

# Conference on Disarmament

English

---

**Final record of the one thousand four hundred and seventy-fifth plenary meeting**


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 21 January 2019, at 10.10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Yurii Klymenko..... (Ukraine)

GE.19-07481 (E) 280619 010719



\* 1 9 0 7 4 8 1 \*

Please recycle 

**The President:** I call to order the 1475th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Excellencies, dear colleagues, Mr. Møller, Ms. Kaspersen, ladies and gentlemen, let me start by extending to you all my best wishes for the new year. I am honoured to start the 2019 session of the Conference as its first President; may 2019 be a productive year for the Conference.

Before we proceed with our order of business for the day, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the new colleagues who have assumed their responsibilities as representatives of their Governments to the Conference since the end of the 2018 session. His Excellency Mr. Li Song, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for Disarmament Affairs and Deputy Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, and His Excellency Mr. Pankaj Sharma, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament. On behalf of my own Government and on behalf of the Conference, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of our full cooperation and support in your new assignments.

I would like to propose that the order of business of our meeting this morning be as follows: firstly, the adoption of the draft agenda for the 2019 session of the Conference; secondly, the delivery of my statement as President of the Conference; and, thirdly, the statement by the Director-General, followed by the consideration of the requests of non-member States to participate in the work of the Conference in the 2019 session. This will be followed by statements by delegations that wish to speak.

I would like to invite you now to consider the draft agenda for the 2019 session of the Conference. This draft is contained in document CD/WP.616, which is before you. I propose that the agenda be accompanied by a presidential statement, which, as in previous years, reads as follows: "In connection with the adoption of the agenda, I, as President of the Conference, should like to state that it is my understanding that if there is a consensus in the Conference to deal with any issues, they could be dealt with in this agenda. The Conference will also take into consideration rules 27 and 30 of the rules of procedure of the Conference."

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this time on the draft agenda? May I take it that the Conference is ready to adopt the draft agenda as contained in document CD/WP.616, followed by the statement I have just read out?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** The agenda will be issued as an official document of the Conference by the secretariat.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, before I invite the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Møller, to deliver a message, please allow me to make a statement in my capacity as President of the Conference.

Director-General, distinguished delegates, it is with great honour and pleasure that Ukraine, for the third time in our membership of this august body, assumes responsibility for the presidency of the Conference.

As the first presidency of this year's Conference session, Ukraine believes it is its responsibility to lay the foundation of our work for the whole year and is therefore ready to make every effort to contribute to our common success. In my capacity as President of the Conference, I would like to start my opening remarks by expressing our sincere gratitude to Mr. Michael Møller, Secretary-General of the Conference, Ms. Anja Kaspersen, Director of the Geneva branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Radha Day, the new Secretary of the Conference, and her skilful team from the Conference secretariat for their invaluable support for our presidency and their remarkable determination to facilitate the advancement of our goals for the Conference.

I would also like to pay special tribute to my immediate predecessor, Ms. Beliz Celasin Rende, Deputy Permanent Representative of Turkey, as well as her delegation, for their hard work during the negotiation of the annual report of the Conference on its 2018

session and the subsequent resolution that was presented and adopted initially by the First Committee of the General Assembly and then by the General Assembly itself.

Distinguished delegates, at today's particularly challenging juncture, we member States of the Conference have the opportunity in this chamber to make further much-needed positive impact on international security. We must use this opportunity wisely. Bearing in mind that the mission of the Conference is to be the driving force for building a better future and a safer world for all of us, Ukraine remains confident that the Conference continues to be the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and therefore firmly believes that this body cannot be replaced by any other for the purpose of addressing the multifaceted issues outlined in its agenda. The Conference's history is evidence of tangible progress in multilateral disarmament and strengthening international regimes of arms control and non-proliferation, which has been and can still be achieved within this framework.

Despite all the difficulties, events in previous years, the prolonged stalemate and the complexity of discussions we have had, enormous and fruitful efforts have been made by member States to advance the work of the Conference, in particular during the 2018 session.

Notwithstanding the fact that we were unable to reach consensus on several matters last year, there was evident political interest in having substantive discussions on all core issues on the Conference agenda, which was expressed in the active engagement of delegations in the work of the five subsidiary bodies. In this regard, Ukraine believes that we should capitalize and build on all efforts made by member States during the 2018 session of the Conference and maintain this positive momentum. They took action to reassert the rightful place of the Conference as a relevant negotiating body.

Distinguished delegates, before going into detail about the plans of the Ukrainian presidency for its tenure and their substance, as well as to give member States a clear understanding of where Ukraine is coming from in terms of its relevant initiatives, I would like to outline, in my national capacity, my country's prevailing priorities in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Ukraine is a country deeply committed to disarmament. After the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, Ukraine held about one third of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, the third largest in the world at the time, as well as significant means of design and further production. As you are aware, almost 25 years ago, in November 1994, Ukraine demonstrated a proactive approach and set a pattern to follow by abandoning its nuclear capability and acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In turn, the country received relevant security guarantees in the form of the Budapest Memorandum. Unfortunately, we all know what happened in 2013. Given ongoing external challenges which Ukraine has been facing, including those outlined in General Assembly resolution 73/194 of 17 December 2018, entitled "Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov", Ukraine proceeds from the understanding that, in order to protect the world from nuclear proliferation, it is worthwhile, in particular, to seriously consider the situation revolving around the violation of the current regime of non-proliferation, including the Budapest Memorandum.

Furthermore, given the breach of the above-mentioned document, which undermines the whole United Nations-based security system, Ukraine seeks the adoption of an international legally binding agreement that would ultimately replace the Budapest Memorandum. Such an agreement must provide direct and reliable guarantees of peace and security, up to military support in case of threats to territorial integrity. It should also include, among other things, provisions on the response procedure by the international community in case of a violation by a nuclear State of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of a non-nuclear State. Against this backdrop, Ukraine continues to support the concept of negative security assurances as a practical means of reducing insecurity, which in most cases is considered to be one of the key motives for development of nuclear-weapon capabilities.

We strongly believe that complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament is the only guarantee of humanity's protection from the deadly consequences of the possible use of nuclear weapons. This goal requires a long-term approach with practical steps and effective

disarmament measures to be taken in a transparent and irreversible manner, building a system of mutually reinforcing instruments for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Ukraine therefore encourages the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty with a view to its entry into force, which will constitute a tangible step towards the noble objective of a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons.

It is of paramount importance that the integrity of the norms set out by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty be respected. Although the current voluntary moratoriums on nuclear-weapon tests are valuable, they are no substitutes for a binding global ban. In this regard, we call on the relevant member States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible.

The fissile material cut-off treaty is the next logical, practical nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation step essential to constraining the nuclear arms race and achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament. We strongly advocate the immediate commencement of negotiations on this treaty within the framework of the Conference and, at the same time, support relevant international initiatives to protect and secure nuclear materials, including the resolutions of the General Assembly on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and on preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the revised Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Ukraine believes that outer space is the common heritage of mankind and must be used and explored solely for peaceful purposes for the benefit and in the interest of all countries. Outer space should not become an arena for competitive strategic policies. The placement of weapons in outer space could deepen global insecurity, affecting all countries. An arms race in outer space could be a destabilizing factor regardless of the category of weapons. Ukraine shares the view that the threat of nuclear weapons is one of the most serious issues that humankind faces nowadays and that it is essential to strengthen international cooperation in order to reinforce existing international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

We also believe that the Conference must pay close attention to new and emerging challenges in the field of international security, ranging from dangerous biological agents, offensive cybercapabilities and the weaponization of artificial intelligence. This and other contemporary issues must be closely monitored and regulated by the international community to ensure that they never present an existential threat to our collective future. Emerging security challenges also demand new approaches to the disarmament process, including gender-sensitive measures. Gender perspectives have already been incorporated into multilateral arms control in disarmament frameworks, including under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Arms Trade Treaty and different General Assembly resolutions. Following increasing efforts to further incorporate a gender dimension into multilateral arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament frameworks, Ukraine, both in the presidency and in its national capacity, remains committed to the cause and welcomes the work of the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group.

Distinguished delegates, being convinced that, despite the protracted impasse, the Conference's potential has not yet been exhausted and that this year, which marks the fortieth anniversary of this Conference, its member States will show their keenness to consolidate efforts to overcome the existing stalemate, the Ukrainian delegation has started conducting necessary and thorough consultations with member States regarding its proposal for a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. This document will provide for negotiations and discussions on all core items on the Conference agenda and contain references to the work of the five subsidiary bodies as well as to the Agenda for Disarmament launched by the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on 24 May 2018. It will be submitted to the Conference next week for the further consideration of the member States.

We therefore express our hope for support, cooperation, the collective view and wisdom of all Conference member States to consolidate endeavours aimed at achieving the goals and objectives of this august body as a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the worldwide community and a vital element of the rules-based international order.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure now to give the floor to Mr. Michael Møller, Secretary-General of the Conference.

**Mr. Møller** (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, let me first of all take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy new year. It is a pleasure to be with you this morning under your presidency, Ambassador Klymenko, and an honour to address you all at the opening of the work of this year's Conference on Disarmament.

Looking ahead, allow me to share some initial reflections. It is my sincere hope at this critical juncture that the work of this Conference will play the bold and pivotal role it has played in the past. The Agenda for Disarmament of Secretary-General Guterres, presented here in Geneva last May, was a sober outlook on the realities of today and makes a compelling case for a renewed sense of urgency and a collective commitment and determination in pursuing disarmament. Non-proliferation challenges persist, with decreasing value placed on nuclear disarmament commitments, nuclear programmes that continue to be pursued and nuclear arsenals enhanced.

Today's conflicts keep on wrecking the lives and livelihoods of millions of civilians. Military and security expenditures are at a historic high, the use of chemical weapons is no longer universally abhorred in practice and cybersecurity challenges persist, while the implications of new weapon systems and technologies remain poorly understood, are not sufficiently addressed and are not properly reflected in current arms control regimes. Other broader changes are also at play. One clear manifestation is a dissipation of power brought on by the digital revolution – while it brings with it opportunities to advance transparency and trust-building efforts, unthinkable before, it is challenging the centrality of State-based structures.

You have heard me speak about my deep concern that multilateralism is under fire at the moment we need it most. In this very room, we have all repeatedly shared our deep concern about the state of global disarmament. Meanwhile, meaningful dialogue on the right approach to a host of disarmament issues continues to elude us. With these realities, severely testing the limits of the multilateral and normative disarmament architecture, this Conference ought to be able to demonstrate that it is ready to take on the responsibilities bestowed upon it. We can no longer treat this issue as an insular discussion. We owe it to those putting their trust in us to do our jobs well. Acknowledging that, although we may hold different national views, the impact of not getting it right transcends national borders and positions.

As we commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Conference and the centenary of the League of Nations, the foundation of modern multilateralism, we need to recall why these mechanisms, with their regulations and rules of procedures and spoken and unspoken codes of conduct, were established. Their importance resides precisely in providing us with a neutral place for dialogue, a place where we can respectfully exchange, discuss, debate or negotiate in a dignified atmosphere even when points of convergence seem unattainable. They were and are meant to acknowledge and yet transcend at times difficult bilateral relations and specific political positions at any given moment. Disregarding this time-tested way of doing business risks breaking the mechanisms we have jointly created without any new viable ones in sight. The history of the League of Nations is a cautionary tale.

I urge you to use the power of multilateral diplomacy to address today's global disarmament challenges. As our Secretary-General said in his New Year's address, "When international cooperation works, the world wins." It is high time to translate our renewed sense of urgency into action.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I firmly believe that the establishment of the five subsidiary bodies in 2018 showcased the depth and breadth of substantive discussions that can take place in this Conference. The substantive work done in these five subsidiary bodies resulted in the consensual adoption of four reports. This had not been possible for years and provides a solid basis to explore further work within this Conference, including eventual technical discussions. Let me reiterate my deep appreciation for your work and that of the 2018 presidencies, which worked in tandem to achieve these results despite undeniable political differences and political realities.

It is my hope that the momentum generated by these developments in 2018 will continue in this and future sessions of the Conference, bringing new impetus to your debates and much-needed foresight to prepare for potential new weapons technologies and applications.

Last year's session illustrates that the work of the Conference can be pursued even in the face of political divisions and can, at the very least, allow you to discern and explore convergences of common interest, if not complete unity of purpose. We should avoid over-politicizing the Conference's proceedings and generally embrace the multilateral conduct and protocol that true diplomatic dialogue requires.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, as you pursue your work during the session, I am mindful of the need to broaden the dialogue on disarmament, to imbue it with new ideas, to be mindful of the diversity of perspectives that exists. I believe inclusive discussions with civil society, gender groups, youth, academia, think tanks and experts to be important, and to that end I intend to continue supporting an exchange with these communities, including through the organization of our yearly informal Conference on Disarmament/civil society dialogue.

I would also like to encourage you to reflect on how we all speak about the Conference in our daily interactions. Many of us are guilty sometimes of diminishing the value of our Conference through the narrative we choose to share. Fuelled by justifiable frustration with the pace of progress, we inadvertently denigrate its past accomplishments and its future potential to have a real impact. One of you made a comment as we approached the end of last year's session that made me reflect more deeply on this. He encouraged us to rethink how we measure progress, success and accomplishments in this body. In this context, we need to be alert to the fact that we have lost a lot of institutional memory in this Conference. I remember well a Conference that was actively negotiating; it took time, it deliberated for years, it invested in building technical expertise and communities of practice, it invested in active outreach. More than two decades later, we may want to ask what we need to do to rebuild the knowledge and momentum that made the Conference and its predecessors lead on efforts to ban entire categories of weapons and regulate others.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as you know, I am an optimist and I sincerely believe that if these perspectives could permeate the work of the Conference in 2019 and continue in future sessions, progress on our work maybe within reach. For our part, as in the past, I, my deputy, Ms. Kaspersen, and all my colleagues in the secretariat stand ready to support your efforts and those of this year's presidencies.

Mr. President, thank you again for allowing me to address the first session of the Conference. I wish you all good and productive work over the next weeks and months and look forward to continued close collaboration.

**The President:** Mr. Møller, I wish to thank you for the statement and your commitment to our work. The serious issues you raised regarding both the current challenges in arms control and disarmament and the best ways to tackle them, as well as the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament during the current session and onward, are duly noted.

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, let me now turn to the list of requests from the non-member States of the Conference that wish to participate in our work during the 2019 session. The requests received by the Conference secretariat by Friday, 18 January, at 3 p.m. are contained in document CD/WP.617, available on our tables. Any

requests from non-member States received after the date indicated above will be presented for your consideration and decision at the next plenary meetings.

It is my duty to inform you that I have received the two objections to one of the requests reflected in this list. Consequently, I suggest that we go through the list of those requesting participation as observers one by one. I will now proceed with the first name on the list, which is Albania. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Angola. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Barbados. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the following request, from Bosnia and Herzegovina. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Costa Rica. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Croatia. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Cyprus. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from the Czech Republic. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from the Dominican Republic. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Estonia. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Georgia. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Greece. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Guatemala. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Haiti. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from the Holy See. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Honduras. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Latvia. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Lebanon. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Lithuania. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Luxembourg. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Malta. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Montenegro. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Nicaragua. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*



We will now decide on the request from Panama. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Portugal. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from the Republic of Moldova. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Saudi Arabia. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Serbia. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Singapore. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from Slovenia. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the following request from the State of Palestine. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

I see Israel. The floor is yours.

**Ms. Raz Shechter** (Israel): Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming your duties as the President of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to extend Israel's gratitude to the outgoing presidents and to assure you of my delegation's cooperation in the conduct of your duties.

Mr. President, in front of us is document CD/WP.617 containing a list of requests to participate in the work of the Conference during 2019. My delegation would like to state that we do not support the request made by the Palestinian delegation. Israel would like to clarify that our stance on the Palestinian State is clear, constant and unmovable. Palestine does not meet the criteria of a State under international law and is thus ineligible to participate in the work of the Conference. The Conference is an independent body with its own rules of procedure, which limit participation by non-members of the Conference to States. Israel would also like to make clear its support to all other legitimate requests made thus far by other States asking to participate in the work of the Conference.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Israel for her statement and for the kind words for the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President. Please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the first Conference on Disarmament presidency

of this year. The Conference is in very capable hands during this challenging time, and I want to assure you of the support and cooperation of the United States of America and the Trump Administration in your efforts to guide the work of this forum.

I would like to state for the record, Mr. President, that the United States objects to the request that was submitted by the Palestinian delegation. We cannot support this request, and I will leave it at that.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the United States for his statement and for his kind words for the President.

With reference to this request, in the light of the objections raised, there is no consensus to allow participation as an observer to the 2019 session of the Conference. This request is consequently rejected.

I recognize the delegation of Turkey, which would like to take the floor.

**Ms. Celasin Rende** (Turkey): Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the 2019 session.

Turkey supports the application of Palestine to have observer status in the Conference on Disarmament. We see that we are getting away from the established common practice on the approval of observer States. Taking this opportunity, we would like to remind this august body that, although Turkey has concerns with one particular observer, we have never denied blanket lists or chosen to block its participation as an observer of Conference activities, even in working groups for many years. Instead, we have been registering our position with a letter afterwards. That being said, I would like to note that Turkey reserves its right for future cases. It is of utmost importance that the positive atmosphere of the Conference should not be spoiled or politicized.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Turkey for her statement and for her kind words for the President. Your statement is noted, but in the light of the objections which were raised in this chamber today and earlier, there is no consensus allowing participation of the State of Palestine as an observer to the 2019 session. The request, as I mentioned earlier, is rejected.

I now recognize the Syrian Arab Republic which would like to take the floor.

**Mr. Aala** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. I wish to have it placed on record at this meeting that my country officially supports the request of the State of Palestine for observer status in the Conference. The State of Palestine has been accorded the status of an observer State in the United Nations and, accordingly, is fully entitled to participate as an observer in the work of this Conference. Regrettably, some members of the Conference continue to politicize its work in a blatant manner, using the legally unorthodox arguments we have just heard to justify their objection to the request of the State of Palestine. We wish to underscore the importance of refraining from further attempts to poison the atmosphere of the Conference by politicizing its work.

**The President:** Thank you, the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic, but now, as President, I would suggest continuing with the list of the requests for observer status in the Conference on Disarmament.

The next in my list is Thailand. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate ... I see a point of order from the Islamic Republic of Iran. The floor is given to the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation would like to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of our full support.

Mr. President, we asked for the floor simply to express our position with respect to the request by the State of Palestine to participate in the Conference as an observer, and a number of other delegations took the floor for the same reason. Before you proceed with requests by other States for observer status, we would like to register our full support for the request by the State of Palestine and to express regret that, unfortunately, the

Conference is becoming overly politicized at its first meeting in 2019. Again, for the record, my delegation believes that the participation of the State of Palestine in this important body would contribute to the work of the Conference, and we fully support that request.

**The President:** Thank you for your kind words for the President. Does any delegation wish to take the floor on the request we have just considered?

I understand that the delegation of Indonesia would like to speak.

**Mr. Sidharta** (Indonesia): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to join the other delegates in congratulating you on your assumption as the President of this session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Indonesia would also like to record its support for the request of the State of Palestine to be an observer to the Conference. I would like to note that Palestine is a full member of the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Asia-Pacific group of the Group of 77. The State of Palestine is even the Chair of the Group of 77 in 2019. It is with deep regret that we cannot reach a consensus on the application of Palestine for observer status in the Conference. We can go along with the consensus but would like to record our deep regret that the State of Palestine cannot participate in this august body, which is at odds with the decision taken by the General Assembly on the assumption of the State of Palestine as the current Chair of the Group of 77 for the 2019 session.

**The President:** I thank the delegation of Indonesia for the statement and the kind words for the presidency. Now I recognize the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**Mr. Valero** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Welcome, Mr. President. We offer you our full support in exercising your important responsibilities in the Conference.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela holds to the principle that multilateralism should be strengthened, which means that my country has the inclusive mission of promoting international relations and the role that all States should play in the various forums that make up the United Nations. In that regard, we would like to place on record our express support for the request made by the distinguished delegation of Palestine to participate in the Conference in accordance with the rules of procedure in force.

Palestine is part of the United Nations. Palestine is part of the world community. Palestine is part of humanity. Why is Palestine being denied participation in the Conference? The only explanation is that the Governments of certain countries, acting against the people of Palestine and the Palestinian State, are seeking to deny, as they have done thus far, the legitimate and fundamental rights of that people and that Government.

**The President:** I thank the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the statement and for the words for the presidency. I would now like to give the floor to the delegation of Cuba.

**Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, on behalf of the Cuban delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference this year and assure you of my delegation's full support.

I would like to add my voice to those supporting the request of Palestine to participate as an observer in the work of the Conference. I believe that the participation of Palestine as an observer would, in itself, contribute to the work of this body and I think that the Ambassador of Indonesia has given additional reasons why Palestine should participate in our work. I do not believe that objecting to its participation as an observer would help to establish the climate of peace and stability towards which this Conference must work.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Cuba for his statement and the kind words for the President and would now like to give the floor to the delegation of Iraq.

**Mr. Al-Juhaishi** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. As I am taking the floor for the first time, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you and the other presidents of this year's session of the Conference every success in your work. Mr. President, with regard to the

participation of the State of Palestine as an observer in the work of the Conference, our delegation would like to reaffirm its full support for its participation. The State of Palestine enjoys observer status in the United Nations and is a State party to many international treaties. We underscore the importance of avoiding the politicization of the work of the Conference on Disarmament and of taking steps, which may constitute a precedent, to approve the participation of States as observers in the work of the Conference.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement and for his kind words for the President and would now like to give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

**Mr. Kazi** (Bangladesh): Thank you, Mr. President. We also join other delegations in congratulating you on your assumption of this important role.

We would like to put on record our delegation's unstinting support for the request by the State of Palestine to participate in the Conference on Disarmament's work as an observer, and we do so in our capacity as the incumbent Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. We deeply regret that extraneous political considerations are brought into play in considering the request by the State of Palestine. We hope that consensus will not continue to be used as a pretext for preventing the State of Palestine from making its contribution to the international community's engagement on multilateral disarmament affairs.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his statement and for his words for the President and would now like to give the floor to Algeria.

**Mr. Delmi** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to begin by congratulating you on behalf of the Algerian delegation on your assumption of the presidency. As many colleagues have already stated, the Conference on Disarmament is, first and foremost, striving towards universality, and has also always been driven in its work by a desire to avoid politicizing its activities. On the basis of these two principles, I would like to state Algeria's position in support of the request for observer status of the State of Palestine, which wishes to participate in the work of this Conference in that capacity. We deplore the fact that consensus is being used as an excuse to prevent the State of Palestine from being able to participate in the work of this Conference.

**The President:** Thank you, Ambassador, for your statement. I would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President. I am taking the floor because earlier there was a reference to General Assembly resolution 67/19. This is the resolution that accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations to the Palestinians. By the resolution's own terms, and as confirmed in the United Nations Secretariat's implementation report, it applies only in the United Nations, not in any other multilateral venues such as the Conference on Disarmament. And this is a very important distinction. It is incorrect and inappropriate to read resolution 67/19 as providing a basis for decision by States members of the Conference to invite the Palestinians to participate as a non-member observer State in the Conference or its associated bodies.

The Conference, we should all be reminded, is an autonomous body with its own rules of procedure, as has been pointed out by many States here, and it is not a conference of the General Assembly or convened under its auspices. The words of the General Assembly resolution and the subsequent United Nations Secretariat implementation report are important. The resolution says that the General Assembly has decided to accord non-member observer "State" status to the Palestinians "in the United Nations", not in any other multilateral venues such as the Conference on Disarmament. The phrase "in the United Nations" clearly does not apply to the Conference or any entity associated with the Conference. The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 67/19 – this is from 8 March 2013 – is quite precise on this point. It states specifically that the change in status under resolution 67/19 "does not apply to organizations or bodies outside the United Nations".

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement and would now like to give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Pang Kwang-hyok** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President. I congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the 2019 session of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation joins other delegations and fully supports the request of Palestine to participate in the work of the Conference as an observer.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement and his words for the President, and I recognize the representative of Egypt.

**Mr. Elsayed** (Egypt): Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in 2019 and to wish you the best of luck. For the reasons previously mentioned by other colleagues, we would like to register our support for the application by the State of Palestine.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Viet Nam.

**Mr. Duong Chi Dung** (Viet Nam): Thank you very much, Mr. President. At the outset, I would like also to join other colleagues to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for 2019. We hope that you and the other Presidents will uphold the constructive and genuine spirit of dialogue of the Conference.

Concerning the application by the State of Palestine for status as an observer State to the Conference, I would also join other colleagues in supporting the application.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Viet Nam for his statement and for his kind words for the President of the Conference on Disarmament. The delegation of Cuba has the floor.

**Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. Please accept my apologies. It is not my intention to hinder or delay the work of the Conference; quite the contrary. However, I would like to make a statement for the record because I would not want it to appear that everyone supports what has been said.

Although it is true that the Conference has its own rules of procedure, these rules do not in any way pertain to the matter at hand; namely, the request made by a party to participate as an observer in the work of the Conference.

We might also mention that a General Assembly resolution has been adopted that we are not going to interpret here, or interpret in our own way. The truth is that this Conference is a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, so a resolution adopted by the General Assembly should prevail. Therefore, I do not believe that this Conference's own rules of procedure can be taken as a pretext for invalidating the request made.

That is all I wish to say, and I would like my opinion to be included in the records of the Conference.

**The President:** I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and see that the Ambassador of the United States would like to take the floor.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President. I apologize for taking the floor, but, again, to respond to the remarks made by the representative of Cuba: what I quoted from was the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the implementation of the resolution, which, as I said, makes it very clear that it does not apply – what was decided in that resolution does not apply to organizations or bodies outside the United Nations.

**The President:** I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor on this particular matter we are discussing? If not, I would suggest proceeding with the request from Thailand.

May I take it that the Conference on Disarmament decides to accept the request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will decide on the request from Togo. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

We will now decide on the request from the United Arab Emirates. May I take it that the Conference decides to accept this request to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to suspend the meeting for a brief moment in order to allow the representatives of the non-member States who have just been invited to participate in the work of the Conference to take their seats in the Council Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is resumed. At this time, I would like to turn to the list of speakers for today. The following delegations have requested the floor: the United States, China, Romania on behalf of the European Union, the Netherlands, Morocco, Turkey, Mexico, Spain, the United Kingdom, India, Colombia, Chile, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Italy, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Germany, Pakistan, Argentina, Finland, Ecuador and Bulgaria. I recognize Brazil and the Syrian Arab Republic.

At this stage, I would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President. Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, today I would like to speak with you about the importance of compliance with arms control obligations and the consequences when States violate arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements and commitments. As Secretary Pompeo has said, "when treaties are broken, the violators must be confronted, and the treaties must be fixed or discarded. Words should mean something."

The Conference on Disarmament is historically known for negotiating landmark agreements, but arms control is a means to an end, not an end unto itself. When applied in a verifiable and enforceable manner, arms control helps manage strategic competition among States and contributes to security and stability. By reducing the risks and miscalculation, arms control can serve the interests of all parties to an agreement. These benefits, however, are diluted or lost when parties do not comply with their obligations.

Unfortunately, the United States increasingly finds that Russia cannot be trusted to comply with its arms control obligations and that its coercive and malign actions around the globe have increased tensions. Its actions, policies and behaviour are not those of a responsible State actor.

We must view the Russian threat in its entirety in order to understand its gravity – from disinformation campaigns and arms control violations to attempted annexations of its neighbours' territory and to the development of advanced and new types of nuclear delivery systems, such as the nuclear-powered cruise missile and the nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed underwater drone that the Russian leader proudly described in his 1 March 2018 address to the Federal Assembly. Russian strategy and doctrine emphasize the potential to use nuclear-armed offensive missiles for coercion. Russia's destabilizing activities seek to play spoiler in efforts to achieve and maintain global stability, while enabling its contemporary revisionist geopolitical ambitions.

I would like to now turn in detail to a few specific examples. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty: Russia has developed, produced, flight-tested and fielded a ground-launched cruise missile, known as the 9M729 or SSC-8, with a range capability of between 500 and 5,500 kilometres, in direct and continuing violation of the INF Treaty.

Russia began the covert development of the SSC-8 probably in the mid-2000s. To be clear, the SSC-8 represents a flagrant violation of the INF Treaty that Russia intended to keep secret and a potent and direct threat to Europe and Asia. The United States finding is not based on a misunderstanding of the system or its capabilities. Russia is fielding an illegal missile in contravention of the main provisions of the INF Treaty and has made no concrete steps to return to compliance.

Since first informing Russia of our concerns about Russia's INF Treaty compliance in 2013, the United States has worked to induce Russia to return to full and verifiable compliance through a comprehensive approach that included extensive diplomatic efforts. During that time, the United States raised the issue in more than 30 engagements with Russian officials at senior levels, including at the highest levels. The United States provided detailed information to Russia, including information pertaining to the missile and the launcher, including Russia's internal designator for the mobile launcher chassis and the names of the companies involved in developing and producing the missile and launcher. We also provided them with detailed information on the missile's test history, including coordinates of the tests and Russia's attempts to conceal the nature of the programme. We provided information showing that the violating ground-launched cruise missile (or GLCM) has a range capability of between 500 and 5,500 kilometres. Information showing that the violating GLCM is distinct from other missiles, including the R500/SSC-7 GLCM and the RS26 ICBM, was also given to Russia. Finally, we told the Russians that their designator for the system in question is 9M729, and we provided a course of action and framework for the system's destruction in order for Russia to return to treaty compliance.

For several years Russia denied that the missile existed. In parallel to their myriad denials and obfuscations over many years, Russia completed its research and development work and fielded multiple battalions of the SSC-8.

In 2017, the Trump Administration redoubled United States efforts to bring Russia back into compliance with an integrated strategy of diplomatic, economic and military measures. In December 2017, Russia finally acknowledged the designator of the missile – the 9M729 – but did this only after the United States disclosed it publicly, discrediting Russia's persistent cover story that the missile does not exist. Russia has since switched to a new cover story to maintain the facade that there is nothing wrong. Russia now admits that the missile does exist but claims that it is Treaty-compliant. This, too, is false.

The SSC-8/9M729 is a ground-launched cruise missile that has been developed, produced, flight-tested and fielded with a maximum range of between 500 and 5,500 kilometres in direct violation of the INF Treaty. Russia's INF Treaty violation presents a direct security threat to the United States and its allies. It is destabilizing and has a corrosive effect on arms control and disarmament. That is why President Trump, on 20 October 2018, stated that the United States intended to "terminate" the INF Treaty and why on 4 December 2018, Secretary Pompeo declared Russia's ongoing violation of the INF Treaty a material breach of the Treaty and that the United States would suspend its obligations under the Treaty, effective in 60 days from 4 December, unless Russia returns to full and verifiable compliance.

Since the 4 December announcement, Russia has not taken any productive measures to return to compliance and has responded with the rhetoric and obfuscations from the past. Rhetoric and hollow words are not action, and they come amid Russia's ongoing efforts to field multiple battalions of the SSC-8 as well as levelling threats against the United States and its allies.

On 18 December, Vladimir Putin threatened that, if the United States eventually responds to Russia's violation of the INF Treaty by developing intermediate-range missiles, Russia will "naturally have to respond in kind". He said the European nations that agreed to host United States weapons should understand that "they would expose their territory to the threat of a possible retaliatory strike".

The truth is that Russia already has such a missile. It is capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads and it is already a threat to many European nations. The United States is not the only country to come to this conclusion. On 4 December, all North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies stated that they have concluded that Russia has

developed and fielded a missile system which violates the INF Treaty and poses significant risks to Euro-Atlantic security. They strongly supported the finding of the United States that Russia is in material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty.

On 15 January, Undersecretary of State Thompson travelled here to Geneva with an inter-agency delegation. Our delegation's main goal was to see if Russia was serious about returning to compliance, and we presented a detailed framework illustrating specific steps Russia must take to do so. Unfortunately, rather than come to the meeting prepared to work constructively and seriously on their compliance issue, the Russian delegation continued to deny its violation and make false allegations regarding United States compliance. Russia has also used this meeting to try to portray itself publicly as a problem-solver, but its offer of so-called transparency measures is disingenuous and would not resolve its violation of the Treaty. A demonstration by Russia cannot possibly address the fact that Russia has previously tested this missile to Treaty-prohibited ranges.

Now is the time for Russia to take demonstrable steps to return to compliance. There is only one path forward: Russia must verifiably destroy all SSC-8 missiles, launchers and associated equipment in order to come back into compliance with the INF Treaty. The onus is on Russia to take concrete actions in order to prevent the demise of the Treaty.

Inertia will not drive policy in the Trump Administration, and the United States will not stand idly by when others cheat on international agreements. Such behaviour both erodes these agreements and threatens our national security, and we will respond with the seriousness that this demands.

I would like now to turn to Russian non-compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was negotiated here in the Conference.

In March 2018, only months after claiming to have completed destruction of its declared chemical weapons stockpile, Russia used an unscheduled, highly toxic nerve agent in an assassination attempt on Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury, the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom's investigation into the assassination attempt concluded that two Russian nationals were responsible for the attack. The use of this nerve agent in Salisbury further demonstrates that Russia has not met its obligations under the Convention.

As a direct result of the use of this unscheduled military grade nerve agent in the United Kingdom, the United States, jointly with Canada and the Netherlands, put forward a technical change proposal recommending that such chemicals and a closely related family of toxic chemicals be added to the Annex on Chemicals of the Convention. On 14 January, the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons agreed by consensus to recommend the proposal to all States parties. The United States urges Russia to meet and fulfil all its Convention obligations.

Furthermore, Russia continues to support and defend the Assad regime's brutal tactics against its own people, including the use of chemical weapons. Russia has attempted to undermine every effort responsible nations have taken to address this unacceptable situation. Russia must be held accountable for enabling the Assad regime to do the same.

Turning to biological weapons, while Russia confirmed the existence of a biological weapons programme in 1992 and committed to its destruction, Moscow has failed to document whether the biological weapons items under these programmes were destroyed or diverted for peaceful purposes, as required by the Biological Weapons Convention.

Again, as it has done on the INF Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, Russia has developed false narratives and intensified its spurious attacks against the United States, its allies and its partners to deflect attention from Moscow's own dubious record. It has created blatantly false accusations of non-compliance against United States partners to try to achieve its geopolitical aims. We must recognize this for what it is and we must stand united in pushing back against these efforts to obfuscate the truth and avoid accountability.

Furthermore, Russia's aggressive actions in Europe and its disregard for basic international principles continue to undermine European security and strain the key pillars of the European conventional arms control architecture.



While Open Skies Treaty flights will resume in 2019, and the vast majority occur without incident, for years the United States and like-minded parties have engaged Russia – only to limited effect thus far – to resolve a number of specific compliance and implementation issues that limit full territorial access over Russia – a fundamental Treaty principle. In June 2017, the United States declared Russia to be in violation of the Open Skies Treaty and in September 2017 imposed a number of Treaty-compliant, reversible response measures to encourage Russia's return to full compliance with its Treaty obligations. Those efforts will continue, with the support of our allies and partners.

In addition, Russia selectively implements the Vienna Document and has failed to report required data about its military forces located in the occupied territories of Georgia and Ukraine and has improperly reported and failed to declare certain types of major armaments and equipment. Since 2015, Russia has blocked efforts to advance modest updates to the Vienna Document that would enhance transparency on military exercises, including most recently a broadly supported effort at the Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in December 2018.

Most fundamentally concerning is Russia's continued occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, Ukraine, in 2014, as well as its arming, training, leading and fighting alongside its proxy authorities in eastern Ukraine. These actions undermine the most basic commitments on refraining from the threat or use of force contained in the Helsinki Final Act and the Stockholm Document, and reaffirmed in the Vienna Document.

Russian malign activity is perhaps most acutely felt on a regional level. In the Middle East, while the images of dead and dying children following the Syrian regime's chemical weapons attack in April 2018 were a call to action among the world's civilized nations, for Russia, they only served to reinforce its effort to shield the Assad regime from international accountability.

Russia also remains one of Iran's strongest defenders. It has provided Iran with advanced weaponry, such as the S-300 missile defence system. It consistently defends Iran's lack of transparency regarding its nuclear weapons programme.

Responsible States must be united and resolute in our efforts to stop Russia's geopolitical revisionist agenda.

Mr. President, I would be remiss if I did not mention Russia's continuing aggression against your own country. Russia's unwarranted attacks on Ukrainian Navy vessels on 25 November have demonstrated yet again Russia's willingness to violate international norms as it escalates its ongoing aggression against Ukraine.

We call on Russia to immediately return to Ukraine its detained crew and vessels and to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. The United States rejects Russia's invasion and attempted annexation of Crimea. We stand with Ukraine in the Donbass, a region that has suffered so greatly because of Russian aggression, and are committed to diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict. Unfortunately, as with other issues I have already outlined, we still await Russia's constructive engagement.

Mr. President, Russian violations of arms control agreements and malign activities are not just a bilateral issue for the United States or a regional issue in Europe. The Russian approach disregards human life and often poses a direct threat to public safety in many countries. From the attempted murder of Sergei Skripal and subsequent death of Dawn Sturgess in the United Kingdom, to cyberattacks that target critical infrastructure and electoral processes, Russian activities have broad effects that go beyond usual national security and foreign policy concerns. They target the everyday lives of our citizens and attempt to strike at the core of democratic systems. Responsible States must be united and resolute in our efforts to stop them.

Mr. President, it is the policy of the United States that all violations of arms control agreements should be challenged and corrected, lest those violators – or other would-be violators – conclude that they may disregard those obligations at will. This policy makes the world a safer, more secure place, where arms control can help manage strategic competition.

We need arms control that works, and an agreement adhered to only by one side is not a working agreement. We also need an international body that, as Secretary Pompeo said at the German Marshall Fund on 4 December 2018, “can help facilitate cooperation that bolsters the security and values of the free world”.

Russia must understand that it cannot reap advantages from arms control treaty violations. The Trump Administration has moved quickly to rebuild links among our old friends and nurture new partnerships. We will continue to take a direct approach to confront Russia where it threatens our institutions, our interests or our allies.

The dire situation we face today on the INF Treaty does not mean the United States is walking away from arms control. On the contrary, as the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review states, the United States remains committed to arms control efforts that advance United States, allied and partner security; are verifiable and enforceable; and include partners that comply responsibly with all obligations and commitments.

One such example is the continued implementation of the New START Treaty by the United States and Russia. Both countries met the Treaty’s central limits in February 2018 and continue to implement the Treaty’s verification regime, including 18 on-site inspections each year.

At the same time, the United States is prepared to consider arms control opportunities that return parties to compliance and enhance predictability and transparency. We will remain receptive to future arms control negotiations if conditions permit and the outcome improves the security of the United States, its allies and partners. But we need a willing, reliable partner on the other side of the table.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the United States of America for his statement, and now I would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

**Mr. Li Song (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, it is my great honour to take the floor for the first time at the Conference as the eleventh Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs of China. At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency and to thank you and other colleagues for the kind words of welcome that I have heard.

Twenty-two years ago, as a young member of the Chinese delegation, I participated in the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, right here in this august Council Chamber. At that time, against the backdrop of the end of the cold war and bipolarity, peace, development and cooperation had become common aspirations of the international community, and globalization offered important opportunities for the development of all countries. Essential conditions had thus been created for the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to make joint efforts to further the process of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Neither colleagues from other countries nor I myself could have expected the Conference to encounter so much difficulty in carrying out substantive work in the ensuing 20 years.

History will not cast blame on the Conference itself for this situation. We have witnessed a profound transformation on the international scene. Over the past 20 years, the international situation and relations between major countries have undergone significant changes, and humankind has increasingly become a community with a shared future and common interests. With their collective rise, the emerging market economies and developing countries are calling for a new concept of global governance and the establishment of a more just and rational international order. They are now an important force for multilateralism and for meeting global challenges. As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has pointed out, multilateralism is needed now more than ever. It is increasingly important and urgent for United Nations member States to make a concerted effort to maintain global strategic stability by advancing the international arms control and disarmament process and by strengthening the authority and effectiveness of the international non-proliferation regime.

Since its reform and opening up 40 years ago, China has steadily become a stronger nation. Its international influence has unceasingly grown and it has stepped up its comprehensive participation in the international system, with the United Nations at its core.

Two years ago, President Xi Jinping delivered an important speech here at the Palais des Nations in which he specifically mentioned the special place held by Geneva in our country's recollections and sentiments about its participation in international multilateral affairs. He also emphasized that China will never waver in its pursuit of peaceful development and that it will never seek hegemony, expansion or spheres of influence. Our history bears witness to this, and our future will too.

Progress in multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation can never be achieved in a vacuum, and the Conference cannot conduct its work behind the closed doors of this chamber. As the most authoritative and professional mechanism in multilateral arms control and disarmament, the Conference must stay true to its *raison d'être* and keep up with the times. It must work creatively, with a more open and inclusive mindset and a more flexible and practical attitude, integrating the current political realities of international security so as to renew its vitality and carry out its historic mission, as required by the new era. To this end, the Chinese delegation and I myself would like to reaffirm our commitment to support you and the other presidents as they in turn assume their functions, with a proactive, constructive and professional approach. We will strengthen communication and coordination with colleagues from all delegations and will work with them to revitalize the Conference. As I am at the same time a veteran and a fresh face here, I would like to share some preliminary reflections.

First, we should open the Conference up more to the international community, especially to all United Nations Member States. The issues under discussion here concern the security interests of all members of the international community. Naturally, they have the right to know what is going on and to have their voices heard. At a time when the international community is standing more firmly for multilateralism, the Conference must take a decision to enlarge its membership, with the aim of further enhancing its authority and effectiveness. Moreover, the Conference can be more flexible and creative in its interactions with all United Nations Member States. It can make use of their collective wisdom to spur all members of the international community to consolidate, push for and take part in the positive effects of the multilateral disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation process.

Secondly, we should be open to new agenda items and subjects of discussion. The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament conferred upon the Conference a lofty mission and set out priorities and aims for disarmament. This is the original purpose of the Conference on Disarmament, which we must never forget or abandon. We must actively and steadily advance the Conference's long-term work, *inter alia* by insisting that it is the only appropriate forum for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and by advocating the conclusion of international legal instruments on negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We must also consider the maintenance of strategic balance and stability from a wider perspective and integrate the Conference's work on these major traditional agenda items with work on new international security situations and related prospects for progress. At the same time, the international situation is changing faster than can be imagined. In particular, burgeoning scientific and technological progress, especially in the use of the Internet and artificial intelligence, pose immense hidden risks and challenges to international security. In the face of such pressing tasks, the Conference cannot shirk its responsibility to explore ideas and measures for preventive arms control diplomacy in the relevant fields.

Thirdly, we should be more open to the improvement of the Conference's methods of work. Negotiating legally binding international instruments is the mainstay of the Conference's work, and its mandate and status are not subject to change. However, in view of the increasingly diverse security concerns of various countries and their long-standing, important diverging views on priorities for negotiations, negotiating legal instruments should not be the Conference's sole mission. Activities such as negotiations and discussions to conclude some codes of conduct on pressing security matters could both help break the current deadlock and render the work and life of all our colleagues posted here in Geneva more substantive and meaningful. As long as there is the will, there will be a way. If all parties can agree to conduct various forms of consultations, discussions and expert-

level exchanges of views, the Chinese delegation will actively support and participate in such efforts, and it can invite eminent experts in the relevant fields from China to make their contributions to discussions at the Conference. Such work can serve as “pre-negotiations”, which would lay a solid basis and create favourable conditions for starting formal negotiations in relevant fields in the future.

China is in favour of the Conference quickly agreeing on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. Last year, with the active participation of all parties, the Conference set up five subsidiary bodies to conduct discussions on the core agenda items, and that was a positive step in the right direction for the Conference’s work. We should cherish and keep up this momentum and carry it forward. The ideas I have shared with you today are just some of my personal observations, which remain to be further developed. I look forward to in-depth discussions with all colleagues in our common effort to renew the Conference to its past glory by achieving new progress in international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, thus making new contributions to the maintenance of world peace and security and the promotion of multilateralism and international cooperation.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and for his kind words for the President and would now like to give the floor to the delegation of Romania on behalf of the European Union.

**Ms. Kemppainen (Romania):** Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament this year. You can count on the European Union’s support to achieve a successful start of this session.

We thank the United Nations Secretary-General, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Secretary-General of the Conference for their continued support and engagement on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The European Union will continue to actively promote effective multilateralism and effective global governance, with the United Nations at its core.

We share the concern of the United Nations Secretary-General over the current international tensions and concur with his view that further dialogue, transparency and confidence-building measures are urgently required. Bearing in mind the severe and increasingly volatile security environment, we stress the need to preserve and further advance general arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes and call for further progress on all aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation to enhance global security. It is important that all parties contribute to improving the strategic context for arms control and disarmament and avoid eroding the rules-based multilateral system, which is indispensable for maintaining international peace and security. The viability and effectiveness of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements require that those agreements be fully complied with, implemented and enforced.

We appreciate the United Nations Secretary-General’s clear condemnation of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, his engagement to promote the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and his appeal to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in order to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear programme. The European Union will continue to address all proliferation crises in a resolute way. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems to State and non-State actors remains a grave threat to international peace and security, including European security. In addition, we must prepare for new threats, such as malicious cyberactivities and destabilizing activities in outer space.

As we approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, we must do our utmost to uphold and strengthen its role as a key multilateral instrument reinforcing international peace, security and stability. The Treaty remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the Treaty and an important element in the further development of the application of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. Its principles and goals continue to make a fundamental contribution to global security.

We recall that all States parties have committed to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We reiterate the European Union's strong support for all three pillars of the Treaty and continue to call for the comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of the 2010 Review Conference action plan.

In a holistic way, we continue to actively promote the universalization and prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, advocate immediate negotiations in the Conference on a fissile material cut-off treaty and support further work on nuclear disarmament verification in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts and in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East.

Once again, we call to preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and ensure its full and verifiable implementation. Russia must urgently address the serious concerns expressed about its compliance with the Treaty in a substantial and transparent way.

We recall that the two nuclear-weapon States with the largest arsenals carry a special responsibility in the area of nuclear disarmament. The European Union continues to attach great importance to the New START Treaty. We urge the continued implementation of the New START Treaty and the negotiation of a successor treaty. We encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to their arsenals, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, and pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting. Given the severe security environment, we encourage all States concerned to take appropriate risk-reduction measures, which are important to also ensure the safety and security of their nuclear arsenals.

Mr. President, the European Union reaffirms its commitment to verifiable treaty-based nuclear arms control and disarmament and stresses the need to revitalize multilateral efforts and bodies, in particular the Conference, the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

The Conference's continued relevance is of utmost importance for the European Union. The Conference should fulfil its crucial function to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties and it could also elaborate other instruments and norms, such as guidelines and codes of conduct. We deeply regret that it has not been possible to reach consensus on a negotiating mandate for more than 20 years. Strong political will is required if we are to break the impasse and ensure that we focus on substantive work this year, in accordance with the Conference's mandate. We should also continue to explore the possible modernization of its working methods for the benefit of a Conference that functions well.

The European Union has a long-standing commitment to the enlargement of the Conference. We underline the importance of furthering substantive consultations on the expansion of its membership and strongly support the appointment of a special coordinator in this respect.

We are grateful to the five coordinators from Indonesia, the Netherlands, Brazil, Germany and Belarus for their hard work and leadership last year to bring forward substantive work according to the agreed mandate of the subsidiary bodies, to reach an understanding on the areas of commonality, deepen technical discussions and broaden areas of agreement and consider effective measures, including legal instruments for negotiations. The adoption of four substantive reports for the first time in years is an important step forward and provides a solid basis to build on this year. We should not waste time in a protracted procedural debate, but build common ground on all core issues, so that we would be better prepared to start negotiations when the overall context so allows. In this context, the European Union supports your efforts to reach an agreement on a programme of work. Depending on the outcome of your consultations, the establishment of subsidiary bodies could allow further structured and technical discussions throughout the 2019 session in order to bring the Conference back on track as soon as possible. We would support such an approach.

The 2010 Review Conference reaffirmed the urgent necessity of negotiating and bringing to a conclusion a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Our long-standing priority is to immediately commence such negotiations in the Conference, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. The European Union calls on all Conference members to agree to start such negotiations without delay. In the meantime, we call on all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the consensual outcome of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group and look forward to discussing its findings here in the Conference. To ensure the inclusiveness of this process, the European Union is providing financial support to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to facilitate the participation of African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries in FMCT-related consultations and other activities.

With regard to negative security assurances, the 2010 Review Conference stated that the Conference on Disarmament should immediately begin discussion with a view to elaborating recommendations on all aspects of the issue, without excluding an internationally legally binding instrument. The European Union recognizes the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in receiving unequivocal security assurances from nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as part of binding and agreed security arrangements. The European Union calls on all nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm existing security assurances noted by relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Negative security assurances can be an important confidence-building measure which strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, contribute to nuclear disarmament and enhance regional and global security, in line with the goals and objectives of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The European Union and its member States remain strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this context, we continue to stress the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures enhancing the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. While we do not exclude the possibility of a new legally binding instrument in the future, we continue to believe that the best near-term prospects lie in agreeing on a voluntary instrument to establish standards of responsible behaviour across the full range of space activities. Globally shared principles of responsible behaviour should increase international cooperation in space, commit to mutual non-interference in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, facilitate an equitable access to outer space and increase transparency in the conduct of space activities.

The European Union welcomes the civil society forum held within the Conference on Disarmament in August 2018 on science and technology matters. There were also interesting contributions by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and presentations such as that by the Clingendael Institute in subsidiary body 2. We look forward to further opportunities to engage with non-governmental organizations, academia, industry and research institutions.

Mr. President, it is a continuing concern that women remain heavily underrepresented across multilateral forums that focus on security. The European Union would like to emphasize the importance of the full and equal participation of women and men in all decision-making and action, including in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Romania for her statement on behalf of the European Union and the kind words for the President, and now I would like to give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

**Mr. Gabriëlse** (Netherlands): Thank you, Mr. President. Allow me from the outset to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency and assure you of the full support of my delegation. Let me also express my deep appreciation for all the hard work done by the outgoing presidency.

Let me use this opportunity to welcome and congratulate our new colleagues on the assumption of their role in the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Li Song, Permanent Representative of China, and Mr. Pankaj Sharma, Permanent Representative of India, and also welcome the new Secretary of the Conference, Ms. Radha Day. The delegation of the Netherlands looks forward to working with all of you in this important forum.

In addition to the statement delivered by the Romanian delegation on behalf of the European Union, I would like to deliver the following remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. President, the start of the 2019 session of the Conference takes place in a global security environment in which progress on disarmament in all its aspects is more urgent than ever. As noted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his Agenda for Disarmament, we are faced with heightened and renewed tensions among States, challenges to existing norms and technological developments that provide both opportunities and risks. Addressing these challenges through building on existing norms and the development of new disarmament measures should be the key focus of the 2019 session.

In recognition of the need to make progress, last year the Netherlands advocated more flexibility by pursuing an incremental and pragmatic approach to moving forward in the Conference. Progress was achieved during the 2018 session through the work of the subsidiary bodies and the adoption by consensus of four subsidiary body reports.

We view the work and outcomes of the subsidiary bodies as a step forward. This was widely recognized during last year's First Committee sessions by delegations outside and inside the Conference. Therefore, the Netherlands is of the view that we should build upon these outcomes to continue our substantive work towards the commencement of negotiations. While acknowledging the different views and visions of States on disarmament and security issues, let us focus on finding commonalities and on what is realistically possible in the 2019 session.

Mr. President, we are flexible on the format for continuing our work on substantive issues and how we organize our work in this regard. I will take this opportunity to share some thoughts on the programme of work.

For two decades, the Conference has tried to adopt a so-called comprehensive and balanced programme of work without making any headway. As noted by my delegation last year, while we do not object to such a programme of work, the perfect may have become the enemy of the good. Instead, we should take a pragmatic approach to the programme of work. In line with rule 28 of the rules of procedure, the programme of work should be a simple and technical document that includes a schedule of activities for the session ahead.

The Conference took such an approach in the 1980s and the 1990s, with the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as concrete results. In that period, the Conference's programme of work was merely a schedule of activities, which outlined when the different agenda items were under consideration. This was supplemented with separate stand-alone decisions on the establishment and mandate of so-called ad hoc groups in which the actual negotiations took place. By separating the decision on the establishment and the mandate of subsidiary organs from the programme of work, the Conference could continue to conduct the necessary substantive and technical work needed to reach agreement on the commencement of negotiations.

When taking such a pragmatic approach, the programme of work will serve as a scheduling tool, rather than as a barrier for the commencement of substantive work. It will allow us to continue substantive work with a view to reaching agreement on starting long overdue negotiations.

One could even argue that the establishment of subsidiary bodies last year, including a schedule of activities on all the core items on the Conference agenda, was essentially a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Mr. President, only by continuing our collective efforts towards the negotiation of disarmament measures, which can take the form of norms, principles, guidelines, codes of conduct or legally binding treaties, can the Conference remain relevant and credible.

In closing, I will briefly touch on our national priorities concerning the topics on our agenda. The commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices remains our top priority. The Netherlands played an active role in the Group of Governmental Experts in 2014 and 2015 and as co-sponsor of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group that completed its work last year. The consensual reports of these two groups, in combination with the report of subsidiary body 2 of last year, provide us with the impetus to move this issue forward without delay.

In a similar vein, we would like the Conference to move into the twenty-first century and deal with today's and tomorrow's technological developments. Therefore, we see merit in further exploring how global governance structures can deal with the challenges posed by current and future technological challenges. Keeping the Conference on a level with technological developments outside the Council Chamber is fundamental for its continued relevance.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Netherlands for his statement and for his kind words for the President. And now I would like to give the floor to the delegation of Morocco.

**Mr. Zniber** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. As Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to say how delighted I am to take the floor in this first plenary meeting, which is being held at the opening of the 2019 session of our Conference. Allow me, on this occasion, to congratulate you, on behalf of my delegation, on your assumption of the presidency and to assure you of our full support in your efforts to advance the work of our Conference.

We hope to be able to count on the dynamism, professionalism and spirit of trust which should be present among all delegations in order to make progress. I would like to wish a warm welcome and every success to the Ambassadors of China and India. Lastly, we would also like to thank the secretariat for its efforts in supporting our work.

Mr. President, as you know, after several decades of stalemate, certain sectors are inclined to minimize or even ignore the achievements of the Conference over the past 20 years of its existence. However, it is very important to recognize that the Conference on Disarmament, as the only multilateral negotiating forum on this subject, has been a success story and we hope it will remain as such. Indeed, as we all know, negotiations were held in this prestigious chamber for several major multilateral agreements on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the prohibition of biological or toxin weapons, the prohibition of chemical weapons and the comprehensive ban on nuclear testing.

Despite the fact that the current international security situation is incredibly challenging, as has been stated several times this morning, we believe that the time has come for the Conference to pull itself together and chart a course to resume its work on a concrete, realistic and pragmatic basis. Overcoming the divergences of opinion of the different parties, the Conference must continue to exist and develop instruments that will enable us to live in a world that is safer by the day. In this regard, I would like to recall the substantive discussions held in 2017 in the working group on the way ahead and those held during the 2018 session, as my colleague, the Ambassador of the Netherlands, has rightly mentioned. I recall that, during that session, through the five subsidiary bodies established pursuant to decisions CD/2119 and CD/2126, we were able to demonstrate that we could move forward.

The discussions held in 2017 and 2018 have established a basis upon which we must build in order to make progress during the current session. They also demonstrated that a new dynamic could be established. For that reason, my delegation believes that the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work is crucial to enable the Conference to move forward. To that effect, every one of us must assume our responsibilities for the adoption of this programme of work and thus respond to the urgent need to negotiate instruments capable of preventing the threats arising from the arms race, including those of nuclear weapons, the militarization of space, and the use of new technologies and artificial intelligence in the weapons sector.



My delegation understands that the degree of responsibility may vary and believes, in this regard, that nuclear-weapon States are the most directly concerned and have a particular responsibility to relaunch negotiations on the various issues that we have just raised in this Conference. In this context, the Kingdom of Morocco considers nuclear disarmament to be the main objective that we are responsible for achieving, given the clear threat posed by those weapons and the need to address this global humanitarian threat through urgent, courageous and progressive actions, with a view to their definitive prohibition. Similarly, instruments establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones present a great opportunity on the path to nuclear disarmament. In that regard, Morocco underlines its strong commitment to the effective implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East aimed at the much-needed liberation of the region from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

With that in mind, the Kingdom of Morocco supported the resolution adopted this autumn on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, in which the United Nations General Assembly urged all parties directly concerned to consider, seriously and more than ever, taking the practical and increasingly urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish such a zone. Similarly, the conclusion of a verifiable treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is of central importance. However, as we reaffirm and repeat, the negotiation of such an instrument would only make sense from our point of view if it were to be part of the disarmament process. In the same vein, the intense and constructive discussions that have taken place in the Conference on Disarmament over the past two years suggest that a number of issues have reached a maturity threshold, which is indeed the case and this could enable us to include these issues in the programme of work that we wish to adopt. These issues include negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. That is the view of my delegation, Mr. President, with regard to moving quickly towards the adoption of a programme of work.

These are, very briefly, the key challenges to which it is our duty to provide collective responses as part of such a programme of work. To that end, it is crucial to strengthen our commitment to the virtues of collective dialogue and multilateralism with flexibility and political will, and to reaffirm with conviction the centrality of the Conference on Disarmament, which we so desperately need, as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which remains faithful to its position of moderation, restraint, openness and constant and responsible engagement, is ready to collaborate and to contribute to efforts to reach consensus on a programme of work, as well as to any initiative aimed at strengthening international peace and security.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Morocco for his statement and his kind words for the President. Before giving the floor to the delegation of Turkey, I would like to remind those delegations requesting the floor that the room and interpretation are only available for another 40 minutes. Now I would like to give the floor to the delegation of Turkey.

**Ms. Celasin Rende (Turkey):** Mr. President, once more I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in 2019. I assure you of Turkey's full support and cooperation in your efforts to advance the work of the Conference.

The Conference, as the single multilateral disarmament platform, with its unique structure and special mandate of negotiating legally binding disarmament instruments, has been at the centre of endeavours to achieve the ultimate goal of creating a safer world. As we begin each year with cherished hopes, the prolonged stalemate at the Conference should not restrain us from making every effort to achieve a breakthrough this year. Therefore, we call on all members to create an atmosphere of compromise and flexibility in order to maintain the relevance of the Conference by enabling the resumption of its substantive work.

Mr. President, the 2018 session was not an easy year for the Conference. Following the adoption of the agenda of the Conference, a consensus on a programme of work did not

emerge during the session. A lot of work was done, and tremendous efforts were made, but it was only possible to adopt a “technical and procedural report” on 14 September 2018. This result should not discourage us. Although not all was reflected in detail in the report, very important and positive steps were taken at the Conference in 2018.

The Conference made a promising start under the guidance of the Sri Lankan Ambassador, and it was possible to adopt a decision on the establishment of five subsidiary bodies, in accordance with the agenda of the Conference. Accordingly, four subsidiary bodies were established on agenda items 1 to 4 and one subsidiary body was established on agenda items 5, 6 and 7. It was also agreed that reports on the progress achieved and agreed on in the subsidiary body would be submitted to the Conference. In retrospect, the expanded mandate of the subsidiary bodies and the reporting responsibility were their strength when compared with the working group on the way ahead, which was established in 2017. We believe that these two elements should be considered steps forward at the Conference and that similar incremental steps have to be taken in the 2019 session. During the year, seven meetings were held by each subsidiary body. In the end, they all submitted their substantive reports to the Conference, and four of them were adopted. The report of the fourth subsidiary body, on negative security assurances, was not. However, I am confident that in this session of the Conference, we will also further develop the work on negative security assurances, a very important topic for many delegations, and close the so-called gap between the items on the Conference agenda. It is also worth underlining that the meetings of the subsidiary bodies and their reports provide us with the possibility to better understand the converging and diverging positions of the delegations on different topics. They certainly constitute a solid basis for the future work of the Conference.

Mr. President, one important responsibility of the last President of the Conference was to prepare the report of the Conference to the General Assembly. As the Turkish presidency was aware of the circumstances and controversial issues of the 2018 session, our objective was to produce a factual and objective annual report in an impartial and transparent manner during our tenure as President at the last session of 2018. The initial reactions to the first draft were very positive and constructive. Most delegations acknowledged the first draft as a solid basis. Although it was possible to provisionally adopt a majority of the paragraphs, there were intense and lengthy negotiations on some issues as well. Preparing the Conference report was a long and exhausting exercise for everybody. After having held 9 formal plenary meetings, 12 informal plenary meetings and dozens of bilateral consultations and small group meetings in the course of four weeks, the Conference was only able to adopt a technical and procedural report, although many parts, including the controversial ones, were dropped. In the aftermath, discussions of a similar nature took place during the informal meetings held on the resolution on the report of the Conference. The delegations managed to agree on the draft resolution in Geneva, and finally it was adopted in New York. A presentation that summarized the 2018 session of the Conference was given on 30 October 2018 in New York at a panel discussion held in the cluster of First Committee meetings under disarmament machinery at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

We would like to once again thank all member States for the enormous effort that has been made to advance the work of the Conference since the beginning of the 2018 session; 2018 will definitely be a year that will not go unnoticed in the history of the Conference. We are also pleased to have had the chance to come together with you, Mr. President, during the intersessional period to discuss the current affairs of the Conference. Today, the most essential issue is to maintain the relevance of the Conference. We all need to assume our responsibilities to enable this august body to perform its main task again.

To conclude, let me reiterate our support to you, Mr. President, and your successors, and wish you all success.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Turkey for her statement and for her kind words for the President. I would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Mexico. The floor is yours.

**Ms. Flores Liera** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I wish you every success in the exercise of your mandate and assure you of my

country's willingness to work with you and the member States to overcome the impasse in which this important body finds itself.

This year, 2019, the Conference is celebrating 40 years of existence. For half that period, it has been paralysed. Everything would seem to indicate that we have forgotten the sense of urgency with which the Conference was imbued by the diplomats who established it as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament at the first Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament.

Mexico has been a constant driving force behind the Conference through the great importance that it attaches to disarmament, multilateralism and the reaching of agreements to establish a world at peace, with universal security its central feature. However, we are, and will continue to be, critical of the complacency into which this Conference has fallen in the face of the failure to fulfil its negotiating mandate. Not for the first or the last time, international disarmament is at a critical juncture. It is regrettable that members are not committed to seeking agreement and that they tend to justify this by pointing to the conduct of others. If all, and I repeat, all, countries assumed their responsibilities and moved forward in unison to insist that those who fail to comply with their obligations must do so, the world would not be facing its current dilemmas.

As the Secretary-General has rightly said, the tensions of the cold war are re-emerging in a much more complex and dangerous environment, where military spending has risen sharply. New weapons technologies are appearing that may jeopardize the security of future generations and the continued existence of nuclear weapons poses an ongoing threat to humanity. This is despite the fact that we have a legal framework that should take us in a different direction.

In the face of these important challenges, Mexico believes that resignation, recriminations and complacency are not the way forward. We must reflect, explore new ideas and take advantage of the common ground between us in order to promote agreements. "Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament", presented in 2018 by Secretary-General António Guterres, is very timely in this regard. It reminds us of the important tasks ahead and what is at stake if we do not face those tasks with a sense of commitment and political will.

It is essential to recognize that disarmament is a common cause, built on tangible and concrete commitments made in sensitive and complex security situations in which a willingness to fulfil the obligations assumed should be demonstrated. There will never be better conditions if there is no political will to create and make use of them.

Although the obligations and commitments apply to everyone, there is no doubt that the nuclear-weapon States have a key duty and that is why they must act responsibly and honour their commitments to the international community, which are the cornerstones of the international system. We want to see real leadership and less rhetoric.

Despite the concessions and the will with which the Conference began its work last year, regrettably, it was ultimately unable to adopt a substantive report because of questions raised about the implementation of the rules of procedure. We may face a similar situation this year. The disarmament machinery must be equal to the task at hand and, on a strictly procedural level, my delegation hopes that the following points will receive sufficient attention at the 2019 session: firstly, the Conference must focus its efforts on adopting a realistic programme of work, with a progressive vision, that reflects the fact that it is not an end in itself but a guide to our work. As such, it should not predetermine the final outcome of the negotiations.

Secondly, since the last session brought to light differences of opinion on procedural matters, we believe it would be timely to consider whether the Conference's working methods should be updated. From what I have heard this morning, several delegations believe that they should be. Our analysis of the rules should consider the terms of presidencies, the direct and active participation of civil society and formulas for avoiding abuse of the consensus rule. We should bear in mind that other main bodies of the United Nations make use of different formulas for the adoption of procedural and substantive decisions.

I would also like to express my support for the measures mentioned earlier aimed at including the gender perspective in the work of the disarmament machinery.

We must make an effort to overcome the prevailing inertia and construct a framework for this Conference in order to move forward on a disarmament agenda that is now all the more urgent. I must add that Mexico will not support the adoption of decisions aimed at enabling simulation exercises that do not contribute to disarmament and are intended to appear as substantive work where they are not.

In the light of the current ineffectiveness of the Conference, it would be unacceptable and unjustifiable to continue allocating human, financial, professional and political resources to an institution that does not fulfil its mandate but, on the contrary, promotes an exercise in empty diplomacy.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to express its full commitment and willingness to support every effort made to promote disarmament and the proper functioning of this Conference, in accordance with the mandate assigned to it.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Mexico for her statement and her kind words addressed to the President. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Spain.

**Mr. Górgolas Hernández-Mora** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I congratulate you on assuming your new responsibilities at the helm of this Conference, a task for which you can count on the full support of my delegation. Spain fully endorses the statement made by the European Union.

My country, being convinced of the fundamental importance of the role played by the multilateral system and the United Nations, wishes to reiterate its support for the Conference in these delicate and uncertain times for the global security landscape. Spain recognizes and appreciates the work done in the subsidiary bodies last year, which provides an excellent platform of knowledge on the technical and political status of disarmament issues.

We are well aware of the remaining obstacles to the adoption of a programme of work with a mandate for negotiating treaties. However, we are optimistic and believe that, if we continue working and engaging in dialogue, walking side by side, we will eventually find solutions and agreements.

We must discuss the general outlines of a negotiating mandate, listening to the security concerns of States but also facilitating the expression of alternative proposals at the Conference on the most sensitive issues at hand. We must reach an agreement and seek common objectives. The consensus rule necessarily entails notions of flexibility and negotiation. Consensus does not exist, and cannot be established, without prior discussion taking place. We must determine our common objectives and then journey towards them along different routes. There is no single path.

For many years, Spain has believed that its priority is the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This treaty will be a useful complement to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and will help to ease tensions, allowing other important aspects of disarmament to be addressed later. It would also be interesting to explore the alternative area of negative nuclear security assurances, which rely on respect for strategic stability and the principle of not compromising security for everyone.

In the current climate of tension, it would be useful to foster a favourable environment, involving measures for promoting transparency and dialogue, that might allow possible future progress on disarmament issues to be more ambitious. We believe that the area of verification might serve as a field of action in which to establish a fundamental basis for mutual trust. It is essential to strengthen the credibility of the multilateral disarmament system through concrete measures and visible initiatives that will enable us to approach the future with hope.

In full recognition of the fact that nuclear tests no longer have any possible place in our time, we again call on all countries listed in annex 2 to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to ratify the Treaty so as to secure its immediate entry into force.

We call on all States that possess nuclear weapons to intensify their disarmament efforts. We reiterate our appeal to the United States and the Russian Federation to establish and strengthen dialogue, confidence-building, transparency and verification measures that will facilitate future disarmament efforts.

To make the Conference more inclusive, we advocate a reasonable expansion of its membership, this being an issue that must be considered at regular intervals, in accordance with the rules of procedure. The fact that 27 States have applied for membership since 1982 continues to demonstrate the interest generated by this forum.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would like to encourage this Conference to carry out its work in a pragmatic, technical and objective spirit, avoiding, to the extent possible, politicizing attitudes towards some of its members that could undermine the real purpose of this body.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Spain for his statement and for his words for the President and would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Liddle** (United Kingdom): Thank you, Mr. President. Allow me first to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you all the best in your important role and I assure you of the full support of my delegation. I look forward to working with you closely as we prepare to assume the presidency following you. I also thank Mr. Møller for his wise words earlier. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues joining us for the first time today, in particular Ambassador Li of China and Ambassador Sharma of India, and our new Secretary, Ms. Day. I look forward to working with you all. Colleagues, you joined at such an important time in this Conference's history, and I look forward to your creative, fresh ideas as we seek a way forward. My delegation is always at your disposal.

Mr. President, I do not propose to rehearse all our national positions, which are aligned with the statement made by Romania on behalf of the European Union; there will be ample opportunity for that in the coming year. I would just like to make a few remarks on our work this year.

As we have heard, 2019 marks the centenary of the establishment of the League of Nations, whose Council met in this chamber and whose mandate had the work of disarmament at its heart. Forty years ago this month, the Conference began its work. These anniversaries are an opportunity to reflect on the past and the future of disarmament diplomacy in Geneva.

Looking back, we can see clearly that, over the last hundred years, there have been long periods when the political and international security contexts have made the agreement of new disarmament regimes impossible. Those periods were punctuated by a few short windows of opportunity when it became possible to adopt new treaties. Without detailed discussion and technical work through the 1970s and 1980s, which included several dead ends, our predecessors would not have been able to seize the moment in the early 1990s and conclude the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in relatively short order. They worked diligently and waited patiently for the right time; their patience was rewarded to the lasting benefit of humanity.

We all deplore the failure to agree, for many years, on a programme of work for substantive negotiations. But it is not the view of my delegation that this means no useful work is being done. The creation of five subsidiary bodies to discuss the Conference's core agenda items last year was a welcome and positive development which allowed for substantive detailed engagement with the issues we face. There were genuine efforts to identify areas of common ground with a view to reaching substantive agreement in the future. The adoption of reports of four out of the five subsidiary bodies constituted a good result which I am confident we can build on this year.

Looking ahead, what can we expect this year? The international security context does not appear to have improved over the last 12 months. The multilateral order is under pressure not least from the flouting of treaty obligations by certain States, as others have reminded us already this morning. In this situation, it is incumbent on us to protect and strengthen our existing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons regimes; but, like our predecessors, we must also continue working hard to lay the ground for when the next window of opportunity opens. That is especially the case when it comes to a fissile material cut-off treaty. So much excellent technical work has been done by the Group of Governmental Experts and the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group in the last few years. The ball is now in our court in the Conference. This body also has an important role to play in considering the impact of emerging technologies on international peace and security.

Mr. President, let me assure you once again of my delegation's full cooperation as we look to build on the good work we did last year. We will support you in your efforts and we will be ready to pick up where you leave off in four weeks' time. We will consult intensively with all delegations to see where we can take our work forward. Perhaps this year will be the year we make a breakthrough: I certainly hope it is. But if it is not, let us use the time well, so that we are ready to seize the opportunity when it comes, as it surely will.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his statement and for his kind words for the President. On my list I have the Ambassador of Argentina.

**Mr. Foradori** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. Allow me to begin by congratulating you on assuming responsibility for leading the Conference during the first part of its annual session this year. You may count on the full support and cooperation of Argentina in your ongoing efforts to reach positive outcomes. I would also like to welcome the ambassadors of China and India.

With its long-standing history of broad support for multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in the field of nuclear disarmament, my country has participated actively in the work of the Conference ever since its inception in the conviction that it is the sole multilateral forum for negotiating nuclear disarmament issues. In this regard, we consider it important that we redouble our efforts to strengthen this forum while maintaining its health and credibility.

Nonetheless, my delegation regrets the long stalemate in which the Conference has become embroiled, which has prevented it from achieving any progress in negotiations or any concrete results since 1996. In this regard, we would like to call for reflection on this issue, especially in view of the various challenges posed by the current international security situation. We would like to express our support for the efforts made by the current presidency to develop a programme of work in the hope that it will satisfy all parties and enable the Conference to make progress towards real and effective negotiations.

It should be noted that a programme of work was last adopted in 2009 but that procedural problems ultimately prevented it from being implemented. My country has closely followed the discussions on issues related to the functioning of the Conference. We are open to discussing and reflecting on these issues and to working in a flexible yet practical manner towards the development of innovative proposals.

In that regard, we would like to highlight the work of the five subsidiary bodies last year. They undoubtedly provide a space for frank and dynamic informal exchanges that have made a valuable contribution to the work of the Conference. If progress cannot be made in substantive discussions in formal sessions, we support the continuation of these bodies. They will enable us to continue developing the ideas and positions expressed in these forums for exchange and reflection, which, at some point that I hope is not far off, will lead us to one of the ultimate goals of this Conference: that of serving as a forum for multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would like to finish by wishing you every success in your work and by expressing the hope that the Conference will be able to conclude this year with a substantive report for the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. In the

current international security climate, it is essential that the Conference should be able to show signs of progress to the rest of the international community, especially with regard to the review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, whose third pillar, that of nuclear disarmament, has often faced questions over its effectiveness.

For the time being, we have to admit that disarmament has been seen as no more than an option, one that some actors have unfortunately not chosen. I hope that, this year, this forum will put the Conference back on track towards achieving its goals and marking out the path to peace.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Argentina for his statement and for his kind words for the President. And now I would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

**Mr. Sharma** (India): Mr. President, distinguished members of the secretariat, Excellencies, fellow members, my delegation would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for this year, especially as you come from a country that I have had the privilege to serve in. My delegation assures you of its full cooperation and support in steering our deliberations to a successful outcome.

This is an important year, particularly in the wake of a number of significant global developments that took place last year. The international community has great hopes and is banking on the outcomes emerging from our work here. We must work towards developing the right atmosphere and political will to engage constructively on all items on the agenda of the Conference.

Significant work was carried out last year, as also noted by you and other speakers before me, and it is now incumbent on us to take it forward and ensure that the Conference delivers on its mandate. If we do not do so, it will only encourage sceptics and fuel despair and frustration. None of us wish that. Questions have been raised about the effectiveness and efficacy of the Conference, and even its relevance. Attempts have been made to discover alternate forums. In our view, the Conference still remains the most appropriate and relevant forum. It enjoys legitimacy through its mandate, membership and rules, including consensus-based decision-making for negotiating legally binding instruments for strengthening international peace and security. On its part, India stands ready to support your efforts as well as the subsequent presidencies for a productive session this year.

Mr. President, on a personal note, I would like to thank you and other colleagues for welcoming me. It is a great honour and privilege for me to be representing my country in this august body and succeed a long list of my distinguished predecessors. While this is my first stint at the Conference, I am not new to the Conference and have followed it, as well as other disarmament bodies, for more than 17 years. Like every disarmament expert and diplomat present in this room, it has been my wish to work for the Conference, and I am pleased that I can do so now.

I look forward to working with all of you towards achieving our collective vision and goals and a possible breakthrough, as mentioned by the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

In concluding, let me wish you all a very happy new year and hope that it is a truly happy one. As is said in Russian, "hope dies only in the end".

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement and for his kind words for the President. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Colombia. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Dimaté Cárdenas** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. Please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. Colombia hopes that, under your able stewardship, the Conference will make substantial progress in the matters that concern us. With this aim in mind, you have the full support of my delegation. We also welcome the ambassadors of China and India.

The challenge that we face is hugely significant for the world. Given the knowledge, commitment and negotiating capacity gathered together here, we may allow ourselves to

hope for a successful session in 2019, in which we can achieve the concrete results for which we are all working.

Although the States meeting at the Conference are committed to international peace and security, this commitment must be accompanied by clear signs of political will and by the flexibility required for the Conference to resume its role as a multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament matters.

The prevailing reality and international tensions cannot be used to justify the failure to make progress in multilateral agreements on these issues. On the contrary, they must be the engine that drives our work forward. For that reason, my delegation hopes that a realistic, comprehensive and balanced programme of work can be set out this year. Only in this way will we be able to resume our mission of negotiating instruments on fissile material cut-off, negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, or any of the other issues we have been discussing for the past few decades.

Although we want to make progress on the fundamental issues, we need to be flexible enough to prioritize our challenges and identify those issues on which a legally binding instrument might be established. The deadlock in the Conference is unsustainable and immoral. In 2018, we established basic agreements that allowed us to discuss the key issues in five subsidiary groups. For Colombia, it is important that we make the most of this work and use it as the basis for continuing thematic discussions.

We know that multilateralism must be patient but, if we do not build on what we have achieved thus far, it will be even more difficult for our work to result in obligations for States and for those obligations to have tangible effects on international peace and security. We must also establish better links with other bodies, inside and outside the United Nations, that share the purposes that unite us in this room today and for which we have worked since the establishment of the Conference.

To this end, Colombia welcomes the efforts made by the Secretary-General, who presented his Agenda for Disarmament in 2018. We hope that the Agenda will produce concrete results in 2019 and the near future. In this regard, the creation of an implementation plan for the Agenda, setting out how the entities of the United Nations system will carry out the 40 actions described in the document, is very useful. Colombia reaffirms its commitment to this initiative and its four pillars.

Another issue to which Colombia is deeply committed is the inclusion of gender issues in disarmament contexts. The full and effective participation of women in discussion forums and negotiation processes is essential to generating new dynamics and solutions to the historical challenges that we face.

My delegation also hopes that, this year, we will once again be able to stage initiatives like the dialogue with civil society held on 17 August 2018. Exchanges between the Conference and civil society can strengthen our discussions and teach us more about other contexts that will benefit our work.

In conclusion, please allow me once again to repeat the appeal that my country has made in the past. We need to resume our discussion of the rules of procedure, especially with regard to the membership of the Conference and the way that decisions are adopted. It would be timely to broaden the membership of the Conference towards better representation of the Member States of the United Nations. It would also be useful to examine our decision to conduct the work of the Conference, and adopt decisions, by consensus. While consensus is necessary to reflect the collective will, it is worth considering whether this approach has hindered the fulfilment of our negotiating mandate.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Colombia for his statement and for his kind words for the President. It is now 1.05 p.m., so, as I mentioned before, the room and interpretation may be available for 10 more minutes. We have quite a long list of speakers – at least 12 requests for the floor, and we also have some requests for the right of reply. I would suggest that maybe we will take one more statement for today and that we continue during the next plenary meeting with the rest of the list of speakers and also the right of reply. Is that acceptable for the delegations? The representative of Pakistan would like to take the floor.



**Mr. Jadoon** (Pakistan): Thank you, Mr. President. Did I understand correctly that we cannot meet this afternoon? If we cannot, why not?

**The President:** As was mentioned, the interpretation would not be available this afternoon, so if the delegations would like to work without interpretation, then we can do so.

**Mr. Jadoon** (Pakistan): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation, in any case, delivers its statements in English, so we would be fine with working in English only, but it is very strange that we could not foresee or plan for an afternoon session today and could not envisage that there would be a large number of speakers, which is usually the case for the opening of the Conference on Disarmament and also given the unusual procedure that we adopted in the morning for dealing with one non-member request. What we had to say in our statement is also important because it is related to what you mentioned in your opening remarks. You intend to work on certain proposals, and unless we share our views with you on the record, I do not know what other way there is to record them. You also mentioned that next week you probably intend to submit your proposal, so without receiving our feedback and our remarks, how would you proceed with that?

**The President:** I thank the representative of Pakistan for his comments. We will continue to be engaged in consultations with all interested delegations. We are still working on the draft programme of work, and it is up to the presidency to decide when it can circulate this document, but we will do our best to do so as soon as possible next week. But we will be ready to be engaged with the delegation of Pakistan with any consultations. I now recognize that the representative of France would like to take the floor.

**Mr. Riquet** (France) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to speak quickly following the discussion that has just been initiated at your request. I simply wanted to say that, from France's point of view, it would be desirable for this session to be held in accordance with the rules of procedure, in particular rules 18 and 19, and rule 37, which provides that, at official meetings, interpretation services may be provided in such a way that all delegations can have their views reflected in the six official languages of the United Nations.

**The President:** I thank the representative of France for his comments. Would any other delegation like to take the floor on our further proceedings for today? If there is no objection, I would suggest that we will take one more request for the floor, and I would like to give the floor to the delegation of Peru.

**Ms. Masana García** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to begin by congratulating you on assuming the stewardship of the Conference. We are confident that you have the diplomatic experience and ability to carry out this delicate task. You may count on the Peruvian delegation's full support in helping to make your work a success. We welcome the ambassadors of China and India and the new Secretary of the Conference.

The start of this first part of our session is an opportunity to renew our efforts in favour of global peace and security and to demonstrate our political will to galvanize the work of this forum. We must send a clear message to the international community that we are serious about our commitment to the lofty ideals mentioned earlier, which should inspire our work. We recognize the contribution of the Conference as a forum for negotiating and deliberating agreements that, many years ago now, enabled substantial progress to be achieved in the areas of disarmament and arms control.

As the President has stated, the Conference is the driving force for disarmament. Despite the frustrating paralysis that has for so long affected this forum, which is of the utmost importance for international security, we must not lose our resolve to sustain and encourage a frank dialogue that enables us to bridge our differences in the search for tangible results and agreements. We therefore remain hopeful that 2019 will be a milestone year in which the Conference gets back on track.

In that regard, we strongly support the start of negotiations within our Conference and urge all members to show greater political will by adopting and implementing a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Peru is a country that is committed to peace, disarmament and the strengthening of international security. We are part of every international disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and arms control regime and we support all initiatives leading to general and complete disarmament, particularly those aimed at the prohibition and total elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

That is one of the pillars of our foreign policy and our commitment to multilateralism, international law and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes. In view of the fact that the status quo cannot be sustained, and in the firm belief that the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a serious violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, Peru actively participated in the negotiations leading to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons within the framework of the General Assembly. We also acted in the belief that it was a moral imperative to heed the cry of the international community for a world free of nuclear weapons. In keeping with that responsibility, Peru was one of the first States to sign the Treaty.

We are aware of the legitimate defence and security needs and the strategic military interests that prevent us from making further progress in the negotiation efforts that we jointly undertake in this room. Nevertheless, we believe that we need to persist in our endeavour, assume the responsibilities demanded of us by the international community and arrive at a turning point that will put an end to the damaging inertia in which the Conference is mired. This requires flexibility from all the countries represented here to enable us to face the complex challenges to global security together by developing a programme of work and urgently commencing negotiations.

Peru is a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2018–2019 biennium. Since joining the Council, we have been promoting, among other issues, the strengthening of the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are placing particular emphasis on promoting preventive diplomacy in a bid to end the mistrust that tends to create perceptions of insecurity that result in an arms build-up.

To this end, we support the development of open channels of communication and mutual understanding, open and transparent procedures, monitoring and verification mechanisms and crisis management protocols, which, together with other confidence-building measures, form the basis for a minimum level of cooperation that will reduce the risk of escalations or accidents with severe consequences.

Lastly, let me reiterate that my country's delegation is fully prepared to work actively with all the countries represented here to find a consensus that might allow progress to be made towards tangible achievements on the difficult path towards general and complete disarmament. We share Mr. Møller's optimism about the resumption of negotiations in the Conference and hope that this feeling will be justified so that the fortieth anniversary of the Conference's founding will mark the point when the deadlock is broken.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Peru for her statement and for her kind words for the President. I would like to suggest stopping with the list of speakers now. If there is no objection, we will continue the rest of the list of speakers and this right of reply during the next plenary meeting. May I take it that that is convenient for the delegations?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** During our next meeting in plenary, which we are going to convene on Tuesday, 29 January at 10 a.m., we are going to continue with the list of speakers and the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will take the floor as the first speaker for that plenary meeting.

Before concluding, I would like to welcome Ms. Radha Day, who has assumed her place as Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament. Before giving her the floor, I would also ask the secretariat to share with us some organizational information.

**Ms. Day** (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament): Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for the warm welcome. This is a housekeeping point, but if the delegations have not done so yet, could they please communicate their delegation list? That would be most useful. Thank you very much.

**The President:** This concludes our business for today.

*The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.*