite you to read the report carefully. As Chair of the Working Group, I would like to revive the idea of "building blocks". My understanding is that it is a different concept from the step-by-step approach because it presupposes only the identification of the elements needed to achieve disarmament. These building blocks are not dependent on each other, nor are they linked in any chronological sequence. You will find these elements and the necessary measures to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world in paragraphs 27 and 28 of the report.

Lastly, I wish to point out that, following on the work of the Open-ended Working Group, the General Assembly adopted resolution 68/46 in which it requested the Secretary-General to solicit the views of the Member States on how to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. To this end, 1 June was set as the deadline for submitting comments to the Office for Disarmament Affairs. I urge you not to let this opportunity to advance our discussions pass us by.

The President: I thank Ambassador Dengo for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is Ambassador Simon-Michel of France, who will inform us about the recently concluded informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems held within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under the presidency of Japan, I would like to begin by expressing my sincere congratulations to you for the mandate entrusted to you personally and to your delegation. I also wish to join my colleagues who have expressed their condolences to the delegations of Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

I have asked for the floor in order to share information with you from the meeting that was held last week on lethal autonomous weapons systems. This informal meeting of experts was held within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, but the topic is not unrelated to the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would first like to thank the four Co-Chairs, who agreed to assist me in their capacity as Friends of the Chair, for their role in organizing this meeting. They are our colleagues Michael Biontino, Ambassador of Germany, Pedro Motta Pinto Coelho, Ambassador of Brazil, Aya Thiam Diallo, Ambassador of Mali, and Yvette Stevens, Ambassador of Sierra Leone. Their involvement helped to ensure collective ownership of the topic from the outset of the meeting.

I would also like to thank all of the delegations for their input. Some 30 statements were made during the general discussion, 24 at the closing session and, of course, many others during the technical meetings. This, to my mind, is indicative of the interest garnered by this emerging disarmament issue.

This was in fact the first international meeting on this topic to be held in an intergovernmental setting. Many of the delegations are, quite understandably, still at the very initial stages of considering this issue, so these four days were an opportunity for in-depth discussion and sharing of experiences. The meeting was held in an atmosphere that, in my opinion, was very constructive and demonstrated the determination of all the delegations to learn more about this complex issue. The goal of this initial meeting was just that: to outline a common understanding of the issue and to give the delegations elements to fuel national discussions.

I would like to draw particular attention to the discussions on autonomy, human oversight and accountability, which were identified as warranting further thought on our part. I would also highlight the discussions on international humanitarian law, which showed that, beyond the obvious consensus, some aspects could be discussed further and in greater depth.

The relevance of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons was mentioned a number of times. This first meeting was an opportunity to share thoughts on technical, legal, ethical and military aspects. This diversity of angles was necessary in order to ensure the best possible understanding of the topic. The varied expertise of the participants, whether national or civil society experts, was also an asset.

The report that I presented reflects in what I hope is an objective way the discussions that were held and does not make any specific recommendations, in keeping with the mandate that I was given last November. The report does, however, reflect the statements made during the outcomes meeting, most of which called for the discussions and process relating to lethal autonomous weapons systems to continue. A decision on the next steps in the process should be taken at the meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention in November 2014.

The President: I thank Ambassador Simon-Michel for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Balmaceda of Chile.

Mr. Balmaceda (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me to begin by congratulating you and your team on the work you have accomplished. The schedule of activities that was adopted under your leadership is a clear sign of commitment, which, although it is not a substitute for this body's substantive work, demonstrates determination to revive the work of the Conference. As I have said on other occasions, after 15 years without any meaningful commitment to global security, it is time for us to think about looking for other avenues together with civil society, which has been

absent from the table — and, to some extent, that is why we are here. Until that happens, you may rest assured, Mr. President, that Chile will continue to support any and all efforts to find ways and alternatives to get the disarmament machinery moving again. That is why we agreed to lead the working group on negative security assurances and I take advantage of this opportunity to thank you for the trust you have placed in my delegation.

I will shortly be leaving my country's permanent mission to the international organizations in Geneva and this Conference to take up a new post. During my mandate, I could not help but notice the chasm between what goes on in this room and the concerns of citizens around the world. The world of today and the forces that drive it have changed. A myriad of organizations are upping the ante for us to achieve results that respond to the population's needs and expectations. Examples of such results and of the laudable relationship between civil society and Governments are the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which, regrettably, were not accomplished by this Conference, the sole United Nations body dedicated to negotiating disarmament issues. Understanding the logic of the disarmament machinery has been a huge challenge for me, balancing the complex and sensitive multilateral agenda with the adequate safeguarding of national interests. This logic, though it slows down processes, is rooted in reality. The rapid developments that the world has seen in recent decades require a modern, forward-looking approach that rejects cold war stances and national security positions that fail to acknowledge the overarching objective, which is human safety. I trust that your successors will pursue your efforts and take us to that light at the end of the tunnel. This is vital for global security and the protection of people, even though we sometimes forget that what is decided in this room has repercussions around the globe.

As a representative of an exemplary region in the field of nuclear disarmament, it is my duty to emphasize that the Conference must adapt its *modus operandi* to the emerging trends in the international system if it is to assert its credibility and legitimacy. The Conference urgently needs to open up to all the Members of the United Nations. The approach of an exclusive club that takes, or attempts to take, decisions on behalf of all must be left behind. The current multilateral system is participatory and democratic: it cannot tolerate such restricted involvement of civil society in the Conference on Disarmament. My hope is that soon those sitting in the second-floor gallery of this meeting room will come down and join us at the table, bringing with them innovative and responsible ideas.

Mr. President, we have listened attentively to Ambassador Dengo and my country would like to thank him for his and his delegation's efforts in leading the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. Their efforts have confirmed the value of extending full rights of participation to civil society. There is no doubt that a view from outside the traditional forums that is intertwined not with the interests of any one country in particular but rather with those of humanity as an indivisible whole was a substantial contribution. For Chile, it is clear that the presence of all States, nuclear and non-nuclear alike, would have been beneficial in order to set a common denominator, in other words the urgency of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. This exercise nonetheless embodied a taking of ownership of a topic that had been largely the preserve of a few to the detriment of many. The fact that the Working Group was chaired by a country that is not a member of this Conference, is located in Central America, does not have a military and is an outspoken proponent of human rights sent a strong political signal and was a challenge that the delegation met brilliantly. Such ownership has been established as a global priority that is ripe for the taking by countries with the necessary political will. We hope that this experience will do away with or change some structural patterns in how the international community operates.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate our appreciation for your leadership, in particular for your tireless efforts to move the Conference forward. Japan is a member of the international community that has experienced the horrors of war and is active in promoting disarmament efforts. It has been an honour to work with your delegation, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Chile for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Again, thank you very much for your contribution to the Conference on Disarmament, and I wish you success in your next assignment. I now give the floor to Ambassador Motta Pinto Coelho of Brazil.

Mr. Motta Pinto Coelho (Brazil): Mr. President, it is always a pleasure to see you back presiding over the Conference on Disarmament. At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Dengo for his excellent report on the activities of the Open-ended Working Group. I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the delegations of Austria, Mexico and Norway for leading the initiative to table the resolution establishing the Working Group in the First Committee at the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2012.

From our perspective, the Working Group's meetings in 2013 were highly successful, for they allowed an open, transparent and comprehensive exchange of views on the critical issue of nuclear disarmament. We believe the Working Group should be seen as complementary to other timely initiatives, such as the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, which took place on 26 September 2013, and the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. All these initiatives create vital momentum to bolster nuclear disarmament. We therefore look forward to the resumption of the activities of the Working Group as soon as possible.

Last December, the General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on how to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. In this regard, I would like to recall that, on 14 May 2013, Brazil delivered a joint statement to the Working Group on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition in which we highlighted the urgent need for a political horizon to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We stated that nuclear-weapon States are duty-bound to fulfil their obligations and enter negotiations in good faith towards a transparent, irreversible and verifiable process of nuclear disarmament, with defined benchmarks and timelines.

In order to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the New Agenda Coalition proposed a set of interim measures, including: (1) a clear, legally binding multilateral commitment on the part of all States to the goal of nuclear disarmament, with clearly defined benchmarks; (2) time-bound, progressive and irreversible reduction of nuclear arsenals, including the irreversible removal of nuclear weapons stationed in the territory of non-nuclear-weapon States; (3) the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; (4) the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; (5) the provision of legally binding negative security assurances; and (6) prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and dealing with already existing stocks of such material.

We have just heard in this session — and we listened very attentively — to the words pronounced by the Acting Secretary-General, Mr. Møller, on a number of suggestions that would move us forward. At the same time, yesterday we had the first session of the meeting of the informal working group, where, through the statements of the two Co-Chairs, we heard a number of provocative and, I would say, constructive ideas that could be taken on in our work towards movement in the Conference.

But, after so many years of discussions and failed attempts to advance nuclear disarmament negotiations, there is no doubt, in our view, as to what is preventing us from achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. We have all the necessary means, expertise and capacity to achieve nuclear disarmament. If the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons is still not within our grasp, it is because a key element is lacking. Clearly, we need to focus on the need for political will from some major actors. States possessing nuclear weapons and, to a certain degree, States under the protection of nuclear umbrellas have the main responsibility to break the long-lasting impasse in nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Last September, the United Nations high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament provided an excellent opportunity to reflect upon our responsibilities and the challenges we face. The overwhelming majority of participants expressed their frustration with the enduring impasse in nuclear disarmament negotiations. Subsequently, in December, the General Assembly called, in resolution 68/32, for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. All those strong messages were voiced from New York, but they do not seem to have had any effect on our deliberations so far.

As I have already stated, Brazil is ready to consider proposals for the commencement of negotiations on any of the four core issues. We do not endorse the view that only the issue of a treaty on fissile material is “ripe” for negotiations. The deadlock in the Conference will only be overcome through flexibility and a desire to compromise — not just on one item of the agenda but on all its core issues.

My delegation hopes that progress will be achieved during the Conference’s current session. We are in fact encouraged by some recent developments. Earlier this year, Conference members agreed on a dual-track approach: the establishment of an informal working group to facilitate adoption of the programme of work, which has already held a first, very interesting meeting; and the approval of a schedule of activities to allow for informal substantive discussions on the various items of the Conference’s agenda, which approximates to a programme of work. Both initiatives are very positive and reflect a genuine effort to overcome the current deadlock. The Conference urgently needs to get back to negotiation mode.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Mr. Ballard.

Mr. Ballard (New Zealand): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor during your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of your position and, as this is the final plenary meeting of your presidency, to thank you for your efforts over the last several weeks. I also thank the Acting Secretary-General for his statement this morning and for his continuing active engagement in the work of this body.

New Zealand is pleased to welcome the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, Ambassador Dengo of Costa Rica, to the Conference on Disarmament today and to congratulate him on leading the Working Group to a successful outcome last year.

We also welcome the updates provided by the three Chairs today on the work that they are leading, and we wish the Ambassador of Chile every success in his new assignment.

I would like to make some brief remarks on the Open-ended Working Group. The Working Group was a unique United Nations forum, open to all Member States and

with the full participation of civil society. Its creation was a global call for action on nuclear disarmament — action which has not been possible in the traditional disarmament machinery for some time. Its value lay not only in its broad membership and its clear mandate: it was unencumbered by rules of procedure that allowed the few to dictate to the many, nor was it bound up in the history of positions taken on treaty language or review conference outcomes.

By providing a space for all United Nations Member States to take a step back and examine how to make good on their commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons, the Working Group filled a void that the existing forums have been unable to fill. Through its focus on the substance of nuclear disarmament, not just its process, it allowed us to consider fresh perspectives and to re-examine old assumptions.

New Zealand was pleased to have been able to contribute to the Working Group's deliberations through our moderation of a panel discussion on international law relevant to the use of nuclear weapons and through our contribution as part of the New Agenda Coalition, which presented a paper to the Working Group elaborating on the elements required for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons. In doing so, it surveyed the current nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation landscape, noting where there were gaps in the current regime and how they might be filled. That paper, which the Ambassador of Egypt introduced to the Conference during its final session last year, emphasized that the key to making progress was a clear, legally binding and multilateral commitment to nuclear disarmament that would underpin and guide all future nuclear disarmament efforts, regardless of the form they took. The New Agenda Coalition has continued to press for a discussion on this issue, including through its working paper on fulfilment of article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which was presented to the recent session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

New Zealand welcomes the discussions to be led this week in the Conference by the Ambassador of Egypt on nuclear disarmament. We hope that those discussions will reflect some of the useful exchanges and interaction which we witnessed at the Working Group.

The President: I thank Mr. Ballard of New Zealand for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. At this moment, there are seven more speakers on my list. I now give the floor to Ambassador Hajnoczi of Austria.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you and your excellent team on a very active and successful tenure in this high office.

I also want to thank the Acting Secretary-General, Mr. Møller, for his thoughtful remarks this morning. Indeed, we agree with him that we should consider the working methods of the Conference on Disarmament. This is an issue that needs reform. I also support his ideas to increase the dialogue with civil society as an interim measure until a long-term solution for more inclusive involvement of civil society in the Conference's work is found.

I also want to pay tribute to my colleague and friend from Chile, who made a very good contribution today. We will miss your professional and personal qualities here in the future.

My delegation thanks all the presenters — Ambassador Dengo, Ambassador Golberg, Ambassador Simon-Michel and Ambassador Vasiliev — for their respective briefings and commends them for their leadership and valuable work.

I would like to briefly share a few comments on two of the forums in which Austria had the opportunity to actively participate: the informal meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems held within the framework of the Convention on Certain

Conventional Weapons and the Open-ended Working Group. The informal meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems, which took place just last week under the skilful leadership of Ambassador Simon-Michel, provided, in our assessment, an excellent opportunity for an exchange of expertise and views, as well as the identification of the key questions concerning this multifaceted topic. For my country, the Convention framework has proved to be a valuable forum in which discussions on this important issue should be continued, alongside the other relevant forums, with the active participation of individual experts, international organizations and civil society at large. We look forward to the meeting of States parties in November this year and hope it will be possible to embark on a results-oriented process.

The work of the Open-ended Working Group constitutes one of the major contributions in recent years to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, alongside the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament last September and the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons that took place in Oslo and Nayarit. The Working Group filled a void, given the stalemate in both the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. It allowed for an open and constructive debate that led, under the skilful and successful leadership of its Chair, Ambassador Dengo, to a substantive consensus report.

I also want to pay tribute to the panel chairs and facilitators. The working papers and report of the Working Group contained valuable input on the question of how to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The input focuses on building bridges and moving beyond entrenched national positions by concentrating on the essential elements that would be necessary to complement the existing international legal framework for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons, as well as the elements that would complement and support such action.

Further, the Working Group focused on the role that various actors play in taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, including the role of non-nuclear-weapon States. Not only the process but also the result, as reflected in the consensus report, showed that — with goodwill — we can find common language for a common cause. One factor in the productive debate, and indeed the success of the Working Group, was without a doubt its inclusive nature, allowing the community of United Nations Member States and international organizations, academia, elected representatives and civil society at large — all have a legitimate interest of course in nuclear disarmament — to engage in a real dialogue.

Austria believes that other bodies of the United Nations disarmament machinery should not only take due note of the report of this body of the General Assembly but also ensure that future work builds upon the outcome of the Working Group's efforts last year. Also, these bodies should take into account the positive lessons that can be drawn from an inclusive and participatory approach to multilateral nuclear disarmament, as demonstrated by the Working Group.

We look forward to the upcoming informal discussions on nuclear disarmament, under the guidance of my Egyptian colleague, as an opportunity to benefit from the experiences and work of the Working Group. We hope that these informal discussions will help to bring the Conference on Disarmament closer to fulfilling its mandate: the negotiation of treaties on vital disarmament issues.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Austria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Wai of Myanmar.

Mr. Wai (Myanmar): As my delegation is taking the floor for the first time at this resumed session under your presidency, I would like to begin by commending

your leadership, Mr. President, for the successful adoption on 26 March of the schedule of activities for the 2014 session of the Conference on Disarmament. We would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the previous Presidents this year for their endeavours to move the Conference forward with renewed momentum.

Before proceeding with my statement, allow me to convey, through you, Mr. President, our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the delegation of the Republic of Korea on the recent tragic ferry accident, and also to the delegation of Turkey on the tragic mine accident that happened there a week or so ago.

With the adoption of the schedule of activities during your presidency, my delegation is hopeful that, under the leadership of the coordinators of the respective agenda items, the informal meetings will be able to complement the Conference's ongoing activities, in particular the continuing debate seeking the early adoption of a programme of work.

My delegation attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and was created by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We always welcome endeavours to move the Conference forward. We also welcome the re-establishment in March this year of the informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation. We sincerely hope that under the able leadership of the Co-Chair, Ambassador Gallegos of Ecuador, and the Vice-Co-Chair, Ambassador Woolcott of Australia, the Conference will be able to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work during this year.

For my country, nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority on our disarmament agenda. The continued presence of nuclear weapons and their deployment stands as one of the most serious security challenges posing the greatest threat to the very existence of humankind. The only absolute guarantee against a nuclear catastrophe is the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons. Towards this end, the delegation of Myanmar, together with other like-minded delegations, tables a yearly resolution on nuclear disarmament at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. In this regard, we would like to thank the delegations that are always supportive of our yearly resolution.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to welcome once again the outcome of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, which was held in New York on 26 September 2013, as well as General Assembly resolution 68/32. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on 26 March this year by Ambassador Balmaceda of Chile on behalf of the Group of 21, calling for the implementation of resolution 68/32.

I would also like to welcome the successful convening of the second conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, which was held in Mexico in February this year. My delegation hopes to be able to participate in the third conference, to be held in Austria.

Before concluding, I would like to commend the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, which was done on the occasion of the second summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in Havana, Cuba, in January this year.

Furthermore, we also welcome the signing of the legally binding protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia by the nuclear-weapon States in New York earlier this month.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Myanmar for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Quintana of Colombia.

Mr. Quintana (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Firstly, I would like to join those who took the floor before me in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your leadership and commitment to serving as President of the Conference on Disarmament. You have been able to maintain a spirit of reflection that my country considers to be an essential part of the Conference's negotiation process. Achieving our noble goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world requires patience and a long-term vision, and these are qualities that you have shown throughout your presidency. Allow me also to note and applaud the address by the Acting Secretary-General, Mr. Møller, and the presentations made by the delegations of Russia, Canada and France and by Ambassador Dengo in his capacity as Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, all of which contained specific proposals on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations that we will consider closely. We are inspired by the fact that the Working Group was chaired by a country from Latin America and the Caribbean that, although not a member of the Conference, has always demonstrated an unequivocal commitment to peace and disarmament. This is a reminder of the important role of non-nuclear States in taking on responsibilities to defend security as a universal good without, however, diminishing the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States, in particular those with the largest nuclear arsenals, to achieve nuclear disarmament.

The fulfilment of the Conference's mandate could be advanced significantly by the Working Group's report, especially its recognition that, in the sphere of nuclear disarmament, the international community should focus on advancing common elements rather than prioritize differences. My delegation wishes to stress the benefits of moving forward simultaneously and non-exclusively on several fronts. In contrast, the idea of advancing in a rigidly sequential manner could reinforce the perceived deadlock that has characterized disarmament for the past 10 years. It is thus appropriate to consider jointly all the points discussed in the Group's report, namely: the approaches, the components, the role of nuclear weapons in the global security situation of the twenty-first century, the role of international law, the role of States and other actors and other specific actions.

Strengthening nuclear-weapon-free areas has particular significance for the members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, whose Heads of State or of Government announced in January of this year their commitment to continue promoting nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to pursue general and total disarmament as a means of fostering greater trust among nations. That is why we fully support not only strengthening the role of nuclear-weapon-free areas and expanding their scope by establishing new areas where such weapons do not exist, but also removing the conditions and reservations imposed by countries that possess nuclear weapons. Discussions about a convention on a nuclear weapons ban that would be verifiable, non-discriminatory, legally binding and irreversible do not preclude the possibility of strengthening the current international legal framework through the adoption of multilateral legal instruments designed to complement existing ones.

The Working Group's comment regarding changes in international law pursuant to the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons is very relevant. We agree that these developments in international law relate to international humanitarian law, human rights law, environmental law and international criminal law and that they represent an area of work that should be further discussed and developed. Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. That is why the talks held on this

topic in Oslo and Nayarit, and those to be held in Vienna, are an essential and cross-cutting point of reference in the consideration of this issue.

Allow me to conclude by saying that the paper submitted by the Open-ended Working Group is of the utmost importance for the promotion and progress of multilateral disarmament negotiations. It behoves the members of the Conference to demonstrate the political will to find practical ways of implementing its mandate.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Colombia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I would now like to give the floor to Ambassador Van der Kwast of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): Mr. President, thank you for all the work done so far.

First, I would like to extend our condolences to the delegations of Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

My delegation would like to thank the Acting Secretary-General for what he has contributed so far to the United Nations here in Geneva. His efforts to give more visibility and attention to the valuable work done in this town are highly appreciated by us. For us, Geneva is not a dark corner of the United Nations, nor the shadow side of New York: it is a place where we work on further development of multilateral cooperation and the framework for this cooperation, which includes disarmament or, better said, with a special focus on disarmament. This body, which we all describe as the single multilateral body for negotiating disarmament, needs new ways forward.

I thank the Acting Secretary-General also for his remarks on the role of the Conference on Disarmament not as an organization in Geneva but as a body that is aware of its wider responsibilities — responsibilities towards the multilateral world, in particular towards our own Governments and to those whom we represent here. For us, responsibility brings with it accountability for what we accomplish and what we will accomplish. We will look further into the ideas that have been discussed before in this body and that were mentioned in the Acting Secretary-General's statement.

Allow me to thank Ambassador Golberg for her report on the first meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We welcome the work of the Group in the absence of the start of real negotiations on an FMCT here in the Conference. We hope that the Group will produce a substantial consensus report that will bring us closer to the start of real negotiations. We have appointed a high-level technical expert to present our views in the Group and have provided the Office for Disarmament Affairs with an expert to support the Group's work.

Let me also thank Ambassador Dengo for his report on the Open-ended Working Group. We participated in the Working Group as a Co-Chair for the session on verification and transparency issues and actively contributed to the debate. For us, the Working Group was a valuable exercise, as it presented the international community here with the opportunity to discuss nuclear disarmament, including through national and regional approaches. The format of the Working Group was unique: first, because participation was open to all States and not restricted to Conference members, and secondly, because States and civil society both contributed to the informal discussions. Content-wise the Working Group set a high standard, as during the whole exercise the focus was on finding common ground rather than on emphasizing our differences. All these positive elements made it possible to conclude with a consensus report.

We would like to explore further the idea of building blocks. In the Working Group, it was widely agreed that, regardless of which approach we prefer, it is necessary to identify the various elements or building blocks that are needed to

achieve a world without nuclear weapons. To this end, the Netherlands was a co-sponsor of the Japan-led paper on building blocks that was submitted in the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty recently. We will come back to the notion of building blocks during the schedule of activities later this week. We still believe that in the identification of different elements or building blocks, we may find common ground to move further on nuclear disarmament. Therefore, we look forward to continuing this discussion in the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me also thank Ambassador Simon-Michel for his report on the expert meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems held in the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Looking back, it was a good week of lively discussions which were a refreshing *novum* in the Convention meeting. The level of discussions was high and well informed; we were pleased to see record attendance, and many delegations took the floor.

I also want to mention here the constructive role played by civil society before and during the meeting.

In conclusion, the discussion on lethal autonomous weapons systems in the Convention context was off to a good start, and we are looking forward to our next meeting in November. At the same time we should be realistic. This is a start, and a lot remains to be done. Further research on technical, legal, military and ethical aspects is necessary for a further discussion.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ms. Ramírez.

Ms. Ramírez Valenzuela (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by reiterating my delegation's support for you in the performance of your duties. I also wish to endorse the expressions of solidarity to the delegations of the Republic of Korea and Turkey.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to refer to the report of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/56, which was presented here today by the Chair of the Working Group, the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica. In this regard, I would like to stress that, as stated in the report, the Working Group was an opportunity for States, international organizations and civil society participants to hold interactive, open, transparent and constructive discussions on issues to do with taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in order to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world. It also made clear, once again, the importance and urgency of a substantive process in this domain. We thus find it deeply regrettable that the work under a schedule of activities that will begin tomorrow still does not include the active participation of civil society, which is known to have made valuable contributions to our discussions. Therefore, we call on both the President of the Conference on Disarmament and the thematic coordinators to give more thought to involving civil society.

Lastly, we wish to reiterate how important it is for the delegations that have not yet done so to submit to the Secretary-General their report containing their views on how to promote multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in keeping with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 68/46.

The President: I thank Ms. Ramírez for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay, Ms. Dupuy.

Ms. González (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ambassador Dupuy was called away and presents her apologies; I will take the floor on behalf of Uruguay. My delegation was particularly keen to take the floor today to express our appreciation for the report of the Chair of the Working Group set up pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/56, the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, Ambassador Dengo. We appreciate the efforts made by the Ambassador of Costa Rica and wish to point out that his country, like Uruguay, is an observer at the Conference on Disarmament. The commitment shown by his country in chairing the Working Group is clear evidence of the interest that all countries have in disarmament issues, especially nuclear disarmament, and of how observer countries can play a constructive part in reaching this goal.

The fact that the General Assembly of the United Nations, the universal body of the multilateral system, has taken up the discussion from the Conference on Disarmament is a consequence of this forum's long impasse. We support the approach taken by the General Assembly, which is to give all States the opportunity to participate on an equal footing. The observer States to the Conference share the concerns about the risks associated with nuclear weapons in terms of health, the environment, peace and security as well as their humanitarian impact. Uruguay stands ready to contribute meaningfully to nuclear disarmament efforts.

The President: I thank the representative of Uruguay for her statement. I now give the floor to Ambassador Akram of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on assuming this post and appreciate the manner in which you have conducted this task.

I would like to first express our condolences to the delegations of Turkey and the Republic of Korea for the recent disasters.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to our colleagues the Ambassadors of Syria and Chile, who will be moving to different positions, and we wish them all the best in their new assignments.

My delegation readily appreciates the thoughtful and constructive statement made today by the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Møller. We will give careful consideration to his proposals.

I have requested the floor to express my country's position on the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the fissile material cut-off treaty, as stated today by the Ambassador of Canada. We also appreciate the statements made by Russia on the Group of Governmental Experts on outer space, by France on the meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems held within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and by Costa Rica on the Open-ended Working Group. We will comment on these issues at a later stage.

As you are aware, Pakistan voted against United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/53, which established the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty, and chose not to participate in it. I would like to briefly outline the reasons for doing so.

First, Pakistan firmly believes in the established role of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. We do not favour a dilution of this role through General Assembly-led, non-universal processes that have not been agreed by consensus.

Second, the Group of Governmental Experts has been mandated to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a

treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. My delegation feels that document CD/1299, also known as the Shannon mandate, has outlived its utility as the basis for negotiations, primarily because it is ambiguous on the issue of stockpiles of fissile materials, which is no longer acceptable to us, as well as to several other delegations, because of our regional security situation and the discriminatory policies being pursued by certain countries.

Third, the discussion mandate assigned to the Group of Governmental Experts could easily have been fulfilled in the Conference on Disarmament. In fact, we are going to hold informal discussions on the issue of a ban on the production of fissile materials in the Conference under the schedule of activities that has been adopted by consensus recently. These informal discussions would be held in a representative body with the participation of all stakeholders and would thus hold more relevance and legitimacy. The Group of Governmental Experts is simply duplicating this work in a non-inclusive body and has brought no added value to this issue.

Fourth, while the Group of Governmental Experts is working on so-called technical issues and preparing recommendations on possible aspects of a future treaty, it is only looking at one issue in isolation without addressing the basic underlying security-related concerns that are preventing the Conference from reaching consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. Hence, the Group of Governmental Experts is not in tune with ground realities and does not make any contribution towards breaking the Conference's persistent deadlock arising from the national security concerns of States. If anything, it distracts us from finding consensus solutions in the Conference by providing a false sense of progress on only one issue.

Fifth, since not all nuclear-weapon States participated in the Group of Governmental Experts, the work of this Group is partial and lacks universality.

And lastly, while Pakistan chose not to take part in the Group of Governmental Experts, there are several other Conference members with significant nuclear capabilities that are not represented in it. These States have an important stake in the future treaty and could not be expected to endorse the Group's outcome without taking part in its deliberations.

I have highlighted these points for the record to make it absolutely clear that Pakistan would not be bound, in any manner, to consider or endorse any of the recommendations that the Group of Governmental Experts might produce. The key to the Conference's deadlock lies in addressing the security concerns of its member States and not in imposing unrealistic solutions from outside.

Having said that, I would like to stress that Pakistan remains committed to participating actively and constructively in the work of the Conference, including in its informal working group, as well as in the informal discussions under the schedule of activities, to pave the way for progress on all agenda items, including fissile materials.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I have five more speakers on my list. I now give the floor to Ambassador Schmid of Switzerland.

Mr. Schmid (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like first and foremost to thank the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament for his invaluable input on revitalizing the Conference and his suggestions in that connection. They seem compelling to us and we will return to them in due course. I also wish to thank the speakers who reported on the various processes related to the activities of the Conference.

I wish to thank Mr. Vasiliev — and it is a pleasure to welcome him in person today — for his statement this morning and for the work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities, especially its report. The document contains a significant number of key recommendations and will undoubtedly feature prominently when the Conference addresses the topic of the prevention of an arms race in outer space as part of its schedule of activities.

I also extend my gratitude to our colleague Ambassador Golberg for her report on the first session of the Group of Governmental Experts set up by the United Nations General Assembly to consider the issue of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for the manufacturing of weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. I wish to thank her for her commitment to this issue, which is central to the work of the Conference, and hope that it will help move the issue forward in the Conference as well.

I would now like to make a few substantive comments on the two working groups in which my delegation had the opportunity to be directly involved. I begin by thanking Ambassador Dengo for presenting the report of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in order to bring about a nuclear-weapon-free world. We also wish to express our sincere appreciation to him for chairing the Working Group, which met in 2013, and guiding its efforts and the adoption of its report in such an expert manner. In our opinion, the Working Group's efforts were both constructive and productive. It facilitated a substantive exchange on nuclear disarmament among States and with civil society. Marked by rich interactive discussions, the Working Group's proceedings bore witness to the interest in and need for such an exchange.

The weighty report that the Working Group adopted by consensus reflects both the richness of the discussions and the positive atmosphere that prevailed during the talks. The report, along with the various working papers submitted to the delegations for consideration, has advanced the discussion of several issues and identified the areas that warrant further thought in particular. The discussions on the various approaches to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world were, in our view, especially instructive and have enhanced our understanding of the various concepts, their individual value and their interconnectedness. The same can also be said of the identification of political and legal aspects that will be vital in the short, medium and long terms to creating and safeguarding a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Working Group was of course not an end in itself: it put forward a significant number of observations to guide nuclear disarmament discussions and those should now be looked into more thoroughly.

We hope that the Conference will take into account the Working Group's outcomes when it engages in discussions on nuclear disarmament. In that connection, we take note of the suggestion made this morning by the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference to hold a forum on nuclear disarmament with civil society; we find that suggestion to be of great interest.

Lastly, the Working Group pointed up participants' expectations with regard to the holding of a substantive discussion on nuclear disarmament and the launch of a dialogue on how to take forward negotiations in this domain. This tool could prove useful to the international community again in the future.

Moving on to a different topic, we would like to thank our colleague Ambassador Simon-Michel for providing the necessary drive to organize an informal meeting last week on lethal autonomous weapons systems within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and to commend him for the manner in which he

led our discussions. This initial multilateral meeting on the issue saw active involvement by delegations and civil society. The exchanges confirmed the relevance of the topic and the appropriateness of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons as a multilateral framework for taking discussions to the next level.

While the exchanges led to more in-depth discussion of some points and lent focus to some topics, they first and foremost underscored the complexity of the matter; it will undoubtedly be necessary to give further consideration to the various issues raised last week. The discussions also highlighted particular aspects, such as the notion of effective human oversight and the legal review of methods and means of war.

This leads us to conclude that it is necessary and appropriate for the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to continue and intensify its efforts in this area, and we hope that the States parties to the Convention, which are to meet in November, will decide to do so.

The President: I thank Ambassador Schmid for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Indonesia.

Mr. Yusup (Indonesia): Mr. President, at the outset my delegation would like to join other Ambassadors in expressing our sincere congratulations to you for your excellent work.

My delegation would also like to express appreciation to Ambassador Dengo for his comprehensive report on the activities of the Open-ended Working Group. The Working Group, which met in May, June and August 2013, provided an opportunity for Governments and civil society experts to examine cases, share ideas and develop proposals to bridge differences and take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

The working papers and report of the Working Group offer an overview of useful elements and practical approaches to taking forward multilateral negotiations that provide valuable input for our deliberations. Pending the commencement of the programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament, there would be merit in the Working Group continuing its work.

On a final note, I would like to convey to you that a Maputo+15 commemoration week is taking place now in Geneva, from 19 to 22 May. Maputo+15 is a series of four activities to highlight key issues under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention that will be considered at the Maputo review conference this June. In this regard, I have the pleasure to inform you that Ecuador and Indonesia, as the Co-Chairs of the Convention's Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance, in cooperation with the Convention Implementation Support Unit, are convening an event entitled "Beyond Maputo: the future of cooperation and assistance under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention". This event will be held today, 20 May 2014, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in room 3 of the Geneva International Conference Centre. It is our sincere hope that you will be able to attend and participate in this afternoon's event.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Indonesia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Mr. McConville.

Mr. McConville (Australia): Mr. President, the Australian delegation extends its thanks for your considerable efforts to move forward with the Conference on Disarmament agenda and all your hard work on our behalf.

Our condolences also are extended to the peoples of the Republic of Korea and of Turkey.

We also wish to thank the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament for his thought-provoking contribution, and we look forward to reflecting further on these ideas presented by Mr. Møller at a later point in time.

We also wish to thank the four presenters today and extend our appreciation for their substantive contributions. Specifically, we wish to make comments on the Group of Governmental Experts process on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) and also the Open-ended Working Group process.

In relation to the Group of Governmental Experts on FMCT, we would like to thank the Chair, Ambassador Golberg, for her report from the first session of the Group's meeting. The Australian delegation, led by Ambassador Woolcott, can testify to the skill and professionalism of Ambassador Golberg as Chair in ensuring we were able to make good progress across the range of issues discussed, including on definitions and verification. An effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices has the potential to deliver substantial benefits for the security of all States, furthering the twin goals of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Australia welcomes the Group as a valuable opportunity to make progress on this crucial element of the disarmament and non-proliferation equation. It is an opportunity to technically focus discussion to define practical elements for a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. While this work will inevitably brush up against broader political issues, we need to keep the work focused on the practical and the technical. At the end of the Group, we would hope to have clarity on the key issues that will require negotiation and a better sense of how we might bridge these differences. We look forward to the resumption of the Group's second session on 11 August.

In relation to the Open-ended Working Group, I would like to thank the Chair, Ambassador Dengo, for his summary provided to us today and for his skill and dedication in chairing the Working Group process in 2013 on taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Australia has been pleased to have contributed to and supported the Working Group process. It is only through open and constructive discussions involving as many parties as possible that we can make progress on multilateral negotiations for the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons. When we consider the question of taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, we need to recognize that future multilateral measures will build on what has been achieved in the past and will not occur in a vacuum. The reality is that bilateral and multilateral measures will continue to be an important part of the mix. We can see where multilateralism has already played its part in nuclear arms control, but it has yet to realize its full potential in respect of nuclear disarmament. There are various views on how to realize that potential, including through the building-blocks approach that has been mentioned several times today, which is the view of Australia, or going directly to a prohibition. Whichever way it is done, the same issues will need to be confronted, including how to ensure that there will be no more nuclear testing — through the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty — and how to ensure that fissile material is no longer produced for or directed to weapons purposes.

There will come a point when we have to multilateralize this very fundamental aspect, bringing in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) nuclear-weapon States with smaller stockpiles and the non-NPT States with nuclear weapons, and bringing in

all States to build and physically implement the prohibition and, very importantly, to ensure we have a verification system supporting it.

Australia remains interested in working with delegations to support initiatives such as the Working Group. We note that while it remains our view that this particular process in 2013 reached a logical conclusion, we look forward to working at further ideas and welcoming other initiatives to keep the momentum moving forward on nuclear disarmament negotiations, including later this week as part of the Conference's schedule of activities. Once again, Australia would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Chair for his very useful report.

The President: I thank Mr. McConville of Australia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, Ms. Kasnakli.

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Mr. President, I have taken the floor to thank you for your words of sympathy and condolences for the tragic mining accident that took place in my country last week. Let me also express my gratitude to the Ambassadors and colleagues who have extended condolences today, as well as other colleagues and friends who expressed solidarity before on various occasions. In these difficult times, those words and sentiments are much appreciated.

The President: I thank Ms. Kasnakli for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Finland, Mr. Järviaho.

Mr. Järviaho (Finland): Mr. President, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and your good efforts in recent weeks in the Conference on Disarmament.

Our condolences go to the Republic of Korea and Turkey for the recent disasters.

We thank the Acting Secretary-General, Mr. Møller, for his contribution today and his innovative proposals for the Conference.

We also thank all the presenters today for their comprehensive briefings.

Regarding the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), Finland has been happy to provide the Group with an expert. Our understanding is, as pointed out by Ambassador Golberg, that the work has started quite well. In its first session, the Group was able to focus in a good and constructive atmosphere on some very technical issues of an FMCT, such as definitions of fissile material and verification mechanisms. Much work remains to be done on these and other issues, such as the scope of the treaty, legal aspects and so forth. At this juncture we are confident that, under the leadership of the Chair, Ambassador Golberg, the expert group will be able to explore thoroughly various aspects of the treaty and produce a very useful report for the benefit of the General Assembly and the Conference and, ultimately, for the future negotiation of such a treaty.

Regarding the Open-ended Working Group reported on by Ambassador Dengo, we thought that the Working Group was a good example of how discussions can be organized in an open, transparent, inclusive and productive manner despite the differences sometimes in our opinions. The participation by civil society was important and brought welcome flavour to our deliberations. Finland was happy to participate in the Working Group as a Friend of the Chair.

The meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems, held within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and conducted last week under the leadership of French Ambassador Simon-Michel, provided a welcome opportunity

to explore and learn more about this issue. We stand ready to continue this work in the future.

The President: I thank the representative of Finland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Now, I would like to give the floor to Ambassador Varma of India.

Mr. Varma (India): Mr. President, since this is the first time we are taking the floor under the presidency of Japan, we would like to convey our very warm congratulations to you and to your team, and to convey to you our very deep appreciation on the manner in which you have been conducting our work, both towards the end of the first session and the commencement of the second session of this Conference.

Let me join you in conveying our good wishes to the Ambassadors of Chile and Syria as they leave us to take new assignments.

We also convey our deep condolences on the tragic loss of life in Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

It gives us great pleasure in recognizing and welcoming Ambassador Vasiliev to the Conference on Disarmament. We have heard his report with deep attention. India has given importance to the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures (TCBMs). We have also noted that the Group was not inclusive enough to include other spacefaring nations, such as India, who could have further enriched the content and the discussions of the Group. We believe that the Group's report will be an important contribution, including in this forum, which is actually a negotiating forum, as we take forward our efforts to commence work under the agenda item relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We would like to join others in thanking Ambassador Dengo of Costa Rica for presenting to the Conference the report of the Open-ended Working Group, which met last year in Geneva. Though we had certain concerns regarding parallel initiatives to the Conference on Disarmament, India participated in the Working Group, and we would like to convey and note in particular the manner in which Ambassador Dengo conducted the work of the Working Group, which allowed an inclusive process and a comprehensive discussion.

The Working Group's report includes several important proposals, including two that had been suggested by India, namely, the importance of an agreed multilateral framework covering all States possessing nuclear weapons, as well as the need for a time-bound programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Though we note that the process was inclusive, we cannot ignore the fact that at least five States possessing nuclear weapons were not part of the discussions. We believe that any discussion on nuclear disarmament should be as inclusive as possible, including all the States possessing nuclear weapons, which are integral to the discussions and any eventual outcome which would need to be implemented by all, including those States possessing nuclear weapons.

In supporting the resolution forwarding the report to the Conference, India had also expressed its view that this is without prejudice to our position that the Conference is the appropriate forum for carrying forward nuclear disarmament negotiations. In that respect, we welcome the report of the Working Group as a contribution that will hopefully further enrich the discussions within the Conference and lead it in the direction of the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

We have noted carefully the suggestions made by the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference today. We will give them careful consideration after we have received a written text of his suggestions. Allow me, however, to offer the general views of India on this subject.

We do believe that there is considerable scope for improving the working methods of this Conference. We would participate in discussions to see how consensus can be reached on improving the working methods of the Conference, taking into account various proposals, including the suggestions made by the Acting Secretary-General. But this is a process that ought to be taken forward by discussions not between the member States and the Secretary-General, but among the member States themselves. This is, in the end, a member-driven body. We are willing to look at all proposals provided they do not change the essential character of this Conference, it being a negotiating body ruled by the rule of consensus and bringing together all militarily significant States, and the essential character of which was defined by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is therefore a body to which India attaches high importance. If the essential nature of the Conference ought to be changed, in our view it would require another special session of the General Assembly. However, with these overall remarks we are willing to look at the various suggestions made by the Acting Secretary-General.

The President: I thank Ambassador Varma of India for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Mr. Khelif.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): As your term of office is drawing to a close, Mr. President, the Algerian delegation would first like to express its deep gratitude for the efforts you have undertaken during your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

(*spoke in French*)

The delegation of Algeria was not planning to take the floor at this stage, but we have been inspired by the statements made by the previous speakers and would like at this point to raise two issues.

First, we have taken note of the very useful ideas presented to us by the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament on how to improve the Conference's functioning and wish to thank him for his commitment to the Conference and, thus, to disarmament itself and for his contribution to this end.

The delegation of Algeria is open to any initiative to launch discussions on how to improve the functioning of the Conference with a view to overcoming the standstill. However, as noted by the Acting Secretary-General himself, the problems that impede our progress are deeper and extend beyond the walls of this meeting room. They stem from the nuclear deterrence policies pursued by the nuclear Powers. Even if we are able to improve the Conference's functioning, the problem will remain and these improvements will not enable us to move forward and reach consensus on a programme of work.

Secondly, we listened with great interest to the reports given by the Ambassadors of Costa Rica, Russia, France and Canada regarding the Open-ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament, lethal autonomous weapons systems, the treaty on banning the production of fissile materials and transparency in outer space affairs. The establishment of these groups bespeaks two basic concerns. It reflects, first, the importance of the issues discussed by the groups and, second, and more importantly, our failure to respond to the international community's calls for us to fulfil the mandate entrusted to us.

Looking beyond the formal requirement that reports were to be submitted, we would like to reflect on the underlying purpose of this exercise. The Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiation body, should not be reduced to providing rubber-stamp approvals. In our deliberations, whether in the informal working group on the programme of work or in informal thematic discussions, we need to give serious thought to these groups' recommendations in order to move negotiations forward and determine a balanced global programme of work that takes into account the security interests of all and to ensure that the Conference truly is the sole multilateral negotiation body in the field of disarmament.

The President: I thank Mr. Khelif of Algeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus, Mr. Grinevich.

Mr. Grinevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): As this is the first time, Mr. President, that our delegation has taken the floor during your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of these responsibilities. You may count on our delegation's full support in the implementation of your mandate. We would like to join the other delegations in expressing our condolences to the people of the Republic of Korea and Turkey. We also wish to thank Mr. Vasiliev, Ms. Golberg, Mr. Simon-Michel and Ambassador Dengo for the information that they have provided on the work of various international forums whose activities are associated with the remit of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like now to make some brief comments on the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Belarus does not share the optimism of other delegations about the Working Group's outcomes, which is why our delegation abstained during the consideration of the relevant draft resolution at last year's session of the United Nations General Assembly. We have a number of observations concerning the Group's organization and work. First, we do not share the assessment on transparency. We find it regrettable that the information about which countries took part in the work of this forum has been kept a secret. Furthermore, while it has been stated that civil society representatives took part in the Group's work, there is no information about this in the final report. We realize why this was done. Those behind this new discussion platform preferred to keep the real number of participants a secret. In our estimation, the total number of delegations that took part in the Working Group was no larger than the number we usually have at the Conference on Disarmament. This is confirmation of the argument that studying ways to build a world free of nuclear weapons without the involvement of key countries, and especially nuclear-weapon States, has little chance of success. Second, our country is cautious about any parallel processes that might undermine the importance of existing mechanisms and bodies of the United Nations system, including the Conference. We have always supported the nuclear disarmament negotiation processes. It would be preferable in the future, though, for these processes to be organized with the participation of all the key players.

The President: I thank Mr. Grinevich of Belarus for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Now, I would like to give the floor to Ambassador Ahn of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ahn Young-jip (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, thank you very much for your kind words for the victims of the recent ferry accident in the Republic of Korea. I also appreciate the solidarity of Canada, France, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Mexico, Pakistan, Australia, Finland, India, Belarus and the many other delegations in this room on this matter. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Allow me to avail myself of this opportunity to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the processes of the Conference on Disarmament, including the activities of working groups, the Groups of Governmental Experts and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. I sincerely hope that substantive and productive discussions and negotiations will be made under your able leadership and that of the other Presidents this year and the Chairs of the working groups, together with the active participation of all delegations in the Conference.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Mr. Elmolla.

Mr. Elmolla (Egypt): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to thank the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Møller, for his constructive remarks, which stem from the desire to reinvigorate the work of the Conference. My delegation wishes to thank the Ambassadors of the Russian Federation, Canada, France and Costa Rica for their excellent presentations and the work done under their leadership in the different forums.

Egypt has participated in the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty, the expert meeting on lethal autonomous weapons held within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Open-ended Working Group to take forward nuclear disarmament negotiations. Allow me to make a brief comment on the work of the Open-ended Working Group. The brilliance of the Working Group on taking nuclear disarmament negotiations forward lies in the fact that it constituted a forum for all stakeholders to present their views freely and exchange ideas on how to get the international community closer to nuclear disarmament. We would like to commend Ambassador Dengo for his excellent report and his able management of the discussions, which enabled all participants to express their positions and come out with an all-inclusive and progressive report. Egypt, as a coordinator for nuclear discussions in the informal meetings this week, will try to benefit from all available resources, including notably the Working Group's report.

Mr. President, as this is the last plenary meeting under your presidency, my delegation would like to thank you for all your efforts to take the Conference's work forward.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Now, I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Mr. Buck.

Mr. Buck (United States of America): First, let me join other delegations, Mr. President, in expressing the heartfelt condolences of the United States for the ferry tragedy in the Republic of Korea and the mining tragedy in Turkey. The victims of these tragedies are very much in our thoughts and prayers.

Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor during your presidency, I would like to take this opportunity also to thank you for your stalwart leadership in bringing us this far in the session, not least for your efforts to launch the second part of the dual-track process schedule of activities that we look forward to commencing this week under the leadership of the Egyptian Ambassador. We look very much forward to those discussions starting tomorrow. My delegation listened with interest to the comments and proposals this morning by the Acting Secretary-General, Mr. Møller. We will study those and be prepared to provide comments in the course of this session. I would say that in studying some of the recommendations we will look at the proposals very much in the context of the unique nature of the Conference on Disarmament as a negotiating body between member

States. That will be the lens through which we will consider those important recommendations and ideas.

I just want to return briefly to some of the discussion this morning and underline how much the United States has appreciated participating in the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty, with the first session under the able leadership of Ambassador Golberg. We found those discussions to be productive and useful, and we do expect that they can very helpfully inform the discussions that we look forward to having in the Conference, including under the schedule of activities.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

Since this is the last plenary meeting under the Japanese presidency, allow me to make some brief concluding remarks. I must say, first of all, that it was an honour for me to serve you as President of this privileged body. Japan respects and values the Conference on Disarmament because my country has a distinct history with regard to nuclear disarmament and, as a main pillar of its foreign policy, it places great emphasis on disarmament. This forum has a strong *raison d'être* because a safer world free of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved without further progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. Although the prospect of commencing such a negotiation is not bright now, I still consider the agreement on a schedule of activities as a modest but positive step for the work of the Conference. It is not a satisfying result, but it is a product of concession by all member States, and I would like to sincerely thank you all for your constructive attitude. At the same time, I wish to repeat that this is not the goal itself. To meet the expectations of the international community, we need to make the best possible use of the upcoming substantive meetings in order to maintain our expertise and pave the way for future negotiation. Mindful of this, I look forward to us participating in those meetings starting tomorrow.

Second, regarding the formal working group on a programme of work, we had a discussion just yesterday to which I listened with great attention. It is a difficult task, but I remain committed to contribute to further discussion under the guidance of Ambassador Gallegos and Ambassador Woolcott, since it is not only their responsibility but also all of ours.

I also thank the Acting Secretary-General, Mr. Møller, for his thoughtful statement today, which incorporated a variety of concrete ideas for our consideration. I firmly support the strong will and wish he expressed to revitalize this forum, and I am committed as one of this session's six Presidents to continue working with the Acting Secretary-General.

Third, if I may just refer to another aspect of my term, it was exemplified by an able spirit of cooperation among the session's six Presidents, which emulated previous presidencies. Though it is not a formal scheme, the Presidents group has been functioning as a key component this year. It has continued every year since 2006, and originated from a sense of urgency in the face of the long stagnation of the Conference. Since the stalemate continues, we should not lose such a sense of urgency, knowing there is good reason for the Presidents group to be active.

In ceding my place to Ambassador Tileuberdi of Kazakhstan, I assure him of my continued engagement.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for the strong support and cooperation that you have extended to me, and I would also like to thank the conference officers, the interpreters and the members of the secretariat.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place next Tuesday, 27 May 2014, at 10 a.m., under the presidency of Kazakhstan.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.