
Conference on Disarmament

10 June 2014

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 10 June 2014, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi(Kazakhstan)



The President: I call to order the 1319th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

This morning we have a guest of honour, His Excellency Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, who will address the Conference. Allow me to suspend the meeting for a short while so that I may escort His Excellency to the podium.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: The meeting is resumed.

It is my honour to welcome to our midst His Excellency Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal. I invite His Excellency to take the floor.

Mr. Ndiaye (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, and to wish you every success as you undertake your tasks at the helm of the Conference on Disarmament. You have the support of Senegal and the whole-hearted cooperation of its delegation. I would also like to congratulate the other Presidents of the 2014 session on their commitment to the cause of disarmament and to pay tribute to the work of Mr. Michael Møller, the Acting Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. It is with great pleasure that I address this august assembly, in particular as we are gathered here to discuss an issue that is at the top of the international agenda and of the utmost importance to my country.

The Conference on Disarmament serves as a linchpin of the framework for ensuring peaceful international relations. As the world's leading body with a mandate to carry out negotiations on disarmament issues, its efficient functioning is vital to cooperation on global peacekeeping and security.

To say that the Conference is currently going through a difficult phase and has even reached an impasse is to point out the obvious, given the slow pace of its proceedings and the fact that it has made little real progress for nearly two decades. We are all aware of and deplore the continuing deadlock that has beset the Conference and whose cause lies indisputably in a clear lack of trust among its members, the absence of political will and the patently intransigent nature of stances that are dictated by divergent individual interests to the detriment of the common interest of the community of nations and peoples.

The disarmament process stems from a firm political will to curb the risks of conflict and catastrophe associated with weapons and military installations. Committing to that process is, therefore, an act of faith that, as we are well aware, involves obstacles and sometimes fierce opposition at both the national and the international levels.

Should we just give in, then, to the prevailing mood of pessimism caused by the deadlock in the Conference's discussions? For Senegal, the answer is "no". We must not succumb to scepticism for at least three good reasons. Firstly, we are all aware of the extent to which the handling of an issue as sensitive as disarmament — a matter of concern to the international community — requires patience and clear-sightedness. Secondly, recent positive developments, such as the re-establishment of the informal working group with a mandate to produce a draft programme of work for the Conference and the adoption of a schedule of activities for the current session, herald more substantive progress for the future. Lastly, the international community cannot afford to stand idly by and watch indifferently as humankind continues to face the threat of the use of weapons and the risk of conflict and catastrophe with potentially disastrous repercussions for the planet.

That is why I wish to urge the member States of the Conference to redouble their efforts, alongside their President, to take advantage of the current propitious juncture to

forge ahead towards the adoption of a consensual programme of work and on the four core issues of the Conference in general, and on nuclear disarmament in particular.

I commend the holding, on 26 September 2013, of the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, as endorsed by Assembly resolution 68/32, and wish to point out that my country supports the complete eradication of military nuclear activities. Likewise, we fully support the Assembly's proposal on the convening, in 2018, of a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament.

The first two Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Oslo in 2013 and in Nayarit in February 2014, as well as the one scheduled to take place in Vienna before the end of the current year, are a manifestation of the will of the participating States and actors to find other effective ways and means to eradicate these types of weapons, which pose a permanent threat to human life. The conclusions emerging from the Oslo and Nayarit conferences show that no one nation, no matter how powerful, is equipped to deal with a nuclear conflict on its own.

I think we can all agree that the risk linked to the use of nuclear weapons remains very real in the light of their proliferation and the possibility of them falling into the hands of non-State actors or, even more worryingly, terrorist or organized criminal networks or groups. We therefore call on those States which have not already done so to join in the broad-based movement that is coming together to seek the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons through a binding international treaty.

Allow me, Mr. President, while reaffirming the unflagging commitment of Senegal to general and complete disarmament, to call on the members of the Conference, in particular the producer countries, to increase transparency with regard to the manufacture and sale of weapons. This call is all the more justified given the indescribable devastation caused by those weapons, mainly in non-producer developing countries, many of which have seen entire swathes of their civilian populations, economies, ecosystems and even political stability seriously affected.

Allow me also to recall — and associate myself with — the well-advised appeal made to States to promptly become parties to the Arms Trade Treaty as testimony to their commitment to the cause of disarmament. Senegal, for its part, will continue to actively pursue the aims of the Arms Trade Treaty as well as other objectives, such as the conclusion of an international legal instrument on nuclear disarmament, the full implementation of negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the setting up of nuclear-weapon-free zones, in particular in the Middle East and Africa, within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

As a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and all its amended Protocols, Senegal welcomes the conclusions that emerged from the informal meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems, which will no doubt constitute an effective contribution to the preparation and adoption of a new amended Protocol to that Convention on such systems. In addition to the questions surrounding their reliability, lethal autonomous weapons systems pose a serious problem in terms of respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

The various issues included on the agenda for the 2014 session of the Conference on Disarmament are all equally important to my country. My delegation joins the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in supporting the proposal to hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In backing that proposal, our sole motivation is the hope that States, international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders will come together, as a part of a global and pragmatic effort, in order

to give new impetus to all the various disarmament bodies, in particular the Conference, whose role as the main body for negotiations and discussions on disarmament must be reaffirmed and consolidated.

Considering the somewhat less than rosy picture presented by the disarmament world today, the time has perhaps come for the international community to agree to integrate this important element into the wider framework of global reform of the United Nations — a process that is designed to ensure greater consistency in how the system operates. It is high time for us to listen more closely to the calls for sweeping reform of the overall United Nations system. Those calls underscore the need to give civil society and NGOs more of a say in disarmament matters as well as on other issues, such as human rights and sustainable development. I wish to welcome and encourage their extremely positive contributions to and involvement in discussions within this body.

We hope that, in the near future, membership of the Conference on Disarmament will be opened up to some civil society organizations, thereby allowing the Conference to regain its effectiveness in guaranteeing a more secure and stable world.

Firmly committed to the achievement of fair and sustainable world peace, Senegal wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate its unfailing resolve to work with all parties and actors to take up the challenge of world peace. To that end, Senegal has decided to stand as candidate representing West Africa in next year's elections for non-permanent members of the Security Council for the period 2016-2017.

In doing so, Senegal is reaffirming its faith in the United Nations, its faith in the organization's ideals, its faith in international cooperation and, lastly, its faith in the Conference on Disarmament, which we strongly hope to see shake off its current lethargy, allowing all those present here today to witness with relief the end of a drama that has gone on for too long.

The President: I thank His Excellency Mr. Ndiaye for his address to the Conference and for the kind words addressed to me.

Allow me once again to suspend our meeting so that I may accompany the Minister from the podium.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: The meeting is resumed.

I now welcome the presence in our chamber of another distinguished guest to the Conference, Mr. Frank Rose, Assistant Deputy Secretary of State in the Department of State of the United States of America. I invite Mr. Rose to take the floor.

Mr. Rose (United States of America): I am pleased to join you today at the Conference on Disarmament and to have this opportunity to address an issue that is vital to the interests of the United States as well as the entire global community: ensuring the long-term sustainability, stability, safety and security of the outer space environment.

Since the beginning of the space age, the global community has been inspired by humanity's space endeavours and has reaped the benefits of the use and exploration of outer space. Many may take these benefits for granted, so we must ask ourselves: what would the consequences be if the space environment were to become unusable? The use and exploration of space and the information we derive from these activities permeate almost every aspect of our daily lives. We are safer, healthier and more knowledgeable, not to mention more connected, due to humanity's creativity, ingenuity and willingness to transcend the difficulties humankind faces in harnessing outer space. All nations and people have seen a radical transformation in the way we live our daily lives and in our understanding of our planet in the universe. Today there are more than 60 nations and

many non-governmental entities that are spacefaring or that benefit from space capabilities.

But space, a domain that no nation owns but on which all rely, is becoming increasingly congested with orbital debris and contested from man-made threats that may disrupt the space environment upon which we all depend. The globe-spanning and interconnected nature of space capabilities, and the world's growing dependence on them, mean that irresponsible acts in space can have damaging consequences for all of us. Therefore, it is essential that all nations work together to adopt approaches for responsible activity in space to preserve this domain for future generations, and we must ask ourselves what is the best way forward.

Some of us would suggest we pursue a new legally binding arms control agreement. The United States is willing to consider space arms controls, proposals and concepts that are equitable, effectively verifiable and enhance the security of all nations. However, we have not yet seen any legally binding proposals that meet these criteria. Therefore, it is important to focus on areas that unite us rather than divide us. There are many ways forward on which we do agree. Spacefaring nations have cooperated in numerous ways since the beginning of the space age. It is in those areas that unite us, I believe, that we should focus on achieving progress in the near term. This is because the United States wants to ensure a future where humanity continues to benefit from space activities.

As the United States national space policy states: "All nations have the right to explore and use space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all humanity in accordance with international law."

We must work together in a productive manner to address these challenges. I believe there are challenges that need to be addressed for practical, near-term solutions, such as non-legally binding transparency and confidence-building measures to encourage responsible action in and peaceful use of space. Such pragmatic, non-legally binding measures exist; they have been agreed to by consensus in the past and can be implemented quickly; they address the problem of debris and address the growing potential for actions that threaten the space environment.

Let me discuss some of the practical initiatives that the United States has pursued and supported over the past several years. First, there is a Group of Governmental Experts study on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures. Thanks to the constructive approach taken by the Group's Chair, Mr. Victor Vasiliev of Russia, the Group reached consensus on a final report in July 2013. This report was then adopted by consensus on 15 December 2013 by the United Nations General Assembly. The report endorsed voluntary, non-legally binding transparency and confidence measures to strengthen stability in space. It endorsed efforts to pursue political commitments, including a multilateral code of conduct, to encourage responsible actions in, and peaceful uses of, outer space, and it demonstrates the importance and priority of working on these voluntary and pragmatic measures. This report should be an essential element in our informal discussions this week on outer space security.

For those committed to peaceful cooperation and collaboration in space, recommendations from this report provide useful, near-term steps to further our shared goal of a long-term sustainable space environment.

First, States should take steps to ensure the long-term sustainability of space by adhering to international guidelines to mitigate space debris and cooperate on orbital collision avoidance. For its part, the United States is an active participant in these efforts, which include bilateral experts workshops and multinational technical exchanges, such as the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space Working Group on Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

Second, the report encourages States to implement further information-sharing measures. Such measures provide clarity of intent about military space activities and avoid misunderstandings and miscalculations which, in the realm of space, could prove catastrophic for all who benefit from space assets. For example, States could exchange information regarding national space security policies, as well as military space expenditure. Such measures would build on the practices already employed by a number of nations, including the United States, which currently publish their space policies as well as national strategies for military space activities.

Third, States should consider pursuing political commitments, including a multilateral code of conduct, to encourage responsible actions in, and peaceful use of, outer space. The United States actively supports and participates in efforts to develop an international code of conduct for outer space activities, and we encourage all interested States to continue to engage in this process.

Fourth, the Group of Governmental Experts recommends that States address harmful radio frequency interference and exchange information on space weather hazards. These recommendations deserve further consideration by the International Telecommunication Union and the World Meteorological Organization.

The United States welcomes proposals for the development of additional transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space activities as long as they satisfy the criteria established in the consensus report. Per the Group of Governmental Experts consensus report, criteria for non-legally binding transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space activities should be verifiable by other parties in their application either independently or collectively, be clear, practical and proven, meaning that both the application and efficacy of the proposed measure must be demonstrated by one or more actors, and finally, reduce or eliminate the causes of mistrust, misunderstanding and miscalculation with regard to activities and intentions of States.

In this regard, the United States believes that the European Union's efforts to develop an international code of conduct for outer space activities can serve as the best near-term mechanism for States to implement many of the recommendations made by the Group of Governmental Experts. Furthermore, we believe such a non-legally binding code of conduct, if signed by established and emerging space Powers, could help to solidify safe operational practices, reduce the chance of collisions or other harmful interference with nations' activities and strengthen stability in space. I attended the recent round of open-ended consultations on the code in Luxembourg, which I found to be very productive and constructive. The United States fully supports the European Union's ambition of finalizing the code later this year or soon thereafter.

In addition to the Group of Governmental Experts and the code of conduct, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has also been doing important work to move forward in the development of new international long-term sustainability guidelines. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee Working Group on Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities is playing an active role in developing these recommended guidelines, which are being further reviewed in Vienna this week. We believe that numerous areas covered by this agenda item are fruitful for international discussion and cooperation, such as space situational awareness, space operations, space debris and space weather. Furthermore, we welcome an opportunity to discuss implementation of specific bilateral measures, such as exchanges of information on national space policies and military activities, and the provision of space flight safety notifications to other spacefaring nations.

So, as I have outlined today, the United States will continue to take a leadership role in ensuring the long-term sustainability, stability, safety and security of the space environment by promoting and putting into practice the landmark consensus report of the

Group of Governmental Experts and continuing to support the European Union's efforts to develop an international code of conduct for outer space activities. These efforts keep the focus on those areas that unite us rather than divide us, and offer the best way forward.

The United States has made clear that we are prepared to engage in substantive discussions on space security as part of the Conference on Disarmament's consensus programme of work. Indeed, as I have described, the United States is fully engaged across a wide range of bilateral and multilateral forums in pursuit of sustaining the space environment. However, some proposals fail to meet the criteria set for valid transparency and confidence-building measures as identified in the Group of Governmental Experts report.

For example, in assessing a Russian initiative for States to make declarations of no first placement of weapons in outer space, we conclude that it is neither verifiable nor does it adequately and satisfactorily define a space weapon. The United States believes that arms control proposals and concepts should only be considered by the international community if they are equitable, effectively verifiable and enhance the security of all. In this regard, the analysis by the United States of the draft Treaty on the Prevention of Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Space Objects, introduced in 2008 at the Conference in document CD/1839, revealed that the draft Treaty does not meet the necessary criteria. In this regard, I note the revised draft Treaty sent to delegations yesterday evening by Russia. We will conduct an in-depth analysis of the revised text, but our preliminary assessment is that the new draft text does not address the significant flaws in the 2008 draft Treaty, namely there is no effective verification regime to monitor compliance and terrestrial anti-satellite systems posing the greatest and most imminent threat to space systems are not captured.

Last year we observed the fiftieth anniversary of a key piece of outer space diplomatic history: the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space. This resolution, adopted by consensus in December 1963, laid out key principles, including that the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all humankind and that outer space is free for exploration and use by all States on the basis of equality and in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

Just over three years later, the Declaration formed the core for the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which remains the foundation of the international legal framework for space activities, along with three other core treaties on outer space. It is important that we not lose sight how much has been and continues to be achieved for humanity's common benefit within this framework. The United States believes any discussions on space security in the Conference or other forums should support the continued vitality of these principles.

Sustaining the space environment is critical for all humankind, for our aspirations, our economies, our environment, our health, as well as our security. If we are serious about maintaining the space environment for future generations, we must support measures that promote positive activities in space and refrain from proposing ineffective measures that will fail to unify us in solving the challenges we face in the space environment.

Fortunately, the current legal framework for space activities rooted in that declaration of principles of 50 years ago provides a solid basis for operating today in space. The recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts offer the best, most practical solutions for bolstering the international community's efforts to ensure the availability of the space environment for all of humankind. By working together on

pragmatic steps, our nations in the international community can advance the long-term sustainability and security of the outer space environment for all nations in future generations.

We have already witnessed progress on many fronts in the pursuit of a sustainable, stable, safe and secure space environment. This progress did not happen by accident. It required the sustained commitment and hard work of many, many individuals and Governments from around the world. Yet more progress must be made to ensure that our ever-greater goals in space are not hindered by miscalculation, accident or short-sighted action.

The President: I thank Mr. Rose for his very important statement. I would now like to turn to the list of speakers for today and give the floor to Ambassador Borodavkin of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Borodavkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, it is a special pleasure for me to congratulate you as the representative of Kazakhstan — our neighbour and a country with which we maintain friendly relations — on assuming the Conference presidency. I am also happy to note the significant contribution that Kazakhstan made to the preparations for the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which took place on 6 May in New York.

What made this important international event stand out, and what is our shared achievement, was that, for the first time in global practice, the Protocol to the Treaty was signed at the same time by all the nuclear Powers that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. All that remains to be done is its ratification. We anticipate that we will all do this in as timely a manner as possible.

Mr. President, allow me to take the opportunity at this plenary meeting to draw your attention to a topic that will be the subject of in-depth discussion at the Conference tomorrow: the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

As you are aware, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 bans the placement in outer space only of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction — not of any other weapons. However, the risk of such weapons appearing in outer space is growing by the day, given the rate at which military scientific and technological capacities are developing.

If space weapons were to be deployed, they would pose a huge new threat. They would have a global reach, high readiness for use and a capability for hidden and sudden engagement of outer space and Earth objects. The consequences of their use would be disastrous for the Earth's biosphere and for all humankind.

If this were to take place, it would have an extremely destabilizing effect on strategic stability and international security. Moreover, the placement of weapons in outer space would jeopardize the security of outer space activity, as well as its long-term sustainability in all respects.

The threat of outer space becoming a new arena for armed conflict creates an urgent need to find negotiated collective solutions to neutralize such a threat. The members of the Conference, all of us, stand before a truly unique and historic opportunity to take preventive action, rather than waiting for this threat to materialize.

We believe it is vital to take advantage of the current favourable situation — that is, the absence of weapons in outer space — and, without delay, embark collectively on serious and substantive work on the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space with a view to moving towards the necessary negotiations.

As you are all aware, the draft Treaty was first submitted to the Conference — by Russia and China — in 2008. Together with the Permanent Representative of China to

the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Wu, we would now like to bring to your attention an updated draft of the Treaty. This text, which reflects the outcomes of previous discussions and delegates' comments, has been significantly updated. Moreover, it is now virtually multilateral in nature since it is the product of collective efforts, not just those of Russia and China. In addition, the updated text remains open to new, constructive ideas. As was the case during previous in-depth discussions at the Conference, we are interested in receiving new ideas and proposals which may move the draft Treaty ever closer to a consensus.

With regard to the comments made just now by the representative of the United States, Mr. Rose, we feel that they are too hasty in their criticism and we regret that there is nothing positive to be taken from them. We would like to be able to look forward to more constructive and positive ideas and proposals from the United States delegation in future stages of the discussion.

I would like to stress that the essence of the updated draft Treaty has not changed. It was envisioned as a legally binding international instrument for preventive action, creating a reliable barrier to keep outer space from becoming another arena of armed conflict. The fundamental obligations have been maintained, such as not placing weapons of any kind in outer space, as well as not using force or the threat of force against space objects of member States.

We wish to lay particular emphasis on another extremely important aspect: the conclusion of this treaty and its entry into force will allow us to strengthen strategic stability and global security, and the international legal safeguards not to place weapons in outer space will facilitate the implementation of further measures in the field of nuclear disarmament.

We call on all members of the Conference to play an active and constructive role in the substantive and results-oriented dialogue on the draft Treaty during the thematic discussion that will start tomorrow on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We anticipate that this discussion will open the path to beginning negotiations on the draft Treaty at the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank Ambassador Borodavkin for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China, Mr. Wu.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Kazakhstan has always been committed to international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and has made unique contributions to maintaining international and regional peace and stability. Recently, the five nuclear-weapon States jointly signed the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. Kazakhstan played an important role in this regard, and we are confident that further progress will be achieved in the Conference under your presidency. You may count on the full cooperation of the Chinese delegation in your work.

We are already halfway through this annual session of the Conference. Positive progress has been made through the joint efforts of the various Presidents and member States of the Conference. The informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work has been re-established, and an in-depth exchange of views on a programme of work has been carried out. In accordance with the schedule of activities, we have held in-depth and substantive discussions on nuclear disarmament and a fissile material cut-off treaty. We hope that the upcoming informal meetings on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances and other issues will be similarly fruitful.

At the plenary meeting held on 20 May, the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Møller, put forward constructive proposals on the work of the Conference, and some States have made observations in this regard. The Chinese delegation appreciates the proposals put forward by Mr. Møller and supports any efforts that will be conducive to promoting the work of the Conference. At the same time, we believe that the rules of procedure — at the core of which is the principle of consensus — should be observed and that the work of the Conference should be promoted in a comprehensive and balanced manner. We are ready to explore with all colleagues feasible ways of revitalizing the work of the Conference.

Today, the delegations of China and the Russian Federation jointly submitted to the Conference an updated text of the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects. Ambassador Borodavkin of the Russian Federation has just introduced the new draft.

Tomorrow, the informal meetings on the prevention of an arms race in outer space will begin. China has consistently been promoting this as a priority issue in the Conference. The reason for this is that, with the rapid development of space technology, the risk of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space has been increasing, and this will hinder peaceful uses of outer space, undermine trust among States in matters of space security, subvert global strategic balance and stability and weaken the nuclear disarmament process. At the same time, the existing legal framework governing outer space is not adequate to prevent the weaponization of outer space or effectively prevent the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

In the face of this situation, the international community must take preventive action and negotiate and conclude a new international legal instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space as soon as possible, so as to stymie the weaponization of outer space from the outset by means of a legal mechanism. The international community has also made universal calls for this. At successive past sessions, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted resolutions on this issue by an overwhelming majority, calling upon the Conference to negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument on the subject.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has always been one of the four core issues of the Conference, which has laid solid groundwork for addressing the issue. For many years, the Conference has been carrying out work relevant to this issue and has accumulated a wealth of experience. The members of the Conference have held in-depth discussions on the issue and have put forward many proposals. In 2008, China and the Russian Federation jointly submitted to the Conference the draft Treaty (CD/1839) as a basis for the negotiation within the Conference of an international legal instrument on the matter. The United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities has also studied the issue extensively, with positive results.

Taking into account new developments in outer space security and the views of the various parties, including some recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts, China and the Russian Federation have updated and improved the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, mainly by supplementing, revising and fine-tuning the provisions on definitions, scope, institutional arrangements and dispute settlement mechanisms. The new draft aims to further promote the negotiation of an international legal instrument on the issue within the Conference. The Chinese delegation will explain its position in greater detail at the informal meetings tomorrow. We hope that all parties will seriously study the new draft and support this initiative. We will continue to give serious consideration to views and suggestions from all parties and will continue to further improve the draft Treaty, so as to

lay more groundwork for the start of substantive negotiations on the issue within the Conference.

The international community is concerned by the fact that the Conference has been unable to carry out substantive work for a long time. That being said, it is widely recognized that there is a close link between the Conference's work and the external security environment.

The international situation is undergoing complex changes. On the one hand, the constant expansion of multipolarity, economic globalization and social informatization is causing the interests, prosperity and security of all countries to become increasingly interconnected. On the other hand, regional hotspots wax and wane, and traditional and non-traditional security threats are intertwined. Recently, President Xi Jinping pointed out that we should attach equal importance to both national security and common security for all and should build a community of common destiny by encouraging all parties to move forward together towards the objectives of reciprocity, mutual benefit and common security. This is quite instructive for us as we explore ways of promoting the international arms control and disarmament process. All parties should abandon the concepts of the cold war and a zero-sum game, actively seek common and cooperative security, and continue to improve the international and regional security environment with a view to creating favourable conditions for the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process.

Nuclear disarmament is one of the core issues of the Conference and is also an important aspect of global governance. We believe that the primary objective of nuclear global governance should be to achieve universal security and that it should preserve the existing multilateral mechanisms, uphold the principles of balanced progress and consensus, and ensure broad participation from the international community. Nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy are equally important and indispensable and should be given equal consideration and promoted in a balanced manner.

Firstly, we should maintain international strategic balance and stability and abandon the nuclear deterrence policy, which is based on the first use of nuclear weapons. Countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to take the lead in making drastic and substantive reductions in their nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament should be steadily promoted in accordance with the consensus reached by the international community, including in the road maps adopted by the successive Review Conferences on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Secondly, we should effectively strengthen the authority and universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. All States should strictly comply with the non-proliferation obligations stemming from it and the relevant regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency; maintain a balanced supply and demand of nuclear materials; eliminate gaps in nuclear security and potential proliferation risks; properly resolve regional hotspot issues through political and diplomatic means; and consolidate the international non-proliferation regime.

Thirdly, we should fully respect the rights of all countries, and especially developing countries, to engage in peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and we should actively undertake international cooperation to assist developing countries with developing and using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Fourthly, we should follow a sensible, coordinated, joint approach to nuclear security, work to create an international nuclear security system that is based on fairness and win-win cooperation, vigorously strengthen nuclear security, promote international cooperation and make joint efforts to combat nuclear terrorism.

The President: I thank Ambassador Wu for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and to my country.

You will recall that, at the last plenary meeting, a number of delegations commented on the statement made on 20 May 2014 in this chamber by the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Møller, and requested him to provide clarification on some of the very important proposals he made. Mr. Møller has decided to again address the Conference in order to provide us with more details on his proposals. It is my pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Møller for his statement.

Mr. Møller (Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to address you again three weeks after my 20 May statement, in which I offered a number of suggestions aimed at helping to unblock the protracted deadlock in the Conference and thus, hopefully, facilitate the resumption of substantive negotiations.

I listened very carefully to your views on my proposal. It was a very rich and encouraging debate, and I was gratified by the positive spirit in which my comments were received and by your own very constructive comments.

Many of you requested clarifications of my suggestions in order to facilitate your own future deliberations on them, and I am very happy to provide them. However, before addressing the four proposals separately and in greater detail, let me make a more general comment.

My suggestions were, and are, meant to provide food for thought for your own deliberations. You are clearly the masters of the substance and procedures of the Conference on Disarmament, and that is how it should be. Just as my predecessor's suggestions led to the establishment of the informal working group, it is my hope that what I have put forward, and the ensuing discussions among you, will help build on and reinforce the recent new momentum, which of course also includes the current parallel discussions within the schedule of activities. Our shared overall objective is to move closer towards reaching the long elusive goal of resuming negotiations in the Conference.

Let me now turn to the four suggestions.

First, on the search for common ground with a view to eventually producing framework conventions to which substantive protocols could be subsequently added, there were divided opinions on this idea last week. It is not entirely a new one. In October 2008, the Secretary-General of the United Nations launched his five-point nuclear disarmament proposal in which he referred to a framework of mutually reinforcing instruments leading to a nuclear weapons convention with the goal of global nuclear disarmament.

Last week, our Swiss colleague drew the conclusion that such a "building blocks approach" could provide the balance between setting a clear aim and a common objective of nuclear disarmament on the one hand, and flexibility in achieving it in a gradual manner on the other. I agree with him. Several of you also seemed to accept it, and it has been proposed on several occasions by Japan in the past.

There are, potentially, a number of elements within each agenda item on your disarmament palette around which it may be possible to garner consensus. My suggestion was aimed at encouraging you to explore those elements that could constitute a basis for future treaty negotiations.

As an analogy and a way of moving forward, I suggested that you look at past examples of framework conventions, such as the Convention on Certain Conventional

Weapons with its five protocols, each targeting a specific weapons type. Looking at the substantive items on your agenda and determining which of them might lend itself to such a model may be a useful way forward.

I would also like to recall the proposal put forth by Brazil on a possible structure for a fissile material cut-off treaty in 2010, contained in document CD/1888, to be composed of a framework or umbrella treaty containing provisions on objectives, definitions and final clauses and protocols.

The determination on whether or not to pursue this avenue needs to be done by the members of the Conference. The secretariat obviously stands ready to assist if and when you decide that could be useful.

Second, with regard to exploring issues on which voluntary, politically binding regimes may be negotiated, let me be clear that I am not suggesting a move away from the Conference's core negotiating mandate to conclude legally binding instruments. That should clearly remain your fundamental goal.

There is, however, nothing in the Conference's rules that prevents you, as a first step, from negotiating other types of instruments. This could help build momentum, generate mutual confidence and trust and, most importantly, allow the Conference to add tangible value in strengthening the rule of law in disarmament. Any such agreements should be issue-specific and could set the stage for the initial crafting of the building blocks I referred to earlier. You may wish to explore such an option within the framework of the informal working group.

This suggestion also elicited diverging views from you last week. It may well be that, as has been suggested by some of our colleagues, you conclude that starting to craft voluntary, politically binding agreements may just create the illusion of progress and thus relax the pressure to reach the Conference's core objective. However, as our colleague from Poland reminded us last week, there are examples of politically binding regimes that function quite effectively, even in challenging circumstances.

I would mention the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons as an example of a robust and successful politically binding instrument. Another example, as we were reminded this morning, are the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines, which have been accepted by the General Assembly and are now being implemented by States. The fact is that politically binding agreements have often in the past been the first step towards a negotiated legally binding agreement. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons are also cases in point. Almost 18 years after having been opened for signature and, regrettably, not yet in force, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty nevertheless constitutes a powerful global norm.

My objective with this, as with other suggestions, is to stimulate discussions among you by looking at different possibilities for moving forward, fully realizing that not all of them may find favour in the end.

But I am an optimist by nature, and that optimism led me to make the other two suggestions, the first being to set up a subsidiary body to review the methods of work of the Conference.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea suggested last week that, rather than creating a subsidiary body to discuss the methods of work, you should meet in a more informal setting in order to nurture a frank exchange of views. It may very well be more convenient to first start with an informal exchange to see what the traffic will bear and then move to a more formal subsidiary body setting once it is clear that there is the possibility of agreement on some of these issues. I certainly hope that there will be.

Most of you agreed last week that the reasons for the current deadlock are political rather than procedural. Yet many of you also conceded that there would be merit in taking a fresh look at your working methods in order to make them help reach your goals. New realities and practices have emerged which, if codified, might serve the Conference even better.

It is in this spirit that I would like to elaborate on the suggestion by pointing to some of the areas that you might wish to look at.

The consensus rule is one such item. Rest assured that I am not suggesting that the principle of consensus should be challenged. However, you may want to take a look at how its application has evolved. As the Ambassador of France reminded us last week, consensus in the Conference has migrated to mean unanimity. And that unanimity requirement is being applied to all decisions, irrespective of their substantive or procedural nature, and at all stages of the decision-making process, with no distinction of the importance of the issue. In this context, the Ambassador of Germany also recommended a more flexible approach to the application of the rule of consensus in procedural matters and where issues of national security are not directly affected.

The nature and role of the presidency is another important element. Some of you elaborated on my suggestion that you formalize the practice of effective continuity from one President to the next, and suggested that it may be time to think of reducing the number of Presidents per session that we have now. This would imbue the work of the presidency with greater continuity, consistency and leadership for the benefit of the Conference's efforts to revitalize its activities.

Our French colleague also reminded us that the prerogatives of the President have, over the years, been reduced by increasingly restrictive interpretations of the rules of procedure. He implied that we should differentiate between truly important procedural matters with clear and direct substantive impact on your deliberations and those of a more organizational nature which could better be left to the President's discretion.

I found myself very much in agreement with that view. Let me add that the Conference's rules of procedure are fairly flexible and that you are their masters. The rules should serve you, and not the other way round.

The Conference's representativeness is often questioned. A host of States are queuing to get in and have been doing so for years. This goes to the heart of the perception of, and trust and confidence in, the Conference. Some forward movement on this issue would go a long way to restore those. I am fully aware of the reasons for the current blockage, but it really ought to be possible to find imaginative ways around that problem.

There is currently no mechanism for self-review or evaluation comparable to the five-yearly reviews built into some of the outcomes of the Conference — the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — or the 10-yearly reviews in the case of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It may be worth considering applying the same to the Conference on Disarmament itself.

Finally, on the matter of civil society interaction with the Conference, the current rules governing that interaction were agreed to by you in 2004. I do not need to tell you that the manner and content of civil society participation in everything that we do in all corners of the United Nations today has evolved dramatically over the past 10 years — except in the Conference on Disarmament.

A policy of non-engagement is simply no longer tenable in today's world, particularly on an issue like disarmament, nuclear or non-nuclear, with such profound importance for, and impact on, every single human being. Regardless of the proposal to

hold an informal Conference on Disarmament/civil society consultation later this year, I would recommend a review of the now 10-year-old rule governing your interaction with other stakeholders. One possible moment to do so might be after the eventual holding of the forum mentioned earlier.

Lastly, my suggestion of holding an informal Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum was received by you last week with varying degrees of enthusiasm, but with unanimity among those of you who spoke in welcoming the idea, and I am very grateful for that.

Let me clarify how I see the next steps. First of all, the objective is to organize such a gathering in a way that is useful, enriches the disarmament debate and meets with your approval. We do not need another event in which we will hear a repetition of known positions and sterile debates. This requires some careful thought as to the participants, the subjects to be discussed and the format. Some of you have already expressed views in that regard last week, and I welcome further suggestions from you. The timing will be determined by the speed with which we can prepare well and other practical considerations, but I do not see this taking place before late fall or winter of this year.

I will now start the thinking and planning process with the help of my colleagues in the secretariat, and revert to you soonest with some suggestions that we can then discuss further. I will also invite ideas from our colleagues at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), a valued partner with solid substantive expertise.

At this stage, I see this as an informal dialogue linked to, but not part of, the Conference that will hopefully take a fresh look at some of the issues before you. It should, on the one hand, allow you to be better informed on how civil society views those issues and the way they are dealt with by the disarmament machinery and, on the other, allow civil society to be better informed of your positions and concerns. I have suggested that the forum be hosted by the Secretary-General of the Conference, but that is not etched in stone: it may well be that as our collective thinking evolves other possibilities emerge further.

Once the forum takes place, and if you deem it to have been a success, you may then want to, as mentioned earlier, draw lessons from it as you contemplate the future of your relationship with civil society.

I hope that my statement today has clarified the issues raised by some delegations on my proposal and I am, as always, available for further discussions anytime. I thank you once again for your interest and attention and look forward to continue working with you on returning the Conference to its proper place in the multilateral disarmament architecture.

The President: I thank Mr. Møller for his statement to the Conference, which I am sure has clarified and provided more details on the proposals he made in this chamber about three weeks ago.

There are no more speakers on my list. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held next Tuesday, 17 June 2014, at 10 a.m. It is my intention to devote the plenary to an informal meeting for the consideration of the clarified proposals made by the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.