
Conference on Disarmament

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 30 August 2016, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Kim In-chul(Republic of Korea)



The President: The 1399th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is called to order.

By now, members should have received the first version of the Conference's draft annual report to the General Assembly in all the official languages, as issued in document CD/WP.596. The draft report takes into account the work of the Conference up to 19 August 2016, which is the day when the draft was finalized and submitted for processing. The draft lists the documents that had been issued by that date. In line with past practice, the secretariat will complete the blank spaces in the report relating to the members and to the numbers of meetings and will update the list of documents to reflect those submitted after 19 August until the conclusion of the 2016 session. In this regard, kindly be reminded that only documents submitted by 16 September 2016 will be issued as official documents of the 2016 session of the Conference.

At our last plenary meeting, I invited all delegations to comment on the advance draft report and to send any written comments to the secretariat by Friday, 26 August 2016. The secretariat has received one communication — from the delegation of Mongolia requesting that the reference to document CD/2069 in paragraph 27 be moved to the third part, as mentioned in a letter from the Mission addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference. This change seems to be clerical in nature and I take it that there will be no difficulties in moving the text of paragraph 27 to a new paragraph after paragraph 33. We have also noted a clerical error in paragraph 19 that will be corrected. In the first sentence, after "The Conference held" we will replace the word "three" with the word "four".

Would any delegation like to offer any comment? That does not seem to be the case.

I will now turn to our list of speakers for today. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Ayanansi Rodríguez Camejo.

Ms. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, as you assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to wish you every success in discharging this responsibility. We would also like to express our support for all the statements made by the Group of 21 at the Conference this year.

Mr. President, the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, recently referred to the massacre in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In a message delivered on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday he said, and I quote: "We must drive home the need to preserve peace and to prevent any one Power from granting itself licence to kill millions of human beings."

There is no valid argument that may be used to justify the existence and possession of nuclear weapons. The doctrines of defence or security based on so-called nuclear deterrence are highly questionable and must be abolished. The use, whether intentional or not, of even a miniscule part of the enormous global nuclear arsenal would cause a nuclear winter and the annihilation of the human race. As long as the threat of the existence of nuclear weapons persists, our planet will not know peace. For that reason, Cuba will always call for the total elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons to ensure the survival of humankind and will support efforts to achieve world peace. Nuclear disarmament must remain the priority of the United Nations disarmament machinery. Unilateral declarations and voluntary pledges as proposed by some States are, in and of themselves, not enough. Cuba reaffirms the importance of multilateralism as a basic principle in disarmament negotiations. We are concerned that the Conference on Disarmament continues to fail to carry out its mandate as the sole multilateral forum for the negotiation of treaties on disarmament; and it is failing in particular in terms of nuclear disarmament, which was considered a priority in 1978 at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We deeply regret that substantive work has not been carried out by the Conference for almost 20 years and are convinced that this impasse is due to a lack of political will on the part of some States to make real progress. Similarly, we regret the failure of the ninth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and we reaffirm that all States parties to the Treaty must comply with all of the legal obligations flowing from it. The effective

implementation of article VI of the Treaty requires States to undertake, as a matter of urgency, more precise and measurable actions within specific time frames.

Recently, the final report of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations was adopted. Cuba supported the adoption of this report and the recommendations contained therein related to the prohibition of nuclear weapons with a view to their total elimination, which we value as an important step towards achieving a world free from nuclear weapons. Cuba aligns itself with the long-standing position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which seeks the prompt conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, manufacturing, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. In this connection, the full implementation of General Assembly resolutions 68/32, 69/58 and 70/34 on the follow-up to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament held in 2013 is of particular importance.

As a result, a decision was taken to convene, for the first time in the history of the Organization, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, which is scheduled to take place in 2018 at the latest, to review the progress made in this important matter. We hope that the conference will enjoy unanimous support and deliver a successful outcome. We also underscore the importance of commemorating on 26 September each year the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and increasing public awareness and knowledge of the threat that nuclear weapons pose to humankind and of the need for their total elimination.

At the regional level, we would like to, once again, recall the adoption of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace at the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, which took place in Havana in January 2014, as a significant and historic event. The Proclamation emphasized the firm commitment of the 33 countries that are members of the Community to promoting nuclear disarmament as a matter of priority.

Mr. President, Cuba confirms its trust in the Conference and its willingness to negotiate in this forum on any topic agreed upon by all of its member States. Changing the Conference's working methods and rules of procedure is not, in our view, the solution for making progress in negotiations at the Conference. Under the exact same arrangements as we have in place today, other important legal instruments on disarmament have been negotiated in the past.

Cuba reiterates that the key to making real progress in the Conference lies in the political will of some States, in particular in terms of nuclear disarmament. We are, of course, also open to improving the working methods of the Conference, including through the participation of civil society.

Cuba calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to adopt a broad and balanced programme of work that reflects the real priorities in terms of nuclear disarmament and breaks the long-standing impasse which benefits only a few. The Conference is prepared to negotiate on various issues in parallel, including a treaty prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons, a treaty prohibiting an arms race in outer space, a treaty on providing effective security assurances to States which, like Cuba, do not possess nuclear weapons, and a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Cuba is in favour of initiating negotiations in the Conference on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty to ban the production of all weapons-grade fissile material, including a declaration of all stocks of fissile material and their irreversible elimination within an agreed time frame. Negotiating a treaty on this topic would be a positive measure, yet it would be insufficient if subsequent steps for achieving nuclear disarmament were not agreed on.

We call for any plan to militarize outer space and cyberspace to be ceased immediately. We consider the prevention of an arms race in outer space to be a priority, as is preventing the placement of weapons in space. We support negotiations within the

Conference on Disarmament to achieve a legally binding treaty to completely prohibit the possibility of an arms race in outer space.

The draft treaty submitted to the Conference by Russia and China this year is a good basis for further discussions and negotiations in this regard.

Furthermore, we condemn the covert and illicit use, by individuals, organizations or States, of other nations' computer systems to launch attacks on third countries in view of the potential for provoking international conflicts. The use of new information and communications technologies must comply fully with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with international law.

Lastly, Mr. President, I wish to inform you that I will soon be stepping down as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations based in Switzerland.

I wish you every success in the work ahead and I hope that the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly the Conference on Disarmament, as a negotiating forum, is able to move towards nuclear disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Ambassador, in particular for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the presidency. It has been a great pleasure to work with you and I wish you luck and every success in all your future endeavours.

(*spoke in English*)

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Ambassador of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament, Madam Sabrina Dallafior. You are most welcome in this room.

The next speaker on the list is the representative of Kazakhstan. I give the floor to Ambassador Zhanar Aitzhanova.

Ms. Aitzhanova (Kazakhstan): Mr. President, as our delegation is taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, I would like to congratulate the Republic of Korea on its assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I also would like to assure you of our delegation's full support, in particular in the finalization of the Conference's 2016 annual report. I wish to express our appreciation as well to your predecessors for their energetic endeavours during their tenure in the presidency.

Allow me to recall, in my brief statement, the resolution adopted at the sixty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly in December 2009 declaring 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. This resolution was adopted at the initiative of my country, with the support of a significant number of other States, to commemorate — under the auspices of the United Nations — the date of the signing of a historic decree by President Nazarbayev to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site.

Our undertaking was made in recognition of the efforts of all stakeholders, including civil society, public diplomacy and the mass media, in promoting awareness and education about the terrifying and devastating consequences of nuclear explosions. By supporting this resolution, Member States took a firm commitment to further action against nuclear tests. It serves our common goal of living in a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The huge site in the eastern part of Kazakhstan was the centre of the nuclear-weapon testing programme of the Soviet Union. The first nuclear test took place there on 29 August 1949. Over the next 40 years it was followed by another 455 nuclear explosions in an area of approximately 18,000 square kilometres. When those first nuclear devices were exploded, the potential effects of radiation or contamination — even though known — were seen as far less important than the arms race. Elderly residents tell stories of being encouraged to go out of their homes to witness the first explosions and mushroom clouds. More than 1.5 million people were exposed to devastating levels of radiation, the effects of which are still borne today by a third generation.

Furthermore, an immense territory comparable to the size of some European States had been contaminated with radiation and was excluded from the economy of my country. This terrible impact remained hidden from the wider public for many years, but as the

health and environmental damage became better known, it led to demonstrations across the country in protest against nuclear testing.

Against this backdrop, President Nursultan Nazarbayev made a historic decision to shut down the Semipalatinsk test site 25 years ago, and Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal, which it had inherited as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site, an international conference entitled "Building a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World" was held in Astana yesterday. The conference brought together prominent political leaders, members of parliament, heads of international organizations and civil society institutions from more than 50 countries.

In this regard, I would like to inform you that the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan is planning to hold a photography exhibition dedicated to the International Day against Nuclear Tests and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site. We invite you all to visit this exhibition, which will be held from 1 to 7 September at the Palais des Nations, building E, third floor. We hope that this exhibition will convey to you the suffering — even if only a fraction of it — endured by the people and land of Kazakhstan from nuclear tests.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement on the occasion of the International Day against Nuclear Tests and for the kind words addressed to the presidency.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Mr. Shindo.

Mr. Shindo (Japan): Mr. President, since this is the first time for our delegation to take the floor under your presidency, I would like to extend our congratulations to you, Ambassador Kim, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of our delegation's full support and cooperation.

Mr. President, it is unacceptable that on 24 August the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again launched, from a submarine, a ballistic missile which, according to our estimation, flew a distance of around 500 kilometres and, for the first time, a submarine-launched ballistic missile fell inside our country's air defence identification zone. This poses a grave threat not only to the national security of Japan but also to security in the region and of the international community.

This launch using ballistic missile technology is in clear violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, including the recently adopted resolution 2270 (2016). Japan strongly condemns the launch and urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions and other international commitments without taking further provocative actions.

The President: I thank the representative of Japan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the presidency. The next speaker on the list is the representative of Norway. Ms. Hauge, you have the floor.

Ms. Hauge (Norway): Mr. President, allow me to make just a brief remark to say that Norway fully shares the concerns just expressed by the representative of Japan regarding the nuclear weapons programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its continued ballistic missile launches. We fully condemn these actions, which clearly undermine regional stability and efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from any further actions and violations of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Norway remains committed to a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the situation. It is therefore essential that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea now demonstrate readiness to cooperate with the international community.

The President: I thank the representative of Norway for her statement and for the kind words addressed to me. The next speaker is the representative of the United States of America. Ambassador Wood, the floor is yours.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor during your presidency, let me congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and offer my delegation's support to you as you carry out your duties.

Mr. President, the United States strongly condemns the 24 August submarine-launched ballistic missile launch by North Korea. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from actions and rhetoric that further raise tensions in the region and to focus instead on taking concrete steps towards fulfilling its commitments and international obligations.

The commitment of the United States to the defence of our allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan, in the face of these threats remains ironclad. We remain prepared to defend ourselves and our allies. This launch is the latest in an accelerating campaign of missile tests which violate multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions explicitly prohibiting launches by North Korea using ballistic missile technology and pose threats to civil aviation and maritime commerce in the region.

These provocations only serve to increase the international community's resolve to counter the prohibited activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including through implementing existing Security Council resolutions. The continued development by North Korea of its United Nations-proscribed nuclear and ballistic missile programmes threatens the United States, our allies Japan and the Republic of Korea, and our partners in the region. We continue to assess the situation in close coordination with our regional allies and partners and will raise our concerns at the United Nations and in other forums to bolster international resolve to hold the Democratic People's Republic of Korea accountable for its provocative actions.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. The next speaker is the representative of Canada. Ambassador McCarney, you have the floor.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): Mr. President, as this is the first time I speak during your presidency, I too wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and to wish you every success.

I take the floor today about an issue of significant and growing international concern, namely, the nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Last week's test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of a submarine-launched ballistic missile demonstrates the growing threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — and not only to the countries in the region — as it advances the capabilities of its delivery systems for nuclear weapons.

Earlier this month, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also launched two other ballistic missiles and the head of one landed inside of the exclusive economic zone of Japan, approximately 250 kilometres west of Akita prefecture. Canada unequivocally condemns these launches, not only because they are in violation of the international obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but also because of their destabilizing effect on the region and beyond. These launches were the latest in an escalating series of ballistic missile tests this year which — together with the nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — pose a grave threat to regional and to international peace and security.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must comply with successive United Nations Security Council resolutions and suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile programme. I should also note that Canada fully supports the press statement issued by the Security Council on 26 August concerning the ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are also concerned by recent reports which suggest that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is reprocessing plutonium and enriching uranium to further increase its stockpile of fissile materials. We believe the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must verifiably abandon its nuclear weapons programme, resume adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, fully comply with its nuclear safeguards

agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and resume dialogue to find a peaceful, diplomatic solution.

This is why Canada co-sponsored Security Council resolution 2270 (2016) on 2 March 2016, following the fourth nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 January and its space launch on 7 February. This resolution sends a clear message that the international community is resolved to halt the reckless and illegitimate pursuit of nuclear weapon and ballistic missile capabilities by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Canada stands ready to work with the international community to find effective and multilateral solutions to enhance security in the region and globally.

The President: I thank the Ambassador for her statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Van der Kwast.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): Mr. President, first of all, I join the others in wishing you luck with the daunting task of preparing the report of the Conference on Disarmament. I want to assure that, in every sense, you can count on this delegation.

On 24 August 2016, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a submarine-launched ballistic missile. This was the latest in a series of launches these past months. The Government of the Netherlands condemns this launch in the strongest possible terms. The launch is a grave violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Netherlands is deeply concerned about the provocative behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The continued ballistic missile activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea increase tensions, pose a threat to regional security and further isolate the regime. The Netherlands demands that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea abide by its international obligations and without delay abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Moreover, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should fully comply with its aforementioned international obligations, implement the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and submit all of its installations to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. Additionally, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay. Echoing the statement by the High Representative of the European Union, the Netherlands calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from any further action that increases tensions and to engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular in the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and for the kind words addressed to me.

On the list of speakers I now have Romania, Australia, Sweden, Spain, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and the United Kingdom. I now give the floor to the representative of Romania, Mr. Tudorie.

Mr. Tudorie (Romania): Mr. President, since this is the first time Romania takes the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on your assumption of this difficult task. I wish you every success in this important endeavour and you can count on the full support of this delegation.

It is very well known that the Conference on Disarmament is a unique platform that bears a special responsibility for the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We take this opportunity to support the statements made thus far regarding the ballistic missile fired from a North Korean submarine on Wednesday, 24 August 2016. Romania continues to firmly condemn any launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. By engaging in such provocative actions, which are major threats to international peace and security, the Pyongyang authorities continue to be in blatant violation of current United Nations Security Council resolutions. Romania reiterates its call upon the Pyongyang authorities to fully comply with current international regulations and abstain

from any action that might destabilize security in the Korean Peninsula and in the world. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from actions that further raise tensions in the region and to focus instead on taking concrete steps towards fulfilling its commitments and international legal obligations.

The President: I thank the representative of Romania for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. Now, I invite the representative of Australia to take the floor. Mr. McConville, the floor is yours.

Mr. McConville (Australia): Mr. President, I wish to join you in welcoming our Swiss colleague to the Conference on Disarmament and wish her the best as she approaches this challenging environment we are facing in terms of moving forward on disarmament.

I join many other delegations in highlighting the gravity of recent developments on the Korean Peninsula. Australia views with great concern the ongoing provocative, dangerous and destabilizing behaviour by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which aggravates tensions in the region and threatens peace and security. This includes a nuclear test on 6 January, reports of multiple ballistic missile tests every month this year since February and the reported submarine-launched ballistic missile on 24 August. Australia strongly condemns these activities, which are clearly in breach of unanimously agreed United Nations Security Council resolutions.

As underlined in last night's statement from the Security Council, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regime should immediately desist from its irresponsible and dangerous behaviour; it should focus instead on the welfare of the people of North Korea. Australia is implementing tough new Security Council sanctions and will continue to take all necessary steps to deter the dangerous ambitions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We call on all United Nations Member States to do their utmost to comply with these measures. Such circumstances affirm the need for the closest possible cooperation among countries in the region in the face of such provocative actions. Australia is working with its partners for the strongest possible response to the continued defiance of the international community by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Australia makes its deep concerns known to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea directly as well as in international and regional forums.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. Next, I give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Mr. Nord.

Mr. Nord (Sweden): Mr. President, since this is the first time Sweden takes the floor under your presidency, allow me to assure you of my delegation's full support for a successful presidency.

As several delegations have already brought up, the actions taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are in violation of several United Nations Security Council resolutions and will increase tensions in the region and beyond. As the Security Council has stated, these actions constitute a threat to international peace and security. In order to lower tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in the region, the best way forward is dialogue and negotiations. We strongly encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take that path instead of continued violations of international norms and obligations.

The President: I thank the representative of Sweden. I now give the floor to Ambassador Herráiz España of Spain.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to wish you well with your work related to the preparation of the report of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have asked for the floor, Mr. President, because Spain wishes to express its deep concern at the launch of a ballistic missile from a submarine by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 24 August in what was a further violation of Security Council resolutions.

Spain calls upon the North Korean authorities to refrain from any provocative actions that could exacerbate tensions in the region and threaten international peace and security.

As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), Spain is determined to work with the international community for the effective implementation of the sanctions regime that will permit progress towards the goal of the dismantlement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its nuclear and ballistic programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and words of support.

(*spoke in English*)

I now give the floor to Ms. Maja of Finland.

Ms. Maja (Finland): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor during your presidency, let me assure you of my delegation's full support. I also wish to welcome the new Ambassador of Switzerland and to wish all the best to the Cuban Ambassador.

Finland strongly condemns the launching of a submarine-launched ballistic missile by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 23 August, the ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 2 August and 18 July and the launching of a submarine-launched ballistic missile by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 July. These constitute serious violations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its international obligations as set out in multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions, the latest one being resolution 2270 (2016). The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must halt all missile launches using ballistic missile technology and abandon its ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. As the High Representative of the European Union, Finland as well urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from any additional action that undermines the stability and security of the Korean Peninsula. Finland also urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular in the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

The President: I thank the representative of Finland and now give the floor to the representative of France, Mr. Riquet.

Mr. Riquet (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is my first time taking the floor since the beginning of your presidency, allow me to start by congratulating you warmly on your assumption of office and wish you every success in the discharge of your responsibilities. You can count on my delegation's full support, including for the adoption of the report that you have so diligently prepared. I would also like to welcome the Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation and to wish her every success in discharging her responsibilities.

I have taken the floor to add the voice of France to those of the long list of speakers who have preceded me to denounce the recent launch of a ballistic missile from a submarine by North Korea on 24 August. France condemns in the strongest terms this reckless provocation, which constitutes an affront to regional security and an unacceptable violation of the non-proliferation regime, as well as the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, in particular, resolution 2270 (2016) of 2 March 2016. France once again urges North Korea to comply immediately with its international obligations and to carry out a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of its nuclear and ballistic programmes. France also requests North Korea to refrain from any action that might further increase the tension on the Korean Peninsula and might undermine regional and international peace and security.

Since I have the floor, allow me also to broach another subject which is, regrettably, still relevant, namely the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and to cite the words of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Marc Ayrault, who spoke on this issue last Thursday. On 24 August 2016, the Joint Investigative Mechanism created pursuant to

Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) published a report confirming that the regime of Bashar Al-Assad had used chemical weapons against the Syrian population on at least two occasions: in Talmenes in April 2014 and in Sarmin in March 2015. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is thought to be responsible for another attack in Marea in August 2015. Through its commendable work, a United Nations mechanism created and mandated by the Security Council has, for the first time, unequivocally named the actors involved in the chemical attacks committed in Syria. In so doing, it drives home the absolute horror of a conflict that has resulted in more than 300,000 deaths, repeatedly denounced by France, with both the regime and ISIL using all means at their disposal to shamelessly and systematically terrorize and massacre the population. The use of chemical weapons, which the Syrian authorities had undertaken to prohibit upon acceding to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013 under pressure from the international community, is an abomination which highlights the pivotal role played by the Damascus regime in the continuing deterioration of the situation in Syria. It requires a response commensurate with its gravity. It is incumbent upon the Security Council to discharge its responsibilities. France is already working with its partners to that end.

The President: I thank the representative of France for his statement. The next speaker is Mr. Pauels of Germany. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Pauels (Germany): Mr. President, as this is our very first time taking the floor during your presidency, Germany wishes you the very best and every success.

The German Government condemns the latest ballistic missile test conducted by North Korea on 24 August. We deeply regret that this latest test fits into a pattern of repeated violations of binding United Nations Security Council resolutions by North Korea. My Government considers it an additional provocation that the recent tests on 3 August and 24 August took place close to Japanese territorial waters. Not only do these tests violate Security Council resolutions, they also represent a specific security risk and have an inherent danger of escalation. The repeated violation of Security Council resolutions must not be left unanswered. We need a strong and resolute reaction by the international community. It must be made very clear to North Korea that there will be no familiarization effect and that we will continue to condemn each ballistic missile test as being a violation of binding resolutions. In this regard, we welcome the most recent press statements of the Security Council and the statement of the Trilateral Foreign Ministers Meeting among China, Japan and South Korea, which both condemned the North Korean behaviour in strong terms.

My Government has addressed and will continue to address this serious issue bilaterally with North Korea. We will be insistent about the fact that the latest ballistic missile tests will only result in driving North Korea further into international isolation.

The President: I thank the representative of Germany and I now give the floor to Ambassador Mati of Italy.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of this role and on the way you have conducted our work. I can assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation, in particular in the preparation of the final report of the 2016 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to join the previous speakers in expressing the concern of Italy relating to the latest ballistic missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from a submarine on 23 August. We strongly condemn such launch, which constitutes a further provocation and threat to international peace and security and another open violation of relevant Security Council resolutions and declarations. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to refrain from any other provocative action. Furthermore, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards at an early date and as well to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and for your kind words. I now invite the representative of Belgium, Mr. Dhaene, to take the floor.

Mr. Dhaene (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, I too would like to congratulate you on your assumption of office. Please be assured that you will have my delegation's full support for the continuation of our work, including the adoption of the report of the Conference. Let me also welcome the Ambassador of Switzerland and wish the Ambassador of Cuba good luck for the future.

Like other delegations, I have taken the floor today to underscore that my country, too, strongly condemns the recent ballistic missile launches by North Korea. On 24 August, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country, Mr. Didier Reynders, condemned the launch of a ballistic missile from a submarine by North Korea earlier that same day. He recalled that the Security Council had explicitly prohibited North Korea from launching ballistic missiles. These missile tests are increasing regional tension and threatening peace and stability in the region and across the globe. Belgium calls upon North Korea to cease all provocations and to take measures to promote regional stability. North Korea is thus called upon to abandon its nuclear and ballistic programmes in a comprehensive, verifiable and irreversible manner. It is only by complying with its international obligations and the resolutions of the Security Council that North Korea can expect an easing of international sanctions.

The President: I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement. I now invite Ambassador Rowland of the United Kingdom to take the floor.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, let me congratulate you on the assumption of your role and assure you of my delegation's full support for your efforts.

The latest provocation by North Korea is of serious concern and shows the flagrant disregard of North Korea for its international obligations. Its illegal programme has continuously violated United Nations Security Council resolutions and demonstrates an increasing threat to regional and international security. The United Kingdom continues to work with their allies on a strong multilateral response to the actions of North Korea, including ensuring that the tough provisions of Security Council resolution 2270 (2016) are enforced globally.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador. I now give the floor to Ms. Davidova of Bulgaria.

Ms. Davidova (Bulgaria): Mr. President, since this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on your assumption of this position and assure you of the full support of our delegation.

Mr. President, I am taking the floor to join others in expressing our serious concern with regard to the submarine-launched ballistic missile launched by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is yet another serious violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its international obligations as set out in numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions and endangers the stability and security of the region. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its ballistic missile programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community.

The President: I thank the representative of Bulgaria. Now I give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Dallafior.

Ms. Dallafior (Switzerland): Mr. President, as Switzerland is taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of this function. On a more personal note, I would like to thank you for your words of welcome, as well as those expressed to me by other speakers this morning. I am looking forward to close cooperation with all members of the Conference on Disarmament.

Switzerland would like to echo the concerns expressed this morning at the Conference regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Switzerland has publicly condemned the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in

January and the launch of the space vehicle in February 2016. These activities, as well as the numerous subsequent missile tests, were in clear violation of several Security Council resolutions which demand that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea immediately and irreversibly stop all its ballistic missile and nuclear activities. Switzerland shares the view of the Council — expressed most recently in resolution 2270 (2016) — that these activities constitute a grave threat to international peace and security. Switzerland has repeatedly called upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions, to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to put all its nuclear installations under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and your kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Al Nuqari.

Mr. Al Nuqari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time during your presidency, allow me to congratulate you and wish you every success in your work as the last presiding officer of this session. I would also like to express my best wishes to the Ambassador of Cuba and to wish her every success in her new functions, and to welcome the Ambassador of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament.

As we have consistently reaffirmed, it is essential that State representatives maintain a certain level of tactfulness and diplomatic courtesy during their statements. The Conference should be permitted to engage fully in the substantive work assigned to it, rather than being distracted by marginal issues that fall outside its remit or by topics discussed in other forums. I am referring, in this case, to the statement delivered by the representative of the French regime, in which the representative referred disrespectfully to the “Assad regime”. There is no such thing as the “Assad regime”; there is the President of the Syrian Arab Republic. If certain parties who occupy seats in international organizations hold specific political positions, they should confine their discussion of those positions to themselves and their countries, rather than imposing their views on the agenda of an international organization. When a State is a recognized member of the United Nations, the principles of tactfulness and diplomatic courtesy require that respect should be shown for that fact. This is why I felt compelled to use the expression “French regime”.

Secondly, with regard to the point raised concerning the report by the investigative body, we believe that this matter has no bearing on the work of the Conference. We understand that the Conference has failed to adopt a programme of work, but we should not take this to mean that we can introduce new subjects that are unrelated to its work. Many comments can be made on the events unfolding in Syria, including the fact that the French Government is involved in supporting terrorists in the country and in killing the Syrian people. This former colonial Power colonized my country and killed tens of thousands of people. This former colonial Power claimed the lives of 1.5 million victims in a single country, namely Algeria. To my mind, neither the colonial history of France nor its current status entitles the representative of the regime to talk about the accountability of States at a time when his country is intervening in Syrian affairs and openly supporting terrorist groups that have used chemical weapons in Syria, not only against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). My country can make numerous explicit comments on the subject, but only in an appropriate context and not at the Conference on Disarmament, which is not the appropriate forum for such discussions. We have a great many comments and statements to make on the subject. When the Syrian Arab Republic requested that a fact-finding mission be sent to investigate the use of chemical weapons in Khan al-Asal back in 2013, France objected, covering up the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups against the Syrian Arab people and the Syrian Arab army and preventing an investigation of these crimes. I can state, as a matter of principle, that the United Nations report is incomplete. There are cases in which chemical weapons have been used by so-called moderate opposition groups that are supported by the French regime. The regime has turned a blind eye and feigned ignorance of the fact. We therefore believe that the report should include more detailed information and adopt a clearer position. Furthermore, we reject the allegations that we have used chemical weapons.

As my delegation stated at a previous session, ISIL has outstanding technical capabilities, but it is not the only group to have used chemical weapons in my country. However, ISIL acquired these capabilities and its ability to use advanced technology from individuals in European countries, including France.

I hope that when representatives take the floor in future, they will respect the principle of diplomatic courtesy. I also hope that we will not be obliged to respond to allegations and political positions such as those presented by the representative of a regime which has a tainted history and which continues to commit crimes against humanity, including against my people.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. I now give the floor to Mr. Lagos of Chile.

Mr. Lagos (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, my delegation wishes you every success in leading this complex and, I must add, regrettably dispiriting forum. We join with the other delegations in wishing good luck both to you as you assume your new duties and to the Ambassador of Cuba, who will soon be leaving us. At the same time, we welcome the arrival of the new Ambassador of Switzerland; we are glad to have another woman among our number.

Chile wishes to take this opportunity to add its voice to the expressions of concern over the recent launch of a ballistic missile by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We reiterate our call for the country to regularize its membership of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State, to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and, above all, to turn away from the path of provocation and to return without delay to the Six-Party Talks.

As has already been pointed out by other delegates in this forum, these provocations not only threaten regional security but, to the alarm of my delegation and as we were able to observe in the intense discussions of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations two weeks ago, serve to justify and to attempt to lend legitimacy to the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines.

Chile reiterates that international disputes should be resolved through diplomacy and peaceful means, in accordance with international law.

The President: I thank the representative of Chile. Before I invite the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take the floor, I would like to make — with the indulgence of the members — a statement in my national capacity.

The Republic of Korea strongly condemns the continuing provocative behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including, most recently, the firing of yet another submarine-launched ballistic missile on 24 August and the processing of spent fuel rods that it acknowledged on 17 August. These provocations ignore the repeated warnings from the international community and violate relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. The Government of the Republic of Korea strongly calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately stop its nuclear and missile development, which poses a threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and beyond, and to abandon such activities in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must realize that if it continues to pursue only the advancement of its nuclear and missile capabilities while exacerbating the already extreme hardship of its people, it will only bring about tougher sanctions and further diplomatic isolation that could eventually lead to its self-destruction.

I now resume my capacity as President, and I invite the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Jo, to take the floor.

Mr. Jo Chol-su (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I am taking the floor to respond to the remarks made by some delegations concerning the submarine-launched ballistic missile test fire. It is well known that certain countries have continuously tried to take advantage of this forum to term the self-defensive steps of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for defending its sovereignty as violations of resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the like. The current submarine-

launched ballistic missile test fire is no exception. But even the United Nations Secretariat fails to give a clear answer to the question as to whether the resolutions are legitimate documents complying with the Charter of the United Nations.

For decades, joint military drills targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been carried out in the Korean Peninsula in defiance of the aspirations of peace-loving people, under the pretext that they are routine and defensive in nature. This year, the United States staged the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle 2016 joint military drills only a few months ago. They openly talked about occupying Pyongyang, the capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, after bringing huge nuclear strategic assets and troops to South Korea. The United States is now desperately staging joint military drills again to mount a pre-emptive nuclear attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, despite the unanimous denunciation and opposition of all Koreans and the entire public.

The unceasing arms build-up and nuclear war drills of the United States are the real threat to the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. A touch-and-go situation where a nuclear war may break out at any moment is now prevailing on the Korean Peninsula due to the war rehearsal. With regard to the reality and prevailing situation in the Korean Peninsula, certain countries are blindly taking sides with the United States while contributing to undermining global strategic stability by developing and modernizing new weapons systems and irresponsibly projecting delivery of attack missiles. Those countries are making strenuous efforts to raise concerns about the defensive measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including even the peaceful satellite launch, while keeping silent on ballistic missile launches by other States and never having tried to urge the United States and its allies to refrain from their hostile posture towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all kinds of provocative actions. Those countries should behave discreetly with a correct view of the situation of the Korean Peninsula.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea categorically rejects the United Nations Security Council's press statement, which is devoid of impartiality and is a product to take issue with and deter the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from exercising its legitimate right to self-defence. Lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the region can be ensured only when the hostile military acts of the United States and its hostile posture toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are terminated. Now that the United States poses threats to the dignity and the right to existence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, defying its serious warning, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to take a series of eventful action steps.

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The representative of China has asked for the floor. Mr. Ji, the floor is yours.

Mr. Ji Haojun (China): Mr. President, I just want to make a couple of points. First, we are also highly concerned by the situation developing on the Korean Peninsula and we call on all parties to do more that is conducive to denuclearization of the Peninsula and to peace and stability in the region. We also call on all parties to refrain from splashing oil on fire. I would like to emphasize that China is determined to safeguard its own security interests in the region.

Second, China calls on all parties to treat other countries with respect and to refrain from using words such as "regime". Terrorism is the common enemy of the whole global community. Our advice is that refraining from meddling in another country's internal affairs will help a lot in global counter-terrorism efforts. To turn other countries into hell is not in the interest of any country.

Third, this morning we sadly learned that the Chinese embassy in Kyrgyzstan has been attacked by a terrorist car bomb which caused several casualties. In this context, we call on all countries to abandon double standards in counter-terrorism efforts.

The President: I thank you, Mr. Ji. Ambassador Wood, you have the floor.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor but I need to respond to comments that were made by the representative of the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As I have made clear in this body many times, the United States is not a threat to North Korea. We have been very clear about that.

I would urge — as I am sure others would — that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, instead of listening to its own warped propaganda, should listen to the loud calls of the international community for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to live up to its United Nations Security Council resolution obligations.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States. Mr. Riquet, you have the floor.

Mr. Riquet (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor again. Very briefly and without yielding to the temptation of engaging in controversy, I would just like to reject all attempts to personalize the discussions. This was not the intention of France. I merely cited the words of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, which are part of the official foreign policy statements of the French Republic.

I would also like to take this opportunity to formally reject all the confluences of recent history, including the particularly fanciful allegations made by the distinguished representative of Syria in exercise of the right of reply. In particular, the claim that France is supporting terrorist cells cannot be taken seriously by anyone: like many other countries, France has been a victim of terrorist attacks, some in the recent past, and, frankly, I do not believe that such arguments are valid or admissible.

The President: I thank the representative of France. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. I thank all delegations for their statements this morning and for the positive feedback on the draft report as contained in document CD/WP.596. I take it that we have a provisional agreement on the report as amended with the two earlier amendments this morning and pending any further comments.

I recognize China.

Mr. Ji Haojun (China): Mr. President, I am sorry for asking for the floor at this late stage. With your permission, I am wondering if we can make a few small edits to the text. In part H, paragraph 53, subparagraph (c), in the penultimate line, after "Mr. Xi Jinping", I would like to change the text from "President of China" to read "President of the People's Republic of China" so that it is more formal. Another edit is on page 7, paragraph 29, the fifth line, at "The forum consisted of two panels discussions": I wonder if we should change it to "panel discussions". I do not know which one is correct.

The President: I thank you, Mr. Ji. I think that no one will find any difficulties in improving our text with the suggestions from Mr. Ji. So, as I was saying, pending any further suggestions or comments, I presume that we have provisional agreement on the draft.

I recognize India.

Mr. Varma (India): Mr. President, since this is the first time we are taking the floor under your presidency, let me convey how pleased we are to convey our very warm congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are particularly pleased at the very efficient manner in which you have taken forward the work of the Conference at this important stage. Allow me to assure you of the full support of the Indian delegation.

We would like also to welcome our new colleague, the Ambassador of Switzerland, and bid farewell to our colleague from Cuba. India and Cuba enjoy the most friendly of relations, which are reflected in the relations between our missions, reinforced by the fact that I know Ambassador Rodríguez from before. We wish her all success in her future work.

Mr. President, we have taken note of the changes that have come about in this draft report of the Conference. We would request you to circulate a final draft, which will allow us to convey a clean document to our capitals. I would presume we would have no further changes, but I think we should give delegations the opportunity to see a clean draft and consult with the capitals before we take a decision on the report itself.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador Varma. We will see to it. We will take those measures as soon as we can. I propose that we resume next week at the plenary with a view to adopting the text next Tuesday.

Does any member wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. This concludes our formal meeting of today. The next formal plenary meeting will be held on Tuesday, 6 September, at 10 a.m., in the Council Chamber. This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.