

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 1 March 2017, at 10.05 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Alexey Borodavkin.....(Russian Federation)

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**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I call to order the 1411th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As I announced at yesterday's plenary meeting, today we will continue the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament. There are four speakers on the list for today. Allow me now to suspend the meeting in order to greet our first distinguished guest, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Mr. Lubomir Ivanov. The meeting is suspended.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): The meeting is resumed. Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to warmly welcome our first distinguished guest for today, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Mr. Lubomir Ivanov. I thank you, Mr. Deputy Minister, for taking part in today's high-level segment and making a statement to the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Mr. Ivanov** (Bulgaria) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to express my sincere condolences on the passing of Ambassador Churkin. This is a great loss to us all, so please accept my condolences.

*(spoke in English)*

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, it is an honour and a privilege to address the Conference on Disarmament. I would like, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you success in your endeavours to steer effectively the work of this important international body.

Today we face, on a global scale, security challenges of an incredibly complex nature. This requires our active engagement and concerted efforts. Multilateralism is needed more than ever to achieve global peace, stability and prosperity.

The Conference on Disarmament is designed to serve the objectives of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. As the single multilateral forum on disarmament and on negotiations on disarmament, it has an impressive record, having successfully negotiated key international agreements in the past. Regrettably, for more than two decades the Conference has been in a deadlock. Sustained policies, commitment and willingness to seek common ground are needed from all Conference members in order to preserve the relevance of this body and make it deliver again, according to its mandate.

The disarmament agenda is driven by the need to address in an adequate way the emerging challenges and the various new developments. The ongoing stalemate in the Conference has led in recent years to pursuing ways outside the Conference in order to seek progress on disarmament issues, including in the nuclear field. While we all share the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, we differ in our views on how to achieve this objective.

Numerous considerations point to the fact that the only realistic way to attain the goal of effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament is through a progressive approach based on practical and feasible steps. There is no fast track to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. A possible nuclear weapons ban treaty could not and would not be effective without the participation of all States with nuclear weapons. Tangible progress towards a world without nuclear weapons could be accomplished only through an inclusive approach and due consideration of the complex security environment and the strategic context.

The Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) contains treaty-level commitments on the elimination of nuclear weapons and provides a solid foundation that guides us towards achieving this goal. The NPT is the central platform for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Although much has been achieved, progress is not as fast as we would have wanted. But it depends on us to speed things up. The commencement of the new NPT review cycle this year is an opportunity that needs to be seized in a responsible manner by all States parties in order to advance efforts for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is also worth highlighting the proposals for practical steps towards nuclear disarmament that came out of the seventy-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, namely with the resolutions regarding the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and regarding nuclear disarmament verification. We hope that the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group will provide the Conference on Disarmament with the necessary grounds to begin negotiations on this treaty. For us, this is a priority and a logical step in nuclear disarmament.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is another key building block in the construction of a world without nuclear weapons. More than 20 years after its opening for signature, the efforts of the international community are still required for its entry into force. The Republic of Bulgaria, which is an annex 2 State, is among those who have signed and ratified the Treaty. Once in force, the Treaty will provide a legally binding global ban on nuclear explosions of any kind. This will be a crucial advancement of the noble goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Therefore, we call upon the States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without any further delay. In particular, this is relevant to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which carried out nuclear tests in violation of its international obligations. These illegitimate actions remind us all, once again, of the urgent need to have the Treaty in full legal standing.

Mr. President, fortunately, there are certain developments within the arms control and disarmament domain which deserve to be mentioned on a more positive note. They demonstrate the effectiveness of multilateralism in finding solutions to major international problems. Among them is the Arms Trade Treaty. With the second anniversary of its entry into force marked last December, we now enter a stage when focused efforts are needed, especially with regard to its effective implementation and universalization. This is the way to fully unfold and employ the potential of the Treaty, to demonstrate the Treaty's relevance and to create an example of how the application of common standards for regulation of the international trade in conventional arms can contribute to security and stability on a global scale.

For the Republic of Bulgaria, the Arms Trade Treaty has always been among the national priorities in the export and arms control area. We participated actively in the negotiation process since its very beginning. Now we are privileged to serve as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Third Conference of States Parties to the Treaty. We will not spare any efforts to contribute to the achievement of the Treaty's objectives.

Mr. President, last year the Conference on Disarmament was close to being set back on track. We appreciate the genuine efforts of the past and current presidencies to move the Conference out of its stalemate. This positive momentum should be preserved. All avenues that have the potential to bring the Conference closer to fulfilling its tasks should be explored. Expanding the Conference's membership could be one way to revive its work. The Republic of Bulgaria is a convinced supporter of enlargement of the Conference and would like to see the membership of this valuable forum relevant to the twenty-first century's realities and challenges.

To conclude, let me stress the unrelenting trust of the Republic of Bulgaria in multilateralism as the most reliable mechanism to achieve long-term solutions to every State's security concerns. The Conference on Disarmament should live up to the expectations of the international community and engage in substantial work aimed at creating a better, more secure and safer world.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank you for your statement and, on behalf of the Russian presidency of the Conference, for the kind words and condolences offered on the passing of Ambassador Churkin.

I will now suspend the meeting for a few minutes in order to escort the Deputy Minister out of the room.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): The meeting is resumed. Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to warmly welcome our next distinguished guest, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Mr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari. I thank you, Mr. Minister, for coming to this meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and delivering a statement to us. You have the floor.

**Mr. Al-Jaafari** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, Excellencies, Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and Permanent Representatives, allow me to extend warm wishes to you all and express my appreciation of your words of welcome. It is an honour for me to join you today in this important international multilateral forum. My presence reflects the importance that the Government of Iraq attaches to the key role played by the Conference on Disarmament. Iraq reaffirms its commitment to the ideal of multilateralism, which enhances the credibility of the international community's collective responsibility in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Iraq seeks to promote stability in its regional and international environment and shuns anything that is likely to increase tensions and instability in the world.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq attaches great importance to the issue of general and complete disarmament, given that the arms race is not conducive to peace and security and is a major source of tension and instability. The Government of Iraq is also committed to disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, since it believes that the universality of international treaties on weapons of mass destruction, compliance with their provisions without discrimination and the total elimination of such weapons constitute fundamental prerequisites for global peace and stability. As the international community requires a reliable guarantee of a ban on the use or threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction, Iraq has acceded to all major disarmament treaties and is fully committed to the implementation of all their provisions and requirements.

Iraq attaches special importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole international multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. The Conference has a successful record, but it is now witnessing a new and highly complex era, with expanding regional crises, escalating terrorist threats, a growing risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and a stalemate in the field of disarmament, all of which jeopardize international security and stability. The Conference has been unable, during the past two decades, to play its negotiating role in respect of disarmament treaties. It is essential under these circumstances to demonstrate our political will to move forward, to redouble our efforts to achieve a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that meets the concerns of all member States and is consistent with the rules of procedure of the Conference, to make progress on Conference agenda issues with a view to achieving the disarmament goals to which we all aspire and to invest the momentum and success thus achieved in the international environment. Iraq sought to achieve these goals during its presidency of the Conference in 2013.

Iraq shares the view of many States that nuclear disarmament should remain a top priority for the Conference in accordance with the special status accorded to it in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, and the conclusions of the International Court of Justice in its 1996 advisory opinion, which emphasizes that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the provisions of international law on armed conflict. States must undertake to pursue in good faith the negotiations leading to full nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control. The destructive nature of such weapons renders their definitive elimination a necessity for the survival of all humankind, and their continued existence constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Mr. President, let me now present the views of the Government of the Republic of Iraq on the four core issues of the Conference's agenda with regard to the programme of work.

First, nuclear disarmament should remain a top priority for the Conference. Iraq therefore supports all efforts and negotiations among the nuclear-weapon States to achieve a serious reduction in nuclear weapons and eventually a world free of nuclear weapons.

Secondly, with regard to negative security assurances, it is necessary to produce a legally binding international instrument pursuant to which nuclear-weapon States are required to provide unconditional assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that they will neither use nor threaten to use nuclear weapons. It is also necessary to identify ways in which progress towards this goal can be made. While negative security assurances are a key element and an important step forward, and constitute a fair and legitimate demand by non-nuclear-weapon States that have voluntarily renounced the military nuclear option by acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), they cannot be regarded as a substitute for the goal of total nuclear disarmament.

Thirdly, the ongoing production of fissile materials poses a threat to the goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Iraq therefore supports the idea of achieving a negotiating mandate for the drafting of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Fourthly, with regard to outer space, we share member States' view that space is a common heritage of all humankind and should be exploited solely for peaceful purposes, as its militarization will lead to a costly and destructive arms race. With a view to preventing such a race, the international forum should consider the adoption of an international instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space.

Mr. President, Iraq reaffirms its support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world as an important step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. In particular, we call upon the international community to implement the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, in accordance with the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Iraq is also disappointed that the recent 2015 NPT Review Conference failed to adopt a final document. This failure imposes a major responsibility on States to step up their collective efforts to promote the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The failure of international efforts to convene the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which was to be held in Helsinki in December 2012, was equivalent to a repudiation of the commitments contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and it is likely to have a negative impact on the credibility of the NPT, the NPT review process and the nuclear non-proliferation regime as a whole.

We wish to express our hope that the Preparatory Committee, which will meet in May in Vienna, will lay solid foundations for the success of the next NPT Review Conference in 2020 and for achievement of positive results leading to the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty and contributing to enhanced international security and stability.

In conclusion, I wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation of the efforts of the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Michael Møller, and the endeavours of the Presidents of the Conference this year to restore the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament so that it plays its true role in addressing disarmament and non-proliferation issues. You may count on the support of the Republic of Iraq for your projects and we wish you and the other presidents success in your work.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank you, Mr. Minister, for your statement and, on behalf of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, for your kind words.

Permit me now to suspend our meeting in order to escort the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq out of the room.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): The meeting is resumed. Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to warmly welcome our next distinguished guest, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. Margot Wallström. I thank you, Madam Minister, for coming to this meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and delivering a statement. You have the floor.

**Ms. Wallström** (Sweden): Mr. President, Excellencies, thank you very much for having me. Two years ago, I had the honour of addressing the Conference on Disarmament. On that occasion, I stated that we needed to move further and faster on nuclear disarmament and that one step in that direction would be to finally overcome the impasse that for far too long had paralysed the Conference.

Much to my regret, I feel compelled to repeat these messages today. Over the past two years, we have witnessed an increase in unfulfilled commitments, in polarization and in the inability of multilateral forums to conduct their mandated work: the Conference on Disarmament being a case in point, and the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference another. Disarmament diplomacy now has to be conducted with a clear sense of urgency, an urgency for which there is ample justification.

Sweden, as a small, militarily non-aligned country, is dependent on a world order based on international law. That is why we react strongly when the European or global security order is challenged. A particularly dangerous aspect is the continuing existence of nuclear weapons. Although the number of warheads has come down substantially from the all-time high in 1986, they remain at levels that put the survival of the human race at risk.

The last multilateral nuclear disarmament treaty negotiated in this room — the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty — has yet to enter into force. The strong norm against testing established by this Treaty is time and time again challenged by tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Instead of disarmament, the prevailing trend seems to be the modernization of nuclear arsenals, almost at any cost, taking us even further from the fulfilment of the NPT promise of a world without nuclear weapons: the only true guarantee against the horrors of nuclear war. In the fringes of the debate, you even come across reckless talk about when the actual use of nuclear weapons could be justified. Development of lower-yield battlefield weapons could only serve the purpose of dangerously blurring the line between conventional and nuclear warfare.

So, we cannot afford to lose more opportunities. Time is running out, as symbolized by the recent announcement by the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* that its doomsday clock has been adjusted by 30 seconds. It is now two and a half minutes to midnight. That is the second highest alert status since its inception in 1947.

Mr. President, have there been any positive movements? I would say yes. The most positive development during recent years is the recognition that nuclear weapons cannot be reconciled with international humanitarian law. Human beings, not States, have been placed at the forefront of the discussion. We all know that nuclear weapons must never be used and that any use would have catastrophic consequences.

In Japan, the survivors of the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki are referred to as hibakusha, as you all know. I met a group of hibakusha during my visit to the 2015 NPT Conference in New York. They work tirelessly to educate young people about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. The memory of what disaster even a single nuclear attack could bring must never be forgotten, and we all bear a responsibility for this. The woman who said that this is carried over from one generation to the next is a living witness of the effects and the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

Sweden looks forward to participating in the negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. I am aware that not all States share our view on these negotiations and that some regrettably do not intend to partake. Let me explain our perspective.

Sweden has always participated in multilateral negotiations related to disarmament. We see no reason not to do so this time. We feel strongly that we all have an obligation to contribute in a multilateral United Nations negotiation. In a deteriorating security environment — and this is, of course, also the result of a sense of despair and frustration over the lack of progress — we must take every opportunity to seek progress in nuclear disarmament, and we cannot ignore the humanitarian perspective. But will these negotiations be successful in achieving nuclear disarmament? The fact is that we do not know, but we all have an obligation to try. I estimate that the norm against the use of nuclear weapons and against the weapons themselves stands a good chance of being

strengthened. Some argue that the prohibition treaty process will be divisive and harmful to the NPT. My view is that the prohibition can be beneficial by injecting new political energy into the debate — something that is urgently needed. Let me also be clear that Sweden sees the prohibition in the context of the NPT framework, not as a substitute for it.

Let me mention three other important recent developments. One was the decision to set up a high-level expert preparatory group on the fissile material cut-off treaty. This is a question that is long overdue and should have been dealt with by the Conference. Let us now hope that the work of this group will be followed by concrete action. Sweden looks forward to participating in the group together with Canada and other States.

The second positive development was the First Committee showing very strong support for the resolution on de-alerting, which had been introduced by Sweden together with other members of the De-Alerting Group. In today's world of unimaginably high information flows, fatal decisions can be made within minutes; and levels of stress are also much higher. Therefore, now more than ever, decreasing the readiness of nuclear weapon arsenals is crucial. And last but not least, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed with Iran, and endorsed by the Security Council, is a crucial agreement that must not be put at risk by any party.

Mr. President, in May a new review cycle of the NPT will start, leading up to the Review Conference in 2020. That year will also mark the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT. No doubt, this Treaty is the cornerstone for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. But it has not lived up to its full potential. There are serious flaws in the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments, and the responsibility falls heavily on the nuclear Powers. They cannot continue to ignore the promise to disarm their nuclear arsenals. Russia and the United States must take the lead in restarting the reduction of nuclear weapons. There are also many other important measures that nuclear-weapon States could commit to in connection with the NPT Review Conference, such as legally binding negative security guarantees, a ban on nuclear-armed cruise missiles, negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons and, maybe more importantly, risk reduction, including de-alerting. I strongly encourage the nuclear-weapon States to abandon hair-trigger launch procedures, which are potentially destabilizing. Reduced operational readiness in order to avoid accidental nuclear use is in everybody's interest.

Mr. President, Excellencies, small arms and light weapons kill half a million people every year. The majority of direct victims are men. Women, boys and girls also suffer from the violence caused by small arms and light weapons. Societies are being brutalized as illicit and uncontrolled weapons are in circulation, domestic and intimate partner violence is increasing and the public space for women is reduced. We must all gain better control of these weapons, including ammunition. The 2018 Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons will provide an important opportunity to strengthen our work against them.

Let me also mention the important issue of chemical weapons. We appreciate that the Joint Investigative Mechanism for chemical weapons use in Syria was extended for another year. The decision by the Third Review Conference on Certain Conventional Weapons to set up a group of governmental experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems should also be recognized as an important step forward.

My country has the privilege to serve on the United Nations Security Council this year and next year. The main task of the Council — and thereby our main task — is to preserve international peace and security and prevent future conflicts from emerging. In my view, sustainable security can only be attained through cooperation and disarmament. The lack of cooperation and disarmament has led to a more unstable and insecure world. This development must be turned around, not only for ourselves but — even more so — for the sake of younger generations. In order also to fulfil the 2030 Agenda, this is where we have to start and focus.

Let us now, through the ban negotiation and the proper implementation of the NPT, contribute to setting our world on a safer course.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank you for your interesting statement.

Please allow me now to suspend the meeting in order to escort Ms. Wallström out of the room.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): The meeting is resumed. Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to warmly welcome our next distinguished guest, the Deputy Minister of People's Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Rubén Darío Molina. I thank you, Mr. Deputy Minister, for coming to this meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and delivering a statement to us. You have the floor.

**Mr. Molina** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, it gives me pleasure to deliver this brief statement on a subject of such vital importance for humankind. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its commitment to the promotion of complete and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament as a guarantee of international peace and security. The Bolivarian Government, in exercising its peace-oriented diplomacy, underscores its pacifist mission to render the world more secure. My country pays special attention to the work conducted by the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral forum with a mandate to negotiate on disarmament. The Conference has demonstrated its authority and relevance through the important and outstanding achievements recorded throughout its history, such as the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Mention should be made, however, of the state of stagnation in the Conference during the past two decades, notwithstanding the latent danger of the spread of nuclear weapons and current aspirations to modernize existing arsenals.

The Conference should revitalize its mission by urgently adopting a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that reflects disarmament-related priorities. It is imperative to launch negotiations on a legally binding instrument that prohibits the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. That instrument should contain specific provisions concerning verification of stockpiles, prevention of a possible arms race in outer space and negative security assurances.

It is alarming that major Powers are allocating enormous financial resources to the expansion of their nuclear arsenals instead of to global poverty reduction, social development of peoples and development assistance in support of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. According to United Nations data, 836 million people live in extreme poverty, 2,400 million lack access to adequate sanitation facilities, 1,100 million lack access to electricity and 880 million live in urban slums. That notwithstanding, one nuclear Power has announced that it will spend more than US\$ 348 billion on its nuclear installations over a nine-year period. Venezuela reaffirms that it is imperative to promote dialogue and diplomatic negotiations to prevent and surmount inequality, poverty and extreme poverty, exclusion, intolerance, racism and xenophobia. Scourges such as these affect millions of people. My country deplores the promotion of militarism that squanders resources which could be used for food security, health, education and the well-being of peoples.

Mr. President, nuclear weapons pose a serious threat to the existence of humankind. Such weapons should not be used under any circumstances; their use or any threat of their use constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity. Venezuela supports all initiatives that can help to achieve progress towards nuclear disarmament. The only effective safeguard against their use or threat of their use is total prohibition and elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner within a clearly defined period. Universal, unconditional and irrevocable agreement on a legally binding instrument must be reached promptly to ensure that non-nuclear-possessor States are protected from the use or threat of the use of such weapons. We call for elimination of the role of nuclear weapons in strategic defence doctrines, security policies and military strategies. We cannot continue to promulgate a concept of security based on the promotion and development of military alliances, which are founded on dissuasion and the threat of using nuclear weapons. Terrorism and violent extremism are global issues that threaten international peace and security.



Venezuela repudiates all forms and manifestations of terrorism. The fight against terrorism should be conducted through multilateral cooperation based on the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law. We recognize the importance of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) as an initiative aimed at preventing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups. The elimination and control of such weapons is the most effective safeguard against their acquisition by non-State actors. We support the drafting of a new legally binding instrument aimed at suppressing acts of chemical and biological terrorism. The achievement of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is essential for the strengthening of the right to international peace and security, which should not be rooted in privileges and discrimination, since fundamental peace based on those terms would remain intrinsically fragile.

Latin America and the Caribbean is a region with a steadfast commitment to pacifism. During the last two decades, solid progress has been made in the area of peace and security. Our countries have, as a group, recorded the lowest rate of military expenditure in the world. We underscore the fundamental importance of the role played by nuclear-weapon-free zones in addressing non-proliferation issues and promoting a common regional security policy that is non-nuclear. Venezuela is a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was signed just over 50 years ago and which served as the basis for the establishment of the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone. This is a highly commendable contribution that the countries of our region have made to peace, international law and humanitarian law. We reaffirm our commitment to consolidating Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace. The Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 23 January 2014, constituted a milestone in this regard. The Heads of State of Latin America and the Caribbean signed the resulting proclamation. Venezuela reiterates what was agreed in the Political Declaration of the Fifth Summit of CELAC, held on 25 January 2017, in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on the urgent need to move towards the main objective of general and complete disarmament under strict international control. The diplomacy of peace promoted by Venezuela is in line with the proclamation at the Second Summit of CELAC, in 2014, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace. We wish to draw attention to the alarming plan to extend the military doctrines of warmongering bodies, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to Latin America and the Caribbean and to promote military alliances in some countries that jeopardize the pacifist policy pursued by the region.

Mr. President, Venezuela reaffirms its commitment to the peaceful use of outer space. It should be used for the benefit of peoples without distinction on grounds of economic and scientific development and without prejudice to the security of States. The Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum for building a consensus with respect to the production of a legally binding instrument aimed at preventing the arms race and prohibiting the placement and use of weapons in space. At the Seventeenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held on Margarita Island, Venezuela, in September 2016, we underscored our long-standing support for the urgent commencement of negotiations leading to a convention on the elimination of nuclear weapons. Venezuela highlights the agreement reached in the final document of the Margarita Island Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which expressed concern about the slow progress towards nuclear disarmament. The document encourages the establishment of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East.

Venezuela underscores the urgent need to launch negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, particularly on a comprehensive convention to prohibit the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, storage, transfer, and use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons, thereby facilitating their destruction within a specific time frame. We are committed to participating in the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to be convened in 2018 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/32, in order to continue promoting disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Finally, Mr. President, we trust that the Conference, under the presidency of the Russian Federation, will be able to develop a programme of work that makes it possible to

achieve results and be at the forefront of nuclear disarmament. Our goal is to strengthen peace and it is necessary, to that end, to avert the new threats to which people are exposed, such as cyberattacks. The challenge facing the Conference on Disarmament is that of securing a safer future for the next generations of humankind.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank you for your statement and, on behalf of the Russian presidency of the Conference, for your words of support.

Please allow me now to suspend the meeting in order to escort Mr. Molina out of the room.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): The meeting is resumed. Would any delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Ju Yong-chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I am taking the floor in order to express my delegation's strong disagreement with and rejection of the prejudiced accusations made against my country by delegations from some European countries, including the remarks by the distinguished guests from Sweden and Bulgaria.

Judging from the logic of their argument, I am led to believe that they are not really concerned about the situation on the Korean Peninsula, but are deliberately disregarding reality to take sides with hostile forces out of political motivation. Although they are keen to repeatedly voice out stereotyped condemnations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, they show no regard for our position, which explains where the real threat comes from, as well as our unavoidable choice of strengthening our self-defensive capabilities. This clearly shows that, even though they call for global and regional security and peace, their words and deeds are totally inconsistent and are contradictory.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): Are there any further requests for the floor? I recognize the representative of the Republic of Korea.

**Ms. Kim Kyoung-hae** (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I wish to say that the statements by North Korea concerning the Korean Peninsula are entirely groundless, delusional and contradictory to the facts. I sincerely hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will face the naked fact that they are constantly violating numerous important international obligations. I will not repeat our reasoning. However, I believe those who have years in this chamber would know to whom they should give credit.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I recognize the representative of Bulgaria.

**Ms. Davidova** (Bulgaria): Mr. President, very briefly, what our Deputy Foreign Minister said actually was that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has carried out nuclear tests in violation of its international obligations, which was just an undisputable statement of fact.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): Are there any more requests for the floor? I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Ju Yong-chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, it is deplorable that South Korea is still resorting to every means and opportunity to mislead world opinion and direct criticism towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the purpose of increasing pressure. South Korea has gone so far as to try to turn this august forum into a venue for their political propaganda and shore up support for their sinister scheme against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As for the European countries who expressed criticism against my country, they would be well advised — if they wish to do something helpful to ease tension on the Korean Peninsula — not to follow hostile forces in instigating confrontation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but, instead, they should try to have a correct and objective view of the situation of the Korean Peninsula based on their own judgment.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): Are there any further requests for the floor? I hope there will not be any. I do not see any requests for the floor, so we have completed our

work for today, and the high-level segment of the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament has also come to an end.

The next scheduled meeting will take place on Tuesday, 7 March, at 10 a.m. in the Council Chamber. I declare the meeting closed.

*The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.*