

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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**Final record of the one thousand four hundred and third plenary meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 31 January 2017, at 10.10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Adrian Cosmin Vierita .....(Romania)

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**The President:** I call to order the 1403rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I welcome you all to the second plenary meeting of the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Please allow me first to wish a happy lunar new year to all those of you who celebrate it.

As I indicated at yesterday's meeting of the Presidents of the 2017 session and to the coordinators of the regional groups, my intention today is first to invite countries who wish to make a general statement to take the floor. I also look forward to receiving your comments on the approach I outlined to you last week and which was shared with you in the non-paper prepared by my delegation. It is my hope that the discussion will take place in an open and frank manner and enable us to be operational as soon as possible.

Before we proceed with the next item in our order of business for the day, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to a new colleague who has assumed responsibilities as representative of his Government to the Conference: His Excellency Nobushige Takamizawa, Permanent Representative of Japan.

Before we proceed, there are few issues we need to address. Last week, we adopted our agenda for the 2017 session. It has been issued as document CD/2085. We also invited 27 States to participate as non-member States in the work of the Conference in accordance with rules 32 to 36 of our rules of procedure. Since our last plenary meeting, we have received requests from four delegations wishing to participate in our work as non-member States. The list before you in document CD/WP.598/Add.1 includes all the requests received up to 3 p.m. yesterday, Monday, 30 January 2017. Requests received after the issuance of the document will be considered at the next plenary meeting.

Are there any comments on these requests?

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Now allow me to suspend the meeting for a brief moment in order to allow the representatives of the non-member States who have just been invited to participate in the work of the Conference to take their seats in the Council Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is resumed. At this time, I would like to turn to the list of speakers for today. The following delegations have requested to take the floor: Japan, Chile, Malta on behalf of the European Union, Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, Norway, France and Italy.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Nobushige Takamizawa.

**Mr. Takamizawa (Japan):** Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor and also for your warm welcome to this august body. I look forward to working with you and all other distinguished representatives in this chamber.

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Ambassador Vierita, on your assumption of the first presidency of the 2017 session, in which the Conference on Disarmament is at a critical juncture. I assure you of my delegation's utmost support and cooperation during your tenure.

Mr. President, as the only country to have ever suffered nuclear bombings in wartime, Japan has been keen on the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation through realistic and practical measures in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, I would like to welcome your initiative to revitalize and move forward the Conference. Your proposal to establish a formal working group and its subgroups would allow us to have substantive discussions among nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. At the same time, I would like to stress that these

discussions in the working group should be rendered in a way to lead us to future negotiations.

Mr. President, the Conference faces serious challenges due to the two-decade stalemate. My delegation will spare no effort to work closely with you and other delegations in order to have a productive 2017 session in the Conference on Disarmament.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Japan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile, Ambassador Marta Maurás.

**Ms. Maurás (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to express our congratulations and wish you well during your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

Revitalizing the work of this multilateral body continues to be our shared objective and it is one that we have long pursued, notwithstanding our inability to crystallize the interesting ideas proposed at our last session. We are duty-bound to continue to work together and not resign ourselves to such a regrettable and unacceptable impasse. In this regard, Chile appreciates and supports the proposal that you have circulated at the current session, Mr. President, concerning the establishment of a working group to develop a programme to make concrete progress on the various challenges faced by the Conference.

We, as members of this unique multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, should without a doubt engage in substantive discussions on the various topics, but at the same time we should not lose sight of our mandate to negotiate multilateral disarmament instruments. There is no point in establishing a forum for discussion if we do not keep in mind that essential task.

This year, we hope to be able to make progress in various areas of multilateral disarmament. In particular, we welcome the commencement in March of the work of the preparatory group to consider the text of a future treaty on the prohibition of fissile material. We hope that this group can move forward in outlining the key elements of such an international instrument.

We also note with interest that this year marks the beginning of the preparatory cycle for the next Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Chile welcomes the fact that the Preparatory Committee will meet in Vienna with Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast of the Netherlands in the Chair. Chile especially appreciates the serious and proactive approach of the Netherlands, and it will be hosting a regional workshop in March with the aim of encouraging discussion among experts from our region on the key challenges of the Treaty.

It is crucial to engage all States parties to the Treaty in these discussions from the very beginning of the review cycle to ensure that the Review Conference in 2020 will be more successful than the one convened in 2015. The failure of that gathering to culminate in an outcome document was a reflection of the significant divisions existing in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Chile has always been of the view that all possible avenues must be explored if we are to make progress towards the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. In particular, we are concerned that there is still no international instrument banning the most lethal and destructive weapons of mass destruction. We therefore participated actively in the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and we co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 71/258, whereby a conference to negotiate an instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons was convened. The objective of the conference will be to create an instrument that complements — rather than replaces — the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, thus filling the existing legal gap.

Chile welcomes the nomination of Costa Rica to preside over that important conference, which we hope will enjoy broad participation by various delegations, including those that were not initially in favour of holding such a conference. We have listened with interest to those delegations who believe that the time is not right for negotiating a prohibition treaty because we should wait until the necessary conditions are in place or that

national security needs must be taken into account. However, this is a multilateral process that emanates precisely from the deep concern of the majority of States about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. They will have an impact not only on the security of States but more specifically on the security of the people, who sit at the core of our multidimensional understanding of security.

We are concerned about the limited progress made in curbing the role of nuclear weapons in the security and defence doctrines of nuclear-possessor States and those under the supposed protection of extended nuclear deterrence. Chile shares the concern expressed by the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, in his message delivered to last week's plenary meeting, regarding what he referred to as the recent sabre-rattling in relation to nuclear weapons. Such manifestations do nothing to help build the trust needed to address the threat posed by nuclear weapons and they have been accompanied by disturbing weapons-system modernization programmes, which are diverting huge amounts of resources that should be directed instead towards combating the effects of climate change and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This grave situation has been denounced in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which in its most recent issue of 26 January moved its Doomsday Clock 30 seconds forward. That means it is now only two and a half minutes before midnight — which may seem remote and unrealistic, but it could happen in our lifetime or that of our children if we are unable to reverse the trend. To do so, we must all work together in line with the principles of the multilateral system, because the elimination of all nuclear weapons will benefit all nations and because saving the planet and humankind transcends all national interests. Although we recognize that we are only at the beginning of what will be a complex process that will probably take longer than we would like, we note with satisfaction that for the first time in many years, we now have a real chance to make tangible progress in this area.

My delegation appreciates this development and believes that we should indeed address the issue in this forum, inasmuch as this necessary and urgent process might help to revitalize, with renewed and enthusiastic focus, the stagnant debate on disarmament.

Finally, Mr. President, given the current uncertainty in the international context, it is important to persevere in our multilateral efforts: it is only with the collective political will and cooperation by all that we will be able to progress in our efforts to protect our citizens and move away from nuclear midnight.

I reiterate, Mr. President, the willingness of my delegation to work with you and the members of this body to achieve our common goals.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Chile for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Malta on behalf of the European Union. Ambassador Carl Hallergard, you have the floor.

**Mr. Hallergard (Malta):** Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Let me first congratulate you on the assumption of the post as the first President of the Conference on Disarmament during its 2017 session. We will fully support you in your efforts to achieve a successful start of this session.

We take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for their messages last week and for their commitment and interest in the work of the Conference. We all heard their urgent appeal to the Conference to start long overdue negotiations. The European Union and its member States strongly support this appeal.

Mr. President, at the outset, let me highlight that 16 January 2017 marked the first anniversary of the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed between China, Germany, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, the

European Union as coordinator, and Iran. One year after the beginning of the implementation period, it is clear that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which was designed to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme, is bringing tangible benefits to all. While recognizing the concrete progress achieved so far, we underline the need to continue to ensure full and effective implementation throughout the entire lifetime of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The European Union has clearly affirmed its commitment to this objective and will continue to work hand in hand with all those willing to contribute to its full implementation and to achieving the objectives which brought us together.

The Iran nuclear deal is a multilateral endeavour endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, demonstrating that it is possible to find diplomatic solutions even to the most pressing proliferation challenges. In the same vein, we hope that the members of the Conference on Disarmament will work together to embark on serious negotiations that will benefit international peace, security and stability.

The Conference on Disarmament remains the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and should fulfil its crucial role to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties according to its mandate. Its continued relevance is of utmost importance for the European Union. While we appreciate the efforts of past Conference presidencies to break the deadlock and reach agreement on a programme of work, the long-awaited breakthrough has not been achieved. Renewed efforts are required to reach agreement, and this will continue to require substantial political will and creative thinking from all Conference members.

The European Union and its member States welcome the efforts of the Romanian presidency of the Conference to bring the Conference back to substantive work. The working group on a proposed way ahead and the informal thematic working groups, which would work for the whole period of the 2017 session, would give continuity to our work and enable open discussions to identify issues of commonality and points of divergence on current and new issues of interest.

In this context, we would like to reiterate the long-standing commitment of the European Union member States to the enlargement of the Conference. We underline the importance of furthering substantive consultations on the expansion of its membership and strongly support the appointment of a special coordinator in this respect.

We also encourage enhanced interaction between civil society and the Conference and we hope that further steps towards broadened contribution of non-governmental organizations, academia and research institutions can be taken. We take note of the intention of the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Møller, to organize the next civil society forum in 2018.

For the European Union, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein remains a clear priority. We call on all Conference members to start negotiations on such a treaty without delay and to begin work on the other issues on the agenda in line with the adopted programme of work contained in document CD/1864.

We call on all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The European Union and its member States supported the 2016 United Nations General Assembly resolution on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which was presented by Canada, Germany and the Netherlands. We hope that the work to be carried out by the high-level expert preparatory group, complemented by open-ended consultative meetings, will bring the Conference on Disarmament closer to negotiations on this important issue, which would significantly strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

The European Union and its member States also supported the 2016 General Assembly resolution on nuclear disarmament verification, and we welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. While verification is not an aim in itself, further development of the multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capabilities will be required for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

The European Union recognizes that negative security assurances strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and calls on all nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm existing security assurances noted by relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The European Union and its member States continue to promote the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. We remain convinced that transparency and confidence-building measures can make an important contribution to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space to preserve the integrity of the space environment for all. This is the reason why the European Union proposed some years ago an international code of conduct for outer space activities. The European Union continues to believe that a non-legally binding agreement negotiated within the United Nations could be a way to proceed. Globally shaped principles of responsible behaviour across the full range of space activities should serve long-term goals: to increase international cooperation in space, to commit mutually to non-interference in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space and to facilitate equitable access to outer space and increase transparency in the conduct of space activities. The European Union and its member States will continue to show commitment in these areas, which are important to our security and prosperity.

Mr. President, for the European Union, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the NPT and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. A new review cycle is starting this May. Our priority is to uphold and preserve the NPT as a key multilateral instrument for reinforcing international peace, security and stability, promote its universalization and strengthen its implementation. We call on all States parties to implement without delay and in a balanced manner the 2010 action plan designed to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty. The concrete and mutually reinforcing steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy contained in the action plan will contribute to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We will fully support the chairs of the NPT Review Conference Preparatory Committee in their endeavours for a successful review cycle.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and its entry into force and universalization remain top priorities for the European Union. Twenty years after the opening of the Treaty for signature, we welcome the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), its first ever Treaty-specific resolution, as a decisive development. The European Union and its member States, all ratifying States of the Treaty, call upon all States to refrain from conducting any nuclear-weapon test explosion and urge all States that have yet to sign or ratify the Treaty, in particular the eight remaining annex II States, to do so without further delay.

The European Union strongly condemns the nuclear tests and the ballistic missile launches which were conducted in 2016 by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in clear violation of its international obligations under multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. These activities represent a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. They also underline the necessity of universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We again urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular in the framework of the Six-Party Talks, to abide by all its international obligations and abandon its nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and existing nuclear and ballistic missiles programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to cease immediately all related activities.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Malta for his statement on behalf of the European Union and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador Michael Biontino.

**Mr. Biontino** (Germany): Mr. President, Germany fully aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the European Union.

Let me also congratulate you on the assumption of the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament during its 2017 session. Given the difficult situation in this Conference, your task is all the more important. I would like to reassure you of the ongoing and full support of Germany.

Indeed, we are commencing the 2017 session in the field of disarmament and arms control under particularly difficult circumstances. The general security environment continues to be very fragile and challenging. The year 2016 was a year which can hardly be described as one which made our planet safer. North Korea has continued with its irresponsible and illegal nuclear-weapons tests and ballistic missile programme despite all calls for restraint. The violent conflicts in Syria and eastern Ukraine continue to cause unbearable human suffering. International terrorism has seen new, tragic pinnacles. The use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups is a persisting and real danger, as the use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq has tragically underlined. However, even against this backdrop, and given the political will, progress is possible.

This January, we are able to look back at the first year of implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which was negotiated between China, Germany, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Iran to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

While the start of implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was clearly a positive development, full and comprehensive implementation of the Vienna Agreement for its full duration, by all sides, is now key to ensure its continued success. While the beginning of the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action clearly marks a success and strengthened the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, 2016 was also a year with substantial challenges which put the global disarmament architecture under particular strain.

In view of the failed NPT Review Conference in 2015, new approaches will have to be found in order to overcome old blockades while maintaining the NPT as the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In this context, much will depend on how the NPT process evolves at the first session of the Preparatory Committee in Vienna in May.

As negotiations for a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons are scheduled to commence in 2017, we reaffirm our commitment to achieve a world without nuclear weapons through a step-by-step approach. Any negotiations on a ban treaty without the participation of nuclear-weapon States will have no added value beyond what is already enshrined under article VI of the NPT. On the contrary, they disregard legitimate security considerations in the face of today's world and can potentially negatively impact commitments already undertaken under the NPT.

As called for in the 2010 action plan, we continue to underline the need for the nuclear-weapon States to reduce and eliminate all types of their nuclear weapons and encourage those States with the largest nuclear arsenals to lead efforts in this regard. More substantial, concrete nuclear disarmament steps is what the world needs to see. Progress is possible provided that there is political will.

In the First Committee, at the seventy-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, together with Canada and the Netherlands, Germany was one of the initial sponsors of the resolution on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which gained the overwhelming support of the international community. We would like to reiterate the objective of this initiative: to contribute in a step-by-step approach to achieving concrete practical steps of nuclear disarmament and, by doing so, also improve the general international security environment by increasing trust and enhancing cooperation.

In this context, we have been advocating the legitimate interests of non-nuclear-weapon States in receiving unequivocal, legally binding and effective security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. An in-depth discussion of such negative security assurances, in conjunction with an interdiction to resort to force as one of the fundamental principles that the Charter of the United Nations recognizes, would indeed be a next practical step and substantially contribute to nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President, let me turn to our task in the Conference on Disarmament for 2017.

After 21 years of stalemate, it is difficult not to be repetitive, as many of the messages, appeals and expressions of goodwill that we heard during the opening plenary have been heard time and time again. Nevertheless, we hardly have any alternative other than to keep trying: trying to develop new ideas and approaches but also trying to reassess those already made in the past in the light of new political developments. We cannot let defeatism prevail and paralyse our work, or else the Conference risks being further marginalized.

In this context, I would like to repeat my message from last year. New solutions have to be found without any prejudice. We must urgently improve the Conference's working methods, and we should consider opening the Conference for new members in order to improve its general appeal and representativeness. A pragmatic approach therefore seems to be the only one appropriate.

Let us concentrate on what is realistically possible, namely, in-depth discussion of all issues relevant to the Conference, both those that have traditionally been on the agenda and newly emerging arms control and disarmament issues. This applies, first and foremost, to the four core issues: nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, a fissile material cut-off treaty and prevention of an arms race in outer space.

At the Conference, we should not leave a single stone unturned in order to explore progress. Besides, there are other topics with potential for common ground, such as in cybersecurity, which could help pave the way to unblocking the current stalemate.

The proposal as presented by you, Mr. President, for a working group on the way ahead seems to be a very good basis for structuring our work in 2017.

Germany has on many occasions not only stated but proved its readiness to move ahead with action. Germany will continue to work hard towards achieving our common goal of a safer and more stable world through practical disarmament. The initiative of Frank-Walter Steinmeier on conventional disarmament in Europe is a vivid testimony to this. Germany, besides that, will continue to play a constructive role across the entire spectrum of existing arms control and disarmament instruments, including the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, in particular with respect to mines other than anti-personnel mines, lethal autonomous weapons systems and the use of explosives in populated areas, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Arms Trade Treaty.

In this sense, I wish you, Mr. President, and all of us, a successful and fruitful Conference session in 2017.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President.

Now it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf as President to Ambassador Geert Muylle, who has assumed responsibilities as Permanent Representative of Belgium to the Conference. You have the floor, Sir.

**Mr. Muylle (Belgium) (spoke in French):** Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your warm words of welcome. It is an honour for me to take the floor as the new representative of Belgium to the Conference on Disarmament. As we begin this new year of 2017, allow me to wish you every success in your functions as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I can assure you of my delegation's full support for your efforts to get the



Conference back on track. My delegation fully associates itself with the statement of the European Union and would like also to make a few points in a national capacity.

Belgium continues to attach great importance to the central role of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. It regrets the ongoing impasse in the Conference and hopes that substantive work can soon be resumed. After 20 years of deadlock, one might be led to forget that the Conference once achieved a number of impressive outcomes: the Conference and its predecessor bodies have negotiated important multilateral agreements, namely, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

The time has come for the Conference to regroup and embark on a path towards resuming work on a concrete and pragmatic basis. My country therefore supports your proposal to establish a formal working group, Mr. President, as outlined in the non-paper that you circulated last week. My delegation also supports the establishment by that working group, as may be deemed appropriate, of thematic subgroups for issues on the Conference's agenda, as well as other emerging issues that merit our attention. However, we need to be constructive and pragmatic, and not engage in endless discussions on the possible topics to be addressed. It is worth bearing in mind that the items on the Conference's agenda allow for any issue of interest to the Conference to be raised.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, my country reiterates its commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Belgium, which signed the Treaty in 1968 and ratified it in 1975, considers that text as the cornerstone of the country's nuclear-weapon policy. It must therefore not only be preserved, but also strengthened. The Treaty is a collective endeavour: we all benefit from it, but we all also share the responsibility to ensure that it functions properly. Even though the 2015 Review Conference was unsuccessful in producing an outcome, we still have the 2010 action plan, which serves as a detailed guide for making tangible progress under all three pillars of the Treaty. A new review cycle will begin in May this year, and we welcome the approach taken by the Netherlands, which, in the person of Ambassador Cor van der Kwast, will chair the first session of the Preparatory Committee to ensure an optimal start to the review cycle.

Belgium remains firmly committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, but we seek to achieve that objective in the most efficient manner possible. The immediate ban proposed in the framework of the multilateral negotiations under way at the United Nations to draft an international treaty for the prohibition of nuclear weapons — for adoption by the General Assembly — is not compatible with the gradual and realist approach supported by my country on this issue. Such an approach does not take necessary security conditions into account and it will not eliminate nuclear weapons. We are concerned that a new instrument negotiated outside the United Nations and without the participation of the nuclear Powers would set back the cause of nuclear disarmament by widening the gap between States parties to the NPT. If the goal is to create a world without nuclear weapons, the disarmament process cannot ignore the very real security concerns faced by the international community. Only by following a progressive approach will it be possible to reconcile disarmament imperatives with maintaining global stability. Therefore, my country does not intend to participate in the negotiations in question at this stage.

Negative security assurances should be one of the irrefutable benefits of accession to the NPT until such time as the total elimination of all nuclear weapons under effective international control becomes a reality. There can be no doubt that a legally binding instrument would strengthen the status of security assurances, and we believe that such an instrument could take the form of a protocol to the NPT or a separate multilateral arrangement.

Some quarters have criticized the taking of a gradual approach on the grounds that it is tantamount to justifying the status quo; that criticism is ill-founded. Recent initiatives belie such a categorical judgment, in particular the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on nuclear verification and the commencement of more substantive work on the negotiation of a draft treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which is an initiative that my country supports fully. On

the issue of nuclear verification, I wish to make mention here of my country's contribution to the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

Belgium reaffirms its support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It is crucial that the Treaty be made irreversible and legally binding for all States in order to achieve a complete prohibition of nuclear testing. The relevance and importance of the Treaty's entry into force are clearly demonstrated by the recent nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The annex 2 States have special responsibilities and must ratify the Treaty in order for it to enter into force. Accession to the Treaty cannot be made contingent upon the action of other States. There are sufficient diplomatic tools available to ensure that the strategic interests of any given country will not be adversely affected by such a decision. The fact that only one of the two nuclear super-Powers has acceded to the Treaty is evidence of this. In parallel with a traditional diplomatic approach, we should be bold in thinking of ways to encourage accession. For instance, why not look at establishing nuclear-test-free zones in regions where accession to the Treaty is still weak? The status quo is not acceptable and risks undermining the credibility of the international non-proliferation regime. Belgium therefore undertakes to pursue its commitment to the entry into force of the Treaty as a key step in moving towards our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons as set forth in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In this connection, Belgium has just presented its candidature to serve as Co-Chair of the tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which this year will take place in conjunction with the United Nations General Assembly.

Belgium reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. These tests, together with multiple ballistic missile launches, demonstrate the will of this regime to develop a real nuclear weapons capability, thereby jeopardizing regional and international peace and security. The international community cannot give in to nuclear blackmail. Through the actions of the Security Council, the international community must show a strong and united front, not only in its response to these provocations but also in the full implementation of sanctions, which are an invaluable means of persuading the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change its behaviour.

Lastly, allow me to reiterate my country's full support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. It is clear that the Plan of Action is yielding concrete results and that it is important to continue to work towards its full implementation.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President.

Now it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf as President to Ambassador Deyana Kostadinova of Bulgaria, who has assumed responsibilities as the Permanent Representative of her country to the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor, Madam.

**Ms. Kostadinova (Bulgaria):** Thank you very much for the warm welcome, Mr. President. Let me at the outset congratulate you on your assumption of the post as the first President of the Conference on Disarmament for its 2017 session and assure you of the full support of our delegation. Despite the long-lasting stalemate in the Conference, Bulgaria remains firmly committed to the objectives of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. We continue to trust in multilateralism as the sole reliable mechanism to achieve long-term solutions to every State's security concerns.

In the face of the current global security challenges and the need for an adequate common response, we need now more than ever a firm commitment and sustained political will on the part of all Conference members to make the Conference deliver according to its mandate. The Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral forum on disarmament negotiations, should live up to the expectations of the international community and engage in substantive work aimed at creating a better, more secure and safer world.

Last year, we were close to putting the Conference back on track. Regrettably, once again we missed that opportunity for the Conference to take action. Moreover, this

continuous stalemate and inability of the Conference to address important issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation has led in recent years, as many have already pointed out, to pursuing ways outside the Conference to seek progress on disarmament issues, including on nuclear disarmament. While we understand that there may be frustration at the pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament, we are of the view that a prohibition treaty as proposed for negotiation in 2017, pursuant to the resolution adopted last year, would not be effective without the participation of the necessary stakeholders. Effective measures towards a world without nuclear weapons can be achieved only through an inclusive approach with due consideration for the complex security environment and the strategic context.

The commencement of a new review cycle for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty this year is an opportunity that needs to be seized by all in order to advance efforts for the elimination of nuclear weapons. During last year's session of the First Committee, constructive initiatives were promoted offering practical steps for progress in nuclear disarmament, such as the resolution on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the proposal on nuclear disarmament verification, among others. We hope that the work of the high-level expert preparatory group on a fissile material cut-off treaty will provide the Conference with the necessary ground to begin negotiations on such a treaty.

In 2016, we marked the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Our efforts should be aimed at its expedited entry into force, as this is a key building block in achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, I would like to express our appreciation for your genuine efforts to move the Conference on Disarmament out of its long-lasting stalemate. We look favourably on your proposal for the organization of the Conference's work during this session through the establishment of subsidiary bodies in the form of a working group on the way ahead and informal thematic working groups. We believe the proposal has the potential to bring the Conference closer to fulfilling its tasks. Among the issues that are to be discussed we hope the important topic of the expansion of the Conference and admission of new members will find an appropriate place. Bulgaria is a firm supporter of enlargement of the Conference and would like to see the Conference's membership relevant to the realities and challenges of the twenty-first century.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Bulgaria for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, Mr. Knut Langeland.

**Mr. Langeland (Norway):** Mr. President, allow me to join others in congratulating you on assuming the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation would like to express appreciation for your efforts — through the non-paper — to enable the Conference to commence substantive work.

Norway held the presidency a year ago. We put in considerable efforts with a view to get the Conference out of the long-lasting impasse, which has lasted for more than two decades: unfortunately, and not surprisingly, we were unable to break the deadlock. The fundamental question is how to mobilize the necessary political will and flexibility to allow us to move forward with substantive work. In that vein, we should also ask ourselves whether we are too fixated on what constitutes deliberation and what constitutes actual negotiations.

We need a multilateral body to elaborate and recommend effective measures on nuclear disarmament, including legal provisions and other arrangements that contribute to, and are required for, the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. It is vital that both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States are engaged in such a process.

While we agree on the overall objective of a world without nuclear weapons, we remain divided on how to achieve it. We must explore ways to overcome these differences and foster the necessary confidence among member States. This will necessarily take time,

but a good start would be the adoption of a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, commencement of substantive work in the Conference would also be a considerable deliverable for the upcoming review cycle of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Regrettably, the 2015 Review Conference was unable to agree on a substantive outcome document. That makes it even more imperative to succeed in 2020. The NPT constitutes a cornerstone for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Norway joined others in regretting that the 2015 Review Conference did not agree on the substantive outcome document. It is therefore vital that the upcoming review cycle succeeds. Our point of departure for the process leading up to the 2020 conference is the legal obligations contained in the Treaty itself and the outcome documents from 1995, 2000 and 2010. While there has been progress in implementing commitments, it is clear that we need to do much more. We hope that the coming review cycle will provide us with some guidance to this end.

Let me highlight some items which are of the greatest importance to Norway. We must reaffirm the obligation of the nuclear-weapon States concerning the unequivocal elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Norway will continue to advocate for new rounds of reduction talks involving all categories of nuclear weapons. We must reaffirm the principle of transparency, irreversibility and verification in nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament verification remains a key priority for Norway, and we deeply appreciate the strong support in the United Nations General Assembly for the nuclear disarmament verification resolution.

We must address the issue of fissile materials with urgency. We need a prohibition on future production and we must find ways to reduce and eventually eliminate existing stocks. We remain convinced that the current Shannon mandate provides us an opportunity to do so. We must consolidate the non-test norm: the best avenue would be an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Norway welcomes Security Council resolution 2310 (2016). We also condemn the nuclear test and the ballistic missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The fact-based humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons tells us that we must explore ways to minimize the risk of any use of nuclear weapons, intentional or not.

In this vein, we need to do more on securing sensitive nuclear material, continue efforts on de-alerting and support negative security assurances. We must strive to ensure a watertight non-proliferation regime through the full universalization of the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards as well as the additional protocol. Outstanding proliferation questions must be resolved, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is an inspiring example that diplomacy works. Last April, the Norwegian Parliament agreed on a consensus motion that requests the Norwegian Government to actively work for a world free of nuclear arms and to promote implementation of the NPT, to be a driving force for non-proliferation and disarmament with a view to balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons and, on these grounds, to take a long-term perspective in working for a legally binding framework to achieve this goal. We believe that the Conference should also contribute to this end.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Norway for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of France, Mr. Louis Riquet.

**Mr. Riquet** (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, France associates itself fully with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. I would also like to make a few additional remarks in a national capacity.

At the outset, allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success on my own behalf and on behalf of Ambassador Alice Guitton, who has asked me to convey her regret at being unable to be with us today.

I also wish to express the condolences of France to the families of the victims and to the survivors of the terrorist attack that was carried out at a mosque in Quebec. France

stands with the Government and the people of Canada and reiterates its unwavering commitment to the fight against terrorism.

The year 2016 was defined by growing complexity and unpredictability in the strategic environment and international security. As we begin 2017, we again face a period of uncertainty and challenges. In such situations, no matter how tempting it may be, the solution is not to turn inward or simply do nothing. France plans to continue to contribute actively and tangibly to resolving crises and strengthening international security. It is against that backdrop that my country intends to work towards arms control and disarmament with a view to building a safer world for all. Coherency in our efforts to defuse international tensions, ensure strict respect for international law and underscore the need for dialogue and cooperation at all levels — bilateral, regional and multilateral — is the only way to give credibility to our shared ambitions in the area of disarmament.

Confidence-building is an essential prerequisite for the credibility of our shared commitment to create a better world for present and future generations. To that end, re-establishing dialogue in the disarmament community, which has unfortunately become more divided than ever, must be made a priority. In our view, the boundary between discussion and negotiation is a flexible one. Attempting to create an artificial barrier or to build a wall between the two in order to circumvent legitimate forums is not a solution to the impasse. It is true that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral forum of the international community for disarmament negotiations, but it is also true that the Conference is the sole forum for exchanges on technical matters that can help to identify problem areas and prepare the ground for political agreements in the future. We remain convinced that only by building a shared understanding of the challenges, which are often technically complex, and of the different elements that comprise a disarmament agreement will we be able to make tangible progress. Strengthening dialogue, including on technical matters, is the only way to overcome political differences, which are generally the result of futile clashes of positions of principle and are not related at all to the search for common ground in the interests of all.

Mr. President, as we start this new year, you have the difficult task of getting the Conference on Disarmament back to work. We welcome your unstinting efforts in undertaking this complex exercise. We appreciate your constructive and inclusive approach, including the innovative proposal contained in the non-paper you circulated last week. My delegation supports the idea of establishing a standing subsidiary body that would prepare the ground for future negotiations. The working group on the way ahead that you propose to establish offers a number of benefits in our view. First of all, it would enable the resumption of substantive work, which we have unfortunately moved away from over the years by spending too much time on procedural debates and political statements. The working group could also resolve the problems of continuity caused by the short rotation cycle of the Conference presidency. It might thus enable the Conference to return to the practice of taking up long-term tasks. If authorized to establish informal subgroups, such a subsidiary body could also address any and all topics that delegations would like to see discussed.

In parallel with this initiative, my delegation sees significant advantages in tapping all possible areas of synergy in order to enhance consistency across the various pillars of the disarmament machinery. For example, this could take the form of closer cooperation between the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament so that work on a fissile material cut-off treaty, in particular, would be aligned. It could also take the form of closer ties between the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). On this point, my delegation is of the view that there would be considerable advantage in allowing the Conference to commission UNIDIR to carry out research — through objective studies and analyses — so that the Conference would have access to full information. This would facilitate negotiations on disarmament and strengthen international security in accordance with the Institute's mandate.

Mr. President, you may count on the full support of my delegation and its firm commitment to pursue its consideration of these specific proposals, and above all to contribute to the resumption of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament as soon as possible.

In conclusion, allow me to quote Immanuel Kant, who said that someone's intelligence can be measured by the quantity of uncertainties that he can bear. Let us hope that, at a time when the world is facing growing challenges, the international community, particularly the disarmament community, will demonstrate intelligence and wisdom by recognizing the challenges that arise when there is no dialogue and by resuming dialogue as a matter of urgency.

**The President:** I thank the representative of France for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Vinicio Mati.

**Mr. Mati (Italy):** Mr. President, let me first of all join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of responsibilities as the first President of the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation for productive involvement in this year's work.

I would also like to thank the United Nations Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs as well as the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Møller, for their messages last week, which we strongly welcome. Let me also welcome our new colleagues, the new Permanent Representatives of India, Senegal, Turkey, Belgium, Japan and Bulgaria to the Conference on Disarmament.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

This year is a very challenging one for my country in multilateral affairs. Earlier this month Italy took up its mandates as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council — a mandate we are sharing with our Dutch partners in the best spirit of European unity and solidarity — and as the Chair of the Group of Seven. Also, in advance of its chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe next year, as from 1 January 2017 Italy has been part of the troika leading the Organization. In fulfilling these mandates, we will reaffirm our engagement to promote effective multilateralism, including in the disarmament field, in all relevant forums. We firmly believe that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective and long-term results in this sphere as well.

In this perspective, the relaunch of the Conference on Disarmament, which in our view remains the cornerstone of the multilateral disarmament machinery, is crucial. Nowadays effective multilateralism and international cooperation have an even more crucial role to play in disarmament and non-proliferation in the light of the multiple challenges we have to face.

As already mentioned, 16 January 2017 marked the first anniversary of the implementation day of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States and Iran, which we fully uphold as an essential tenet for regional and international security. We acknowledge the clear progress achieved so far. We believe that the international community should continue deploying its utmost efforts to ensure that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action continues to provide benefits for all and remains a success story in the global efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

At the same time, we remain extremely concerned by the nuclear tests and launches using ballistic missile technology conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We strongly condemn them as clear violations of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and as a serious threat to peace and regional and international 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 to return at an early date to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as well as to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Moreover, we continue to strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons in Syria, as confirmed by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We stress that those responsible have to be held accountable.

Finally, Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors, particularly in relation to terrorist acts. In this regard, we reiterate our support for the full implementation of all relevant international instruments, starting with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We acknowledge with satisfaction the positive outcome of the review of the 1540 regime as well as the adoption of Council resolution 2325 (2016). We remain open to discussing any initiatives aiming to strengthen the ability of the international community to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction in terrorist acts and to combat all related activities.

Mr. President, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation stand high in the Conference's agenda and it is one of the priorities of our foreign policy. Italy is committed to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in a way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. We look forward to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference, to be held in May this year. We will strive for its successful outcome and we fully support the ongoing efforts of the Chair of the Preparatory Committee.

We firmly believe in a concrete and progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, focused on practical and effective measures in accordance with article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In this spirit, we welcome United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/259 establishing a high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group as an attempt to relaunch negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We stand ready to make an effective contribution to its future work. We also welcome General Assembly resolution 71/67 on nuclear disarmament verification, which we co-sponsored.

The Conference on Disarmament was established as the sole multilateral body to negotiate disarmament treaties, and in the past it fulfilled this role very successfully, leading to the adoption of legally binding instruments that are central to the preservation of international peace and security. Last year, the Conference did not agree on a negotiating mandate; nonetheless, our activity was intense. Let me note that the four proposals on a programme of work put forward in the 2016 session are a sign that delegations continue to invest in the Conference and are determined to bring this forum back to work. As far as Italy is concerned, we looked with an open mind and a constructive approach at all those proposals. We agree that a discussion on procedures and methods of work can also provide a useful contribution to the activity of the Conference. We look forward to actively contributing to the search for substantial common ground during the session we opened last week.

In this vein, Mr. President, we commend the efforts deployed by your delegation and we welcome the proposal embodied in the non-paper circulated last week. We look forward to discussing it with a view to allowing for its endorsement by the Conference.

Let me reiterate our belief that the Conference would also benefit from structured interaction with civil society and academia. We greatly appreciated the 2015 and 2016 editions of the Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum and look forward to further similar opportunities.

Before closing, Mr. President, I would also like to mention our support for continuing the discussions on women and disarmament along the lines of the debate we had on this topic in the last two sessions.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Spain, Ambassador Julio Herráiz.

**Mr. Herráiz España (Spain)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me to begin by saying that Spain fully supports the statement made on behalf of the European Union and congratulates you on the beginning of your presidency. I assure you of my delegation's full support and willingness to cooperate, especially in a year during which Spain will have the honour of serving as one of the six Presidents of the session.

We begin this session in the wake of years of deadlock on negotiations. However, we have not given up the hope that comes to us from a deeply seated sense of responsibility. We are aware of the difficulties we face in adopting a programme of work without further delay, but taking a passive stance or simply resigning ourselves are not valid options when tensions and uncertainties in the international security landscape demand a renewed effort for dialogue and understanding on all sides.

We welcome the President's proposal to establish a formal working group on the way ahead for the Conference and identify common ground for a future negotiating process, including the possibility of setting up informal subgroups on substantive aspects of the agenda. We believe that this initiative should be addressed in a constructive and flexible manner so as to avoid a mere repetition of the discussions that have taken place at previous sessions. Although nuclear disarmament is and will remain the primary *raison d'être* of this forum, such an exercise in genuine creativity could be an opportunity to reflect possibly on new topics which, on the basis of consensus, could broaden the scope of topics for a potential negotiating mandate for the Conference.

It is also time to expand the membership of this forum and to update and streamline its methods of work.

A further aspect that has matured considerably — and a consensus could be expected on it if all parties invested the necessary measure of political will, flexibility and constructiveness — is the preparation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. All States would have the opportunity to raise their security concerns, whatever they may be, during the negotiation process. This year we will have a chance to further consolidate this work through the high-level expert preparatory group, which should not be considered a duplication of efforts but rather a way of multiplying our chances of success.

Spain believes that such a treaty should ideally address both disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, I would like to draw attention to the adoption last month of Security Council resolution 2325 (2016), during the Spanish chairmanship of the 1540 Committee, as part of the joint effort that we must all engage in to prevent access by terrorists and non-State actors to weapons of mass destruction.

Rising to the immediate challenge of negotiating a fissile material treaty and promoting the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are crucial to demonstrating a strong and forward-looking willingness to implement article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. These would be just some of the initiatives that would reflect a progressive, good-faith approach to achieving a world without nuclear weapons, which is, in the end, the ultimate goal we all seek under the Treaty.

Having ended its term as Chair of the 1718 Committee on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Spain wishes to reiterate that that country has an obligation to comply with all existing Security Council resolutions, and it condemns the violations of those resolutions that have taken place.

With regard to the worrying developments concerning the use of chemical weapons in Syria, we affirm that it is necessary to continue to work with the Joint Investigative Mechanism to establish responsibility and prevent any use of chemical weapons or their possible diversion to non-State actors.

Spain, which served as Chair of the former 1737 Committee and as Facilitator for the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) on the Iranian nuclear situation, welcomes the headway being made in the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and trusts that there will continue to be positive developments, as reflected in the reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In May, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the next Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference will provide an opportunity for us to reaffirm our conviction that this instrument continues to be the cornerstone of the international regime for disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

I would like to reiterate once again the importance of the 2010 action plan, which was agreed by consensus. It is an excellent point of reference that sets out an ambitious and long list of recommendations on how to achieve these objectives, which we should all strive



harder to attain. To that end, we must boost mutual trust and transparency among all the delegations to this Conference, which should continue to exist as the highly valued forum for dialogue and exchange that it is.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Spain for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President.

I have two additional requests for the floor: from Pakistan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Mr. Usman Jadoon.

**Mr. Jadoon** (Pakistan): Mr. President, I congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome your consultative approach and appreciate your active engagement. You may rest assured of our delegation's full support and cooperation.

We welcome all the new Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives that have joined the Conference recently, including Turkey, India, Senegal, Japan, Belgium and Bulgaria. Our gratitude goes to the secretariat, led by Mr. Michael Møller, Secretary-General of the Conference, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs staff, including Ms. Soliman, Mr. Kalbusch and other colleagues, for putting in place all the arrangements for this year's session. We thank the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for his presence in the Conference last week and thank Mr. Møller for delivering the United Nations Secretary-General's message to the Conference as well as his own statement.

Mr. President, my delegation commends you for circulating a non-paper last week. You have indeed proposed a creative and pragmatic approach for structuring the work of the Conference. It provides for the possibility of holding informal discussions on the existing agenda items and also offers the opportunity to consider new issues, on the basis of consensus, to find a way out of the current impasse.

In the past, due to disagreement over one divisive issue, the Conference has been prevented from carrying out substantive work on all the other core issues. The Conference has also been denied the opportunity to discuss new issues that are of direct concern to international peace and security, such as cybersecurity, new types of destabilizing weapon systems, lethal autonomous weapons systems, chemical and biological terrorism, among others.

Mr. President, we are studying your proposal carefully and seeking instructions from our capital. We look forward to the informal meeting this Friday to develop a better understanding of this proposal and discussing it thoroughly.

Pakistan attaches very high importance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. As the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference is an integral and vital part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. Its strength and effectiveness lie in its representativeness and inclusivity. All militarily significant States participate in the Conference on an equal footing and are able to protect their vital security interests under the consensus rule. These attributes are absolutely essential — or rather, indispensable — for any forum dealing with disarmament and security issues.

There is no doubt that the global disarmament agenda needs to be revitalized. However, it can neither be done through the abandonment of the Conference in search of pseudo progress in non-representative forums, nor can it be achieved through the pursuance of inequitable treaties in the Conference that apply disproportionately to one or two States only. A real breakthrough can be achieved by exercising genuine political will to cooperatively advance the goals of international and regional peace and security and disarmament on a non-discriminatory and equitable basis. The overarching objective guiding this work should be the cardinal principle of attaining equal and undiminished security for all States.

Pakistan stands ready to actively support any effort towards this end in the Conference. Pakistan, however, like any other State, cannot be expected to join any

endeavour — whether inside or outside the Conference — that is detrimental to its legitimate security interests.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Ju Yong-chol.

**Mr. Ju Yong-chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Let me first of all congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament this year.

I have taken the floor in order to exercise the right of reply to the statements made by the delegations of some European countries, including Malta, which spoke on behalf of the European Union, and Belgium. I have carefully listened to those statements full of biased views and allegations, and have become very doubtful whether they are really concerned about global peace and security or deliberately disregarding reality to take sides out of political motivation.

It is well known that some countries have continuously tried to take advantage of this forum to portray the self-defence measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions or serious threats to global security. As it has clearly explained on several occasions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been exposed to nuclear threat from an outside force, namely the United States. For more than half a century, the United States has pursued a hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear threats and blackmail and by means of persistent political and military pressure and economic sanctions. In particular, joint annual military exercises targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under the pretext of being routine and defensive have been carried out on the Korean Peninsula for several decades in defiance of the aspirations of the world's peace-loving people and against the strong warnings of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Under such circumstances, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has chosen the path of building up its self-defence capability for the sake of its sovereignty as a nation in the face of the reckless and hostile United States policy and nuclear threat.

As the Democratic People's Republic of Korea clarified in its recent statement, the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles is part of its effort to bolster its self-defence capability to cope with ever-growing nuclear threats coming from the United States. As long as the United States continue with nuclear threats and blackmail and as long as they do not stop their nuclear war games at our doorstep, disguising them as an annual event, our self-defence capabilities and capacity for a pre-emptive air strike — with the nuclear armed forces at its pivot — will be further bolstered.

If some European countries are really concerned about international peace and security, they should first understand clearly what the main cause is of the escalation of tension on the Korean Peninsula. European countries would be well advised to demand that the United States drop its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is the root cause of the escalation of tension in the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. President, I would like to now move on to the United Nations Security Council's sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, because many delegates from European countries mentioned that the self-defence measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a violation of these resolutions. Last year the United States fabricated yet another resolution on sanctions by abusing the United Nations Security Council mandate and accusing the self-defence measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The resolution — unprecedented in its viciousness and illegality — has no justifiable legal base. If access to nuclear weapons is to be called into question, the United States, the first country in the world to possess a nuclear weapon, has to be blamed. If the Security Council has a mandate to ban an individual country from conducting nuclear tests, why do we have the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty?

Access by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to nuclear weapons is an unavoidable option for self-defence, as the United States has designated the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea as part of an axis of evil and a target of its pre-emptive nuclear strike. It has persistently escalated hostile moves and nuclear threats to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by introducing various kinds of lethal hardware for nuclear war into South Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly denounces and rejects all resolutions against it, which are the product of sinister political purposes of a certain big Power in a wanton violation of independent rights and the right to development and right to existence of a sovereign State.

These documents are nothing more than criminal documents devoid of impartiality, legitimacy and morality. Therefore, last year, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations in New York sent a letter to the United Nations Secretariat for clarification of the legal grounds for United Nations Security Council resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over its nuclear tests and satellite launches for peaceful purposes. In the letter, he asked if there was any article in international law which stipulates that nuclear tests, satellites and ballistic rocket launches constitute a threat to international peace and security. However, the United Nations Secretariat, in its recent reply, only mentioned Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations without a single word in response to the question raised. If any nuclear test or satellite or ballistic rocket launch were considered a threat to international peace and security, the United Nations Security Council should have called into question the United States and other countries for their nuclear tests conducted over 2,000 times and for their regular satellite and ballistic rocket missile launches. This clearly proves that Article 39 of the United Nations Charter has no relevance to nuclear tests or satellite launches. The act of fabricating an unlawful resolution aiming at imposing sanctions and blockades is nothing but an act against humanity and seriously threatens the right to existence of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its peaceful development. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has never recognized such unreasonable resolutions and rejects all resolutions against the country, including the recent one.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to cooperate closely with various countries within the United Nations and in other international arenas to oppose and reject all sorts of high-handedness and arbitrary practices and application of double standards, including the unwarranted and illegal racket for putting sanctions and pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Lastly, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is committed to the advancement of the Conference's work and I assure you of my full support and constructive contributions to a better outcome of the Conference's activities this year.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement. I have two additional requests for the floor: from the Republic of Korea and from the United States. I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Kim In-chul.

**Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea):** Mr. President, I wish to make two points. The first point is one I wanted to make out of decorum; the second point that I am going to make, regrettably, may touch upon the first point at this moment.

First of all, we congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for this year, and we appreciate your efforts to kick off this year's session with a good proposal that we hope will eventually enjoy the support of all members of the Conference. I also would like to welcome our new colleagues from Belgium, Bulgaria, India, Japan, Senegal and Turkey; we very much look forward to working closely with them and, as always, with their teams. Thirdly, I would be remiss if I did not mention our deep appreciation for the cooperation of all members of the Conference and of the United Nations for the conduct of the last presidency of the Conference, which had been assumed by us, including throughout the processes at the First Committee and the General Assembly.

My second point relates to the long statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like to ask him — through you, Mr. President — if, among the things that our colleagues stated today about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, there is anything wrong, not true or not factual in what they

said. Just to state the facts, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea violated relevant Security Council resolutions at a rate of more than twice a month, last year alone. Regarding their absurd logic about Security Council resolutions and international law, I think that it clearly shows that they want to have their cake and eat it, too. I want to tell them — through you, Mr. President — that they can either have the cake or eat the cake: they will have to choose one, and stop the lengthy expressions of absurd logic in chambers around the United Nations. What is more regrettable and alarming is that, while the Secretary-General, through his video message last week here in this chamber, stressed the need to promote security through peaceful action, what the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea just stated is a reiteration of their account that clearly and flatly runs against this message of the Secretary-General. No one gives them any credibility, not even a minimal amount of credibility.

So, once again, we demand — immediately — complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and I want to state clearly, once again, that as shown in this chamber today, through the statements of so many members here, that the international community will stand united until that day comes.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, Ambassador Robert Wood.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on assuming the presidency and assure you of my delegation's commitment to work with you as you undertake your duties as President.

Mr. President, I am taking the floor to respond to the remarks made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As I and many others have said in this chamber before, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea needs to end its hostile rhetoric; it needs to end its provocative behaviour; and it needs to come into compliance with its international obligations.

Let me also remind the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the commitment of the United States to the defence of the Republic of Korea and of Japan is ironclad.

And one last point to remind the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: the United States does not and will not recognize North Korea as a nuclear-weapon State.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the United States for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. Now I have a request from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

**Mr. Ju** Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I am taking the floor again in order to respond to the remarks made by South Korea and the United States.

First of all, it is really disappointing and deplorable that the South Korean delegation has taken the Conference on Disarmament as a platform to blame the just, self-defence measure of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and force a confrontation in this forum. We have already made it very clear on many occasions that nuclear deterrence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not directed to harm fellow countrymen but to protect peace on the Korean Peninsula and the security of the region from the United States nuclear war scenario. Therefore, South Korea should refrain from inappropriate acts against their fellow countrymen, blindly following the hostile United States policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: namely, they should stop joint military exercises targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in collaboration with outside forces.

I would like to make one point very clear in order to make you understand clearly about the current developments on the Korean Peninsula. The nuclear issue on the Korean

Peninsula stems from the deep-rooted, hostile United States policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I would like to respond to the remarks made by the delegate of South Korea. South Korea is not in a position to make any decision or exercise the right to command wartime operations. So, it would be much better for the internal issue to be settled by our Korean people themselves. South Korea would be well advised to refrain from requesting joint action from others against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and inciting mistrust and confrontation.

I do not wish to go into details on what I have already mentioned, but the United States is wholly to blame for pushing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to produce nuclear deterrents, because they have been desperately pursuing a hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for decades, encroaching upon its sovereignty and vital rights.

Therefore, the United States has to stop, or give up, its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to halt the escalation of tension on the Korean Peninsula. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea — no matter what others say — will bolster its self-defence capability in defiance of the persistent nuclear threat and blackmail of the United States.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement. Now I give the floor to the representative of China, Mr. Ji Haojun.

**Mr. Ji Haojun (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, China has no desire to take part in the dispute that has just arisen. As an immediate neighbour, China strongly hopes for the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. China firmly opposes any action that would exacerbate the tense situation there and opposes the fomenting, by any side, of trouble on our doorstep. We appeal to all sides to maintain calm in order to create, through diplomatic means, the conditions for denuclearization of the Peninsula and long-term peace and stability in North-East Asia.

As a responsible major Power and member of the Security Council, we maintain that the resolutions of the Security Council should be respected and implemented. No matter what country or region they are directed at, and no matter what year they were adopted in, those resolutions should all be respected and implemented. China resolutely opposes the use of double or multiple standards in the implementation of Security Council resolutions by any country. China also resolutely opposes any country loudly claiming, on the one hand, that the international non-proliferation regime must be upheld, while on the other hand taking initiatives that actually dismantle the great bulwark of international non-proliferation.

**The President:** I thank the representative of China for his statement. It seems that we have exhausted the list of speakers for now. I will ask, however, if any other delegation wishes to take the floor. That does not seem to be the case.

As mentioned last week, I will hold an informal plenary meeting on Friday, 3 February 2017, at 10 a.m., in conference room VII in the A building. The secretariat will send a reminder by email.

The delegation of the Russian Federation has requested the presidency to assist in the organization of an informal meeting on the margins of the Conference on the subject of an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. I would therefore invite you to save the date for an informal meeting in the format of a side event on Thursday, 9 February 2017, at 10 a.m., on this topic at the request of the delegation of the Russian Federation. The secretariat will send more information in due course.

Now I would like to ask the secretariat to share with us some organizational information.

**Mr. Kalbusch** (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament): Thank you, Mr. President. Excellencies, delegates, as the President has mentioned, document CD/2085 containing the agenda has been issued and is available in your mailboxes. We have also issued two other documents: CD/2084 and CD/2086.

I would like to thank all delegations that have submitted their notes verbales identifying the members of their delegation; those that have not yet done so are requested to please submit them to the secretariat as soon as possible.

We have also contacted delegations to review the information available in the print version of the directory. We thank those delegations that have given us their replies; for those that have not yet done so, we would be very grateful to receive a reply by the close of business tomorrow, so that we can send the yellow directory to the printers.

Also, we have uploaded several documents to the website and have created a link for you allowing you to create email alerts so you will see when there is something new available on our website.

**The President:** I thank the secretariat for sharing that information. Allow me to inform you that our next formal plenary meeting will be on Tuesday, 7 February 2017, at 10 a.m., in the Council Chamber. This concludes our business for today. This meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*