

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and first plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 13 September 2016, at 10.10 a.m.

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

The President: I call to order the 1401st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

The list of speakers for today is quite lengthy, so we should perhaps get started right away. I give the floor first to His Excellency Ambassador Varma of India.

Mr. Varma (India): Mr. President, I join others in commending you for the smooth and effective conduct of our work, especially the adoption of the 2016 report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly.

Before I make a farewell statement, it is my duty to place on record my Government's position on the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September. In a statement issued the same day, the Ministry of External Affairs noted as a matter of great concern that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had again acted in violation of its international obligations. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself had endorsed and expressed concern about the proliferation of nuclear and missile technologies which had adversely impacted the national security of India. In deploring the nuclear test, India called upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from such actions, which adversely impact peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Mr. President, I am aware that the Conference has important business to transact today. I seek your indulgence to allow me to share a few thoughts as I prepare to leave Geneva for another assignment later this year.

It has been a privilege to be part of the delegation of India to this Conference for nine years, the last three as its Permanent Representative. It is an honour that I am proud of.

India has been represented in this Council Chamber for over 50 years. This chamber is witness to the profound ways in which the world has changed during this time and the place and role of India in it.

For all the difficulties the Conference faces today, its significance for my country remains undiminished.

Conceived in the crucible of global aspiration for a permanent disarmament body and dedicated to the goal of greater international security at lower levels of armaments, in particular nuclear weapons, this Conference is the cherished product of the only truly universal international disarmament document. It would be a folly to cast it aside.

The frustration that has emerged from the stalemate of the Conference is no less than that offered by the immobility of the equatorial doldrums.

This Conference is tasked with reconciling national security of its members and global security for all — disarmament's true democratic dividend — strengthening one and the other, and both together.

That the Conference, despite the well-intentioned efforts of many, has been blocked by the security exclusivism of some or a confidence-deficit in others is unfortunate as it is unworthy of its noble mandate. Either way, it has been a recipe for a stalemate that has lasted far too long, but this too shall pass.

This Conference is a microcosm of global strategic cross-currents, perhaps even more than some bodies of inherited power and privilege elsewhere. For those of us who attend regularly and listen carefully, the signs are unmistakable.

If global security in this century is to reflect the multipolarity that underpins it or tame the negatives of technological change that drive it, there is no alternative to multilaterally negotiated instruments. If we seek multilateral instruments of global relevance that make a real difference on the ground, there is no alternative to this premier disarmament negotiating forum fulfilling its mandate. For the sake of global interdependence that is secure and free, if the Conference on Disarmament did not exist, we would need to invent one.

The bottom line is clear. This Conference remains available as a forum for those wishing to enhance national security through multilateral legal instruments. Without a

common commitment to this goal, we cannot succeed; with such commitment, we cannot fail.

In the end it is not so much a question of viability of this Conference as it is a test of whether we see ourselves as responsible members of the international community. India remains committed to the founding principles and objectives of the Conference.

I have benefited from the cooperation and friendship of many in this chamber: heads of delegation, their experts, the secretariat and the interpreters. To all, I express my thanks and deep appreciation; to the Secretary-General, our warm thanks for his wise counsel.

To my colleague, Siddhartha Nath, who is away fighting the cause of India in another land, my gratitude and appreciation for he is proof of what many of us in the Conference already know. We are better because of our deputies and experts.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador. Indeed, it has been a great honour and privilege for me to work with you, Ambassador Varma. I also believe that our members will be feeling the same way and will be missing very much your valuable, learned contribution to our discussions. Allow me to wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Next I give the floor to Ambassador Sano of Japan.

Mr. Sano (Japan): Mr. President, at the outset I would like to express our appreciation to the Indian Ambassador Mr. Varma for his hard work and invaluable efforts in the Conference on Disarmament and his great contribution to the disarmament community here in Geneva and also in New York. Ambassador Varma, I wish you all the best and I am confident that your next assignment will also be successful.

Mr. President, on 9 September, the Japan Meteorological Agency detected seismic waves originating from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with a wave pattern which differs from those usually seen in natural earthquakes. This was followed by an announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it had carried out a nuclear explosion test. Taking account of these circumstances comprehensively, my Government considers that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test, despite the repeated calls by the international community to fully comply with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, including the recently adopted resolution 2270 (2016).

This nuclear test is totally unacceptable to the international community, including Japan, and constitutes a grave threat to its security and seriously undermines the peace and security of North-East Asia as well as of the international community, when considered together with the recent enhancement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its ballistic missile capability, including submarine-launched ballistic missiles. This nuclear test as well as the series of launches of ballistic missiles, including submarine-launched ballistic missiles, by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitute a clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. In addition, it represents a grave challenge not only to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime centred on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but also in the effort to accelerate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

In response to the test, the Security Council and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, which met on 9 September, expressed strong condemnation of and grave concern at this test with regard to international peace and security. This nuclear test also violates the Japan-Democratic People's Republic of Korea Pyongyang Declaration, as well as the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks of September 2005, and goes against their efforts to resolve various issues through dialogue. Thus, Japan lodges a serious protest against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and strongly condemns its nuclear test.

Japan reiterates its strong demand for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately and fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions without taking further provocative actions. In this regard, Japan also associates itself with the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) joint statement that will be introduced later by the Australian Ambassador.

Mr. President, before I conclude, since this is the last meeting of the Conference on Disarmament this year, I would like to commend you and all the other Presidents of this session for their hard work as President of the Conference. Japan expects that all the Conference members will carry out their responsibility to produce a concrete outcome and agree on a programme of work at an early stage in 2017, taking into account this year's discussions regarding several proposals on a programme of work.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, for your kind words addressed to the Presidents of this session and the gentle prodding offered to those of next year's session.

I will next give the floor to Ambassador Aitzhanova of Kazakhstan, followed by Slovakia, Ireland, Australia, the United States, New Zealand, Canada, Belgium, France, Sweden, China, Poland and the list is growing. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Ms. Aitzhanova (Kazakhstan): Mr. President, first let me congratulate you on the adoption of the 2016 annual report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly. I hope that later today we will be able to have agreement on the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the report in the same constructive manner.

Before I continue my statement, I would like to join the international community in voicing condemnation of the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September 2016. My Foreign Ministry has already made an official statement concerning this act of violence of international law. As Co-President, together with Japan, of the Ninth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as Chair of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, we are convinced that this action has an extremely negative effect on the process of nuclear disarmament and poses a threat to regional and global security.

Kazakhstan, as a country that voluntarily renounced its nuclear weapons and contributed significantly to the process of global disarmament, strongly condemns the continued practice of nuclear tests despite calls by the international community. We call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return immediately to the Six-Party Talks and completely abandon its nuclear ambitions.

As noted in my earlier statement, representatives of the global players and leaders in the international anti-nuclear weapons movement gathered on 29 August in Astana at the international conference entitled "Building a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World" in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Participants discussed modern-day nuclear threats and next steps in the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament movement and adopted the Astana Vision Declaration. In this regard, we would be grateful if the secretariat could issue and circulate this Declaration among the members of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Astana Vision Declaration praises the people of Kazakhstan and President Nursultan Nazarbayev's leadership for voluntarily renouncing the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal, joining the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, establishing a central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone and launching the Abolish Testing: Our Mission (ATOM) project to work towards a nuclear-weapon-free world and educate the world about the dangers and long-term consequences of nuclear tests.

President Nazarbayev urged the international community to create new mechanisms to regulate relations among the major Powers and international organizations to prevent conflicts. In particular, he emphasized that it is essential to enforce control over proliferation of conventional weapons and new military technologies. He appealed to all States to accept new obligations on further strengthening of international agreements — the institutions that constitute the basis of nuclear security.

The activity of Kazakhstan as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2017 and 2018 will be aimed at these and other measures to strengthen international peace and security. It was during the conference that a proposal to establish a special award — the Nazarbayev international prize for contribution to nuclear disarmament and security — was announced. A prize award ceremony will take place at the first Astana Peace Summit, which will be held on 15 and 16 November this year in Astana. We believe that this will become a good tradition and a regular event, taking place every

two years. The Peace Summit is aimed at establishing a common platform and conducive environment for dialogue on the most critical issues related to global peace and security. Invitations from President Nazarbayev have been sent to Heads of State and Government, international organizations and leaders of non-proliferation and disarmament movements; we look forward to active participation of Heads of State and leaders of international organizations at the forthcoming Astana Summit.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, and now I give the floor to Ms. Kemppainen of the European Union.

Ms. Kemppainen (Slovakia): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The European Union condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September 2016. The nuclear tests and the continued launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea using ballistic missile technology constitute a grave violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions and a direct threat to international peace and security and further aggravate tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

The latest nuclear test is yet another direct violation of the country's international obligations not to produce or test nuclear weapons, as determined by multiple Security Council resolutions. The path that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has to follow is clear and there is no alternative. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must abide by its obligations and abandon all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The European Union fully supports the international community's demand for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards at an early date. Once again, the irresponsible behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea underlines the necessity of universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The European Union calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all other States that have not already done so to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without further delay.

We furthermore call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from any action that further increases regional tensions and to re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular in the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

We look forward to the Security Council addressing the matter and taking a firm and effective stand. We will closely coordinate our action with its decisions.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador. Ambassador O'Brien of Ireland, you have the floor.

Ms. O'Brien (Ireland): Mr. President, allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for your efforts as well as our full cooperation and support for the remainder of your tenure.

I would like, firstly, to acknowledge the extraordinary work of Ambassador Varma of India and to thank him for his collaboration and for his contributions to the Conference on Disarmament and to wish him well in his future endeavours.

Ireland would like to add some remarks in a national capacity to those delivered on our behalf by the European Union.

We are gravely concerned at the latest reports of a nuclear test conducted by North Korea on Friday, 9 September — the largest carried out so far. It constitutes the second reported test this year and adds to the series of provocative actions persistently carried out by North Korea. This highly irresponsible action is clearly a flagrant violation of the international obligations of North Korea not to produce nor to test nuclear weapons, and it represents a real threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and to the entire North-East Asia region. The reported test is also a significant obstacle to international efforts to advance global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Nuclear weapons are

never a means to guarantee peace and security; on the contrary, they pose the greatest threat of all.

The reckless behaviour of North Korea has starkly demonstrated the urgent need for engagement on nuclear disarmament by all stakeholders. Ireland calls on the North Korean authorities to cease all nuclear testing and to re-engage with the Six-Party Talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, immediately and without preconditions. We further exhort the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its programmes to develop ballistic missiles, nuclear capabilities and weapons of mass destruction and to carry out these processes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We reaffirm our support for the international sanctions regime against North Korea, and we emphasize that continued disregard of its international obligations will only lead to more severe diplomatic isolation for the North Korean regime, with detrimental impact on the lives of the North Korean people.

Lastly, the recent event highlights the urgency for the immediate entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As 2016 marks the twentieth anniversary of the conclusion of negotiations on the Treaty, Ireland calls on the eight remaining States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force to ratify without delay.

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

Mr. Quinn (Australia): Mr. President, I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the member States of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative:

The Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear test conducted by North Korea on 9 September 2016. This is its second nuclear test conducted in eight months, despite the repeated calls by the international community to comply fully with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and to conduct no further provocation, including nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches.

The nuclear test by North Korea is a clear violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, as well as of the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, and represents a grave challenge to the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime centred on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This latest nuclear test is another reminder of the urgency of further strengthening the international framework for disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, including achieving the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty at the earliest possible date, the urgent negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices and the effective implementation of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

This latest nuclear test seriously threatens the peace and security of North-East Asia, as well as of the international community, particularly given the fact that this year North Korea has launched more than 20 ballistic missiles to enhance its capability to deliver nuclear weapons. As NPDI has repeatedly done on previous occasions, we strongly urge North Korea to refrain from conducting further provocative actions, including, among others, nuclear tests or ballistic missile launches. NPDI also urges North Korea to comply fully with all of its international non-proliferation obligations, including relevant Security Council resolutions, and to live up to its commitments under the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks; to return to compliance with its International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement and the NPT; to cease immediately all nuclear activities; and to abandon all nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

With your permission, Mr. President, I would like to add a few short remarks in my national capacity on this latest North Korean nuclear test. Let me say that Australia condemns absolutely the reckless, provocative and dangerous action of North Korea in

undertaking its fifth nuclear test. We stand firm with our allies and regional partners in condemning this provocative action by North Korea and calling on it to immediately desist from such irresponsible and dangerous behaviour.

At the regional level, the East Asian Summit statement on non-proliferation secured by Australia and Myanmar this week in Laos sets out the determination and commitment of regional leaders to support non-proliferation and their deep concerns with regard to North Korea. Let me also say that Australia will continue to work with partners regionally and globally in taking necessary steps to address the threat to international security posed by North Korea.

Mr. President, I would very much like to join others in passing on a tribute to the work of Ambassador Varma to the Conference on Disarmament. As we all know, Ambassador Varma's deep knowledge, wisdom and superlative diplomatic skills are on display each time we meet. I think the eloquence of his valedictory remarks underlines those qualities. I would like to join others in thanking him for his invaluable contribution to this Conference and to wish him all the best for his next assignment and beyond.

Let me also add my delegation's appreciation for your role, Mr. President, in taking the helm of the Conference and for all the hard work you have put in and to pledge our support for your further time at the helm.

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

Mr. Hall of the United States, you have the floor.

Mr. Hall (United States of America): Mr. President, first of all, the United States would like to thank Ambassador Varma for his distinguished service here in the Conference on Disarmament and wish him well in all his future endeavours.

As President Obama said, the United States condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear test by North Korea. We are monitoring the situation in close coordination with our regional allies and partners. In real time, at least 25 stations of the International Monitoring System of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization detected a seismic event consistent with the footprint of past illicit nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The rapid detection of this event and of the previous four nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea demonstrates the effectiveness of the Treaty's verification regime and why the United States seeks to strengthen it even further.

The nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is destabilizing and threatens international peace and security, and we call on North Korea once again to abide by its international obligations and commitments. We have consistently made clear that we will not accept North Korea as a nuclear State, nor will we accept its possession of nuclear weapons. As President Obama has made clear, we will respond resolutely to the defiance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its international commitments and obligations. This latest test — the second this year — follows an unprecedented campaign of launches of ballistic missiles which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself says are intended to serve as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons to cities in the United States and those of our allies in the Republic of Korea and Japan. These provocations only serve to increase the international community's resolve to counter prohibited activities by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including through implementing existing United Nations Security Council resolutions and seeking new sanctions.

We intend to work closely with all our allies and partners to develop and apply new measures to compel the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change course and return to denuclearization. Our commitment 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 using all the capabilities at our disposal.

The President: I thank you. Now I give the floor to Ms. Donnelly of New Zealand.

Ms. Donnelly (New Zealand): Mr. President, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to add the voice of New Zealand to those that have expressed their outrage at the nuclear test undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September. As our Foreign Minister Murray McCully said in a statement shortly after the event, the nuclear test by North Korea is a dangerous affront to the international community and a serious threat to regional security.

This latest nuclear test is highly provocative and deeply concerning, especially as it comes on the back of a series of recent ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This is the fifth nuclear test conducted by North Korea, and it directly defies the United Nations Security Council which has demanded that North Korea stop nuclear testing.

In our capacity as President of the Security Council, New Zealand issued the Council press statement on 10 September, strongly condemning the test as a clear violation and in flagrant disregard of relevant Security Council resolutions and of the non-proliferation regime. In that statement, the members of the Security Council recalled that they had previously expressed their determination to take further significant measures in the event of another nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and in line with this commitment and the gravity of the new violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, will begin work immediately on appropriate measures under Article 41 in a Security Council resolution.

New Zealand absolutely rejects nuclear weapons, including their testing, and is strongly committed to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This latest action by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea underlines the importance of the urgent entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and we call on all non-ratifying countries, especially annex II countries, to ratify without delay.

Mr. President, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your delegation for your smooth and successful leadership of the Conference on Disarmament during its final meeting of 2016. We certainly hope that the text of the General Assembly resolution can be agreed as swiftly as that of the Conference's report.

Finally, Mr. President, please allow my delegation to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Varma for his contribution to this body and to wish him all the very best for his future endeavours.

The President: I thank you for that statement and the kind words addressed to me. Indeed, New Zealand was sitting in this place last year and we all know that you have been of invaluable help to us.

Ambassador McCarney of Canada, you have the floor.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): Mr. President, allow me to thank the Ambassador of India for his consistently wise, measured and gentle interventions and guidance; he will be truly missed in this body. I also thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for your service to the Conference on Disarmament.

Canada fully supports the statement delivered by Australia on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and joins the international community in condemning the fifth nuclear test conducted by North Korea on 9 September. Canada remains gravely concerned by the apparent accelerated pace of nuclear testing and ballistic missile launches by North Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to blatantly ignore international law and the will of the United Nations Security Council by acting with complete disregard for its own international obligations and for the safety and security of its own people, those of all the neighbouring countries in the region and peace-seeking people everywhere. The illegal and provocative acts by North Korea are a clear threat to our international security and really accomplish nothing but its further isolation from the international community of which it is a member.

(spoke in French)

We welcome the announcement that the members of the Security Council will immediately begin working on appropriate measures under Article 41. We enjoin North

Korea to respect its international obligations, to take concrete steps towards denuclearization and to re-engage in real negotiations to find a peaceful, political solution.

Canada will continue to provide its unwavering support to South Korea, Japan and other partners in the region, and it will consider — together with the international community — other measures that may be taken to respond to the actions of North Korea.

We support the efforts made to come up with multilateral solutions geared towards the strengthening of security in the Asia-Pacific region.

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

Mr. Dhaene (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation fully supports the statement of the European Union and, in the light of the seriousness of the situation, we would like to highlight a few points from our national point of view.

It is important for Belgium to add its voice to those of other countries and to strongly and unequivocally condemn the latest nuclear test conducted by North Korea this past Friday, 9 September. This latest provocation, which follows the recent launching of ballistic missiles, constitutes a serious violation of several Security Council resolutions and demonstrates, for the umpteenth time, that North Korea is continuing to develop its nuclear programme in parallel with its ballistic missile programme. Its actions threaten regional stability and endanger international security.

Once again, Belgium calls on North Korea to immediately bring its illegal nuclear weapons programme to a complete, verifiable and irreversible halt, to comply with its international obligations and to take concrete steps to restore regional trust and stability. The leaders of North Korea must understand that the international community will not yield in the face of nuclear blackmail and that their provocations and irresponsible behaviour will serve only to trigger a stronger, more determined response from the international community.

In concluding, Mr. President, I would like to thank the Ambassador of India for his welcome contribution to our work and wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The President: I thank you, and now I give the floor to Ms. Robles of France.

Ms. Robles (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by congratulating you on the way you have guided our work so far and the effectiveness that you have demonstrated. I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Varma for his continued cooperation and contribution to our work. It goes without saying that we wish him all the best for the future.

I wish to comment briefly on the main points expressed in the press releases recently issued by the Office of the President of the Republic and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France on the latest nuclear test conducted by North Korea. France strongly condemns the latest nuclear test conducted by North Korea. The international community must unite in the face of this new provocation, which comes in the wake of the Security Council's unanimous condemnation of the ballistic tests conducted by North Korea. North Korea is continuing to develop a nuclear and ballistic arsenal in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions and this escalation is unacceptable. It is a serious act that profoundly undermines peace and security in Asia and the world.

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

Ms. Bard (Sweden): Mr. President, Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would only like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

As the Swedish Foreign Minister, Margot Wallström, made clear in her statement last Friday, Sweden strongly condemns the nuclear test that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea concluded on 9 September — the second nuclear test this year, following the previous test on 6 January and following a row of provocative missile

launches this year. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization's monitoring mechanism will continue to further analyse the incident.

The defiant behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this year — involving serious and provocative actions — jeopardizes international peace and security. The situation on the Korean Peninsula is serious and the latest test further aggravates this. Sweden urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease activities that aggravate the security situation and to fulfil its international obligations and respect the United Nations Security Council's resolutions and the principles of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

In concluding, I would also like to wish our Indian colleague, Ambassador Varma, all the best in his future endeavours and, Mr. President, warm thanks to you for your leadership of this body.

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

Next on the list is China, followed by Poland, Switzerland, Italy, Bulgaria, Mongolia, the United Kingdom, Chile, Finland, Turkey, Spain, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Israel, Colombia, Ecuador, Ukraine, Argentina and Peru.

Mr. Li of China, you have the floor.

Mr. Li Chunjie (China) (spoke in Chinese): Mr. President, China expresses its appreciation for the smooth achievement of consensus by the Conference on Disarmament on its annual report during your tenure. China also expresses its gratitude to the other five Presidents for their work and related efforts during their tenures this year. I should further like to take this opportunity to express the regret of the Chinese delegation at the departure of Ambassador Varma of India.

Mr. President, despite the broad opposition of the international community, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recently conducted a fifth nuclear test. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already released a statement in this regard, making clear the position of the Chinese Government as resolutely opposed to that test. China stands firmly for achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, preventing nuclear proliferation and preserving peace and stability in North-East Asia. We strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by its commitment to denuclearization, comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and refrain from taking any action that aggravates the situation.

Since the beginning of this year, the situation on the Peninsula has undergone many twists and turns that have seriously jeopardized regional peace and stability and confounded the broad expectations of the international community. As the facts repeatedly prove, the security concerns of all sides involved on the Peninsula can and should only be resolved in ways that accord with the interests of each. Any unilateral action that proceeds solely from self-interest is a blind alley; it can only aggravate tensions and complicate the problem, and in the end not only fails to address the security concerns at issue but also makes related objectives even harder to attain.

Mr. President, China strongly urges all parties to focus on the overall situation, be cautious in word and action, avoid further mutual provocation and join in genuine efforts to bring about peace and stability on the Peninsula and advance the process of denuclearizing it.

China will continue to maintain its commitment to resolving issues related to the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and negotiation within the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

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

Mr. Stachńczyk (Poland): Mr. President, Poland aligns itself with the statements of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the European Union.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea systematically violates its international commitments and ignores a number of United Nations Security Council resolutions,

including the most recent one, resolution 2270 (2016) of 2 March this year. The nuclear and missile tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea pose a threat to the security and stability of the Korean Peninsula. They also upset the international system of non-proliferation and arms control, specifically by weakening universally accepted norms against nuclear testing, especially in connection with the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to dialogue also with the International Atomic Energy Agency in order to subject its nuclear programme to international verification.

Poland has been engaged in the stabilization process on the Korean Peninsula since 1953 by being part of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. We are prepared to support efforts towards reconciliation of the Korean people and for building permanent security and stability in the region.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your smooth presidency and for your efforts to prepare the report which was accepted last week. I would also like to thank Ambassador Varma for his cooperation, especially during the Polish presidency in the Conference on Disarmament: I wish him all the best.

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

Mr. Masmejean of Switzerland, you have the floor.

Mr. Masmejean (Switzerland) (spoke in French): Mr. President, we would like to comment on the announcement made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the effect that it had conducted a further nuclear test on 9 September. Switzerland condemns this act, which violates Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013) and 2270 (2016), under which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must verifiably and irreversibly abandon all nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. This test not only violates Security Council resolutions but also poses a threat to peace and security in the region and undermines the efforts of the international community in the area of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Switzerland is convinced that the nuclear and security issues in the Korean Peninsula can be resolved only through a negotiated, diplomatic process. In this regard, it reiterates its support for the Six-Party Talks and stands ready to respond to any request that might contribute to efforts to promote stability and peace in the Korean Peninsula.

Lastly, Switzerland urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to re-establish its safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. It also calls on all States that have not yet done so to sign and/or ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as early as possible.

To conclude, we would also like to commend the farewell statement made at the start of the meeting by the Ambassador of India. The knowledge, contributions and sound judgment of Ambassador Varma will certainly be missed by the Conference on Disarmament and we wish him all the best for the future.

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

Mr. Mati (Italy): Mr. President, let me join the previous speakers in expressing my Government's strongest condemnation of the new nuclear test conducted on 9 September by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea which poses a threat to Asia and world peace.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. The test represents a new, clear violation of the related resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and a serious threat to peace and to international and regional security. We reiterate our call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon the development of all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and the path of challenging the international community and of self-imposed isolation.

Furthermore, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return at an early stage to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as well as to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. While condemning once more the provocative and destabilizing initiatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Italy will make its contribution to a firm and cohesive reaction of the international community.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Varma for his contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and wish him all the best for his next assignment and beyond.

Since this is the last meeting of the 2016 session of the Conference, I would also like to commend you, Mr. President, and the session's other Presidents for all the work done and to express my appreciation for the way in which you conducted our work and for the adoption of the Conference's annual report.

Mr. President: I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the session's Presidents.

Ms. Davidova of Bulgaria, you have the floor.

Ms. Davidova (Bulgaria): Mr. President, let me start by thanking you for your skilful and efficient presidency of the Conference on Disarmament during the last part of this year's session and for the adoption of the Conference's report.

I would also like to join others in expressing the appreciation of our delegation to Ambassador Varma of India for his immense contribution to the work of the Conference and wish him every success.

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make some remarks in a national capacity on the latest nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Bulgarian position has been expressed in a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria on 9 September 2016.

We are gravely concerned by the latest nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September 2016. This fifth consecutive nuclear test is in direct violation of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement. The test, which was one in a series of severe provocations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this year, will inevitably aggravate the tension in the region. We persistently call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to suspend its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as well as to resume dialogue with the international community, including in the framework of the Six-Party Talks, aiming at attaining peace and stability in North-East Asia.

The President: I thank you, and now I give the floor to Ms. Rinchenmyadag of Mongolia.

Ms. Rinchenmyadag (Mongolia): Mr. President, since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on your assumption of this important role and commend your able stewardship of our work to adopt the report of the 2016 session of the Conference.

I am taking the floor to make a brief statement in relation to the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September 2016. On this issue, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia issued a statement on 10 September, which I quote: "Mongolia deeply regrets that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted a nuclear test on 9 September 2016 in violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions. This test has a negative impact on the efforts of the international community to maintain international peace and security. Mongolia reaffirms its firm position for the maintenance of peace and security in North-East Asia as well as for the promotion of international talks to that end."

The nuclear and ballistic missile tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a breach of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. Mongolia has been focusing strongly on fulfilling its duties as a member of the international community, in particular on the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

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

Ms. Saggese (United Kingdom): Mr. President, the United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. I would also like to add the voice of the United Kingdom to that of other delegations and express grave concern at the reported nuclear test carried out by North Korea on 9 September 2016.

The United Kingdom strongly condemns North Korea for conducting a further nuclear test which is a clear violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions and a threat to regional peace and stability and international security.

Let me also express the deep appreciation of my delegation for the work conducted by Ambassador Varma of India and wish him all the best for his future endeavours. Allow me also to thank you, Mr. President, and the session's other Presidents for your efforts in steering the work of the Conference on Disarmament this year.

The President: I thank you for the statement and for the kind words addressed to us.

(spoke in Spanish)

Mr. Lagos of Chile, you have the floor.

Mr. Lagos (Chile) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Mr. President, my delegation is pleased to see you chairing the Conference on Disarmament and is grateful for the able manner in which you have guided our meetings during the last part of this year's session. Unfortunately, today's meeting is overshadowed by the troubling news that a nuclear test was conducted last week by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In that regard, we fully support the statement made by the Ambassador of Australia on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. I would just like to add a few brief comments in a national capacity.

Chile condemns the nuclear test, which constitutes a flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 2270 (2016) and other resolutions and is a serious provocation that threatens the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and the international system. Chile calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from conducting any further nuclear tests or any activity that violates international standards on nuclear non-proliferation and the mandate of the United Nations.

We also urge the authorities of that country to regularize its status as a non-nuclear-weapon State under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to open up its nuclear facilities to safeguards inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Lastly, Mr. President, we wish to add our voice to those delegations that have highlighted the important contributions made to this Conference by the Ambassador of India. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: Thank you very much for your statement and your kind words.

(spoke in English)

Next, Ms. Maja of Finland, the floor is yours.

Ms. Maja (Finland): Mr. President, let me first express a warm farewell to the Ambassador of India, Venkatesh Varma, and wish him all the best. Our collaboration has been excellent and the Ambassador's help in compiling the report of the informal working group on the programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament was instrumental. We wish him all the best.

Let me now turn to the issue that many colleagues have addressed today: the recent nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Finland is fully aligned with the statement delivered by the European Union and wishes to make the following additional remarks.

We strongly condemn the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September, as stated by our Foreign Minister Timo Soini last Friday. The nuclear test continues the series of grave violations of international obligations by North Korea which have become alarmingly common during this year. The North Korean nuclear test is an outright violation of its international obligations to refrain from developing and testing nuclear weapons. Finland considers that the recurring provocations by North Korea indicate a serious disregard for the international community's appeals and urges North Korea to immediately refrain from actions that cause a serious threat to the security of the Korean Peninsula and increase tensions in the region and beyond.

North Korea must fully observe its international obligations, abandon its nuclear programme and commit to close cooperation with the international community, including the International Atomic Energy Agency and engagement in the Six-Party Talks.

The President: I thank you, and now I give the floor to Ms. Kasnakli of Turkey.

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Mr. President, allow me to thank you for your smooth and effective conduct of our work on the 2016 report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly. We hope that the General Assembly resolution on the Conference's report will be agreed upon just as successfully.

Let me also wish Ambassador Varma of India the best in his future endeavours. We have benefited from his knowledge and experience extensively.

Mr. President, regarding the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September, Turkey aligns itself with the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative statement delivered by the Ambassador of Australia earlier. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey issued a statement on the same day expressing our deepest concern regarding this fifth nuclear test. This development, which could have a negative impact on regional peace and stability, constitutes a new and clear violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Turkey strongly condemns this test as well as the ballistic missile launches of 5 September and considers them a threat to regional as well as to international peace and security. We expect the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately fulfil its international commitments.

The President: I thank you.

(spoke in Spanish)

I now give the floor to Ambassador Herráiz of Spain.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Mr. President, I would like to express my full support for the statement made by the European Union on the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September. To add a few comments in a national capacity, I would first like to say that Spain strongly condemns this action, which flagrantly violates several Security Council resolutions. This latest test poses a very serious threat to international peace and security and to the stability of the Korean Peninsula; it demonstrates that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is continuing to defy the international non-proliferation regime and, through its actions, is seriously undermining established international practice on nuclear testing. This test follows the repeated ballistic missile launches conducted in recent months, all of which amount to an unprecedented escalation in the North Korean regime's provocation of the international community.

Spain is utterly opposed to these activities and urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions by focusing its efforts on sincerely seeking to establish a climate of understanding and dialogue with the international community and renouncing its nuclear and ballistic programme, which is a

reckless and highly destabilizing enterprise. As Chair of the 1718 Committee of the Security Council on sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Spain will exercise its responsibilities in that capacity to coordinate a robust response from the international community. Spain also remains firmly committed to the effective implementation of the sanctions regime with a view to ensuring that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea dismantles its nuclear and ballistic programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

I would of course like to add my voice to those delegations that have thanked Ambassador Varma for his cooperation and great professionalism and I wish him the very best for the future. I also wish to thank you, Mr. President, for the efficiency and diligence with which you are carrying out your mandate, which allows us to achieve results with a smooth effectiveness that we all welcome.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for your kind words.

(*spoke in English*)

I now give the floor to Mr. Pilz of Germany.

Mr. Pilz (Germany): Mr. President, first of all I would like to thank you for your excellent work in the run-up to the next United Nations General Assembly. I also wish to express our appreciation to the Indian Ambassador for his enduring work during his tenure.

On today's key subject, I would like to say the following: Germany unequivocally supports the statements made by the European Union and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. In addition, it would like to state that Germany condemns in the strongest possible terms the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September 2016. The nuclear tests as well as the continued launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of ballistic missiles constitute a blatant and unacceptable violation of international law. Germany fully shares the concerns expressed, in particular by regional partners. The behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea contributes to a dramatic destabilization of the Korean Peninsula. The international community unanimously rejects these provocations and will not accept violations of United Nations Security Council resolutions and international law as committed repeatedly by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the recent launches of ballistic missiles.

Germany fully supports the latest assessments made by the Security Council stating in its most recent press statement that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses a clear threat to world peace. The Security Council has decided to act accordingly and will examine even stronger sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Germany is in close contact with all its partners in this regard and supports all efforts made by the international community.

The President: I thank you. Ms. Hauge of Norway, you have the floor.

Ms. Hauge (Norway): Mr. President, allow me first to express my delegation's appreciation for your efforts in leading the work of this final part of the 2016 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me also join others in thanking Ambassador Varma of India for his contribution to the disarmament community in Geneva. My delegation has very much appreciated the Ambassador's good cooperation and wishes him well in his future endeavours.

Norway adds its voice to those condemning the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September. This test was far larger than the previous tests. Furthermore, it came not long after the Democratic People's Republic of Korea carried out its last missile test. As was made clear in our statement on 9 September, Norway considers this a very serious development. The nuclear tests and missile tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a threat to peace and stability both in the region and globally and are making it even more difficult to find diplomatic solutions to the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

The actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are undermining the international norm against testing and proliferation of nuclear weapons and are creating new obstacles in the efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. It is important that the international community takes resolute action in response to the destructive and provocative behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United Nations Security Council should consider an appropriate response.

The incident confirms once again how important it is that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty comes into force. The Treaty is now 20 years old, but has not yet entered into force because eight countries, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, have failed to ratify it. The test-ban regime is a key pillar of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Norway will continue to follow developments in this matter closely.

The President: I thank you. Mr. Verstedden of the Netherlands, you have the floor.

Mr. Verstedden (Netherlands): Mr. President, in addition to the statements made by the European Union and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, I would like to make a statement on last week's nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in my national capacity.

The Netherlands condemns this test in the strongest possible terms and frankly deplores that this is already the third time this year that the dangerous provocations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea prompt us to do so. The nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea threatens regional and international security and further isolates the regime. Moreover, it is a serious violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. The Netherlands, therefore, supports a strong reaction from the international community to further restrict the nuclear capacities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to send a strong signal that this behaviour is unacceptable.

The Netherlands urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocations, especially nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches. Moreover, the regime should fully comply with its aforementioned international obligations, implement the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and submit all 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. In its own interests, the regime should realize that the provocative path it has currently chosen does not encourage political progress or economic cooperation. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should, therefore, immediately cease its irresponsible actions and instead seek international rapprochement through dialogue.

Mr. President, allow me to join others in thanking Ambassador Varma for his always thoughtful insights and wisdom in this body and elsewhere. We wish him every success in his next assignment. Let me also thank you and the session's other Presidents for all your work this year.

The President: I thank you, and now I give the floor to Mr. Jadoon of Pakistan.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): Mr. President, I would like to read out the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan on 9 September 2016 regarding the recent nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea:

Pakistan condemns the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September 2016 which constitutes a violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions and is against the objective of a nuclear-weapons-free Korean Peninsula. Pakistan calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions and refrain from actions which undermine peace and stability in the region. We urge all parties to work towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free Korean Peninsula within the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

Mr. President, my delegation would also like to address a few words to Ambassador Venkatesh Varma, the Permanent Representative of India. Ambassador Varma has been a

towering presence in the Conference on Disarmament. This forum has benefited immensely from his substantive contributions. Whether we agreed with his point of view or on the very rare occasions that we did not, his arguments were always logical and compelling. His years of experience in the Conference and in the broader world of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control were extremely beneficial for the Conference. His incisive remarks today were a reflection of that. The Conference will surely miss his presence. Personally, I always benefited from Ambassador Varma's wise counsel, knowledge and insightful analysis. We wish him all the best for his future endeavours.

Mr. President, we also take this opportunity to congratulate you and thank you most profoundly for the manner in which you have presided over the Conference. We appreciate your diplomatic skills and leadership that guided the Conference towards the smooth and timely adoption of the annual report. We are also grateful to you for your efforts on the draft General Assembly resolution and hope for its early finalization.

The President: I thank you for your statement and the kind words addressed to us. I now give the floor to Ms. Yaron of Israel.

Ms. Yaron (Israel): Mr. President, Israel joins other delegations in strongly condemning the nuclear test conducted by North Korea this week. As was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on that same day, this latest nuclear test violates international norms and Security Council resolutions and destabilizes global stability and security. The nuclear test and the ballistic missile test that preceded it necessitate concrete action by the international community, including against the proliferation to the Middle East, carried out by North Korea in a variety of areas.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Varma for his continuous contribution to the Conference on Disarmament as well as to other disarmament mechanisms. We wish him every success in his next position.

The President: I thank you.

(spoke in Spanish)

I now give the floor to Mr. González of Colombia.

Mr. González (Colombia) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor during your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on the work that you have done.

I have asked for the floor to speak about the nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September 2016. The Government of Colombia condemns this test, as it does earlier actions by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, since they are in clear violation of the prohibitions established and resolutions adopted by the Security Council. As the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated on the day of the incident, Colombia is deeply concerned to note the escalation of displays of nuclear force on the Korean Peninsula and the frequency and magnitude of those displays, which pose a threat to stability, peace and regional and global security. We therefore urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with international commitments on disarmament and non-proliferation. It should also fully implement the Security Council resolutions in this area, particularly resolution 2270 (2016).

Colombia will continue to implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 2270 (2016), and other related resolutions, because due compliance with them and the instruments relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is a good means of initiating dialogue and safeguarding international peace and security.

The Colombian State supports multilateral initiatives that could lead to the definitive denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula with the aim of avoiding further tensions in the region. We therefore support the verification and monitoring process carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency and, in that connection, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Agency's safeguards system.

In addition, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Six-Party Talks, which will make it possible to find a peaceful and diplomatic solution to this

issue and to move forward through dialogue and consultation, both of which are key aspects of international security.

Lastly, Mr. President, my delegation would like to join those who have thanked Ambassador Varma of India for his excellent work and countless contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We wish him every success in his next posting.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you and now give the floor to Mr. Avilés of Ecuador.

Mr. Avilés (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, my delegation would like to begin by expressing its appreciation and gratitude to you and the other five Presidents of this session for the significant work that you have done over the course of the year.

We also wish to express our delegation's great appreciation for the important contribution made by Ambassador Varma of India to the work of the Conference on Disarmament this year. We wish him every success in his new endeavours.

I would now like to turn to the official statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ecuador. The Government of Ecuador expresses its opposition to, and profound concern over, the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to conduct a nuclear test on 9 September. This action represents a clear violation of international standards on the elimination and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems and thus poses an extremely serious threat to international peace and security. The Government of Ecuador, in keeping with its staunch commitment to peace and its constitutional mandate, condemns the development and use of weapons of mass destruction and supports all ongoing efforts, within the framework of the United Nations, to negotiate a legally binding instrument that will ban nuclear weapons with a view to their total elimination. It therefore calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all States that possess weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, to strengthen their combined efforts to rid the planet of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. In addition, the Government of Ecuador calls on all States to accede to the relevant multilateral instruments and to cooperate fully with international agencies and their regulation and oversight mechanisms in order to ensure the transparent development of advanced technology, contribute to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and outer space and move towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

In view of the risk of destabilization of the Korean Peninsula, the Government of Ecuador calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all the States concerned to exercise restraint.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you for your statement and your kind words.

(*spoke in English*)

I now give the floor to Ambassador Klymenko of Ukraine.

Mr. Klymenko (Ukraine): Mr. President, I would like to add our voice to those who have condemned the recent nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which clearly represents a threat to international peace and security and undermines the non-proliferation regime.

The fifth nuclear explosive test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September is a blatant violation of its international obligations, including the relevant United Nations Security Council resolution. Ukraine is deeply concerned about the continuous irresponsible actions of Pyongyang that have already seriously aggravated the security situation on the Korean Peninsula and beyond. As a country that has voluntarily dismantled its own nuclear arsenal, the stance of Ukraine in this regard is very clear and unambiguous: we strongly condemn such unacceptable actions and reiterate that North Korea should ensure full adherence to the Security Council resolutions and immediately abandon all prohibited actions.

At the same time, I would like to share the Ukrainian concern at the recent large-scale military exercises — Caucasus 2016 — which are being held by the Russian

Federation on the occupied territories of Ukraine and near the border of our country. The massive build-up of the Russian joint military force grouping in the occupied territories and on the border of Ukraine — as well as bringing it to the highest alert — constitute an increasing immediate military threat to Ukraine and threaten regional stability. While carrying out these exercises, the Russian Federation has concentrated about 41,000 servicemen near the border of Ukraine, a large number of combat vehicles, ships, aircraft and helicopters. Ukraine urges Russia to stop this provocative build-up of its military presence in the occupied territories and near the border with Ukraine and take steps to reduce tensions.

Mr. President, since this is our last plenary meeting this year in Geneva, I would like to thank you for your excellent work and dedicated efforts aimed at a smooth and successful adoption of the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like also to express our gratitude to the previous Conference Presidents of 2016. I would like also to thank Ambassador Varma for his collaboration and contribution to the work of our Conference and wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and the kind words addressed to this session's Presidents.

(spoke in Spanish)

I now give the floor to Mr. Abbenante of Argentina.

Mr. Abbenante (Argentina) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Mr. President, I would like to begin by thanking you for the work that you have done in relation to the adoption of the annual report. We would also like to thank the Ambassador of India for all his contributions to the Conference on Disarmament and we wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Argentina wishes to state that it utterly condemns the latest nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September. This latest test is a violation of the Security Council resolutions that call on that State to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime and to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner by putting an immediate end to all related activities, including launches that use ballistic missile technology and other provocative actions.

Our country considers that, as a matter of urgency, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must cease its acts of hostility and re-establish a dialogue with the international community by agreeing to comply with the obligations arising from Security Council resolutions, returning to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and enabling IAEA to resume its safeguards activities in that country.

These regrettable and irresponsible actions, which undermine our collective security, should make us reflect on the need to step up efforts to ensure that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force. Allowing the Treaty to remain without binding legal force constitutes a risk that we might come to regret. The fact that, so far this century, only one State has carried out nuclear tests is no reason to be complacent. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would provide a sound legal basis for a well-developed system of checks and controls to ensure that States complied with the provisions of the Treaty. It would also make it possible to honour the commitment to demonstrate that Governments and civil society have not abandoned their efforts to bring about nuclear disarmament and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank you and now give the floor to Ms. Masana García of Peru.

Ms. Masana García (Peru) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Mr. President, I would like to express our appreciation and gratitude for the way in which you have brought leadership and commitment to the work that you have done during your presidency.

I will now read out a statement that Peru issued on 9 September in connection with a subject that, owing to its implications for peace and security and for our planet, is an extremely sensitive one for us:

Peru strongly condemns the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. These tests pose a serious threat to peace and international security, the attainment of which is a priority objective established by the entire international community in the Charter of the United Nations.

This is the second time this year that North Korea has conducted a nuclear test, directly violating its international obligations on disarmament and non-proliferation as established through a series of Security Council resolutions.

Peru adds its voice to the condemnation expressed by other countries and reaffirms its commitment to the Security Council decisions relating to the maintenance of peace and security in North-East Asia. It would also like to see the resumption of the Six-Party Talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Furthermore, Mr. President, we call on the States that have not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so without delay, so that this vital instrument for international peace and security may enter into force as soon as possible.

We would also like to say that we will miss the contributions made by Ambassador Varma of India. I fully agree with his view that, if the Conference on Disarmament did not exist, we would have to invent it. Ambassador Varma, we wish you every success in your new role. Lastly, I would like to thank the secretariat team for the continuous support that they give to the work of the Conference.

The President: I thank you. Next I have Austria, followed by the Russian Federation. Ms. Hammer of Austria, you have the floor.

Ms. Hammer (Austria): Mr. President, Austria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add a few elements in its national capacity. Austria condemns in the strongest possible terms the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September.

North Korea is thus the only country in the world to have conducted nuclear tests in the twenty-first century. The test constitutes the latest in a number of violations of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. This gross disregard for international obligations is irresponsible. By further expanding its nuclear weapons and missile programmes, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to head for confrontation and is posing a threat to the entire region. In its resolution 2270 (2016) adopted in March 2016, the Security Council had already expressed grave concern regarding the nuclear test conducted by the country on 6 January, which posed a major challenge to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the international efforts aimed at strengthening the global non-proliferation regime for nuclear weapons.

Austria therefore calls for a further clear reaction from the international community and the Security Council. On the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the irresponsible behaviour of North Korea underlines the fact that it is more necessary than ever to finally make the Treaty universally applicable. It is essential to put an end to nuclear tests once and for all. We therefore call upon North Korea and all other States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty without further delay.

Mr. President, let me quote our Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz, who was among the first to react last Friday:

This regrettable event yet again clearly demonstrates the need for a fundamental shift away from a security policy that relies on weapons of mass destruction. As long as there are nuclear weapons, there is a risk that an increasing number of States will seek to possess them. Austria therefore believes that the time has come to prepare a legal instrument in the context of the United Nations that bans nuclear weapons. This would mark a very important initial step in a series of necessary actions aimed at moving closer to a world free of nuclear weapons.

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

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation has issued an official statement in connection with the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September. Copies of the statement are available in the room for anyone who is interested.

I would also like to draw the attention of my esteemed colleagues to a number of substantive issues relating to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. First, however, allow me to thank Ambassador Varma for his outstanding and constructive contribution to the work of the Conference and to wish him success in his important new role.

Today's meeting practically wraps up the 2016 session of the Conference. Under your leadership, Mr. President, the Conference adopted its report by consensus, reflecting the assessment of its work by the assembled delegations.

The Russian delegation would like to share with the Conference its own take on the developments in the sphere of disarmament in 2016 that can be attributed to the work of the Conference. As in previous years, the Conference failed to adopt a comprehensive and balanced programme of work or to embark on negotiations. At the same time, we should not overlook the unprecedented efforts made by the Presidents of the 2016 session and their delegations to find compromise solutions, with a view to leading the Conference forward out of its long-standing stalemate. In the history of the Conference, there has never been a situation where a number of proposals on a programme of work have been put forward simultaneously.

The Russian delegation also made its own constructive contribution. In a situation where every item of the traditional agenda was rejected by one or other of the interested parties, we put forward a suggestion aimed at finding an alternative topic that would be acceptable to all. It was not an easy matter, because any new topic should not run counter to the basic national security interests of any member State of the Conference and should also have significant added value. The initiative proposed on 1 March by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergei Lavrov, that the Conference should draft an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism, subsequently extended to cover biological terrorism, fully meets those criteria.

As a result of serious work undertaken by experts in Moscow, which also took into account ideas put forward by Conference partners, we now have a fairly substantial draft containing the elements of a possible convention. It can be used in the future when the text of this international legal instrument is finalized. It should also not be forgotten that the Russian initiative, bearing in mind its disarmament component, gives the Conference a chance to redeem the authority that it has almost lost over the years of wasted time. We believe that, during the intersessional period, delegations will be able to give careful consideration to the new draft, which contains the key elements of an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism, so that, by the start of the next session, we can move on to a substantive discussion of the text.

At the same time, we are ready to work on the other items of the agenda. These include the development of a legally binding instrument banning an arms race in outer space. The Russian-Chinese draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, which, in the view of many delegations, is long overdue for discussion, can be used as a basis for this. We are also open to new, constructive ideas to fill out the programme of work of the Conference, if any are put forward. We hope that this determination to reach agreement on a programme of work and its adoption, reinforced by the significant developments of the 2016 session, will be extended even further in 2017. We are convinced that it is fully in our power to resolve this question.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the activities of all the six Presidents of this year: the representatives of Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland and, of course, the Republic of Korea. As one of the Presidents for the coming year of 2017, Russia intends to build on their efforts and actively work hand in hand with all delegations with a view to restoring the viability of the Conference as the world's only multilateral negotiating forum.

Before concluding, Mr. President, if you will allow me, I should like to say a few words in reply to the aggressive remarks made by the representative of Ukraine on the

allegedly provocative nature of the “Caucasus 2016” military exercises. I do not intend to get bogged down in a long and useless polemic about this. I will only say one thing, so that delegations can get a better understanding of our position. In line with the traditions of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, especially when such large-scale military manoeuvres are conducted, briefings and special meetings for representatives of foreign States were held in the Russian Federation. In other words, everyone was fully informed of the aims and challenges of the forthcoming exercises in the territory of the Russian Federation.

As for the other politically motivated statements about occupation and everything else, these unfortunately have nothing to do with the mandate of the Conference. All these matters are being discussed in other forums, especially within the framework of the implementation by Ukraine of the Minsk agreements. Meanwhile, our position in this regard is unchanged. It has been stated on numerous occasions and is well known to all those present.

The President: I thank you for your statement and the kind words addressed to the session’s other Presidents.

Before I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, I am afraid that I will unfortunately have to beg the indulgence of the members for the second time in two weeks to make a statement in my national capacity.

Despite clear warnings by the international community, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test on 9 September. The Government of the Republic of Korea strongly condemns such a great provocation, which must not be condoned. The statements made today by so many members of the Conference on Disarmament attest to the overwhelming grave concern and the unified will of the international community not to condone the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea regime is continuing its dangerous provocation, having no regard whatsoever for the dire humanitarian and human rights situation of its people. It should be obvious to them that they have nothing to gain from such behaviour. The more reckless provocations that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea conducts, the stronger the international sanctions and the more severe the diplomatic isolation it will face.

The Government of the Republic of Korea again strongly calls on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to immediately abandon its nuclear weapons and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

I 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, before I state the stand of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on its latest nuclear warhead explosive test, let me draw the Conference on Disarmament members’ attention to the issue of respecting each other.

It is the prerogative of each delegation to issue a statement as they wish. However, some delegations do not pay due attention to naming sovereign States in a proper and correct way, which runs counter to established diplomatic practice and also the fundamental qualifications required in international forums. I think this issue has already been raised by some Conference members and therefore this is to kindly remind everyone that only when they respect others can they be respected and treated in the same manner.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has already declared that it would continue to exercise its legitimate right to self-defence and bolster in every way its nuclear capabilities in order to cope with the unceasing acts by the United States that infringe upon the sovereignty of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and perpetuate threatening provocations.

The recent nuclear warhead explosive test is a demonstration of the toughest will of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and showed that the Democratic People’s

Republic of Korea is ready to counter-attack its enemies if they make a provocation, as it was part of the substantial countermeasures to the threat of a nuclear war and sanctions racket kicked up by the hostile forces, including the United States.

The desperate moves by the United States to unilaterally impose sanctions and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a hideous crime against humanity aimed at subversion of a socialist system of a sovereign State as they violate the right to development and existence of the country. The United States-touted United Nations Security Council resolutions and sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea assume the nature of reprisal banned by international law and therefore they are nothing but documents devoid of impartiality, lawfulness and morality. The intensified hostile policy of the United States and its hideous nuclear threat and blackmail only resulted in making the Democratic People's Republic of Korea bolster its nuclear attack capabilities in a phased way. The United States is the very one which compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to develop nuclear warheads, and its nuclear threat and blackmail that have constantly been posed to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea almost every day for the past decades have been an engine which pushed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reach this point. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is holding fast to the line of simultaneously developing two fronts, which means developing the economy and defence capability based on the self-defensive nuclear deterrent, in order to safeguard its sovereignty, right to existence and peace from the ever-increasing nuclear threat and blackmail posed by the United States. The recent test was just part of the whole course of implementing this line.

The line pursued by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of simultaneously developing the two fronts is a strategic line to be constantly held fast to as long as hostile forces' nuclear threat and arbitrary practices persist. As already declared and as already clarified, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to take measures for increasing its nuclear deterrent in quality and quantity to safeguard the dignity and the right to existence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and ensure genuine peace from the increasing threat of nuclear war from the United States.

The President: I thank you. The United States representative has asked for the floor. Mr. Hall, you have the floor.

Mr. Hall (United States of America): Mr. President, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the country that remains in constant violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the country that presents the security threat both to the region and to the international community. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes; unfortunately, it continues to defy this commitment and violate its international legal obligations pursuant to multiple Security Council resolutions.

The United States continues to hold the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to its commitment to return to compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. The United States will not accept the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a nuclear State.

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

Mr. Klymenko (Ukraine): Mr. President, I would like to make some clarifications concerning what was said with regard to my country and with regard to some provisions of the statement I delivered today. I would like to mention, first of all, that I am just drawing attention to the current realities. The current reality is that there are developments near our borders which directly threaten not only our own security, but regional security. We are also facing outside aggression against our country. So, I proceed from the indivisibility of security. I think that this forum is the pertinent place where we can discuss any issues, any concerns, any security problems that relate to security, regional security and global security. I also wish once again to draw the attention of all members of the international community to United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/262 of 27 March 2014, which clearly supports the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine

within its internationally recognized borders, and calls upon all States, international organizations and specialized agencies not to recognize any alterations of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Lastly, my statement was not intended to be provocative at all or to make any insinuations. I would, however, like to clarify and draw to the attention of the Russian Federation something about its own defence doctrine, where such steps, namely deployment and build-up by a foreign State of military units in the areas adjacent to Russia, including with the aim of exerting political and military pressure, are defined as one of the main external military threats.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

Mr. Jo of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

Mr. Jo Chol-su (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, let me briefly respond to the remarks by the United States delegation. The nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula started with the introduction of nuclear weapons by the United States into the territory of South Korea, and the United States has been constantly posing threats to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the involvement of nuclear-strike means. If there were no threats posed by the United States, then there would be no nuclear issue in the Korean Peninsula. So, as already clarified, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to take all necessary measures for increasing its nuclear deterrent in quality and quantity as long as the hostile policy and the aggressive military exercises against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea persist.

The President: I thank you. Is there any other delegation wishing to take the floor?

I recognize Mr. Hall.

Mr. Hall (United States of America): Mr. President, the United States is committed to the defence of our allies in the region in the face of continued North Korean belligerence and aggression. We will continue to work with our allies and coordinate with our allies to protect our allies and remain committed to activities to prevent North Korea from threatening us all and threatening security in the region. I would call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to re-engage in negotiations, to eliminate their nuclear weapons and to cease this irresponsible and reckless behaviour.

The President: I thank you. I see no other delegation wishing to take the floor. This concludes our business for today and for the 2016 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before concluding the meeting, allow me to thank you all for your cooperation with all the Presidents of this session, and also to thank the interpreters, the Conference officers and the secretariat for their work.

We had convened a meeting for 11 a.m., but we took longer. Anyone who can is invited to be here at 12.15 p.m. and we will look at the draft resolution. This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.