

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and ninety-third plenary meeting

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President: Mr. Piotr Stachńczyk (Poland)

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The President: Ladies and gentlemen, I call to order the 1393rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is a matter of great honour for Poland and for me personally to assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to begin by complimenting the Ambassadors of Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan and Peru for the manner in which they have conducted their respective presidencies.

I am also pleased to inform you that the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, will be joining us later this morning. He is scheduled to land at Geneva airport shortly. Since Mr. Kalbusch is travelling with him, I am happy to welcome Ms. Silvia Mercogliano as our Secretary this morning.

Please allow me to brief you about our plans for the presidency. The Conference has proven its efficiency in the past and, three years from now, we will celebrate the fortieth anniversary of its establishment. This forum, however, finds itself in a long-standing stalemate that is due to different circumstances, mainly outside the Conference. What is at stake now is not only the situation of the Conference but, foremost, the future of the whole disarmament architecture.

This is why we need qualitative, not quantitative, progress in the Conference. Despite a significantly different situation in the Conference this year, namely having several proposals on a programme of work, we have so far not obtained concrete results.

I would like to thank the United States, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation and the Group of 21 for their proposals. The output of the Conference on Disarmament this year is our common concern. I believe that it is not too late to respond to this matter in a positive way. In this context, we have decided to make another — and common — effort to adopt a programme of work, which would lead to a positive outcome for this year's session and would pave the way for better cooperation in the coming year. Therefore, taking into account the high degree of support for the initial proposal of the United Kingdom on a programme of work, as contained in working paper CD/WP.595 of 27 June 2016, we have decided to reintroduce it to the 2016 session for adoption by the members of the Conference.

I would like to underline that we recognize the United Kingdom proposal as particularly tailored for this year's session in that it provides an open option for building upon achievements over the coming years. At the same time, we consider that other proposals having a negotiating mandate could be further examined and elaborated in the foreseeable future.

Let me request that you, distinguished delegates, express your support for the proposed document. In my view, it is the most realistic and responsible step that we can take now. I invite you all to study the document again over the coming days and that we discuss it with the possibility of taking action at the plenary meeting to be held on Thursday, 30 June 2016. In this context, I stand ready to meet and consult with any delegations. Let me also stress that, in the current situation, the time factor is of the utmost importance.

Let me also inform you that we intend to devote a plenary meeting of the Conference in August to a panel debate on the main international challenges entailed in the disarmament process. The debate could be followed by an informal discussion. What we need, we think, is more open discussion which will lead to mutual understanding.

I would now like to inform you that some colleagues will be leaving us in the coming days and weeks. They have asked to take the floor to address the Conference this morning. Before doing that, I have a request from Mongolia, which wishes to address the Conference on behalf of the Group of 21, as the first speaker due to another commitment. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Purevdorj (Mongolia): Mr. President, first of all, on behalf of my delegation and myself, I would like to extend our sincere congratulations to you on assuming the important role of President of the Conference on Disarmament. We wish you success and assure you of the full support of my delegation as you discharge these important duties as the President of the Conference.

Now, I have the honour to deliver on behalf of the Group of 21 the following statement on negative security assurances:

The Group of 21 reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Group remains convinced that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use and proliferation persists.

Therefore, as reflected in the Group's statement delivered by Kenya on 8 March 2016, the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as mandated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 68/32, leading to agreement on the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time.

Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the Group reaffirms, as a high priority, the urgent need to reach an early agreement on a universal, unconditional, irrevocable and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances, as called for in General Assembly resolution 70/25. Such an instrument should be clear, credible, without any ambiguity and non-discriminatory and should respond to the concerns of all the parties.

The Group reaffirms the right of non-nuclear-weapon States not to be attacked by or threatened by the nuclear-weapon States with the use of nuclear weapons and strongly calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from any such action or threat, whether implicit or explicit.

The Group underlines the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

The Group recalls the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013, which demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority, and supports and calls for the full implementation of its related resolutions 68/32, 69/58 and 70/34 to follow up to this meeting.

The Group also highlights the importance of the commemoration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons devoted to furthering this objective and welcomes the decision to convene no later than 2018 a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament.

The Group highlights the objectives laid down in General Assembly resolution 70/31, entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation", which, among other things, reaffirms multilateralism as the core principle in resolving disarmament and non-proliferation concerns.

The Group underscores the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic defence doctrines, security policies and military strategies which not only set out rationales for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons but also maintain unjustifiable concepts on international security based on promoting and developing military alliances' nuclear deterrence policies.

The Group believes that, pending the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned — and taking into account provisions of the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament — is a positive step and important measure towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In this context, the Group welcomes the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Semipalatinsk and the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia.

The Group of 21 welcomes resolution 69/66 of the General Assembly, in which it was decided to convene the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia as a one-day conference to be held in New York in 2015, under the leadership of Indonesia, and notes with appreciation the various efforts deployed in this regard to produce concrete results.

The Group reiterates that, in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it is essential that nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of the zones. In this context, the Group urges nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all the reservations and interpretative declarations to the protocols of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

The Group of 21 welcomes the formal proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28 and 29 January 2014. The 33 member countries of CELAC declared to promote nuclear disarmament as a priority goal as part of the process towards general and complete disarmament in order to promote the strengthening of trust among nations.

CELAC once again reiterates its standing commitment to continue working for Latin America and the Caribbean to remain and be strengthened as a zone of peace, thereby contributing to regional and international security. Hopefully, this proclamation will be followed by other political proclamations of zones of peace in other regions of the world.

The Group welcomes the political declaration of Quito adopted at the Fourth Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms, *inter alia*, the commitment of CELAC to the preservation of peace and international security, political independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament.

CELAC reaffirms its commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace and highlights its character as the first-ever zone free of nuclear weapons established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The Group reiterates its strong support for the early establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons. To this end, the Group of 21 reaffirms the need for the expeditious establishment of such a zone in response to Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and paragraph 14 of Council resolution 687 (1991) and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The States members of the Group of 21 that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) express their disappointment and deep concern that three States parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositaries and co-sponsor States of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the Ninth NPT Review Conference, including the process to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as contained in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole. The States members of the Group of 21 that are parties to the NPT reaffirm that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The States members of the Group of 21 that are parties to the NPT also express their serious concern over the lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution and, in accordance with paragraph 6 of that resolution, call upon all States

parties to the NPT, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay.

The States members of the Group of 21 that are parties to the NPT express their utmost concern that the persistent lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution — contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT Review Conferences — erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, taking into account that the indefinite extension of the Treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

In this context, the States members of the Group of 21 that are parties to the NPT reaffirm the urgency of accession by Israel to the Treaty without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. While the Group believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones are positive steps towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it does not subscribe to the arguments that declarations that have been made by the nuclear-weapon States are sufficient or that security assurances should only be granted in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In addition, given the geographical limitations, security assurances guaranteed to States members of nuclear-weapon-free zones cannot substitute for universal, legally binding security assurances.

The Group recalls that the demand for security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapon States in the 1960s and it crystallized in 1968 during the concluding phase of the negotiations for the NPT. The response of the nuclear-weapon States, however, as reflected in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), was incomplete, partial and conditional. The demand for assurances, therefore, persists. The Group accepts that, while various approaches exist, efforts to conclude a universal, legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be vigorously pursued. The Group considers that the conclusion of such an instrument would be an important step towards achieving the objectives of arms control, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects.

The Group of 21 takes note of the substantive and interactive informal discussions on negative security assurances held in the Conference on Disarmament from 18 to 20 June 2014, pursuant to the schedule of activities of the 2014 session contained in document CD/1978, and on 27 August 2015, pursuant to the schedule of activities of the 2015 session contained in document CD/2021.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. Now I would like to give the floor to the representative of Finland, Ambassador Päivi Kairamo.

Ms. Kairamo (Finland): Mr. President, allow me to start by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You may trust in the full support of my delegation.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to address the Conference today in order to provide some farewell remarks now, although my tenure formally comes to an end on 31 August. I am genuinely grateful for these past four years that I have served as the Permanent Representative of Finland to the Conference on Disarmament. Working with you, my colleagues, has been truly rewarding as we form a tight collegial community. Even if we cannot always agree, we can certainly find common ground: this makes our disarmament community very special. In this chamber there is hardly any need to emphasize that, during the past four years, we have indeed been able to identify a set of issues that could be addressed in the Conference. The matter of prioritizing the order of these issues has been less clear. This became evident to me when I had the honour to serve as a Co-Chair of the informal working group on a programme of work for the Conference

last year. Nevertheless, our common responsibility is to pursue every avenue that might lead to substantive work in the Conference.

Finland continues to stand ready to support the President of the Conference in this respect and we encourage other partners to do the same. All current proposals to initiate the work of the Conference have been carefully considered by Finland. As Finland has stated many times in this chamber, a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, which would include a negotiation mandate for a cut-off treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, is our priority. Finland welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on this topic and trusts that its elements could well be utilized in the work of the Conference. We warmly welcome and support the efforts to end the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapon purposes. Having said that, Finland is ready to support the draft decision on the programme of work for 2016 that was submitted by you, Mr. President, for our consideration.

It is also important to review and update the Conference's working methods. The expansion of the membership would contribute to the inclusiveness of the body, as would the recognition of the beneficial contribution of civil society and academia to its work.

I firmly believe that equal participation of both men and women is needed to reach a sustainable society. Integrating the gender dimension into the domain of hard security is important, as gender equality has a decisive role to play in making our world more secure for everyone, men and women alike. I therefore very much welcome the initiative taken by the Dutch presidency, and continued under the leadership of the Permanent Representative of Pakistan, to address gender and disarmament issues in the Conference. This is now a tradition and, together with the Geneva Gender Champions Initiative, it provides us with a possibility to make a real difference in how the roles of men and women are perceived in security policy. Let us make sure that we all participate in this work.

In the current security context, the need to uphold and strengthen the rule of law in international affairs is more important than ever. Arms control treaties are especially important as they provide stability and predictability, build confidence and lead us to disarmament. Finland underlines the importance of respecting international commitments as well as addressing arms control and proliferation challenges in a concrete manner. Finland also participates actively in many arms control-related initiatives that complement the normative framework.

The Arms Trade Treaty is a significant achievement for the international community. It contributes to stability and security and provides a more level playing field for companies as more countries apply similar export control policies and principles. Now we need to work towards universalization of the Treaty and ensure its effective implementation. It is also vital to continue dialogue with civil society and industry to achieve more responsible international trade of defence material. Finland has expressed its availability to serve as the next president of the Treaty and would in that role do its utmost to best serve both the universalization and the implementation goals of the Treaty.

To conclude, the Open-ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament started its work in February. Working towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is the responsibility of every State. For Finland, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty establishes the central instrument of nuclear disarmament. In the course of the May session of the Working Group, we referred to other measures that we support and actively advance; these include the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty based on the elements provided by the Group of Governmental Experts report and providing support for the practical implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Furthermore, strengthening nuclear-weapon-free zones and creating new zones free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States in these regions, as well as initiating bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral nuclear-weapons reduction negotiations on both strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons, are among the measures that Finland supports. Processes will also need to be inclusive, bringing together nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. We need practical

mechanisms and to build bridges, which is easier said than done, but it is not a reason to give up.

Finland urges the nuclear-weapon States to continue cooperation, build and rebuild confidence and negotiate deeper cuts in their nuclear arsenals, be they deployed or non-deployed, strategic or tactical nuclear weapons. With these words, I want to thank you all for the last four years and for your attention.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Finland for her farewell speech and wish her the best of luck and success at her next posting. Allow me to personally thank her for her contribution and hard work in the Conference on Disarmament and in the larger disarmament community in Geneva; in particular, her work as the coordinator of the informal working group on a programme of work is highly appreciated by everyone in this room. Thank you, Ambassador.

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel, Ambassador Eviatar Manor.

Mr. Manor (Israel): Mr. President, since this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Let me assure you of my delegation's continuing support under your wise guidance.

Next month I will complete my term as the Ambassador of Israel to the United Nations and other international organizations as well as the Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament after more than four years. I will also conclude more than 40 years of active diplomatic service to my country and retire with satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment.

During the last four years of work in the Conference, my delegation participated in an active manner in discussions, both formal and informal, and in consultations both in plenary sessions as well as within the regional western group. I had the honour to assume the presidency of the Conference at the beginning of 2014, during which we did our utmost to contribute and promote the Conference's work: in an inclusive and thorough process, we sought the positions of Conference member States, achieved agreement on the agenda of the Conference and pursued a programme of work and a schedule of activities. We continued to contribute to the Conference's work together with the session's other five Presidents throughout the year. In four years of work in the Conference, we have witnessed an interesting momentum with the revival of the informal discussions under the schedule of activities, which enabled all of us to deepen our discussions and our understanding of the core issues on the agenda. The extent of initiatives we have witnessed this year at the Conference is a sign of the importance that States continue to attach to the Conference. We share the hope of many other Conference members that these initiatives will help us revive our important work.

Israel values the Conference and its role as the single multilateral negotiating forum, and we continue to hold firm to the view that the Conference remains a singular forum which includes all those member States that must participate in disarmament and arms control negotiations in order to ensure that any outcome is meaningful and firmly linked to reality. There can be no dispute that the Conference is in need of a solution which would enable it to overcome its long stalemate. However, Israel believes that any revitalization of the Conference has to take place from within the Conference itself. Although criticized by some as outdated and as a reflection of past geopolitical realities, Israel remains convinced that the rules of procedure, and in particular the rule of consensus, are crucial in light of the complexity and sensitivity of the issues placed on the Conference's agenda. Israel, like other members of the Conference, continues to view and evaluate any proposal placed before the Conference through the prism of its national security interests. In such matters, decision-making cannot be conducted through a majority vote.

Mr. President, during my tenure, the world has seen significant events unfold which heavily impact the topics under discussion in the Conference, as well as in other arms control and disarmament forums. In the Middle East, we have witnessed fundamental changes which include the erosion of States' sovereign control over territories and the development and use of chemical weapons by Syria, despite its accession to the Chemical

Weapons Convention, as well as by non-State actors in the region. These abhorrent practices undermine the norm against the use of chemical weapons. During these years, terrorist organizations acquired arsenals that in some cases far exceed those held by States, both in quantity and in quality. They include advanced weapons such as unmanned aerial vehicles, man-portable air-defence systems, rockets and missiles of various ranges as well as advanced shore-to-ship missiles. To this, one must add the continued violations by Iran of United Nations Security Council resolutions, in particular regarding the development and testing of its missiles as well as its support of terrorist organizations and involvement in subversive activities on the regional level. Additional worrying developments in the global sphere include the nuclear and missile tests performed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its continued proliferation of weapons to the Middle East. These endanger regional and global stability alike.

Israel believes that a more secure and peaceful Middle East requires all regional States to engage in a process of direct and sustained dialogue to address the broad range of regional security challenges in the region. Such dialogue, based on the widely accepted principle of consensus, can only emanate from within the region and address in an inclusive manner the threat perception of all regional parties in order to enhance and improve their security. Direct contact, combined with trust and confidence-building, is an essential basis for the creation of a new security paradigm in a region fraught with war, conflicts, disintegration of national territories and human suffering. Accordingly, Israel agreed in 2011 to enter a long process of consultations with the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy of Finland, Mr. Jaakko Laajava, regarding the regional security challenges in the Middle East. Subsequently, Israel was the first country in the region to respond positively to Mr. Laajava's proposal to engage in multilateral consultations in Switzerland to advance regional dialogue. Between October 2013 and June 2014, five rounds of multilateral consultations were held in Switzerland between Israel and several of its Arab neighbours. The central purpose of the meetings was to seek regional consensus on all the essential aspects of a conference in Helsinki, including the agenda, the concluding document and the necessary modalities. Israel attended all of these meetings and engaged in good faith and sincerity with the other participants. It is unfortunate that our neighbours did not adopt a similar attitude towards the continuation of these consultations. It is especially unfortunate as the Middle East sorely lacks mechanisms which might contribute to the enhancement of understanding, the cessation of hostilities and the promotion of a more stable and secure Middle East.

Mr. President, on a more personal note, I saw action during my military service and in particular during the Yom Kippur War. I saw first-hand the consequences of war. My belief in and commitment to disarmament was always — and will continue to be — strong, even after I retire. While sometimes wars are inevitable, our aspiration remains steadfast towards the implementation of the eternal words of the prophet Isaiah, and I quote “and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks”.

The Conference on Disarmament has served the international community well in past years. It is too vital an institution to be cast aside. We are confident that the Conference has much to contribute in the future; even though the achievements of the Conference have fallen short of what we would have liked, let us not take a path which might prevent this institution from going forward.

I leave this important task in your hands to follow through.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, for your farewell speech and I wish you a peaceful and enjoyable, well-deserved retirement after 42 years in your country's diplomatic service. Allow me to personally thank you for your contribution and hard work in the Conference on Disarmament and in the larger disarmament community in Geneva.

I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Urs Schmid.

Mr. Schmid (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would first and foremost like to warmly congratulate you on taking up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success in the performance of your duties. You are taking up your functions at a time when I am preparing to leave mine. I am taking the floor to bid farewell to the Conference and the disarmament community. After four years in

Geneva, it is with a heavy heart that I leave a community characterized by esteem, mutual respect and many friendships that extend beyond mere professional relations.

I am also leaving with the feeling that these years have been particularly rich and busy. I leave the Conference unwavering in my belief that the international community must be able to rely on a standing disarmament body.

The challenges in this field are many and acute, and the efforts being made are vital not only to the promotion of peace and stability but also to progress in many other domains. However, if I have become convinced of anything in these past few years at the Conference, it is that this body needs to rethink itself and carry out an in-depth reassessment of how it approaches the challenges before it.

The Conference was established as a unique multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament. But, in truth, this title has become trite nowadays. The disarmament and arms control instruments that have been negotiated over the past 20 years were negotiated not within the Conference but externally, and this trend could grow in years to come.

By virtue of its central position in the multilateral disarmament mechanism, the Conference must approach its work from the angle of how it can contribute and be of use to the international community as a whole. In the increasingly globalized world in which we live, issues are closely interlinked and rising to challenges means working in a cross-cutting manner and breaking down silos.

Unfortunately, the Conference appears to be taking the opposite road, in other words, the road of increased disconnection from many other actors and from the concerns of the international community.

This state of affairs was underscored at the informal Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum held last week, especially during the discussion on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The point was eloquently raised by the Permanent Representative of Colombia during her statement on this topic. Making the Conference relevant to the entire international community would require reassessing several of these aspects.

Geopolitical difficulties partly explain why the Conference has not been able to develop a single instrument in the past 20 years. Yet, over the same period, the international community has been able to negotiate several. The Arms Trade Treaty is one example, as are the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and associated International Tracing Instrument. The Ottawa Convention on Landmines and the Convention on Cluster Munitions are another type of example.

The notion of security has evolved since the end of the cold war. Specifically, it now encompasses the concept of human security. To this day, the Conference appears unwilling or unable to factor in this change. As a result, it is contributing to its own marginalization. The challenges facing the international community in terms of conventional weapons are numerous. Many processes and discussions are under way, and it is telling that the Conference is not a part of them.

The revitalization of the Conference will also require a thorough re-evaluation of its composition. The international system has changed significantly since the Conference was established in 1978. It may have made sense at the time to strictly limit the number of member States, but this is no longer the case. The Conference cannot expect to legitimately act as the main disarmament body when it ostracizes more than two thirds of the States Members of the United Nations. A significant number of States are knocking on the Conference's door. We do not have a single solid argument to explain why we do not respond to their appeals. Broadening the composition of the Conference is now a necessity in order to break its growing isolation and to ensure that it incorporates more fully the concerns of the entire international community in terms of security and disarmament.

Similarly, greater openness will be necessary if the Conference is to fully join its efforts with those of the international community and strengthen its legitimacy. Breaking

down the silos and taking a cross-cutting approach are now necessary for both efficiency and relevance considerations. There are several dimensions to greater openness. Certainly, it means easier access to the Conference for civil society actors but also greater interaction with other disarmament stakeholders and organizations whose procedures and work are relevant to the Conference.

This in-depth reflection on the Conference that I am urging you to have should not be limited to the few aspects that I have mentioned, but it is necessary after 20 years of paralysis and at a time when the Conference's fortieth anniversary is quickly drawing near. Allow me to end by thanking once again all the members of the Conference, as well as its Secretary-General and secretariat for their collaboration, friendship and four bustling years of work.

I hope — or, rather, I am sure — that our paths will cross again in future and wish you all the best.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Switzerland for his farewell speech and wish him the best of luck and success at his next posting. Allow me to personally thank him for his contribution and hard work in the Conference on Disarmament as well as in the larger disarmament community in Geneva. We also thank him for the host country's hospitality.

That was the last of the farewell addresses. There is one more country on the list of speakers. I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Kim In-chul.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency on the Conference on Disarmament. As one of this session's six Presidents, I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in your efforts.

We welcome the proposal you put forward today and we look forward to participating in the working group. Having said that, as was repeatedly the case at the first plenary meeting chaired by our former President, I cannot help but turn to the track record of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its nuclear and ballistic missile programme this year. In response to last week's missile launches, the United Nations Security Council has issued a statement strongly condemning the recent ballistic missile launches, which are in grave violation of the international obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and noting that all its ballistic missile activities contribute to development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of nuclear weapons delivery systems and increase tension.

It also needs to be pointed out, from the Security Council's statement that, and I quote, "the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is diverting resources to the pursuit of ballistic missiles while its citizens have great unmet needs". Although the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continuously reveals its obsession with simultaneously pursuing economic development and nuclear weapons, it is a known fact that a vast number of people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are in need of humanitarian assistance on account of the regime's obsession with nuclear weapons. Thus, its behaviour calls for threefold condemnation as gravely violating its obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions, as disregarding the dire humanitarian needs of its citizens and as running clearly against the very spirit of the Conference on Disarmament. We therefore urge all Conference member States to stand united in implementing fully the measures imposed by the Security Council and in sending a clear message that the international community will not tolerate the behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should abandon its nuclear and missile programmes once and for all in a complete, universal and verifiable manner.

The President: I thank you, Mr. Ambassador. Before I open the floor, let me just underline again that our intention is to have a debate on the presidency's proposal on Thursday, 30 June. I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Al Nuqari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, let me first congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are also grateful for your submission of a draft programme of work to the Conference and wish you every success. As we have not yet had an opportunity to study the draft, we shall forward it to our capital in order to obtain instructions. We extend our best wishes to the Ambassador of Finland on the occasion of her assumption of a new office, and we wish her every success. We also wish every success to the Ambassador of Switzerland in the performance of his future functions. We enjoyed working with him during his presence at the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation supports the statement of Mongolia on behalf of the Group of 21 concerning negative security assurances. I shall not repeat many of the important points made in his statement, but I shall focus on a specific issue pertaining to the establishment of a demilitarized zone in the Middle East. In fact, although the region is designated as a demilitarized zone, it differs from other regions in a number of ways. First, the 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference provided for the establishment of such a zone, and this became part of a package deal whereby the Arab States, including of course the State on behalf of which I speak, agreed to the indefinite extension of the Treaty. This is not the only relevant point of reference. Operational paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which was adopted pursuant to Chapter VII, also called for the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The third point of relevance to the region is that the resolution refers not only to nuclear disarmament but to all types of weapons of mass destruction. The fourth point is that there is a party in the region that possesses nuclear weapons, unlike other regions where States require assurances from the five nuclear-weapon States. In this region, one party possesses weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

I am now approaching the final point. We heard the statement by the representative of Israel, who repeated the same lies that we have previously heard in the Conference, namely that the Syrian Government used chemical weapons. We absolutely deny, as in the past, these false allegations. Syria was the State that demanded two years ago that a United Nations mission should be sent to investigate the use of chemical weapons in Khan al-Assal, but the mission's work was impeded and its arrival delayed. Chemical weapons have been used by terrorist groups, not only by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Terrorist groups in Syria have begun to use chemical weapons, and they are supported by the Israeli occupation. The Israeli occupation recently appointed a liaison officer to communicate with the terrorist groups that use chemical weapons, so there is a liaison officer between the Israeli occupation and such groups. The statements of the Israeli occupation and their relations with these groups are not concealed. They are officially acknowledged by Israel. The charges levelled against the Syrian Government provide a form of coverage for the acts of these terrorist groups and encourage them to continue using chemical weapons, which they have been doing for the past few days, right up to the present moment. Chemical weapons are used not only against the Syrian Arab Army, but also against civilians in the safe zones. So we are faced with a State that engages in terrorism against another State and that supports terrorist groups. There is an entity that systematically engages in State terrorism and that then informs us about the situation in the region and claims to be willing to become involved in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This reflects the systematic Israeli policy. We are the children of a region in which the rights of the Palestinian people have been eroded and the occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan Heights has continued since 1967. The erosion is systematic. While Israel persistently claims that it wants peace and calls for dialogue to achieve peace, it exploits the time available to expand settlements and impose a new *fait accompli*, so that in the long run there is no territory left on which peace can be built. It persists in adopting the same approach so that the talks become an end in themselves. Israel markets itself as the advocate of peace. In reality, however, Israel persists as the occupying Power with practices that have been condemned by thousands of international resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies, such as the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly.

Allow me, Mr. President, while I have the floor, to welcome the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to this meeting.

Lastly, I wish to express regret that the investigating committee of the Security Council on the use of chemical weapons in Syria has not yet published its conclusions. I should also like to reaffirm that any statement concerning the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Government is a political statement and a false and unfounded statement that seeks to provide coverage for terrorist groups.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and now give the floor to the Ambassador of Mexico, Ambassador Lomónaco.

Mr. Lomónaco (Mexico): Mr. President, as this is the first time I take the floor during your presidency, please allow me to express the support of my delegation for a successful tenure.

Mr. President, since you have already introduced working paper CD/WP.595 and have announced your intention to take action on Thursday, I would like to place on record the position of Mexico on your draft proposal. As my delegation expressed early in this session, we are all aware of the urgency of beginning negotiations. As the Secretary-General reminded us in his message on 20 January 2015, and I quote: “Ultimately, the effectiveness of the Conference will be judged on a single criterion: its ability to conclude disarmament treaties.” Moving forward in fulfilling the mandate of this body requires compromise from everyone. But that does not mean that we could — or that we should — ignore the nature of this forum. The mandate of this Conference was set by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and there is absolutely no need for redefining it. Taking up substantive work in the Conference means to negotiate. Allow me once again to remind you that, at the first special session, it was agreed that: “For maximum effectiveness, two kinds of bodies are required in the field of disarmament — deliberative and negotiating.” We would also agree that, and I quote again: “All Member States should be represented on the former, whereas the latter, for the sake of convenience, should have a relatively small membership.” I stress “convenience”, inspired by the words of our departing Swiss colleague. The distinction between a deliberative and a negotiating body is clear and there is no doubt that the Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating body in the disarmament machinery. There are other bodies that are meant to function as deliberative organs.

Mr. President, despite the good intentions behind your draft contained in working paper CD/WP.595, in our opinion this proposal has the potential to damage the Conference not only for the 2016 session but also for many years down the road. Unfortunately, the current draft only contemplates the acts of identification, deliberation and recommendation. It does not include a negotiating mandate. To call it a “programme of work” is therefore misleading, would set a terrible precedent and would create an incentive for future presidencies to settle for non-negotiating mandates in the programme of work for many more years to come, perhaps abandoning the mandate of the Conference for good. This initiative was first presented five months ago, not by you. It was inconsistent with the Conference mandate for sure, but at least it tried to serve a purpose — not one that we could share or that would be good for the disarmament machinery, but a purpose nevertheless. Tabling it now with only a few weeks to go before the session is over makes even less sense, as it serves no purpose other than being the ultimate simulation. Are we so anxious to pretend that the Conference did something this year? After 20 years of paralysis, supporting a proposal on a programme of work that does not contain a negotiating mandate would not contribute to breaking the paralysis on disarmament negotiations and would undermine even more the credibility of the Conference as a negotiating forum. Rather than contributing to ending the paralysis, this draft has the potential to furthering the dismissal of this body. Let us not try to fool ourselves: the challenge before us is not the adoption of a decision on a programme of work, as such a decision should not be an end in itself. The real challenge for the Conference is to start disarmament negotiations on the items on our agenda as per the body’s very clear, very specific mandate.

Mr. President, we are determined to contribute to your efforts towards the adoption of a programme of work and to avoid another failure. However, it is somewhat puzzling

that the very countries that are the most vocal in claiming their support of the Conference are precisely the ones supporting an initiative that can do so much damage to the body. In spite of — or perhaps because of — our public and well-known criticism of the state of affairs in the Conference, we feel obliged to try to stop any action that may make the situation worse. That is why if you, Mr. President, consider that this draft could achieve consensus, we will make every effort to fix the flaws and inconsistencies through the necessary amendments to working paper CD/WP.595.

To conclude, Mr. President, allow me to recall that we were told last year by some colleagues here, when discussing the Conference's report to the General Assembly, that in order to reflect the opposition of Mexico to a decision in the report, we needed to oppose such a decision. We heard those colleagues loud and clear.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, and I now give the floor to Ambassador Wood.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, let me first congratulate you for assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and inform you that my delegation looks forward to working with you and supporting you as you conduct your duties.

Allow me also to say farewell to my Swiss, Finnish and Israeli counterparts who will be leaving. My delegation and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

With regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, let me say that the United States strongly condemns the 21 June launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of two ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan. These launches, as well as other recent missile tests by North Korea, violate United Nations Security Council resolutions explicitly prohibiting launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea using ballistic missile technology. These provocations only serve to increase the international community's resolve to counter the prohibited activities by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including through implementing existing Security Council sanctions. We call on North Korea to refrain from actions and rhetoric that further raise tensions in the region and to focus instead on fulfilling its commitments and international obligations.

With regard to the recently circulated programme of work, we have had a number of proposals put forward in the current session, including one from the United States delegation, with the goal of putting the Conference back to work. It has now become crystal clear that only one of these proposals right now has the best chance for gaining consensus, and that is the United Kingdom proposal — which has now been circulated, as I mentioned, as the Conference President's draft programme of work. Therefore, Mr. President, my delegation asks that you take action on working paper CD/WP.595 as it is, as soon as possible, so that we can use the limited time available in the session to implement this programme of work.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, and now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. McConville (Australia): Mr. President, firstly, allow me to acknowledge the presence of the High Representative, Mr. Kim. We look forward to hearing his message shortly. I also wish to highlight our appreciation for the important contributions of our Finnish, Israeli and Swiss colleagues, whose distinguished contribution over their tenure has been acknowledged by you this morning and which we endorse wholeheartedly. I also wish to acknowledge your assumption of the important and challenging role of President and underline the support of the Australian delegation to you and your team as you carry out this high responsibility.

We note that you have taken the early initiative, which we support absolutely, to submit a programme of work proposal. I know you have not asked for comments today on this proposal, but I would just like to underline one point. We see a danger of trying to set the bar too high in the current circumstances for what we will accept as a programme of work. Can we ask for the immediate launch of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament at this stage of the year? It would seem to us quite sensible to set the mandate as elaborate as you have done, Mr. President, in your draft. We can make progress on that

basis and, in doing so, we would be in a better position next year to work and be more ambitious in our scope and mandate. We certainly do not agree that this draft you have submitted will be causing damage to the Conference.

Finally, I would like to also endorse comments made by our Republic of Korea and United States colleagues on the recent and concerning launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of two intermediate-range ballistic missiles on 22 June, which are its fifth and sixth missile provocations over the past two months, following its fourth nuclear test in early 2016. We strongly deplore these repeated violations of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions banning any launch using ballistic missile technology and stress that they pose a grave threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and beyond. We urge North Korea to refrain from engaging in further provocations and immediately cease its nuclear and missile programmes.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia and now give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan, Ambassador Sano.

Mr. Sano (Japan): Mr. President, since this is my first time taking the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of this high post of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation throughout your tenure.

Mr. President, Japan first wishes to commend the tireless effort made by you and the previous President towards the adoption of a programme of work. Although the time remaining in this year's session is getting shorter, I welcome your initiative since we should continue our efforts to adopt a meaningful programme of work. In this regard, your proposal contained in working paper CD/WP.595 and based on the United Kingdom proposal is considered to be the most realistic option, although our priority remains unchanged: that is, to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Your proposal will give us another chance to revitalize the Conference and lead us to an early commencement of negotiations in the near future. Therefore, my delegation can go along with the proposal.

Secondly, I would like to echo the statement by the Ambassadors of the United States and the Republic of Korea and the representative of Australia regarding the recent ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again conducted missile launches on 22 June, which was strongly condemned by the Security Council in its press statement. These missile launches not only constitute a clear violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2270 (2016), but also are provocations that undermine the peace and security of the region and international community, including Japan. Therefore, we strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and other international commitments without taking further provocative actions.

Finally, I would like to thank the Ambassadors of Finland, Israel and Switzerland, who are leaving the Conference soon, for their great contribution to the disarmament community here in Geneva.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, and now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Jo Chol-su (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, as this is our first time taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on your assumption as President of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of our full support and cooperation.

I requested the floor to exercise the right of reply in order to respond to the prejudiced accusations made by some delegations today with respect to the recent ballistic rocket test fire conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Those delegations said that the strategic ballistic rocket test fire by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a violation of resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, escalates tension on the Korean Peninsula and creates instability in the region, and

they ask us to refrain from any further provocation and threats. Lurking behind this is the sinister intention of the United States — and other countries — to cover up its criminal acts of rendering the situation on the Korean Peninsula extremely tense and to pass the buck for the increasing tension on the Korean Peninsula to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, at the same time ratcheting up the atmosphere of international pressure upon it, while persistently resorting to war drills and arms build-up on the Korean Peninsula and in its vicinity.

It is the stand of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the resolutions of the Security Council, which ban rocket launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is a breach of the Charter of the United Nations and international laws. The series of steps taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to bolster its nuclear deterrent to cope with the undisguised nuclear threat, which the United States poses to it by ceaselessly introducing strategic assets into South Korea and its vicinity, cannot be regarded as provocations as they are just measures for self-defence by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It is the stand of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it should have in place powerful means of attack which can pose a constant threat to the United States in order to fully protect the security of the country and the people from the persistent nuclear threat from the United States.

It is quite absurd that the South Korean delegation pretends to be interested in the life and well-being of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea while calling for sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as well. It is really contradictory in word and deed. As an incoming President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Republic of Korea delegation should concentrate on how to contribute to the progress and development of the Conference's work rather than trying to take advantage of the Conference to criticize their fellow countrymen.

Allow me to comment briefly on the remarks made by the Israeli delegation, which said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is responsible for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The argument made by the Israeli delegation is totally groundless and unfounded without any kind of clear evidence. Therefore, Israel would be well advised to assume its responsibilities to ensure peace and security in the Middle East rather than blaming other countries with unjustifiable assertions.

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Naziri Asl (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

I had not intended to take the floor at this stage due to the very important issue of the programme of work, which was under discussion. Unfortunately, however, certain baseless allegations were just made against my country in a statement by a member that is not a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or other important treaties on weapons of mass destruction, and is a regime that itself is a great source of instability and a sponsor of State terrorism in the region. Iran is a party to all treaties, in particular, treaties on weapons of mass destruction, bearing in mind the critical security atmosphere in the region.

Israel is the reason for the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Its atrocities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are well known to everyone and do not need to be enumerated here in this august body. In this regard, it is worth noting that another august body, which is not very far from this Conference on Disarmament chamber, namely the Human Rights Council, at each session adopts a series of resolutions condemning Israel for its atrocities against the Palestinian people.

Mr. President, last but not least, we advise this delegation with a long-standing total disregard for international law to be silent and not to seek to educate other responsible members of the international community about their international obligations.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Rowland.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the role and assure you of my delegation's full support for your efforts. Let me also join others in wishing colleagues who are leaving us well in the future.

Mr. President, I said in my remarks at the opening of this year's session that, without losing sight of the priority we place on the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, the United Kingdom was willing to consider innovative approaches to getting this Conference back to work. The proposal that we submitted and that was circulated in document CD/2055 has, we believe, the potential to bring back a shared sense of purpose to this Conference. We are pleased that you have followed closely the lines of our proposal in the draft decision you submitted yesterday, which was circulated as working paper CD/WP.595.

Our original proposal was aimed at getting every member State to say "yes", so that we can collectively resume our work. It was not aimed at forcing one or a few States to say "no". To date, I have still not heard that any member State will oppose such a proposal. I want to reiterate that it is not our intention to rewrite the Conference's agenda or to assert that any agenda item is subsidiary to another. A close reading of the draft should reassure those who have doubts in this area. Given the divisions within the community on the priority afforded to individual items on the Conference's agenda, however, and the paucity of consensus resolutions on these issues at the First Committee, we think it is important that there is a comprehensive discussion of the disarmament agenda, including the linkages between the issues, with a view to agreeing a consensual way forward.

Mr. President, we fully accept the minor technical changes you have made to the draft we presented in document CD/2055. The amendment to the schedule makes sense. In February, we had the whole year before us. Now we have just a few weeks, and there are many other meetings scheduled in August. While the mandate of the working group should continue to be to identify, elaborate and make recommendations on effective measures for disarmament, we clearly cannot complete that mandate in the five and a half working days we have remaining this year. It is right, therefore, that this year we focus on the initial phase, which would be an opportunity to map proposals from participating States according to the categories identified in the mandate: legal provisions or other arrangements for the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons, and legal provisions or other arrangements for the maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. The elaboration of those proposals and the negotiation of a report containing the recommendations that would need to be agreed by all members of the Conference will have to wait.

Secondly, we hope that the willingness of the United Kingdom to share the discussions is seen as a sign of good faith that we want the working group to be a meaningful process with a meaningful output. We would welcome a co-chair, should it be possible to identify one. We approached a number of Group of 21 members at the beginning of the year with this in mind. At this stage, however, we do not believe the identification of a co-chair should delay action on the draft. The United Kingdom is fully committed to the Conference on Disarmament, and it is frankly ridiculous to hear the suggestion that we would seek to damage it, particularly coming from an individual whose arrogance has done untold damage to the prospect of setting the disarmament machinery back to work. Of course, we would like to see the Conference begin negotiations, but we are pragmatic. Today the challenge is beginning a dialogue — a challenge that grows daily harder with the polarization that Mexico is perpetuating.

Mr. President, the substance of the proposal has been on the table since February. States have had plenty of time to consider it. We urge you to take action on it this week on the draft that you have now circulated.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Spain.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor during your presidency, we would like to

congratulate you and express our support to you in the performance of all your duties. We are pleased to note the presence with us today of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo. We would also like to congratulate the three colleagues who will be leaving Geneva in the coming weeks and wish them the best in their new endeavours.

I would like to briefly take the floor to touch upon two issues. The first is the programme of work that you have just presented to us. We are aware that the related discussion is due to take place on Thursday, but my delegation would like to make a brief prior observation. As we see things, if the Conference has the task of taking all necessary action to achieve its objective, which, as we well know, is not to engage in endless discourse but to negotiate, then in order to achieve this objective, we regrettably have no choice but to exercise infinite patience and do everything within our power to move forward. The inflexible positions that will potentially be adopted by some parties will only impede the practical achievement of what is our ultimate objective: to negotiate. The agenda we have agreed upon might be minimalistic, but its modest dimension should not be grounds for rejecting it or for considering it as conflicting with the Conference's ultimate objective. Negotiating is difficult because the international sphere is complex and rife with obstacles. We encounter such obstacles all the time, and reaching consensus in the Conference is, of course, one of them. However, we must continue to strengthen our resolve and take advantage of our value added, however small, in order to reach this objective. We believe that this approach is the true way to demonstrate responsibility.

The second issue I wish to raise stems from the status of Spain as the Chair of the Security Council's 1718 Committee on sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. My delegation reaffirms its determination to work within the international community to effectively implement the sanctions designed to achieve the goal of the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of the country's nuclear and ballistics programmes. Spain wishes to express its grave concern at the defiance of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the principles of nuclear and ballistic non-proliferation, in breach of Security Council resolutions. Since the adoption of resolution 2270 (2016), which considerably steps up the sanctions regime, the North Korean authorities have continued to carry out ballistics tests — most recently on 22 June — including the launch of intermediate-range missiles. These activities are unacceptable and constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and to the stability of the Korean Peninsula.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, and I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by welcoming the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, to the Conference on Disarmament.

In addition, Mr. President, I would like to wish you and your colleagues from the Permanent Mission of Poland success in presiding over the Conference on Disarmament. You may count on our constructive support.

Today, the Polish presidency has officially circulated a draft programme of work for the Conference, which repeats almost word for word the initial proposal made by our British colleagues back in February. Let us try to see how far this document goes towards meeting the criteria for a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. I would point out that these requirements were not laid down by us, but have been included in consensus decisions of the Conference itself, the final documents of the review conferences on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and, very importantly in the present case, the statements of the five nuclear-weapon States.

In our opinion, a programme that reorients the Conference's work exclusively towards a single item on its agenda to the exclusion of all others cannot be called comprehensive. This attempt to turn our Conference into a forum for the discussion of one issue alone contradicts at the very least the spirit, if not the letter, of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

From our point of view, the text of the Nigerian presidency, aimed at the discussion of all four core items in the agenda without exception, is highly preferable. Additionally, since the mandate of the new working group relates to research, the minimal necessary balance in the Conference's constituent activities between discussion and negotiation is not preserved.

As a compromise, we could agree to an arrangement whereby the draft programme of work also envisages negotiations on another issue; it would then correspond to the original intended purpose of the Conference. In fact, before the British proposal was made to the Conference in February 2016, we proposed to its authors that a minimal balance should be restored through the inclusion of an additional item on negotiations concerning a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

I wish especially to emphasize the fact that, being aware of the concerns of some delegations, we deliberately did not raise the issue of negotiations on the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, proposed by the Russian Federation and China. For some reason, our British colleagues did not find it possible to meet us halfway by adding to their draft programme of work one more working group with a mandate for negotiation. Nor did they put forward any alternatives, in particular, constructive ones.

Under the circumstances, there was nothing we could do except to put forward our own comprehensive proposal, free of the defects of the British proposal. The main point was to open up the prospect of negotiations on a new initiative for the Conference to formulate an international convention to combat acts of chemical and biological terrorism.

Our idea is that action to counter the upsurge in terrorists' use of weapons of mass destruction would in no way jeopardize anyone's security and therefore, logically, such action could not elicit any fundamental objections. An antiterrorism convention would in no way undermine the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, which were "tailor-made" for other purposes. The establishment of parallel antiterrorist regimes under two conventions to which the parties are different is fraught with unpredictable consequences. On the other hand, the duplication of certain functions in international legal instruments is by no means unusual. To understand this better, you have only to compare the Chemical Weapons Convention with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), especially the parts concerning prevention of the spread of chemical weapons — you will find a great deal of overlap, and no one is worried about this.

From the very start, the Russian delegation has shown exceptional transparency. Our position is open, simple and comprehensible even to those who do not agree with us. In the interests of compromise, we have repeatedly shown flexibility, proactively urging that the British proposal and ours should be combined. We submitted a working document to this effect in which the British proposal was reflected in full, at least in the operative portion, so that the authors lost nothing and their initiative was retained intact. Indeed, since a number of delegations were not prepared to start negotiating the draft convention, the Russian side took an additional step in their direction by replacing the word "negotiation" with a reference to the formulation of the key elements of the convention.

Not only is this well known to all, it was welcomed by the overwhelming majority of participants in the Conference on Disarmament. A few encouraging steps were observed towards a compromise that would facilitate the necessary minimum in terms of the criteria for a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. As you also know, further progress proved impossible owing to reasons beyond our control. Let us also point out that, in contrast to the Russian initiative, the British proposal — its strengths and weaknesses and the potential consequences — was subjected to no serious discussion.

At the previous meeting, we suggested the idea of having a comprehensive review of the remaining proposals on the table to see whether they satisfy the aforementioned criteria and, on that basis, to decide on our best option. We also spoke of the importance of a common understanding of the intended aim of the process initiated by the programme of work. Nevertheless, the Polish presidency decided to circulate the programme of work officially. It was within its rights to do so, and we do not dispute this, even though we

consider this course of action to be wrong. The Russian side's decision on the draft programme of work will accordingly come as no surprise to participants in the Conference.

In conclusion, I wish all the best to our colleagues who have completed their work with the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation and now give the floor to the Ambassador of India, Ambassador Varma.

Mr. Varma (India): Mr. President, we would like to firstly convey our very warm congratulations to you for assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You can rest assured of the full support of my delegation. We would also like to thank you for involving India in the consultations that you have conducted, and we wish you well.

We recognize the presence of the High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and we would like to convey our appreciation for the support that Mr. Kim Won-soo has extended to the Conference on Disarmament and to the other disarmament bodies, and we welcome him again to Geneva.

Mr. President, India associates itself with the statement made by Mongolia on behalf of the Group of 21 and we note that in your opening remarks you noted that the Group of 21 has made proposals; we would like to thank you for that. As you move forward, we would like you to keep in mind that, not just the proposal made today, but the proposal made earlier, on 14 June by the coordinator of the Group of 21, is something that is also on the table.

We have requested the floor for two main reasons. Firstly, we wish to place on record our very deep appreciation of the contribution made by some of our colleagues who will be leaving the Conference and Geneva. I would like to mention, in particular, Ambassador Manor of Israel. We had the pleasure of working with him when Israel assumed the presidency of the Conference at the beginning of 2014, and we found both Ambassador Manor and the Israeli delegation fully interested in making a very substantive contribution to the Conference. We wish to convey our very warm wishes to Ambassador Manor as he proceeds from Geneva.

With respect to Ambassador Kairamo of Finland, we of course had the opportunity and the pleasure of working with the Finnish delegation and Ambassador Kairamo both in the Conference and at other meetings in Geneva and in New York; we have always found that we benefited from these interactions.

Ambassador Schmid of Switzerland has been a pillar of support for the Conference and for other disarmament bodies. His contribution will be remembered for a long time, and we wish him well as he proceeds to his next posting.

The second point I wish to address, Mr. President, is with respect to your ongoing efforts to establish a programme of work for the 2016 session of the Conference. We would like to convey that we agree with your assessment as conveyed in your opening remarks that time is of the essence. We share the disappointment among members of this Conference that the Conference has been prevented, once again this year, from adopting a programme of work that would allow it to pursue its real mandate, which is the commencement of negotiations on a specific agenda item. For the record, India remains committed and prepared to commence immediate negotiations on a treaty dealing with fissile material based on the mandate that has a large measure of support in the international community, which is of course the Shannon mandate. We also remain prepared to take forward our discussions on nuclear disarmament and on negative security assurances today and on outer space issues. We recall in this context that the Group of 21 had made a proposal for the presidency to take forward consultations to see to what extent it would be possible for the Conference to move forward on the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention.

It is indeed right that the mandate provided to the Conference by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament is that it be a negotiating forum. We fully endorse that position, and that should continue to remain our aim and our objective. But we also believe that, if consensus is not possible for the immediate

commencement of negotiations on a particular item, substantive discussions of a nature with the aim of eventually launching negotiations are part and parcel of our work. This is not contradictory to the mandate provided by the special session. It is our belief and understanding that this very principle was the subject of consensus in the report submitted by Ambassador Kairamo last year on the basis of intensive consultations and plenary meetings of the Conference, as contained in document CD/2033. So, the Conference is mandated to conduct negotiations. If negotiations are not possible, substantive discussions with the aim of launching negotiations are consistent with that mandate. We would see document CD/2033 in that context. We would like to keep this particular point in mind as we move forward in seeing how far we can get in trying to find a programme of work for the 2016 session.

In this context, Mr. President, we have noted your efforts and your comments today, and we would encourage you to continue your consultations to see how far these can go and move forward so that we have some clarity on the position before we close down for the second part of the 2016 session. Of course, you have the full support of the Indian delegation.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of India. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I recognize Nigeria; you have the floor.

Mr. Gbemudu (Nigeria): Mr. President, Nigeria congratulates you as you take on the tough task of steering the ship of the Conference on Disarmament for the next month and we assure you of our unalloyed support during your tenure.

We align ourselves with the Group of 21 statement delivered by the Ambassador of Mongolia. My delegation thanks the three Ambassadors who are leaving us, namely Finland, Israel and Switzerland, for their contributions to the Conference and other disarmament matters.

Rather sadly, the Conference has not been able to activate a consensus-driven programme of work for the past two decades. My delegation made an attempt in the beginning of this session, in February, but we are still on it.

Mr. President, we note your attempt to get things going by introducing a decision for the establishment of a programme of work. Since we are not given to delaying or obstructing processes that will keep States engaged in the Conference, we will not start now. At the same time, we encourage States to put in their best, and then let us engage more transparently.

We welcome the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who is here with us today.

The President: I thank the representative of Nigeria. Allow me to welcome, once again officially, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, and invite him to address the Conference on Disarmament this morning.

Mr. Kim Won-soo (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): Ambassador Stachañczyk, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I am very glad to be back to address the Conference on Disarmament and grateful for the kind words of welcome addressed to me.

I also congratulate Ambassador Stachañczyk on assuming your leadership role at this critical juncture. I join other speakers in expressing my deep appreciation to the Finnish, Israeli and Swiss Permanent Representatives for their contribution and wish all of you the best in your future work.

At the outset, I wish to pay tribute to the activism and creativity of the Presidents of the 2016 session. These efforts elicited new proposals by member States seeking to demonstrate that the Conference remains relevant and that its work keeps up with the current developments and challenges in the field of disarmament. I believe today's lively debate, which I personally witnessed, is a testimony to the shared commitment of all members to keep the Conference relevant. I believe this has brought us closer than we have been in quite some time to reaching agreement on a programme of work.

I must pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Møller — in his absence, through Ms. Soliman, the acting Deputy Secretary-General — for his continuing personal efforts to enhance the engagement of civil society in the Conference. The second civil society forum, which convened last week, succeeded in doing something that has been elusive in your official work. It brought critical issues of emerging technologies and cross-cutting concerns of sustainable development to the centre of your deliberations. Yet, the need for such an informal meeting should remind us that the integration of civil society into the work of some multilateral disarmament bodies still remains behind the curve. In surveying the struggles of the Conference to achieve any outcome at all in two decades, I can only make the observation that no recent multilateral disarmament process has succeeded, or indeed even been initiated, without the full participation and contribution of civil society.

The slow pace of disarmament and persistent paralysis in standing multilateral bodies has led many to question the relevance and effectiveness of traditional approaches and processes. But this is not a new development. Over the past 10 years, the General Assembly has taken up some of the core items on the Conference's agenda to help facilitate forward movement. It established the two Groups of Governmental Experts — one on outer space and one on fissile material — as well as two open-ended working groups on advancing nuclear disarmament negotiations. I must be frank with you: it seems, unfortunately, that addressing these issues outside the Conference has become the new normal. Business as usual is not sustainable. Without the hope of a credible path to “nuclear zero”, an increasing number of non-nuclear-weapon States appear ready to pursue new legal measures. The nuclear-weapon States bear the main burden in finding a way to return to arms control — and not arms competition — as the most suitable means to address rising international tension. Without progress on the implementation of long-standing disarmament commitments, tensions are likely to grow between those who feel their nuclear weapons are too dangerous to serve as a legitimate means of security and those who continue to rely on nuclear weapons in their military doctrines.

In May, I appealed to the Open-ended Working Group to continue its work to narrow the gap. To achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, we must find a way to reach common ground while respecting differences. This requires intensified dialogue and a shared understanding that compromise need not involve the sacrifice of agreed objectives, common values or solemn principles. Ultimately, we can arrive at our final destination through an inclusive process. Reviving an inclusive process requires sincere engagement by all stakeholders, both nuclear “haves” and “have nots”, starting from listening more attentively to each other's views. All of us need to go back to the basics of dialogue.

The international community has not given up on the Conference. Efforts pursued outside this body have so far aimed at facilitating the work of the Conference and not replacing it. But time is pressing. This Conference cannot afford to fail again. It is imperative that agreement on a programme of work is reached; if not, pressure will mount for seeking alternative forums. The Conference must rise to the challenge if it is to preserve its unique status as the single standing negotiating body on disarmament. The entire international community is watching. I count on your collective wisdom as you prepare for the final part of the 2016 session under the able leadership of Ambassador Stachńczyk. I hope you will be able to build on the momentum in the coming days and weeks to produce a meaningful result.

The President: I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for his statement and the kind words addressed to the President.

This concludes our business for today. Our next plenary meeting will be on Thursday, 30 June 2016, at 10 a.m. in the Council Chamber. This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.