

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and forty-seventh plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 27 February 2018, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms. Veronika Bard(Sweden)

The President: I call to order the 1447th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Møller, distinguished colleagues, we continue this morning with the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament. Please allow me to suspend the meeting to welcome our first distinguished guest for this morning, His Excellency Mr. Karl Erjavec, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Erjavec (Slovenia) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, allow me to begin by congratulating you on assuming the role of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I am pleased to note that the Conference will have two female presidents this year. That sends an important signal that the United Nations and its Member States take gender equality seriously. Gender equality is both a national priority of Slovenia and a priority of the Slovenian presidency of the Human Rights Council in 2018. The full and equal participation of women in decision-making and in non-proliferation and disarmament activities is essential for ensuring peace and security. I wish to express the strong support of Slovenia for your efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the Conference, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.

Slovenia strongly supports nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and favours treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control. To achieve a world without nuclear weapons, it is essential that we gradually proceed together to the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At the 2010 NPT Review Conference, we agreed on a phased action plan with concrete steps. We also committed to ensuring the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Given the importance that Slovenia attaches to non-proliferation, this subject was chosen as one of the themes of the 2016 and 2017 sessions of the Bled Strategic Forum, a major policy and business conference that is held in Slovenia every year. During the Forum, the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Mr. Zerbo, reiterated that the entry into force of the Treaty was crucial for ensuring global security. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon all countries, particularly annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty unconditionally and without delay. While the Treaty has already acted as a deterrent against nuclear testing, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea being the only country to have conducted nuclear tests in the twenty-first century, its entry into force will permit the verification of countries' compliance, which could pave the way for genuine nuclear disarmament.

All States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty also agreed that the Conference should open negotiations for the drafting of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Slovenia has supported all relevant General Assembly resolutions related to this issue, including on the convening of open-ended consultative meetings and sessions of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group. We believe that these meetings will help us to overcome our differences in interpreting the treaty, which should hopefully lead to negotiations, with at least the implementation of these disarmament measures. We also believe that measures on the verification of nuclear disarmament would allow us to influence the illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Slovenia strongly condemns the serious violations of numerous Security Council resolutions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We call on all countries to implement restrictive measures in a comprehensive and effective manner.

Slovenia recently signed the statement of the Proliferation Security Initiative on the need to step up the implementation of the last two Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We welcome the recent high-level talks between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We support the diplomatic efforts undertaken to de-escalate the situation and to achieve, through peaceful means, the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The Joint Plan of Action is proof that even the most difficult of issues can be resolved diplomatically and peacefully. For that reason, Slovenia is counting on all stakeholders to continue to observe this nuclear agreement. I would like to congratulate the International Atomic Energy Agency for its fundamental role in monitoring the Iranian nuclear programme. These achievements clearly demonstrate that, with enough political will, we are capable of adapting to this constantly changing world. We would like to encourage all members of the Conference to pursue the path of dialogue, trust and cooperation in order to bring the current impasse to an end. I welcome the Conference's recent decision to establish subsidiary bodies for all items on its agenda. Slovenia, in its capacity as an observer State, will be pleased to participate in their work.

Madam President, Slovenia will continue to work for peace, international security and disarmament. We consider that the efforts of the Conference are vital in that regard. Slovenia would like to contribute to the discussions on current challenges and to the search for viable solutions. We look forward to the forthcoming discussions and we hope that they will lead to positive decisions on the enlargement of the Conference. I think that it should be open to all countries that wish to join it, with a view to ensuring universality, transparency and multilateralism. Accordingly, I fully support the appointment of a special coordinator on expansion of the membership of the Conference. In conclusion, all that remains for me to say is that it is high time to move forward. Thank you very much for your attention. I wish you all success in your work.

The President: I thank Mr. Erjavec for his statement and very kind words of support, which we will certainly need. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a moment to escort Mr. Erjavec from the chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like to extend a warm welcome to our next distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Alfonso Dastis, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain. Thank you, Mr. Dastis, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Dastis (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Madam President. Distinguished delegates, I am addressing you for the second time since taking office as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, and for me it is a particular honour to speak to you in this historic, highly symbolic room that bears the indelible mark of my country, since on these walls the painter José María Sert, using only three colours, created his splendid tribute to Francisco de Vitoria, one of the fathers of public international law.

Sert imagined these murals during the interwar period as a wake-up call in what was a troubled time for Europe and the world. Today, we are again living through a troubled time of growing geopolitical tensions, which seem to be leading us towards a new arms race. In that context, we note with great concern the incessant challenge to global peace and security that is posed by one country, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which through nuclear testing and the development of a ballistic programme has placed itself outside international law.

I again call upon Pyongyang to abandon this strategy of stoking tension and to end nuclear testing for good by complying with Security Council resolutions and returning to the discipline of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We also note with horror the recent cases in which chemical weapons have been used in Syria. We cannot stand idle in the face of this flagrant violation of humanitarian law. The closing down of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, which had sought to attribute responsibility for such attacks, was a harsh setback for the international legal order. We must regain the lost consensus and design a new mechanism.

Geopolitical tensions also surround some of the conventional arms control instruments that ensure peace and stability in Europe, such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and The Hague Code of Conduct. For the good of all, we must put the capacity for consensus before distrust – that same distrust which, together with uncertainty, undermines the diplomatic achievement represented by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which is based on the

most advanced and exhaustive verification system that has ever been devised within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This agreement must be preserved and if necessary strengthened through new confidence-building measures between Iran and the rest of the international community.

Against this backdrop of tension and uncertainty, the apparent paralysis of the disarmament machinery has led many States, some of which are very close to Spain, to negotiate and conclude the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I want to make it clear that we share those countries' desire to make more decisive progress towards a world without weapons of mass destruction. However, this Treaty does not seem to us to be the correct path. None of the nuclear-possessor States have joined it. Moreover, it lacks a verification mechanism and may ultimately damage the non-proliferation regime by creating a parallel legal framework that divides the international community.

History endorses a gradual method for implementing non-proliferation. The signs that some years ago augured a multiplication of nuclear-possessor States have not been borne out. If that is the case, it is largely due to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which today remains the most universal instrument in the area of non-proliferation. This Treaty has permitted some advances in disarmament, has contained horizontal and vertical proliferation and has fostered the beneficial development of nuclear energy through peaceful programmes with a direct impact on our daily lives, not only in terms of energy supply but also in areas such as medicine and research.

It is evident that the situation is not entirely satisfactory. We need to make further progress. Paralysis is never an option because, as Dag Hammarskjöld said, in the multilateral world anything that is not a step forward is actually a step back. So let us keep moving forward and let us do so together. In a little less than two months, the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference will be held in a room adjacent to this Council Chamber. Let us contribute to that session with ideas, initiatives and new opportunities for dialogue.

The Conference on Disarmament, whose presidency Spain held at the end of last year, retains a decisive role in driving forward the non-proliferation regime. Although it is true that its record over the past two decades does not invite optimism, if we study the Conference's history from its inception, as the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee, as the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee and as the Committee on Disarmament, we find that many of the instruments of the non-proliferation regime have been devised in this room. For more than 20 years, the agenda of the Conference has included the negotiation and conclusion of a treaty to stop the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. This treaty continues to be necessary and is a goal that can no longer be postponed. Thanks to contributions by members of the Conference and by the scientific community, and also to the synthesis work carried out by the expert preparatory group under the leadership of Canada, today we know almost all the technical, scientific and diplomatic aspects of the future treaty.

For the launch of negotiations, which is the true purpose of this Conference, all that is lacking is the political will that has so often been undermined for various reasons, including in recent years by the opposition of a friendly country and a key player in the security of a particularly turbulent region. I appeal for any vetoes on the negotiation of this treaty to be lifted, on the understanding that the commencement of negotiations does not prejudice their outcome, and that it is at the negotiating table that all sensitivities must be taken into account.

This room also hosted the bulk of the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, whose entry into force would give new impetus to the non-proliferation regime. We encourage all countries that have not yet ratified the Treaty to commit to taking that brave step forward.

Distinguished delegates, I ask for a moment that we return to the murals of José María Sert. In this room, he depicted three essential elements for tipping the balance towards what unites men, and away from what separates them. They are peace, law and intelligence. It is those three elements: the quest for peace, respect for the law and the

intelligence to find consensus, that must guide the efforts of any multilateral forum. May they also inspire you, just as they inspired the work of this Conference in its finest hour.

The President: I thank Mr. Dastis for his statement and also for evoking the spirit of both the painter José Maria Sert and Dag Hammarskjöld. We might need them. Please allow me now to suspend the meeting for a moment in order to escort Mr. Dastis from the chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Sidiki Kaba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal. Thank you, Mr. Kaba, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament.

(spoke in French)

Welcome, Minister. You have the floor.

Mr. Kaba (Senegal) *(spoke in French)*: Madam President, distinguished colleagues, I would first like to express my pleasure at participating in this high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. Disarmament and arms control are important levers for maintaining international peace and security and for regulating international tensions that are often fraught with danger. We therefore consider that the Conference's work is more vital than ever for maintaining a peaceful international environment. We cannot just stand still at a time when humanity is facing the very real and dangerous threat of the use of weapons and the near-constant risk of a catastrophe that could have adverse consequences for the whole world.

The continuing stalemate in the Conference is testimony enough to the complexity and sensitivity of the issues discussed by it, and there has been no significant progress on these issues for almost two decades. However, under no circumstances should this stalemate, which partly stems from the absence of mutual trust and bold compromise, lead us to feel discouraged or to slacken or abandon our efforts. Such attitudes would only further entrench the positions of those who maintain that there is a need to devise alternative options to advance the cause of international disarmament. While they may not be wrong, Senegal continues to believe that we must all reaffirm the central role of the Conference, while remaining open to any ideas that could help revitalize its work.

It is in this spirit that Senegal, during its presidency of the Conference here in Geneva, from 20 March to 28 May 2017, opted for continuity by supporting and cooperating with the working group on the way ahead, with the goals of resuming negotiations in order to overcome differences and of facilitating the adoption of a programme of work with a negotiating mandate, which has been lacking for so long. In accordance with the values and principles of peace, justice, solidarity and reconciliation that it has always defended in the international arena, Senegal also used its presidency as an opportunity to invite all member States to adopt a constructive approach in order to find a way out of the stalemate in the Conference. In the process, our country joined the negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons with a view to achieving the universally desired goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. This instrument, adopted in New York on 7 July 2017, includes obligations for the parties to maintain their International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards obligations or to accept the Agency's safeguards if they have not already done so.

Senegal is of the opinion that, pending the entry into force of that instrument, further consideration should be given to certain important matters in the area of disarmament, namely:

- The goal of general and complete disarmament and, pending that, transparency measures related to the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons;
- The conclusion of an international legal instrument on nuclear disarmament, the full implementation of negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the setting-up of nuclear-weapon-free zones, in particular in the

Middle East, within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

- The holding of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the expansion of the membership of the Conference, and closer involvement of non-governmental organizations and civil society in general;
- An appeal to members of the Conference, including arms-producing countries, to demonstrate greater transparency in the production, traceability and sale of conventional weapons;
- The universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, not to forget the Arms Trade Treaty.

Madam President, it is permissible to hope for the reinvigoration of the Conference, especially given the decision adopted here on 16 February to establish five subsidiary bodies to look into the different items on the annual agenda of the Conference. It is through such bold initiatives that we will be able to rise to meet the current challenges and slowly but surely become the architects of a Conference that is productive, efficient and credible, since it will be responsive and capable of transforming itself after deep reflection. Today, in sharing its optimistic vision with the Conference, Senegal wishes to reaffirm its faith in the ideals of peace, cooperation and dialogue that underpin the work of the United Nations, and its faith in the Conference, which it fervently hopes to see emerge from this impasse so that all stakeholders – States, international organizations and civil society – can work together, taking an inclusive and pragmatic approach marked by mutual trust. Only such an approach can give new impetus to all the various disarmament bodies, in particular the Conference, whose role as the main body for negotiations and discussions on disarmament issues must be reaffirmed and consolidated.

The President: I thank Mr. Kaba for his statement and for the optimistic touch in his support for our work here in the Conference on Disarmament. Please allow me now to suspend the meeting for a moment in order to escort Mr. Kaba from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like now to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, Her Excellency Ms. Kang Kyung-wha, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. Thank you, Madam, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

Ms. Kang Kyung-wha (Republic of Korea): Thank you very much, Madam President, for the warm welcome. Distinguished delegates, I am indeed delighted to be with you today at the Conference on Disarmament, but I have to say I am also very disheartened that progress in the field of disarmament and arms control remains stalled because of deep divergences of views.

Lending urgency to the need for a breakthrough out of this situation is the increasing complexity of the international security landscape: the continued development of nuclear weapons by North Korea and the use of chemical weapons in Syria, which is further complicated by new threats from non-State actors and emerging technologies. In these worrying times, the Conference on Disarmament must find a way to restore its credibility as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The Conference on Disarmament has a proud history of having been centre stage for the formulation of many of the instruments that form the basis of today's disarmament and non-proliferation regime. So there is experience, and also, I believe a strong will in this room to bring the Conference on Disarmament back to its proper place.

I truly hope that we will make meaningful headway this year under the able leadership of Ambassador Bard and the other presidents at this session, on the basis of the decision of 16 February to establish subsidiary bodies to deepen discussions and reach a common understanding on the Conference on Disarmament's agenda items. My delegation will offer its full support for the realization of the Conference on Disarmament's work, which will surely be an instrumental and pivotal step forward for global peace and security.

Distinguished delegates, this month, a landmark event for peace took place in PyeongChang, Korea. The 2018 Winter Olympics, which ended just two days ago, jump-started South and North Korean dialogue and engagement after years of hiatus, and demonstrated the power of the Olympics to generate the momentum for peace and reconciliation. North Korea is also expected to participate in the Winter Paralympics, which will be held from 9 to 18 March.

My Government will work to build on this initial breakthrough to further advance inter-Korean engagement as well as the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue and the establishment of lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. At the same time, we must not get carried away and lose sight of the stark reality. We remember all too clearly that, in 2017 alone, North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test and test-launched 20 ballistic missiles. Such provocations are a blatant affront to one of the major accomplishments of this very body, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. They also gravely undermine the international non-proliferation regime based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that the international community has worked so hard to build and preserve over the years.

What is needed most at this juncture is a strong, united commitment to the full implementation of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions in order to compel Pyongyang to change course and come to dialogue for a peaceful resolution of the nuclear problem. The Republic of Korea is actively participating in these efforts and working closely with our partners to track and stop North Korea's attempts to evade the sanctions.

North Korea must realize that as long as it continues down the path of nuclear development, the sanctions will remain in place and it will only be met with further sanctions and pressure. However, sanctions are not an end in themselves and are not meant to bring down North Korea, but to make it understand that its future lies not in nuclear weapons but in working with the global community towards denuclearization. Our consistent message should be that it must make the right decision, and if it does, we are ready to work together towards a brighter and prosperous future for North Korea.

I want to be very clear that the Republic of Korea endeavours to engage the North, but we remain steadfast in our goal of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. We know that our ultimate dream of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula requires a denuclearized North Korea. And as we continue to seek realistic and effective ways to resume denuclearization talks, we count on your continued support and interest.

Madam President, distinguished delegates, as a country faced with the grave threat of North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes, the Republic of Korea is a strong advocate of the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. But we realize there are differing views as to how to achieve that vision. My Government's firm position is that any nuclear disarmament measure should be pursued in a progressive manner, taking into account the security concerns of all parties involved. And we cannot stand idly by. Much needs to be done, and at a faster pace. The international community must, first of all, reaffirm its strong commitment to strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. And I do feel a sense of shared resolve among us in this room that the upcoming 2020 NPT Review Conference must not repeat the failure of 2015.

One issue on which the Conference on Disarmament could make a substantial and immediate contribution for the success of the 2020 NPT Review Conference is on a fissile material cut-off treaty. There has already been significant progress. In addition to the previous 2015 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the forthcoming report of the high-level FMCT expert preparatory group, which the Republic of Korea is part of, will serve as useful guidance for future negotiators. These hard-won achievements could also serve as a catalyst to drive the Conference on Disarmament forward. A transformed Conference on Disarmament initiated by progress on the FMCT front is the best hope the Conference on Disarmament can offer to the NPT review process.

Distinguished delegates, in these times of protracted conflicts and security challenges and heightened geopolitical tension, the Conference on Disarmament is entrusted with the critical mission of promoting international peace and security through disarmament. And if the impasse in the Conference continues, it will incur a high cost beyond the field of disarmament, especially when the three pillars of the United Nations – peace and security, development and human rights – are more linked than ever before. I truly hope a wave of positive change can start here in Geneva. The Republic of Korea will be a responsible and reliable partner in these efforts.

The President: I thank Ms. Kang Kyung-wha for her statement and for her support for our work here in this chamber and beyond. Please allow me now to suspend the meeting for a moment in order to escort Ms. Kang Kyung-wha from the chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: Distinguished colleagues, it is of course, for me, a very great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to our next distinguished guest, Her Excellency Ms. Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. Thank you, Ms. Wallström, for taking the time to address the Conference on Disarmament today. The floor is yours.

Ms. Wallström (Sweden): Thank you very much, Madam President. Allow me first to thank the United Nations Secretary-General for his statement yesterday and for his strong commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her strong engagement and persistence in urging us to make progress. My gratitude also goes to the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Ravinatha Aryasinha, for his hard and successful efforts to establish subsidiary bodies of the Conference on Disarmament.

Madam President, as a politician coming of age in the 1980s, I have vivid, chilling memories of the ever-present threat of a possible nuclear Armageddon. The end of the cold war brought the world back from the brink – for good, it was universally hoped. Yet, much to my regret, we are currently witnessing a renaissance for nuclear weapons. The doomsday clock of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* was recently adjusted and it is now two minutes to midnight. This is a clear indication that the risk of nuclear use is rising, either by accident or as a result of confrontation. People, civil society organizations and Governments are deeply concerned.

Their concerns were clearly expressed by the Secretary-General yesterday. The international situation is challenging. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been accelerating its nuclear weapons and missile programme. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which has our strong support, is going through a challenging time. The same goes for the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, a treaty of great importance, not least to the European continent. The New START Treaty is being implemented, which is crucial, but what will happen after 2021? There are even indications that the nuclear threshold is being lowered. Meanwhile, enormous resources are devoted to modernizing nuclear arsenals, expanding their lifespan by decades.

The United Nations Security Council has the primary responsibility to uphold international peace and security. As a current member of the Council, we take that responsibility with the highest degree of seriousness. The Council shoulders its responsibility in many instances, but is clearly acting below the expectations of the international community when it comes to issues such as disarmament or non-proliferation. The permanent members of the Security Council, also being five recognized nuclear-weapon States, must take the lead in upholding international peace and security.

This responsibility is also clear when it comes to disarmament and non-proliferation. Without constructive engagements and contributions from the nuclear-weapon States, there will be little progress. It is repeatedly stated that disarmament and disarmament negotiations are not possible in the present security climate. But rather than a pretext for inaction, it should spur us to break new ground. After all, it is in harsher times that effort to break the deadlock is most needed and brings the greatest rewards.

Madam President, 2017 was another lost year for multilateral disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, despite the dire need for progress. It is in

these times of hardship that we must multiply our efforts and show that the Conference on Disarmament, as a platform for diplomacy, can achieve results that bring us closer to our common goal of disarmament.

During the past weeks, intensive consultations have been conducted under the able leadership of the Ambassador of Sri Lanka. During these consultations, we sensed that there was an emerging will, underpinned by a spirit of compromise, to get the Conference on Disarmament back on track. That sense proved correct. The Conference on Disarmament eventually managed to adopt a decision that paves the way for structured discussions.

Now Sweden has assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and, given the high priority that my Government and I personally accord to disarmament and non-proliferation, we will make every effort to continue to make progress. But it is only possible with the assistance and goodwill of all of you.

So let me outline briefly three main priorities for the Swedish presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Firstly, our immediate focus will be to take forward, together with the other member States that will hold the presidency this session, the recent decision to launch structured discussions. To this end, constructive consultations are currently being pursued. I urge members to maintain a flexible approach, so that coordinators and the schedule for the subsidiary groups can be agreed swiftly, hopefully later this week.

Secondly, Sweden's clear ambition remains to make progress towards agreement on a programme of work. We will conduct extensive consultations to this end, in parallel to efforts to operationalize the working groups and build on the momentum from recent weeks. In this context, let us resolve not to make the perfect the enemy of the good. Historically, the Conference on Disarmament has conducted highly meaningful work other than negotiations.

And, thirdly, and related to my previous point, we must never lose sight of the fact that the core purpose for which this body was created was to negotiate multilateral disarmament agreements. That should always be our beacon. Over the years, several issues have been put forward as ripe for negotiations, not least a fissile material cut-off treaty. Another highly relevant issue is negative security assurances, which the NPT Review Conference in 2010 tasked the Conference on Disarmament to take on.

To Sweden, as to most members of the Conference, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone for global disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty has been resilient over the years, the number of nuclear-weapon States are fewer than once feared, and the Treaty is, with a few exceptions, universal. That demands progress on all three pillars. My delegation, and I myself, stand ready to contribute with concrete proposals and to work with all delegations committed to progress.

Since last year's meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, negotiations have taken place in another forum, the United Nations, on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I see this Treaty as a result of several disappointments and frustration in the field of disarmament, not least the failure from the nuclear-weapon States to show concrete progress. But we must not let different views on that Treaty prevent us from making progress here in the Conference on Disarmament and at the NPT Review Conference.

So, distinguished colleagues, there are serious tensions in many parts of the world. Some of them involve States with nuclear capabilities. These States have the main responsibility to reduce tensions and avoid confrontations, but all of us have an obligation to contribute to the best of our ability. Let us make sure that we do our part to move the doomsday clock and the world back to safety.

The President: I thank Ms. Wallström for her statement and also for voicing her expectations of us here in the chamber. Now I will suspend the meeting for a moment in order to escort Ms. Wallström from the chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would now like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, Her Excellency Ms. Chrystia Freeland, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada. Thank you, Ms. Freeland, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament today. The floor is yours, Madam.

Ms. Freeland (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Madam President. Distinguished delegates, it is a pleasure to address the Conference on Disarmament today and to speak to you about how we can re-energize our efforts to positively influence global norms with regard to non-proliferation and disarmament. One of the foreign policy priorities of Canada is to uphold the rules-based global order that has existed for the past seven decades, working with our partners to promote peace, security and prosperity in the world. An essential part of this world order is the work that we do to advance non-proliferation and disarmament, a key element of which is carried out in cooperation with civil society and national organizations.

(*spoke in English*)

For many years, Canada has been a leader in developing the global disarmament architecture, including the one focusing on nuclear disarmament. We are currently chairing a United Nations expert group on the development of a fissile material cut-off treaty to help halt the production of nuclear weapons. This follows the Canadian-sponsored United Nations resolution that brought together 159 States. Crucially, this expert group includes all five NPT nuclear-weapon States, India and 19 non-nuclear-weapon States. Throughout the FMCT preparatory group process, Canada has pursued two objectives: first, to counteract growing international divisions by uniting both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States in continuing to work towards our shared non-proliferation and disarmament goals; and, second, to make real progress towards the long-overdue negotiation of this treaty.

As the votes on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the General Assembly show, support for such a treaty is nearly universal. Moreover, both proponents and sceptics of the recent Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons are on board. There has never been a better time for a fissile material cut-off treaty to contribute positively to nuclear disarmament. We see its great potential for building cohesive action in the NPT review cycle, and for revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament and restoring its credibility. If the Conference cannot address even those issues most ready for negotiation, like a fissile material cut-off treaty, scepticism about its continued relevance will deepen, and questions will be raised about why we invest so heavily in this institution. In these difficult times, we need to redouble our efforts to find a concrete path forward, lest the non-proliferation and disarmament norms embodied in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty be further eroded, with destabilizing consequences for international peace and security.

Canada views the work towards a fissile material cut-off treaty as an essential step to bridge the divide between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. We appreciate that many partners in this room are working to create the conditions for continued progress on nuclear disarmament. Canada remains committed to constructively advancing this process. All States, especially those possessing nuclear weapons, must take responsibility, individually and collectively, for creating a more conducive environment for disarmament.

Over the past year, we have seen leaders from the global disarmament community drive the negotiation and signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The popularity of this initiative speaks to the desire of countries, activists and communities to accelerate the work towards disarmament. It also reflects frustration and disappointment at the pace of global efforts so far. We believe that this is a legitimate critique. In Munich two weeks ago, I had the pleasure of meeting with Beatrice Fihn, the Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its work in drawing attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and for its efforts on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Setsuko Thurlow, a Canadian-Japanese activist who survived the bombing of Hiroshima, received the award on behalf of ICAN. The leadership of these women and of their movement towards nuclear disarmament must be recognized. It must be saluted.

In Canada, the work of civil society, of opposition parties and of our Government has also led us to raise our level of ambition when it comes to arms control. We are proud that our legislative process towards acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty is well under way. Properly regulating and restricting the flow of arms around the world is critical. In addition to this legislative effort, we are also funding projects to address illicit weapons flows and to help States accede to and implement the Treaty. We believe it is long overdue for Canada to join the international community in acceding to the Treaty.

I recently announced my Government's decision to further strengthen the Canadian legislation which implements the Treaty and regulates Canada's arms exports. We had originally planned to place the criteria by which exports are judged, including human rights, into regulation. But we heard from fellow parliamentarians from several parties, including our own, as well as from civil society, a desire to see the Treaty criteria placed directly into legislation. This would include the consideration of peace and security, human rights and gender-based violence. And this is a change my Government is committed to implementing. Going even further than that, our Government has announced that we will support the inclusion of a "substantial risk" clause in Canadian law. This means that we will place directly into our domestic legislation the requirement of the Treaty that we will not allow the export of arms where there is a substantial risk that they could be used to commit serious human rights violations. We need to have a strong level of confidence that our controlled exports will conform with the criteria of the Treaty, and this clause is an essential part of that commitment. This is the right thing to do, and this is a turning point for Canada.

Canadians are rightfully concerned about how arms could be used to perpetuate regional and international conflict in which civilians have suffered and lost their lives. We must be confident that our institutions are equipped to ensure we are not perpetuating these conflicts. We must hold ourselves to a higher standard. Canada has committed to doing exactly that and we will continue to promote disarmament efforts globally.

(spoke in French)

In 1997, many of you came to Ottawa and committed to ridding the world of anti-personnel mines. Since then we have achieved significant results, including the destruction of 51 million anti-personnel mines. But there is still work to be done. I would like to call upon all States that have not signed the Ottawa Convention to join this global movement and to help us stem the flow of anti-personnel mines. My friend, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, Lloyd Axworthy, led the Ottawa Process in conjunction with international civil society and with the support of many countries around the world. Thank you, Lloyd, and thank you to our partners.

Small arms and light weapons are used daily in terrorist attacks and acts of gender-based violence in conflict areas. Anti-personnel mines continue to kill and maim civilians and to prevent children from going to school. I am therefore pleased to have recently expanded the mandate of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Threat Reduction Program of Canada to also support the universalization of the treaties on anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and small arms and light weapons. This will allow us to continue this vital work and fund new types of projects.

(spoke in English)

Nuclear disarmament, implementing a more rigorous system of arms exports, and finishing the job on landmines are all intrinsic to Canada's feminist foreign policy. Preventing conflict and advancing the international disarmament agenda are part of our commitments included in Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which we launched in November last year.

Last fall, in the First Committee, Canada, Sweden and 41 other States issued a joint statement on the need for gender perspectives in disarmament efforts. We said then that maintaining international peace and security is a task for all States and it is a task for both women and men. International institutions need to be representative of society and recognize that their gender balance affects how disarmament issues are discussed and addressed. While men and boys are often disproportionately the direct victims of mines and

explosive remnants of war, women often bear the primary responsibility for caring for survivors and indirect victims. The loss or incapacitation of spouses or other male family members can result in women facing persistent discrimination and hardship. Survivors in communities ravaged by war, often women, as in Northern Iraq, are left to lead stabilization efforts once the fighting has ended. We must support and work with women and girls in our demining work. A feminist foreign policy is essential because we understand that unregulated transfers of weapons fuel armed violence that has especially adverse effects on women.

Though inevitably incomplete, the international frameworks that exist with respect to disarmament must be upheld. This is not just about ensuring accountability. It is also about making concrete progress towards a safer world for us all. There can be no faith in a system that does not produce results, especially when the subject is peace and security. This is not just about the Governments that are behind these laws, treaties and institutions; our dynamic civil societies, Nobel Prize winners and activists are our collective strength. They must be applauded for their leadership, and we need to listen to them.

The North Korean nuclear threat shows that the need for disarmament is more salient now than ever. In January, the United States Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, and I co-hosted the Vancouver meeting on security and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Twenty countries were represented to discuss our common objective: to see a secure and stable Korean Peninsula.

Supporting the international non-proliferation architecture is one reason why Canada stands so strongly in support of Ukraine and its sovereignty. Ukraine contributed to the peace and security of the entire world in 1994 when it gave up its nuclear weapons. In exchange, Ukraine's territorial integrity was guaranteed by the Budapest Memorandum. What message are we sending on non-proliferation if we allow those guarantees to be flouted? Globally, Canada is very conscious of the risk the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty faces as it approaches its fiftieth anniversary review conference in 2020, with little progress on the disarmament pillar.

Canada remains deeply committed to protecting and promoting the rules-based international system and the norms that we have established together over many decades. I remain personally convinced that by working cooperatively within this system, we can continue to make real progress on disarmament. But I also urge us all to do more.

(spoke in French)

We owe it to future generations and we owe it to our children.

The President: I thank Ms. Freeland for her statement and for her commitment to our work. I would also like to thank the distinguished Russian delegate for pointing out that there seems to be a majority of women on this panel today. Let me now suspend this meeting for a moment in order to escort Ms. Freeland from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: Distinguished colleagues, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shoukry, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt. Thank you, Mr. Shoukry, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. The floor is yours.

Mr. Shoukry (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Madam President, please allow me to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament during this important phase of its work and as the Conference begins a new session. I would also like to express my country's appreciation to Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, who helps to provide the constant support that the work of the Conference requires. I wish to confirm the continuing support of Egypt for the presidency of the Conference and for its constructive efforts aimed at the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. My country looks forward to the success of the 2018 session in revitalizing the effective role of the Conference, which has always played a pivotal part in negotiations on international disarmament treaties.

The Conference on Disarmament is locked in a stalemate that has lasted for more than two decades. During that long period of time, and despite the efforts expended, the Conference has been unable to adopt a programme of work that would enable it to fulfil the role for which it was mandated. This extremely frustrating and unacceptable situation should encourage us all to review the reasons that have led to such an outcome and to redouble our efforts to rectify and alter the current state of affairs in order to preserve the credibility of the Conference, maintain its capacity to assume its responsibility to promote international security and help it to resume its traditional role as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The impasse that has hindered the Conference's work for such a long time not only damages its role and credibility but also contributes to reinforcing a trend that is becoming increasingly visible in international relations in the world today: the fact that many countries establish foreign-policy objectives with a view to securing only their own narrow national interests while ignoring a comprehensive vision of shared security concerns that transcend the individual interests of States. Therefore, if there is an international will for the Conference to break its stalemate and resume its historical and pivotal role in the field of disarmament, then all States must avoid unilateral positions that undermine the possibility of achieving collective security, just as they must show the flexibility and political will necessary to relaunch and reactivate the Conference and its work. In that context, Egypt welcomes the fact that, earlier this month, the Conference on Disarmament adopted a decision to establish five subsidiary bodies on agenda items. Egypt hopes that this will represent an important step on which the Conference will be able to build in its current session in order to open the way to the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work in the near future.

Madam President, Egypt and other members of the international community have – over long decades, on many occasions and in different settings – been calling for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, in compliance with one of the pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Up to now, those calls have fallen on deaf ears. Large numbers of nuclear weapons still exist in the world and represent a serious challenge to international security. The concept of nuclear deterrence remains prevalent with certain military alliances and nuclear weapons remain a basic component of strategic defence doctrines in a number of countries. In fact, we are seeing certain States continue to develop new generations of nuclear weapons, deploy them on the territory of other States and undertake comprehensive policy reviews with a view to developing their nuclear arsenals. Moreover, some States have insisted on opposing any international efforts to ban nuclear weapons, such as by refusing to take part in negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which were organized by the United Nations last year.

This brings us to ask just how serious certain international parties are about achieving the goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons, particularly as those same States take the lead in calling for the non-proliferation regime to be enforced against parties they consider a threat to their strategic interests. This not only leads to a loss of credibility but might also prompt certain States to obtain those destructive weapons for themselves, in an attempt to avoid being targeted. Faced with these developments, Egypt underscores the need for all countries to abide by both the letter and the spirit of their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and wishes to express its grave concern that – although the Treaty came into force 48 years ago and although its article VI clearly calls on nuclear States to rid themselves of nuclear weapons – such weapons are still deployed around the world. This undermines international peace and security, and increases sources of tension and instability around the world in an international landscape already marked by stalemate, challenges and growing threats in many regions. Undermining the credibility of the Treaty is a serious matter, for which responsibility lies with the nuclear States, who eagerly enforce the discriminatory status of the Treaty and thereby rob it of the moral grounds for the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime.

Certain nuclear States have put forward the notion that the international political and security environment is not conducive to complete nuclear disarmament. In the view of Egypt, this logic is both twisted and unconvincing. Proceeding towards nuclear disarmament would, of itself, be a major element in a less dangerous security environment

and a more stable international situation, but the world will continue to face risks, threats and insecurity for as long as no serious and tangible steps are taken down that path. Moreover, nuclear disarmament is a legal obligation that must not depend upon political calculations. Therefore, Egypt calls upon nuclear States to shoulder their responsibilities without delay and to begin to move towards complete nuclear disarmament, in line with their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The fact that the obligations under the Treaty have not been fully met so far fuels the suspicion that there is no desire to comply with its provisions.

For that reason, the issue of nuclear disarmament remains a top priority for the Conference on Disarmament, which needs to work to achieve that goal in a non-discriminatory manner. In this context, I would like not only to point out that the international community fully understands the grave humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, but also to draw attention to the undisputed facts in that regard highlighted by conferences held in Norway, Mexico and Austria. There can be no doubt that the growing understanding of the humanitarian perils of nuclear weapons helped lead the international community to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons following negotiations in New York.

Egypt welcomes that Treaty and looks forward to continued efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons and to free all peoples from the dangers they pose. In that context, Egypt confirms its support for efforts aimed at launching negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Such a treaty should also cover stockpiles of fissile material if it is to become a tool for achieving nuclear disarmament and not just a new mechanism for maintaining the unequal status quo and focusing on non-proliferation.

Madam President, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is facing serious, growing and unprecedented challenges, and Egypt is extremely concerned about the possibility that its credibility may be being eroded away. The essence of those challenges undoubtedly lies in the fact that certain States parties are failing to fulfil their obligations under the Treaty. In that regard, we wish to draw attention, once again, to the lack of fulfilment of disarmament commitments, to the need for cooperation on nuclear matters with States that are not party to the Treaty, and to individual and collective measures that hinder cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which is one of the pillars of the Treaty. Equally important has been the inability of the international community to universalize the Treaty, which has had a negative impact on its benefits, and the persistent refusal to accede to the Treaty on the part of a limited number of States, which has thrown a shadow of doubt over the possibility of achieving all its objectives. Egypt calls once again on States that are not party to the Treaty to accede without delay as non-nuclear States, and it encourages all States parties to work seriously to universalize the Treaty as soon as possible. What erodes the credibility of the Treaty even more is the readiness shown by certain States parties to protect the interests of States non-parties and to hinder the Treaty review mechanism in furtherance of political aims that are unrelated to the goals of the Treaty.

The Middle East is a hotbed of regional and international instability, a situation aggravated by the presence there of a State that is not a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We would like to draw attention to the NPT review conferences of 1995, 2000 and 2010, which called upon Israel, the only Middle Eastern State that is not yet a party to the Treaty, to accede without delay and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in order to guarantee peace, stability and security for all the peoples of the region. It is regrettable moreover, that some States parties have adopted certain positions in the multilateral environment that run contrary to the undertakings they have taken upon themselves.

In recent years the Middle East has witnessed serious and rapid developments in the spheres of security and politics. All the countries of the region and of the world must act decisively to address those developments and the concomitant threats to regional and global security. The establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remains at the top of the list of steps that need to be taken to preserve the security of the region and the well-being of its people. Egypt stands at the forefront of countries calling for this objective to be realized, on the basis of its profound

conviction that the way to achieve peace and security in the Middle East is to focus on the concept of collective rather than selective security in order to guarantee the reciprocal interests of all the countries in the region.

The issue of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has gradually and rightly come to occupy a leading place in the deliberations of NPT review conferences and their preparatory meetings. In fact, developments on that issue, and how such developments are addressed, has become one of the indicators of the success or failure of the review conferences. It was, therefore, regrettable to see a small number of States frustrate the efforts being made to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone during the 2015 NPT review conference. Egypt believes that this issue should be a particular focus of the preparations for the 2020 review conference, not for ethical and substantive reasons alone, but also to associate the indefinite extension of the Treaty decided at the 1995 NPT review conference with the resolution on the Middle East.

It is unfortunate that, nearly 23 years after the resolution was issued, we have seen no practical steps taken to implement it or to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region. In fact, what we are seeing is an unjustified and unacceptable reluctance to implement the resolution coupled with attempts to delay and hinder any serious initiatives or ideas to move towards that goal, however substantive or deeply rooted in the principle of dialogue and consensus they may be. At this point, Egypt would like to highlight the special responsibility of the three NPT depositary States to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and to warn that the persistent postponement of implementation will only further complicate the NPT review mechanism. This is something Egypt will work diligently to avoid, extending its hand to any party that wishes to see the resolutions of previous review conferences respected and implemented, in order to preserve the credibility of the Treaty and of the review conferences.

Madam President, Egypt wishes to emphasize its constructive and active engagement in the Conference on Disarmament and looks forward to making further contributions over the course of the various meetings envisaged in this year's agenda. In this regard, Egypt would like to draw particular attention to the United Nations high-level conference on nuclear disarmament that is due to be held in New York in May. The future of the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery depends on whether or not all States believe in and support the goals of disarmament. In the same way, the serious challenges facing the international community require international multilateral cooperation on a scale never seen before. If we wish to achieve a more secure and peaceful world, it is up to us to promote partnership and collective action over the narrow and limited interest of particular States. I can assure you that Egypt will remain at the forefront of States working to achieve that aim.

The President: I thank Mr. Shoukry for his statement and support. Please allow me now to suspend this meeting for a moment in order to escort Mr. Shoukry from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like to invite our distinguished colleague Mr. Farukh Amil, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in Geneva, to address the Conference. The floor is yours, Sir.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): Madam President, it is my pleasure to speak during this year's high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament under Sweden's presidency. We take note of the remarks delivered by the United Nations Secretary-General yesterday and thank him for his interest in disarmament issues and his personal support for the Conference on Disarmament. We are also pleased to observe the support for the Conference expressed by many ministers and high-level speakers yesterday and today.

Pakistan attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament's role as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body, which is an integral and vital part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We remain committed to the Conference on Disarmament's efficient functioning and are heartened by the recent decision adopted under the Sri Lankan presidency to establish five subsidiary bodies dealing with all agenda items.

Madam President, our march towards the shared goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world has been marred by an erosion of the international consensus established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The quest for establishing regional and global hegemony is continuing unabated. The discriminatory revisionism of the global nuclear order, driven by strategic and commercial considerations, as against the building of a truly equitable rules-based disarmament and non-proliferation regime, is fuelling instability and mistrust.

States aspiring for absolute security and unrestrained freedom of action for themselves need to realize that such objectives cannot be achieved by unrealistically expecting other States to compromise on their legitimate vital interests. It is also equally unrealistic to force through progress on issues that belong to the Conference on Disarmament on a non-consensus basis outside the Conference, by ignoring and trivializing security concerns.

Pakistan supports arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament measures aimed at ensuring equal and undiminished security for all States, as recognized at that first session. Any treaty that does not meet this principle would be a non-starter. No country can be expected to enter into negotiations on a treaty that would be detrimental to its national security, as evidenced by the non-universal participation in the process leading to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the failure to kick off substantive work on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The situation in the Conference on Disarmament today is a reflection of the prevailing strategic realities and the competing priorities of the member States. It has little to do with the Conference's rules of procedure or working methods. This forum has had many successes to its credit when genuine political will existed to advance the disarmament agenda in a non-discriminatory manner. The Conference on Disarmament, with the presence of all stakeholders working under the cardinal consensus rule, is best placed to collectively address the issues on its agenda.

Madam President, after Pakistan's security was qualitatively challenged by the introduction of nuclear weapons in our immediate neighbourhood, we were left with no option but to follow suit, in order to restore strategic stability in South Asia. In parallel, Pakistan pursued numerous efforts to keep South Asia free of nuclear weapons. Between 1974 and 1998, after the first nuclear test was conducted in our neighbourhood, Pakistan made several proposals, including for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia; simultaneous application of IAEA safeguards at all nuclear facilities and bilateral arrangements for their reciprocal inspections; simultaneous accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; a regional Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; a zero missile regime in South Asia; and even the signing of a non-aggression pact.

Even after 1998, we consistently demonstrated our commitment to regional peace and stability. Our proposal for the establishment of a strategic restraint regime, premised on three interlocking and mutually reinforcing elements of conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint, and conventional force balance, as well as our proposal for concluding a bilateral arrangement on a nuclear-test ban, remain on the table.

Strategic stability in South Asia has been negatively impacted by discriminatory approaches and deviation from established non-proliferation norms. It is essential for the international community to adopt an approach to this region that is even-handed and criteria-based, rather than one that is driven by strategic and commercial considerations.

As a responsible nuclear State, Pakistan wishes to contribute to the global efforts towards non-proliferation and disarmament on an equal footing as a mainstream partner of the international community. Pakistan has the requisite credentials that entitle it to benefit from civil nuclear cooperation and trade, and to become part of the multilateral export control regimes, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group, on a non-discriminatory basis.

Pakistan has consistently supported nuclear disarmament through the conclusion of a universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable comprehensive nuclear weapons convention in the Conference on Disarmament, leading to undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

Pakistan has a long history of commitment to promoting negative security assurances. In 1979, Pakistan tabled a draft international convention on this issue at the Conference on Disarmament. Since 1990, Pakistan has annually introduced a resolution on such assurances at the United Nations General Assembly. Pakistan supports the conclusion of a treaty in the Conference on Disarmament to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Pakistan also supports the commencement of negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. There is an urgent need to address this issue in order to prevent outer space from emerging as the new realm of conflict. The draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space tabled jointly by China and the Russian Federation in 2008, and updated in 2014, provides a useful basis for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

Besides the issues of nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which are ripe for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, Pakistan also stands ready to consider legally binding instruments in the Conference on Disarmament on other contemporary issues that are of direct concern to international peace and security. These include cybersecurity, lethal autonomous weapons systems and chemical and biological terrorism. These issues deserve our serious and urgent attention.

A treaty that only bans the future production of fissile material would adversely affect Pakistan's security and freeze the status quo to the permanent strategic advantage of a select few States, which unsurprisingly happen to be the most ardent supporters of such a treaty. The asymmetry in existing fissile material stocks in South Asia has been compounded by discriminatory policies of the major nuclear suppliers. Besides, a treaty on fissile material that does not cover existing stocks would merely be a non-proliferation instrument and make no contribution whatsoever to nuclear disarmament. Pakistan's working paper on elements of a fissile material treaty, outlining concrete proposals for dealing with existing stocks, contained in document CD/2036, remains valid.

In the absence of consensus on the commencement of negotiations on any issue of the Conference on Disarmament's agenda, as is the case now, the next best alternative is to hold structured discussions on all agenda items. As witnessed in the past, in-depth discussions held under the Conference on Disarmament's schedule of activities and working group on the way ahead were of great value. They allowed an interactive exchange of views to better understand the various perspectives and added substance to the Conference on Disarmament's work. We therefore look forward to the resumption of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament on all agenda items, on the basis of the decision adopted earlier this year, without any preconditions or preconceived outcomes in a congenial atmosphere.

Madam President, before concluding, let me reiterate that Pakistan deeply values the Conference on Disarmament's potential in addressing the global security challenges through cooperative multilateralism and consensus-based approaches. You will always find my delegation an active and constructive participant in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank Ambassador Amil for his statement and support for getting the Conference on Disarmament back to work. Now, I would like to ask if any other delegation would like to take the floor? I see the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Thank you, Madam President. I just wanted to take the floor to respond to some comments that were made earlier by one of our distinguished speakers.

The President: It was actually my intention to ask you if your intervention concerned the right of reply, because it was my intention to structure today's work so as to put the segment on the right of reply at the end of the afternoon session, if you agree. I see you do. Thank you very much.

So, if no other delegation would like to take the floor on matters other than the right of reply, which does not seem to be the case, this concludes our business for this morning. The next meeting of the Conference will take place at 3 p.m. today, when we will hear statements by dignitaries from Kazakhstan, Slovakia, Ireland, Japan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Venezuela. The meeting is hereby adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.