

Conference on Disarmament

English

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


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 12 June 2018, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Hussam Edin Aala (Syrian Arab Republic)

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The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I call to order the 1460th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. As I indicated last week, I have been continuing my consultations on the Conference's programme of work, in accordance with rule 29 of the rules of procedure, and today I would like to give you a brief presentation on the outcome of those consultations. However, I will put that off until after we have listened to statements from representatives who have asked to speak at this meeting. I will begin by giving the floor to the first speaker on my list, the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Ambassador Jorge Valero, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. Valero (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Group of 21. The Group congratulates you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and is grateful for the open, transparent and efficient manner in which you are directing its work. The Group would also like to extend its thanks to last year's and this year's Presidents for their efforts, which have enabled the Conference to resume its substantive work and to relaunch negotiations as soon as possible in order to put an end to the long-standing stalemate.

The Group welcomes the initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the personal interest that he has shown in disarmament issues. The members of the Group are examining the agenda for disarmament entitled *Securing Our Common Future*, which was presented in Geneva on 24 May 2018, and wish to highlight the fact, once again, that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Group wishes to emphasize the importance of maintaining this forum and of preserving its essence, role and mandate.

We wish to underscore the need to redouble our efforts to reinforce and revitalize the Conference and to maintain its credibility by resuming its substantive work, including negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The Group of 21 reaffirms its working paper on nuclear disarmament (CD/2099) and all the other documents that it submitted to the Conference in 2017.

Nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community, and the Group of 21 reiterates its profound disquiet about the risk to the survival of humankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility or threat of their use.

Stressing its own strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, the Group underlines the urgent need to conduct negotiations on this issue, without delay, in the Conference on Disarmament. As its top priority, the Conference should begin negotiating on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons via, inter alia, a convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time. In that context, the Group recalls its working paper CD/2063, in which it calls for the urgent launch of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference and specifically on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons that prohibits the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and provides for their destruction.

The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace on the occasion of the second summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28 and 29 January 2014. That proclamation includes a commitment on the part of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. We hope that this proclamation will be followed by other political proclamations of zones of peace in other regions of the world.

The Group welcomes the Political Declaration of Quito, adopted at the fourth summit of CELAC, held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC to the maintenance of international peace and security, political

independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament. The Group also welcomes the Political Declaration of Punta Cana, adopted at the fifth summit of CELAC, held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, which reaffirms the commitment of CELAC to achieve the total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. CELAC reaffirms its commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace and highlights its character as a zone free of nuclear weapons as established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The Group welcomes the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 2017 in Mexico in the framework of the twenty-fifth session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Group also welcomes the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, signed in Cairo, Egypt, in 1996. The Treaty, which came into effect on 15 July 2009, seeks to prevent the stationing of nuclear explosive devices and prohibits the testing of nuclear weapons and the dumping of radioactive waste in the continent. The African Commission on Nuclear Energy was established to ensure fulfilment of the commitments made under the Treaty.

The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013 and reaffirms the related follow-up resolution (A/RES/72/251). As the former Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly mentioned in the Conference on Disarmament in 2015: “The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels.” In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals set forth in this resolution, in particular the General Assembly’s call for an urgent decision by the Conference to commence negotiations on nuclear disarmament, including, in particular, a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Group of 21 will make a separate statement in the Conference plenary on this issue.

The Group also welcomes the decision to convene, in New York no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard. The Group welcomes with appreciation the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, just as it welcomes the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly that is organized every year to commemorate and promote this observance. The Group wishes to draw attention to the events held around the world to celebrate the International Day and calls on Governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action to commemorate the occasion each year.

The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-ended Working Group mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons and hopes that it will contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference and, in particular, on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

The Group takes note of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017 at the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/258, held in New York from 27 to 31 March and 15 June to 7 July 2017.

The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the Group reaffirms the

urgent need for the conclusion – as a matter of the highest priority – of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Group wishes to express its concern that, despite the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States and long-standing requests by non-nuclear-weapon States to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard.

Of even greater concern is the fact that non-nuclear-weapon States have, either implicitly or explicitly, been subject to nuclear threats from certain nuclear-weapon States in disregard of the latter's obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. The Group also calls for the commencement of negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, in accordance with General Assembly resolution A/RES/72/59.

The Group concurs with the statement made by the former Secretary-General of the United Nations on 23 May 2015 that there is a growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and, in this regard, welcomes the conferences on this subject convened in Oslo on 4 and 5 March 2015, in Mexico on 13 and 14 February 2014 and in Vienna on 8 and 9 November 2014.

In this context, the Group wishes to express its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear-weapon detonation and its long-term catastrophic consequences on human health, the environment and other vital economic resources, thus endangering present and future generations. The Group believes that a full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments directed towards nuclear disarmament on the basis of an inclusive process involving all States.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) welcome the spirit of the findings of the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. We call on all nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty to implement their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI. Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and unacceptable risks and threats associated with a nuclear-weapon detonation, we will endeavour to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. In this regard, we note the relevant resolutions adopted at the seventy-second session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Group of 21 wishes to express its disappointment at the fact that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake any substantive work on its agenda. The Group takes note of the various efforts to reach consensus on the Conference's programme of work and all the subsequent decisions, efforts and proposals towards this end. The Group welcomes the decision adopted by the Conference on 16 February 2018, under the presidency of Sri Lanka, to establish – in accordance with paragraph 23 of its rules of procedure – subsidiary bodies on agenda items 1 to 4 and another such body on agenda items 5, 6 and 7, which could also consider emerging and other issues relevant to substantive work of the Conference.

The Group reiterates the urgency for the Conference of executing its mandate as set out at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and of adopting and implementing a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, inter alia, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure, particularly the rule of consensus.

The Group encourages you, Mr. President, to provide us with guidance and to continue conducting wide-ranging consultations with all delegations to the Conference to achieve this goal. The Group furthermore believes that the furtherance of the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery hinges on the exercise of the necessary political will, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

While expressing its deep concern over the persistent failure to reach a consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the United Nations disarmament machinery and particularly on the fulfilment of commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for an early convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and expresses its deep concern over the fact that the special session is yet to be convened.

The Group welcomes the successful outcome of the Open-ended Working Group, which was convened pursuant to resolution 65/66 and decision 70/551 of the General Assembly and held its substantive sessions in 2016 and 2017 under the leadership of Ecuador. The Working Group adopted recommendations, by consensus, to establish objectives and an agenda for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It also reaffirmed the importance of the existing United Nations disarmament machinery and examined ways to strengthen it and make it more effective. The Group of 21 welcomes the fact that the General Assembly of the United Nations has approved the report of the Open-ended Working Group and the substantive recommendations contained therein.

The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and deeply regrets the delay in adopting concrete measures to that end. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT wish to express their disappointment and deep concern about the fact that three States parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositaries and co-sponsors of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference, including the process for establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as called for in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT also wish to express their very serious concern over the failure to implement the 1995 resolution and, in accordance with paragraph 6 of that resolution, call upon “all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction” and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT express their utmost concern at the continuing failure to implement the 1995 resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT review conferences, which erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, given that the indefinite extension of the Treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm the urgency of the accession by Israel to the Treaty without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. While the lack of agreement on an outcome document could undermine the NPT regime, the members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT emphasize the continued validity of the commitments made in 1995, 2000 and 2010, particularly the unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament, and call for their full implementation without further delay.

The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the possibility of expanding the membership of the Conference on Disarmament and emphasizes the urgent need to address the prevailing dichotomy between lack of progress on disarmament and increasing emphasis and efforts towards non-proliferation. The Group calls on all member States, as a matter of priority, to demonstrate their support for and investment in education for disarmament and non-proliferation in a balanced and comprehensive manner through the training and fellowships provided by the United Nations.

The Group also recognizes the importance of enhancing engagement between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament in line with decisions taken by the Conference and continues to support the strengthening of the Conference's interaction with civil society. In this regard, the Group welcomes the convening of the Informal Conference on Disarmament – Civil Society Forum on 19 March 2015 and a second informal civil society forum on 22 June 2016.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ambassador Jorge Valero, representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for his statement and for his kind words and expression of support for the work of the presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Farukh Amil, who will also speak on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): I have the honour to deliver the following statement, on behalf of the Group of 21, on negative security assurances. The Group of 21 reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Group remains convinced that, as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use and proliferation persists. Therefore, as reflected in the Group's statement delivered by Venezuela today, the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including on a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as mandated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 68/32, leading to an agreement on global non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time.

Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need to reach early agreement on a universal, unconditional, irrevocable and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances, as a high priority, as called for in General Assembly resolution 72/25. Such an instrument should be clear, credible, unambiguous and non-discriminatory and should respond to the concerns of all the parties.

The Group stresses, in particular, that the negative security assurances provided under a legally binding instrument should be free of any conditions. The Group reaffirms the right of non-nuclear-weapon States not to be attacked by or threatened by nuclear-weapon States with the use of nuclear weapons and strongly calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from any such action or threat, whether implicit or explicit. The Group underlines the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. The Group recalls the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, held on 26 September 2013, which demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority. The Group supports and calls for the full implementation of related General Assembly resolutions 68/32, 69/58, 70/34, 71/71, 72/251 in follow-up to that meeting.

The Group of 21 also wishes to highlight the importance of the commemoration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons devoted to furthering this objective and welcomes the decision to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament.

The Group wishes to draw attention to the objectives laid down in General Assembly resolution 72/48 on the promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, which, among other things, reaffirms multilateralism as the core principle in resolving disarmament and non-proliferation concerns.

In addition, the Group wishes to underscore the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic defence doctrines, security policies and military strategies that not only set out rationales for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons but also maintain unjustifiable concepts in international security based on promoting and developing military alliances and nuclear deterrence policies.

The Group believes that, pending the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, taking into account provisions of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, is a positive step and important measure towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, the Group welcomes the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Semipalatinsk and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status.

The Group of 21 welcomes General Assembly resolution 69/66, by which the Assembly decided to convene the third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia as a one-day conference in New York in 2015, under the leadership of Indonesia, and notes with appreciation the various efforts to produce concrete results deployed in this regard. The Group reiterates that it is essential for nuclear-weapon States to provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States in nuclear-weapon-free zones. In this context, the Group urges nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all reservations and interpretive declarations to the protocols of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace at the second summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28 and 29 January 2014, whereby all States of that region committed to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. We hope that this proclamation will be followed by other proclamations of zones of peace in other regions of the world.

The Group welcomes the Political Declaration of Quito, adopted at the fourth summit of CELAC, held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms the commitment of the States members of CELAC to the maintenance of international peace and security, political independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament.

The Group also welcomes the Political Declaration of Punta Cana, adopted at the fifth summit of CELAC, held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, which reaffirms the commitment of CELAC to achieve the total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. The States members of CELAC reaffirm their commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace and highlight its status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The Group welcomes the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 2017 in Mexico in the framework of the twenty-fifth session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Group reiterates its strong support for the early establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all nuclear weapons. To this end, the Group reaffirms the need for the expeditious establishment of such a zone in response to Security Council resolution 487 (1981), paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT wish to express their disappointment and deep concern about the fact that three States parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositary States and co-sponsors of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference, including the process for establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as called for in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and remains valid until fully implemented.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT also wish to express their serious concern about the failure to implement the 1995 resolution and, in accordance with paragraph 6 of that resolution, call upon "all States party to the Nuclear

Non-Proliferation Treaty, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction” and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT wish to express their utmost concern that the continuing failure to implement the 1995 resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT review conferences, which erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, given that the indefinite extension of the Treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm the urgency of the accession by Israel to the Treaty without further delay and placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. While the Group believes that the nuclear-weapon-free zones are a positive step towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it does not subscribe to the argument that the declarations that have been made by the nuclear-weapon States are sufficient or that security assurances should be granted only in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In addition, given the geographical limitations involved, the provision of security assurances to States members of the nuclear-weapon-free zones cannot substitute for universal, legally binding security assurances.

The Group recalls that the demand for security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapon States in the 1960s and crystallized in 1968 during the concluding phase of the negotiations on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The response of the nuclear-weapon States, however, as reflected in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) is incomplete, partial and conditional. The demand for assurances therefore persists.

The Group accepts that, while various approaches exist, efforts to conclude a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States should be vigorously pursued. The Group considers that the conclusion of such an instrument would be an important step towards achieving the objectives of arms control, nuclear disarmament and all aspects of nuclear non-proliferation.

The Group takes note of the substantive and interactive informal discussions on negative security assurances held in the Conference on Disarmament from 18 to 20 June 2014, pursuant to the schedule of activities for the 2014 session contained in document CD/1978, and on 27 August 2015, pursuant to the schedule of activities of the 2015 session contained in document CD/2021, as well as the discussions held from 28 to 30 June 2017 in the working group on the way ahead established by decision CD/2090.

The Group looks forward to substantive discussions on the issue of negative security assurances in the corresponding subsidiary body, pursuant to decisions CD/2119 and CD/2126.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. His was the last name on the list of speakers. Does anyone else wish to take the floor at this stage? As that would appear not to be the case, I would like to move on to brief you about the outcome of the consultations which, since the Syrian Arab Republic assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, I have been holding on the programme of work in accordance with rule 29 of the rules of procedure.

As I explained at the plenary meetings of 29 May and 5 June, the bilateral consultations are proceeding in parallel with the work of the subsidiary bodies established under Decision No. CD/2119 for the purpose of achieving the joint objective of drafting a programme of work for the Conference. As you will recall, from the very outset, I promised that, as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I would work transparently and comprehensively for all member States and focus on formulating a proposal for a programme of work on the basis of consensus. To that end, I invited all members of the Conference to hold consultations on the efforts being made by the presidency and on the elements of a programme of work for the Conference. I also held bilateral consultations with the regional coordinators in the context of the presidency’s weekly consultations.

The States that participated in the bilateral consultations made helpful and substantive proposals, generally expressing support for the efforts of the presidency and welcoming the approach being taken to achieve consensus on a programme of work in parallel with the ongoing meetings of the subsidiary bodies. In the light of the bilateral consultations and the support expressed, and with a view to encouraging more member States to participate in those efforts so as to achieve consensus around that goal, I would like to propose a draft programme of work for the Conference. The draft, which reflects what was said during the bilateral consultations, attempts to build upon other draft programmes of work submitted by previous Presidents and takes account of the four core items of the agenda. The purpose is to maintain a balance between those items and to address them with the degree of maturity that will enable negotiations thereon to proceed.

I would like to make it clear that the main aims, at the current stage of the presentation of this draft – document CD/WP/608, which I would ask the secretariat to distribute – is to follow up on the consultations in a more focused way, encourage States to hold thematic discussions on the draft and inspire a greater number of members to participate in the consultations in coming days in order to build consensus while taking account of the national security concerns of member States.

I look forward to holding further consultations with delegations and regional groups who favour the proposed draft in order to develop it further and build consensus around it during the remaining week and a half of the Syrian presidency of the Conference. While the secretariat is distributing the document, I would like to indicate that I do not wish to discuss its contents today but would welcome additional bilateral consultations with delegations wishing to make further specific proposals or comments. I propose holding informal consultations in this room on Tuesday, 19 June, once delegations have had an opportunity to examine the proposed draft and to receive instructions. It is hoped that, should the draft receive the requisite consensus, those consultations may lead to the adoption of a draft programme of work at a forthcoming formal meeting to be held at the end of next week.

I hope it is clear that consensus on a programme of work for the Conference is not the sole responsibility of the President. It is a collective responsibility that weighs upon the shoulders of all Conference members, one that requires us all to cooperate sincerely and without discrimination and to show the political will necessary to achieve that goal. In the end, however, I will be realistic about the outcome of the consultations and the efforts of the presidency, and I will refrain from officially presenting a draft programme of work to the Conference if it does not garner the necessary consensus.

Does anyone wish to speak at this stage? That would appear not to be the case, so please allow me to give the floor to the representative of the secretariat for some announcements. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Kalbusch (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament): Thank you, Mr. President. The secretariat would like to remind all delegations that subsidiary body 4 will continue its work this afternoon at 3 p.m. in the Council Chamber, under the coordination of Ambassador Biontino of Germany. It will meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3 p.m., and on Thursday at 3 p.m., also in the Council Chamber.

I would also like to remind delegations that next week, starting on Tuesday, 19 June 2018, at 3 p.m., subsidiary body 5 will be meeting in the Council Chamber under the coordination of Ambassador Ambrazevich of Belarus. Subsidiary body 5 will also meet on Wednesday, 20 June, in the afternoon and on Thursday, 21 June, in the morning and the afternoon.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you. With that, we have concluded our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held in the Council Chamber at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 19 June 2018.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.