

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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**Final record of the one thousand four hundred and fifty-second plenary meeting**


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 13 March 2018 at 10.15 a.m.

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**The President:** I call to order the 1452nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished colleagues, according to the decision contained in document CD/2119, adopted on 16 February, the Conference will appoint the coordinators for the five subsidiary bodies, under the guidance of the presidency and on the basis of equitable regional distribution.

As you know, I have consulted widely on this issue, and I am pleased to present to you the names of five coordinators chosen on the basis of equitable regional distribution. I already indicated that my understanding of equitable regional distribution implied that the Conference would appoint two coordinators from the Group of 21, two from the Group of Western European and Other States and one from the Group of Eastern European States. The names of the five coordinators chosen on this basis are contained in the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.606, which the Conference secretariat circulated yesterday morning and which is also available on your tables.

Before I table the draft decision, allow me to explain how I arrived at this proposal. As you can see in the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.606, I have divided the work of the subsidiary bodies as provided for in the decision contained in document CD/2119. It has not been an obvious conclusion, as the decision is not entirely clear on the establishment of the subsidiary bodies. In its operative paragraph 1, the decision mandates the establishment of “subsidiary bodies on agenda items 1 (one) to 4 (four)”. The plural form points to two or more subsidiary bodies, but the decision is ambiguous on exactly how many subsidiary bodies should be established. Nor does the text state how agenda items 1 to 4 should be divided among the subsidiary bodies. The decision is much clearer on agenda items 5, 6 and 7: it says that one subsidiary body is to be established for those items. It became clear early on in my consultations that member States wished to follow the agenda of the Conference and have four different subsidiary bodies on the first four items of the agenda and one on the other three items, as I informed you in the first week of the Swedish presidency. We were looking to identify coordinators for five subsidiary bodies, and everyone seemed to agree.

Things became trickier when, during the consultations, delegations raised the question of which issues would be discussed under the different agenda items. While agenda items 3 to 7 are rather self-explanatory, agenda items 1 and 2 are anything but: these two agenda items are often perceived as interlinked and overlapping when it comes to some of the core issues on the agenda of the Conference.

There has not been any clear practice on those issues over the past two decades, mainly because there has not been any clear practice on any substantive issues in the Conference since 1996. There have been attempts to agree on the programme of work since 1996, as we all know. All but one of them failed, and the one that was adopted was subsequently reversed. There are also scattered decisions on a schedule of activities, none of which have led to any concrete progress. It is thus very difficult to draw any conclusions regarding the question of which agenda item – 1 or 2 – should cover some of the relevant core issues. Even today, opinions vary among delegations. However, a pattern we were able to discern is that agenda items 1 and 2 have been considered jointly since 2014. While this does not, of course, constitute established practice, in the absence of established practice it has nonetheless guided my decision to propose that we also consider them jointly in the current context. For practical reasons, given the scope and richness of the issues under these two agenda items, I have divided them between two subsidiary bodies, with two different coordinators.

The draft decision is the presidency’s best effort to attempt to meet the contradictory concerns of different delegations. It is my intention to table this draft decision for adoption today. Before tabling the draft decision for adoption, however, I would like to ask whether any delegation wishes to take the floor. I see the distinguished delegate of Pakistan. Ambassador, you have the floor.

**Mr. Amil (Pakistan):** Madam President, let me begin by expressing our appreciation and gratitude for all the hard work and the sincere efforts undertaken by you and your team to operationalize the decision adopted by the Conference on 16 February 2018 to establish

the five subsidiary bodies. We acknowledge your extensive consultations aimed at identifying and proposing to us the appointment of five coordinators on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. My delegation engaged with you in a very constructive manner throughout this process. We thank the distinguished Ambassadors of Indonesia, the Netherlands, Brazil, Germany and Belarus for volunteering to act as coordinators and assure them of our full cooperation and support.

There is an important detail in which the draft decision circulated by you, contained in document CD/WP.606, deviates from the decision contained in CD/2119. The decision adopted by the Conference was to establish subsidiary bodies “on agenda items 1 (one) to 4 (four) and one on agenda items 5 (five), 6 (six) and 7 (seven)”. It was generally understood to mean that four separate subsidiary bodies would be established to cover respectively agenda items 1, 2, 3 and 4, and that a fifth subsidiary body would be established to encompass agenda items 5, 6 and 7 combined. The decision, however, did not stipulate any sort of combining or fusing together of agenda items 1 and 2. Where the decision wanted certain agenda items considered together, as in the case of agenda items 5, 6 and 7, it explicitly said so.

The draft circulated by you, Madam President, has clubbed together agenda items 1 and 2 for both the first and the second subsidiary bodies. In other words, you have proposed that two subsidiary bodies be established with the exact same title and scope. This unfortunately is not acceptable to my delegation, as it deviates significantly from the decision already adopted by the Conference, and it has implications for the substantive work of these two formal subsidiary bodies.

You will recall that in your very first bilateral meeting with us, I stressed to you, as the Conference President, the need to follow the adopted decision in full letter and spirit, and I was satisfied with your assurance that you had no intention to digress from it. The titles of the first two subsidiary bodies should, in our view, conform strictly to the respective items on the agenda of the Conference, as contained in document CD/2116, adopted by consensus on 23 January 2018.

The first subsidiary body, proposed to be coordinated by the distinguished Ambassador of Indonesia, should be limited to agenda item 1 – “cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament” – and the second subsidiary body, proposed to be coordinated by the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands, should be exclusively focused on agenda item 2 – “prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters”. These changes would make the draft decision consistent with the decision already adopted by the Conference and avoid any afterthoughts and reinterpretations.

Before concluding, let me assure you that my delegation remains ready and committed to engage with you, Madam President, and with the other delegations in a constructive spirit towards the early resumption of the substantive work in the Conference on the basis of the decision contained in document CD/2119. Let me re-emphasize that it is not our intention to derail that decision, which was adopted with our wholehearted support. Our aim is simply to ensure that the operational framework to implement that decision is fully consistent with it. I thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan for clarifying his interpretation of the decision. Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor? I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Iran.

**Mr. Heidari** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Madam President. Let me first and foremost congratulate you on the very transparent work and consultation that you have carried out for the selection of the coordinators. We are very pleased with all your efforts and we see that we are now in a position to congratulate all five coordinators and bring the Conference to begin substantive work.

So far as this draft decision is concerned, we also gave consideration to the point that was elaborated eloquently by the Ambassador of Pakistan. We came to the conclusion that the agenda item assigned to the second subsidiary body is different from the agenda item of the Conference. Therefore, we see a discrepancy in that regard. The title of agenda item 2 has always been, from the outset of the Conference, “Prevention of nuclear war,

including all related matters”. Therefore, the categorization of these two agenda items is, in our view, not consistent with the agenda of the Conference. So we look forward to your explanation in this regard. So far, Iran is ready to join the consensus on this draft decision but, as the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan has eloquently explained, it seems to us that the second subsidiary body should be allocated the second Conference agenda item.

**The President:** I thank the distinguished representative of Iran, and I appreciate his kind words. I now give the floor to the Ambassador from the Chinese delegation.

**Mr. Fu Cong (China):** Thank you, Madam Chair. First, let me thank you for distributing the draft decision and for the extensive work you have put into it. I am asking for the floor to express our support for what has been said by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan. During our bilateral consultations with you, we always understood that the subsidiary bodies would correspond to the agenda items listed on the agenda of the Conference. So frankly, when we saw this, we were a little taken off guard. I do not want to belabour the point that has been eloquently explained by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, so I will just say that we support that point.

**The President:** I thank you very much and I am sorry if I caught you off guard; that was not our intention. I see the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom. Please, Mr. Rowland, you have the floor.

**Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom):** Thank you very much, Madam President. I would note that we have done this in various ways in previous years. In the decision contained in document CD/1978, adopted in 2014, we got round this issue by appointing the same number of coordinators and the same number of bodies, but we said then that the first body would be on “agenda items 1 and 2, with a general focus on nuclear disarmament”, led by a coordinator from the Group of 21, and that the second body would be on “agenda items 1 and 2 with a general focus on the ban of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices”, coordinated by a member of the Group of Western European and Other States. Therefore, I wonder whether instead of repeating the full titles we could just go back to the decision, noting the desire to have all the agenda items covered, but referring to past practice. That would be a way of ensuring that we have two separate groups.

**The President:** I thank the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom for his creative proposal. I would like first to hear out all the delegations that would like to speak and then I will get back to you. I see my distinguished colleague from the Syrian Arab Republic. Ambassador Aala, you have the floor.

**Mr. Aala (Syrian Arab Republic):** Thank you, Madam President. Let me begin by thanking you for your extensive efforts to reach a consensus on the names of the coordinators of the five subsidiary bodies. I congratulate you on that.

I have taken the floor, Madam President, to express our views on the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.606, presented to the Conference. My delegation supports the position adopted by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan on the interpretation of the decision contained in document CD/2119. In our view, the new draft decision should correspond to the agenda items adopted at the beginning of this session, and thus should reflect the content of document CD/2116. I am not going to repeat the same arguments presented by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, but we support that position and argument.

**The President:** I thank the distinguished delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic. I am sorry I overlooked Ambassador Biontino of Germany. Sir, you have the floor.

**Mr. Biontino (Germany):** Thank you, Madam President. Our delegation would also like to thank you very much for your very intense, transparent and inclusive consultations on nominating the coordinators.

We could have lived with the draft proposal that you put before us, but I would like to make a couple of points. We have an established practice in the Conference. Part of the established practice is that we have essentially what we call four core items: nuclear disarmament; a ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other

explosive devices; the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as the items that have been associated with what you would call “working group No. 5”. This is past practice and is reflected, for instance – as has been said by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom – in the decision contained in document CD/1978, adopted in 2014, and the decision contained in document CD/2021, adopted in 2015. This was also the practice that was maintained in the working group on the way ahead and the different subgroups of that working group. In other words, we associated items on the formal agenda of the Conference with substantive core items.

We would not have any problem with the proposal made by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, because indeed it would correctly align the decision we are going to take here right now with the decision establishing the working groups. But I think we should make clear which working groups should be associated with which core items that we have dealt with in the past. From our perspective, that can be usefully done in a footnote, where we can refer to past practice, whereby under items 1 and 2 we always dealt with nuclear disarmament and the ban on the production of fissile materials. The other items are more clear, I think, but the footnote may help to clarify things.

**The President:** I thank the distinguished delegate of Germany, Ambassador Biontino, for your creative suggestions. I now see the distinguished delegate, Ambassador Gill of India.

**Mr. Gill (India):** Thank you, Madam President, for pursuing the implementation of the decision contained in document CD/2119, which was adopted under the Sri Lankan presidency. My delegation listened very carefully to the explanation that you provided with regard to the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.606, which is under consideration today. Our understanding is that your decision corresponds to the expectations of the delegations in the room, that were captured in the decision taken on 16 February 2018. Our colleague from Germany has reminded us that those expectations focus in particular on substantive work on the four so-called core agenda items in the Conference, namely: nuclear disarmament; a prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, often referred to as the fissile material cut-off treaty issue; the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and negative security assurances. The additional factor brought in by the Sri Lankan presidency’s proposal, which was adopted by consensus, was a new, in a sense, substantive cluster – an additional core item if you will – that combines agenda items 5, 6 and 7, as well as some other aspects that have been highlighted by delegations. So this is the set of expectations that we are following up on, and your explanation made it clear that the coordinators would pursue those four core agenda items and the new set of issues as part of this, let us say, innovative way of clustering these agenda items.

My delegation did not have the expectation that we would have a coordinator pursue a single agenda item, because that has not been the practice of the Conference. If you look at the last programme of work, adopted by the Conference in 2009, there was no separate working group on agenda item 2. There were two working groups under agenda item 1, and subsequently we started to put together agenda items 1 and 2. Because of the overlap you mentioned right at the outset, we used the term “with a general focus on”, as our colleague from the United Kingdom pointed out, so that the work in the various clusters, or “subsidiary bodies” in this decision, would be unambiguous and so that, when delegations come to a particular discussion, it will be clear in their minds whether the focus is on nuclear disarmament or on the fissile material cut-off treaty.

With that understanding, we were willing to go along with the draft decision that you presented. Unfortunately, we see that we are not in a position to go forward on that basis. We therefore wish, of course, to be flexible in order to ensure that everyone is on board and that we do not derail the decision that was taken last month. However, I think it should be very clear what we are trying to do, and it should also be very clear to everyone in this room that we are not, through this draft decision and its implementation, simply obliterating any particular core agenda item.

**The President:** I thank Ambassador Gill for his intervention. It is absolutely true that the presidency has attempted to meet the expectations of member States. Again, the President is a guide, but we can only come to a decision with the help of all the delegations. So I would now like to ask if there is any other delegation that would like to take the floor? I see the distinguished delegate of Egypt.

**Mr. Atta** (Egypt): Thank you, Madam President. First of all, I would like to thank you for all the extensive consultations you have conducted to appoint the coordinators since we adopted our most recent decision, contained in document CD/2119.

Madam President, generally speaking I agree with the views that have been expressed by many delegations here about the need for the language we are using on this draft decision to correspond to the language in the decision we adopted previously. In fact, during the consultations on the draft decision we previously adopted, my delegation proposed that we should highlight clearly in the language of the decision the exact titles of the agenda items and the subsidiary bodies but, for the sake of brevity, the proposal was not taken on board.

I would like in this regard to make an observation here concerning paragraph 5 of the draft decision, which somehow modifies the titles of agenda items 5, 6 and 7. While I generally agree that the preamble of this decision can include reference to “emerging and other issues relevant to the substantive work of the Conference”, that same wording is added in paragraph 5, but this does not correspond to the agenda of the Conference, which contains no reference to “emerging and other issues relevant to the substantive work of the Conference”. So what applies to agenda items 1 and 2, in my view, should also apply to paragraph 5 here, and to agenda items 5, 6 and 7. And since we have heard some proposals that were presented by members of the Conference, I think that, in order to resolve this dispute, we should focus on the scope of this decision. The decision that we previously adopted established the subsidiary bodies and, for the sake of brevity in this decision as well, we could limit the focus of the decision to the appointment of coordinators, mentioning the agenda item for each coordinator, but without going into the specific language of the agenda item. This is a procedural decision, and I believe that limiting the scope of the decision to the procedure for the appointment of coordinators alone could resolve the dispute we are seeing here.

**The President:** I thank the distinguished delegate of Egypt for his comments and suggestions. Let me just reiterate that in my explanation I tried to outline how the presidency tried again to capture the expectations of member States, so again, this is an assumption we have put forward to you. Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor? I see the delegate of Cuba.

**Ms. Pérez Álvarez** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Good morning, Madam President. I just wish to say that we have noted the references made by some delegations to the title of the subsidiary bodies. In response to what was stated by those delegations, our understanding is that they are trying to ensure that the title of subsidiary groups or bodies 1 and 2 coincide with the title of the agenda items of the Conference on Disarmament. In our case, we would prefer body 1 and body 2 to maintain the exact title of the agenda item of the Conference, and, with regard to paragraph 5, which is the title of subsidiary body 5, we could be flexible inasmuch as the decision that was adopted indicates that subsidiary group or body 5 would also address emerging issues. Thus, in response to the comments of previous delegations, we would prefer the title of subsidiary body 1 and subsidiary body 2 to reflect exactly the same subject matter as the agenda adopted by the Conference and, in the case of the title of subsidiary body 5, we could be flexible, since the decision adopted indicated that subsidiary body 5 would include other topics addressed in the substantive work of the Conference and emerging issues.

**The President:** Thank you, delegate of Cuba. I ask again, is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor? I see the colleague from the Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Kim In-chul** (Republic of Korea): Thank you, Madam President, I would really like to pay tribute to all the efforts you have made to table this draft decision. To help our understanding, through you I would like to ask the representative of Indonesia and the Ambassador of the Netherlands what their understanding was when they agreed to propose

themselves as the coordinators, as written in the draft decision. It is very important that we should hear from them. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank the delegate from the Republic of Korea. Is there any other delegate who would like to take the floor? I see the distinguished delegate of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you very much Madam President. The Russian delegation has two concrete proposals that we hope will help us find mutually acceptable solutions. As several delegations have quite rightly pointed out, the decision contained in document CD/2119 of 16 February includes a number of ambiguous points. I think we can correct them in your draft. First, we could specify that the intention is to establish five subsidiary bodies. Thus, in paragraph 2, before the words “subsidiary bodies”, we can place the word “five”; that is in the second line. I will read it in English:

(*spoke in English*)

“Decides, on the basis of equitable geographic distribution, to appoint the following coordinators of the five subsidiary bodies.”

(*spoke in Russian*)

If all the participants in the Conference agree with such a solution, we will arrive at a consensus on this question and at the same time will correct one of the ambiguities or uncertainties in the previous decision taken by the Conference. I should think we would be within our rights to do so.

As for the question about the agenda, each delegation is entirely entitled to put forth logical arguments on this score. At the same time, taking into account the decision contained in document CD/2119, we have agreed that the subsidiary bodies will operate along the lines of the agenda items. The agenda of the Conference on Disarmament differs significantly from the Conference’s list of key issues. I would like to specifically point that out. The Conference can take a decision and adopt somewhat different terms of reference. But we cannot change a decision or agreements that have previously been reached. In this connection, I would like to propose that we confine ourselves to simple references to the existing agenda items. For instance, for item 1:

(*spoke in English*)

“His Excellency Mr. Hasan Kleib, Ambassador of Indonesia, on agenda item 1 as contained in document CD/2116.”

**The President:** I thank the Russian delegate for his statement and for the proposals he has just put to the members of the Conference. I would like now to ask the delegates about two proposals that have been floated in this room. I sense there may be some interest in going along with them and maybe supporting them. Should that not be the case, I will propose a different way of working. I would like to ask the delegate of Germany, Ambassador Biontino, to repeat his suggestion, and then ask the members of this august body to consider whether that would be acceptable.

Does the delegate of Pakistan wish to have the floor before that? You have the floor.

**Mr. Jadoon** (Pakistan): Thank you, Madam President. With due respect, I did not mean to interrupt you and the way you were conducting business, but I was slightly compelled to do so. My delegation was the first one to make a statement in the plenary meeting and we made a very concrete proposal. You clearly heard a number of delegations support it. It is only logical that you first put that to the house, and not let other proposals, which you might view more sympathetically, take precedence. Thank you so much.

**The President:** I thank the delegate of Pakistan for taking the floor. Of course, the presidency has no emotions, so this is not about sympathy or antipathy, but thank you for keeping the order of speakers. I therefore suggest that your proposal be put to the floor. I would like to request this distinguished, august body to comment upon the proposal of the delegation of Pakistan; after that I will ask Ambassador Biontino to comment.

As a matter of fact, since I sense that there are some expectations in the room – and again the President is the one who is supposed to guide this august body – I sense in order to be able to move on this decision, which I still understand is the will of the 65 members, I will now adjourn the meeting and transform this meeting into an informal meeting. So with this I would like to suspend this meeting. So again, just to repeat, we will now be in an informal setting where I expect that we can raise the various proposals that have been voiced this morning so as to see if we can come a bit further. We will have a couple of minutes of rest or whatever is necessary to gather our thoughts.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11.25 a.m.*

**The President:** Distinguished colleagues, the formal plenary meeting is resumed. I see on my list of speakers the delegate of the United Kingdom and then the delegate of the United States. You have the floor, Ambassador Rowland.

**Mr. Rowland** (United Kingdom): As before, but with gravitas. Madam President, I have a few words to say about the incident in the United Kingdom in which a father and his daughter were poisoned with a nerve agent. It is now clear that the individuals were poisoned with a military grade nerve agent, the type developed by Russia. This is part of a group of nerve agents known as Novichok. There has been positive identification of this chemical agent by world leading experts at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down, and they have acknowledged that Russia has previously produced this agent and would still be capable of doing so. The record of the Russian Federation in conducting State-sponsored assassinations, and an assessment that Russia views some defectors as legitimate targets for assassinations, led the Government to conclude that it is highly likely that Russia was responsible for the act against Sergei and Yulia Skripal.

There are therefore only two plausible explanations for what happened in Salisbury on 4 March. Either this was a direct attack by the Russian State against my country, or the Russian Government lost control of this potentially catastrophically damaging nerve agent and allowed it to get into the hands of others. Yesterday, the Foreign Secretary summoned the Russian Ambassador to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and asked him to explain which of these two possibilities it is, and therefore to account for how this Russian-produced nerve agent could have been deployed in Salisbury against this father and his daughter. The Russian Federation must immediately provide full and complete disclosure of the Novichok programme to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The Foreign Secretary has requested the Russian Government's response by the end of today.

Madam President, this action has happened against a backdrop of a well-established pattern of Russian State aggression. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea was the first time since the Second World War that one sovereign nation has forcibly taken territory from another in Europe. Russia has fomented conflict in the Donbas, repeatedly violated the national airspace of several European countries and mounted a sustained campaign of cyberespionage and disruption. This has included meddling in elections and hacking the Danish Ministry of Defence and the Bundestag, among many others.

During his recent state of the union address, President Putin showed videographics of missile launches, flight trajectories and explosions, including the modelling of attacks on the United States, with a series of warheads impacting in Florida. The extrajudicial killing of terrorists and dissidents outside Russia was given legal sanction by the Russian parliament in 2006, and of course Russia used radiological substances in its barbaric assault on Mr. Litvinenko. We saw promises to assist the investigation then, but they resulted in denial and obfuscation and the stifling of due process in the rule of law. Following Mr. Litvinenko's death, we expelled Russian diplomats, suspended security cooperation, broke off bilateral plans on visas, froze the assets of the suspects and put them on international extradition lists, and these measures remain in place.

Furthermore, a commitment to collective defence and security through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) remains as strong as ever in the face of Russian behaviour. Indeed, our armed forces have a leading role in NATO's enhanced forward presence, with British troops leading a multinational battle group in Estonia. We have led



the way in securing tough sanctions against the Russian economy and we have at all stages worked closely with our allies and will continue to do so. We must now stand ready to take much more extensive measures. On Wednesday we will consider in detail the response from the Russian State. Should there be no credible response, we will conclude that this action amounts to the unlawful use of force by the Russian State against the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister will then set out the full range of measures that we will take in response. Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** I thank the delegate from the United Kingdom and now I give the floor to Ambassador Wood of the United States.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Thank you, Madam President. With regard to the recent nerve agent attack in Salisbury, the American people are horrified by what happened in Salisbury. It is frankly beyond comprehension that a State actor could carry out such an attack, an attack that clearly could have endangered tens, hundreds, if not thousands potentially. I want to be very clear, the Government of the United States and the people of the United States stand firmly behind the United Kingdom. I know that the United Kingdom is waiting for a full explanation from the Government of Russia.

We are outraged that Russia has again engaged in such behaviour. Those responsible must face appropriate, serious consequences. Again, as I said, I know the United Kingdom is waiting for a full explanation from the Russian Government. We are all waiting for an explanation from the Russian Government. Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** I thank the delegate of the United States and now I see the delegate of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you Madam President. As we have already noted on numerous occasions, the Russian delegation categorically opposes attempts to turn the Conference on Disarmament into an arena for political brawls on questions having nothing to do with the Conference's mandate. However, when there are clear anti-Russian attacks, we are forced to make use of the right of reply.

Regarding the substance of the matter related to the Salisbury incident, comments have been made on this score not just by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also by Russian President Vladimir Putin. As you can imagine, the British must be well informed of this, at least through their Embassy in Moscow.

Regarding the rest of the accusations, they are not new to us. They are an attempt to shift responsibility for all the woes of the world away from the faulty and onto the sound. I will not become bogged down by such matters, which have been the subject of much commentary, including in this chamber.

Let us instead focus on the work and those tasks that we have ahead of us. Incidentally, the matters raised by our colleagues warrant close attention in a slightly different context. As you are all well aware, on 1 March 2016 the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation put forward here, at the Conference on Disarmament, an initiative to draft an international convention to combat acts of chemical and biological terrorism. Their interventions, willingly or not, confirm the relevance of this initiative and the need to promptly adopt the programme of work on the basis of the Russian proposal contained in document CD/WP.600. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank the delegate of the Russian Federation for exercising his right of reply. I now see the delegate of the United Kingdom and then the United States. You have the floor, Ambassador Rowland.

**Mr. Rowland** (United Kingdom): Thank you very much, Madam President. I say to the Russian delegation and to any other delegation that thinks that this has nothing to do with the purpose of this forum, that they must think again.

Disarmament and arms control are based on a level of trust. It does not have to be complete trust, but it has to be based on a modicum of trust. The actions that we are seeing consistently from the Russian Government lead us to believe that that trust does not exist, and that is a real barrier to the work that we do here. The United Kingdom recognized in 2015, in its defence and security review, that Russia was posing more of a threat again, and

we were very explicit about that, but we were also very explicit that work needed to continue within formats such as the P5 to build trust, and that is something that we have worked on since we established that body to look at disarmament issues in 2009. So I say to you again, trust is very important within the work that we do, and it is very important that we discuss issues such as the one I refer to today, which undermine that trust. Russia has until midnight to provide a response. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom and give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Thank you, Madam President. I am taking the floor just to respond to the comments that were made by our Russian colleague. As I made very clear in my statement during the high-level week, the United States cannot support the proposal for a chemical and biological weapons convention put forward by Russia. I have made clear, many times, the great concern that the United States Government has about repeated attempts by the Russian Federation to block action in the United Nations Security Council with regard to chemical weapons use in Syria. Given that unwillingness to deal with that issue, which is of great concern to the international community, given what we have seen happen in Salisbury, and other cases, it is hard to imagine us being able to take that chemical and biological weapons convention proposal seriously. And so again, I make very clear, the United States will not support that proposal put forward by the Russian Federation. Thank you Madam President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the United States and now I give the floor to the delegate of the Russian Federation to exercise his right of reply.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you Madam President. I do not think there have been any examples in international practice where mutual trust has been established on the basis of threats and ultimatums. That cannot succeed. We have heard all this before as well and, naturally, we were forced to take measures in response, in this case, military and technical measures. But they were taken because we were forced to do so, and only once it became clear that political and diplomatic means were ineffective. As the Russian representatives have stated, including at the highest level, we are ready to engage in cooperation and a serious dialogue on the basis of national interests. There is simply no other way to arrive at mutually acceptable solutions.

With regard to the Russian initiative to draw up an international convention, answering “we do not support it” is not an answer. Usually in negotiations, if a party is displeased about something, it puts forward alternative proposals or proposes amendments, for instance. It is not for me to explain to you the basics of multilateral diplomacy. But an outright refusal is simply an attempt to dissimulate an unwillingness to seriously work on solving the important international problems of the day.

As for the Security Council, it seems to me that our colleagues in that international body will work out for themselves how to proceed. We think that for our part, we here should focus on solving the problems that are now before the Conference, namely: finishing the draft decision and finally getting down to substantive work. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Russian delegation. Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor? I see the Ambassador of the United States.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Thank you Madam President. I will be very brief with regard to the comments made by my Russian colleague. We have put forward an alternative to the Russian chemical and biological weapons convention proposal, and that is to implement existing mechanisms to deal with the question. We have made that point over and over again to our Russian colleagues. They have not wanted to accept that. They have wanted to create a new convention that was not necessary. We should focus on implementing existing mechanisms. Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** I thank the delegate of the United States and give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Rowland** (United Kingdom): Thank you very much, Madam President. Our country believes in justice and the rule of law and the rules-based international system, and

we will give, and have given, Russia the opportunity to respond. That window for response is still open – there is still a possibility of taking this forward under the rule of law, in an orderly manner.

I would say on the Russian proposal for a convention on chemical and biological weapons and terrorism that we have always had doubts about the purpose of this instrument, fearing that it was intended to detract attention away from the use of chemical weapons by certain States. Unfortunately, Russia's likely actions in the United Kingdom add further credence to our concerns and make us even less inclined to go down that road. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom and give the floor to the delegate of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have two points to raise. First, the Russian Federation has never rejected the idea of strengthening existing instruments, be it United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the Chemical Weapons Convention or the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Nobody knows better than our colleagues from the United States and Britain what kind of cooperation took place among the depositaries, i.e., with their Russian colleagues, in the framework of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, last year. Thanks to our joint efforts we were able to arrive at decisions that will make it possible to initiate processes for the discussion of important and topical issues in the framework of that Convention. That is my first point.

As for resolution 1540 (2004), in 2016 the regular comprehensive review of this international document was concluded. The Russian delegation, like the delegations of other countries, including the United States and Britain, played an active role in the process. I think you are just as aware as I am of the positive outcomes.

Now about the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). It was just last autumn that a decision was taken by OPCW, but we consider such measures to be insufficient. It is extremely important to note that, if we had an instrument such as an international convention to combat acts of biological and chemical terrorism in place, such questions would be unlikely to arise at the meetings of the Conference on Disarmament; they would be resolved within the framework of such an instrument. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank the delegate of the Russian Federation for his statement. I would now like to ask if there is any other delegation that would like to take the floor. I see none and, if this is the case, the President's intention is now to invite interested delegations to conduct informal consultations in the adjacent room, room No. 2. For this we need to suspend this meeting. So this meeting is suspended and will be resumed in 45 minutes. The meeting is suspended.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.45. a.m. and resumed at 12.45 p.m.*

**The President:** The formal meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed. I thank those delegations that are interested and concerned and that are willing to consult informally, and I will now convey to you that in a minute or two I will adjourn this meeting so as to give us time to consult upon the various ideas that came up in the informal session. Before I adjourn the meeting, I would like to ask the delegations if there is anyone who would like to take the floor? I see no one. So, with this, I will come back to you and inform you in due time about when the next formal plenary session of the Conference can take place. In the meantime, we will continue consultations based upon the interventions, ideas and reflections we have heard so far. The meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.*