

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 31 January 2019, at 2.35 p.m.

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

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**The President:** I call to order the 1477th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Excellencies, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, before we proceed with the order of business for today, I would like to inform you that we have received two more requests to participate in the Conference as observers as of yesterday, Wednesday, 30 January 2019, at 3 p.m. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.617/Add.2, available on your 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.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** 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:** Dear colleagues, at this time, and prior to introducing and discussing the draft programme of work circulated by the secretariat earlier this week, I would like to give the floor to the remaining speakers from Tuesday. I have on my list requests from the Netherlands and Germany. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

**Ms. Claringbould (Netherlands):** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I would like to refer to the Russian statement that was delivered on Tuesday last week. We would like to say the following with regard to that.

My Government has independently confirmed that Russia has developed, fielded and deployed a ground-launched cruise missile with a range of over 500 km called the SS8, a very unfortunate development. These actions were a violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and I refer in that regard to the letter my Government sent to our parliament on 27 November 2018. That was well before the recent demonstration referred to in the Russian statement.

For over 30 years, this Treaty has been crucial in upholding European and global security. Its conclusion in 1987 here in Geneva was an unprecedented success of arms control. As a result of the Treaty, almost 3,000 missiles were removed and verifiably destroyed. It made the Euro-Atlantic region significantly safer and it made a tangible contribution to disarmament in the context of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Unfortunately, the concerns about Russian non-compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty are not new; in fact, for more than five years now these concerns have arisen over and over again on many occasions and in many different forums and until last December, when Russia was given another 60 days to come back into compliance.

The Netherlands is therefore very disappointed that with only a few days left, the Russian authorities have not shown the willingness to address the concerns in a substantive and earnest manner. Needless to say, the Netherlands is fully committed to the preservation of effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. We have always been an active player in upholding, supporting and indeed further strengthening the arms-control regime. We do so because we strongly believe this is in the best interest of peace and stability on our shared continent.

An arms-control treaty can only provide security if both sides adhere to it. This is no longer the case, and that is very worrisome. Therefore, we have urged the Russian authorities to return to full and verifiable compliance and, as time is running out, we hope that the Russian Federation will seize the opportunity to preserve this important arms-control treaty in the interest of peace and stability in our region.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Netherlands for her statement and would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Germany.

**Mr. Beerwerth** (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President. I am speaking on the same issue and on that would like to deliver the following brief statement.

For more than 30 years, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty has been an important pillar of the European and North Atlantic security architecture. Its strict continued implementation is essential for European security, thus also for our national security. We therefore have a strong interest in safeguarding the Treaty.

In our view, the Russian 9M729 missile systems are not in conformity with the Treaty, and we share this position with all the North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies. In order to return to adherence to its obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, Russia must destroy this system in a fully verifiable manner in accordance with the Treaty provisions.

The kind of transparency Russia has offered so far is in no way sufficient to demonstrate adherence to its Treaty obligations. At the same time, we welcome the continuing discussions on the future of the Treaty by the two parties thereto and strongly hope that the Treaty will not cease to exist. Continued dialogue is essential in order to safeguard this important Treaty. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Germany for his statement and see that the representative of Slovakia has asked for the floor.

**Mr. Gutten** (Slovakia): Mr. President, allow me first to congratulate you on assuming the duties of the first President of the Conference on Disarmament in 2019. You can count on the support of the Slovak delegation in discharging your responsibilities in this important body.

Mr. President, Slovakia would like to add its voice to those delegations that raised concerns with regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty today and during the last plenary meeting. The preservation of the Treaty as a viable instrument is of crucial importance to Slovakia. We have all benefited from the security, predictability and stability it provides. Erosion of the Treaty would have serious consequences not only for the security of its States parties but also for all of Europe and possibly other regions. We want to preserve the Treaty and ensure that both parties are in full compliance. A treaty in which only one party respects its obligations cannot be sustainable; hence, we call on Russia to urgently address the serious concerns expressed about its compliance with the Treaty in a substantial, transparent and verifiable way.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Slovakia for his statement and kind words for the President and recognize that the Ambassador of Spain has requested the floor.

**Mr. Herráiz España** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. This is the first time that I have addressed you personally in this forum during your presidency, and therefore I would like to wish you every success and to convey my warm regards, knowing too that you are not listening to me through interpretation, given your excellent command of Spanish.

I would like, Mr. President, to speak in the same terms as the preceding delegations in connection with the statement delivered a few days ago by the Russian Federation on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the INF Treaty, which is undoubtedly one of the key pillars of the Euro-Atlantic arms control system and one of the guarantors of peace and security on the European continent. The Government of Spain has already echoed, some months ago, certain aspects of the declaration issued by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization at its July 2018 summit, which stated that the United States was in compliance with the INF Treaty and reiterated serious doubts about the pattern of conduct of the Russian Federation in this sphere.

In addition, the European Union has, on several occasions, repeated its call to preserve the Treaty and to ensure its full and verifiable implementation. We would like to again state that Russia must urgently address the serious concerns that have been expressed regarding its compliance with the Treaty, in a substantial and transparent way.

My delegation would also like to express serious concern, of a general nature, at the deterioration of the arms control regime in the Euro-Atlantic area, which is composed of an entire architecture of treaty instruments that for decades have contributed to the peace and stability of our continent. We must remain committed to international law as the best way of resolving disputes, regulating and making State behaviour predictable, and condemning and punishing any non-compliance. In that sense, it is important to preserve non-proliferation instruments, not only to prevent a new arms race, but also as platforms for dialogue.

In particular, and finally, the Government of Spain considers it essential to have a treaty framework on intermediate-range weapons that includes all States who have developed this kind of weaponry.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** (*spoke in Spanish*) I thank the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain for his kind words addressed to the President.

(*spoke in English*)

I recognize that the representative of Belgium would like to take the floor.

**Mr. Dhaene** (Belgium): Let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in 2019. You can count on my country's full support.

Let me also reiterate the importance my country attaches to the Conference. We strongly hope that the Conference may take up again its crucial function of negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties and regret that it has not been possible to reach consensus on a negotiating mandate for more than 20 years, but we agree with other delegations, notably that of the Netherlands, that we should not focus too much on getting to a programme of work with a negotiating mandate, either.

We would like to recognize in this respect the hard work and leadership of the five coordinators from Indonesia, the Netherlands, Brazil, Germany and Belarus in 2018 to bring forward substantive work according to the agreed mandate of the subsidiary bodies. The adoption of four substantive reports for the first time in years was important, and we should build on it in 2019. We should avoid wasting time on procedural quarrels and focus on building common ground on all core items, so that we are better prepared to start negotiations when the overall context so allows.

In this context, Belgium supports your efforts to reach an agreement on a programme of work and, depending on the outcome of your consultations and the first reactions to the draft you have just circulated, the establishment of subsidiary bodies could allow further structure and then technical discussions throughout the 2019 session, helping bring the Conference back on track as soon as possible. Belgium supports such an approach.

Turning now to the issue regarding the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, my country would like to state the following. On a general level, Belgium is deeply concerned about the deteriorating state of Euro-Atlantic security. For decades, arms control and non-proliferation efforts have made an essential contribution to enhancing our common and indivisible security. If we are not extremely careful, we risk degrading a framework that has been carefully constructed step by step in Vienna, Geneva, New York, Brussels, Washington, D.C., and Moscow.

Indeed, we notice that the current security environment and increased international tension are impacting negatively on States' readiness to move forward on arms control and disarmament. It is high time to re-evaluate the role of arms control in fostering mutual trust and confidence.

Belgium attaches great importance to an international rules-based order composed of transparent and verified conventions such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which has been a cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security for 30 years. We are thus deeply concerned about the potential impact on our security of a world without the Treaty. We

have to be realistic. Euro-Atlantic security is not a given. It depends on clear rules respected by all parties.

Arms control can only be successful when all parties adhere to its rules and verification mechanisms. In this light, we strongly regret the non-compliance of Russia with the Treaty and the material breach of its obligations with the development of the 9M729 intermediate-range missile system. We are of the view that the demonstration on 23 January fell short of what is to be expected of full transparency.

The United States has remained in full compliance with its Treaty obligations since the Treaty has been in force. It is clear that a situation whereby the United States and other parties fully abide by the Treaty and Russia does not is untenable and erodes the international rules-based order. For that reason, Mr. President, my country calls on the Russian Federation to return urgently to full and verifiable compliance. It is now up to the Russian Federation to preserve the Treaty.

I thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and for his kind words for the President and I recognize that the representative of Turkey would like to take the floor.

**Mr. Güneş** (Turkey): Thank you, Mr. President. We would like to add our voice to the others in welcoming the new participants to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to reiterate Turkey's full support and cooperation in your efforts to advance the work of the Conference. In this regard, we also welcome your efforts with regard to the comprehensive and balanced programme of work. We see approval of a programme of work as the way for the Conference to perform its main task again. In this way, we would like to share our hopes that the Conference can agree on a programme of work as soon as possible.

Mr. President, Turkey attaches the utmost importance to strategic stability. In this regard, we believe that existing treaties, agreement and mechanisms in the area of international arms control and disarmament should be implemented in full and preserved. In this body, we know with what difficulty these treaties are negotiated. Multilateralism, not unilateralism, has contributed to peace and security.

History has taught us that an arms race should be avoided. We simply would not want to see that happening again. The development with regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and its ripple effects on global security are a matter of concern. The Treaty is an essential component of the rules-based Euro-Atlantic security and stability architecture. The Foreign Ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization issued a statement on the Treaty on 4 December 2018. Turkey fully aligns itself with it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and for his kind words for the President. I recognize that the representative of the Russian Federation has requested the floor.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, at the last meeting we called upon our colleagues to ensure a professional and substantive debate. What does that mean? It means something very simple: when people speak, their comments or remarks must be based on facts and figures, which is what we tried to do in our statement. I find it hard to understand how, but it seems some people either did not hear or did not understand our comments on the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty. It will be necessary to repeat them again.

First of all, regarding the far-fetched nature of the accusations that Russia has violated the Treaty, more specifically concerning the 9M729 missile, I will begin with the fact that this missile is a modernized version of the 9M728 missile, which the United States and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies have no complaints about. No changes have been made to the engine or propellant. As I stressed, and this was stated at the briefing and then shown by the demonstration of the missile, the weight of the warhead and

therefore of the explosive material in the missile has increased and the navigation system has been made more reliable. It is clear that, with the same engine and quantity of propellant as in the previous versions of the missile, the modernized version, meaning the 9M729, cannot fly any farther. Dear colleagues, if you claim that that is not the case, give the facts and figures.

Moving on. What arguments has the United States put forward during five years of so-called dialogue? I repeat them:

Firstly, it is a type of launcher and missile and its designation is 9M729. I do not think that you need to be an expert to come to the simple conclusion that the range of the missile cannot be calculated based on those facts. Try and argue with that.

Secondly, the United States submitted the missile designation to the Russian delegation during consultations on the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty in December 2017. Where do the five years come from?

Thirdly, given what the United States has provided us with, what they are basing their claims on is the manufacturers of the 9M729 missile. Is it really possible to establish a range using the name of the company that manufactures the missile? If so, tell us how to do it.

Two more things: the coordinates of the tests and the dates of the launches. The coordinates of the launches coincide with those of a Russian test site well known to missile experts, Kapustin Yar. What does the range of the missile have to do with that? It is a test site. Same question. And the dates of the launches. That is all that the United States gave us. What the United States did not give us and what might bring clarity to the issue of the 9M729 missile is data from an objective inspection.

We share the concern of speakers about the future of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty. However, it is not Russia but the United States which is planning to withdraw from the Treaty. Then, colleagues, at the last meeting I drew your attention to the fact that Russia has a number of concerns, some of which date back to the start of the 2000s. They are also related to compliance with the Treaty by the United States. For some reason, none of the speakers have paid attention to that. We are talking about delivery systems with a range of between 500 and 5,500 km. In particular, we reiterated that the Mk41 universal launchers deployed in Romania and planned for deployment in Poland are referred to in that way because they are designed to launch both anti-ballistic missiles and Tomahawk missiles with a range of up to 2,500 km. For some reason I have not noticed anyone in this chamber expressing any concern about that.

Now my very last point, because I do not want to bore you with my intervention. You know, there was an error in the statements. The Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty is not a cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security. That is not true. That assertion contradicts the facts. Think about it. Even if you take the figure of 5,500 km, how can you mention the Atlantic? European security, yes. For those who care so much about Russia complying with the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, I would say this. On 2 February, the United States must decide whether it will remain within the Treaty framework or withdraw. Intermediate-range and short-range missiles do not pose a direct threat to the United States. So, colleagues, think about why the United States is planning to withdraw from the Treaty and start developing and maybe even manufacturing these missiles. You can work out for yourselves where these missiles will be deployed.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Russian Federation. Would any delegation like to take the floor before I introduce the draft programme of work? I recognize Romania. The floor is yours.

**Ms. Beloancă (Romania):** Thank you, Mr. President. As this is my first time taking the floor in a national capacity, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the first presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in 2019. You can count on the Romanian delegation for support and cooperation with a view to productive engagement in this year's work.

I take this opportunity to join previous delegations in expressing deep concern regarding Russia's breach of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Romania expressed its support and seconded the ministerial declaration adopted at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) meeting in December 2018.

We underline once again the importance of preserving the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty as a landmark agreement that remains key to European and international security and stability. We encourage Russia to address the serious concerns regarding its compliance with the Treaty in a substantial and transparent manner and to ensure its full and verifiable implementation.

Regarding Russia's reference to the NATO missile-defence system in Romania in the context of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, allow me to recall the official position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania on this issue. It is completely irrelevant to invoke the component of the anti-missile shield in Romania in the current context. In addition, Romania's position on NATO's ballistic missile defence system, of which the Deveselu facility is an integral part, has not changed. Romania has repeatedly stated that the concept of the NATO anti-missile shield has a purely defensive character and represents an action proportionate to the current threat and compatible with all international commitments.

Furthermore, the Russian Federation received all the necessary assurances and explanations both from Romania and from its NATO allies in this regard. We will continue to promote the need for sustained dialogue and enhanced transparency in order to clarify all the misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

Thank you, Mr. President

**The President:** I thank the representative of Romania for her statement and her words for the President. I recognize that the representative of the Russian Federation has requested the floor.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I have one thing to add. We are not arguing with the United States deploying components of its anti-missile shield in Romania. We are only saying that these universal platforms, the Mk41, are suitable for launches of both anti-ballistic missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles with a range of up to 2,500 km. I do not know what assurances Romania can give us on the matter, if the United States missile defence site on its soil is extraterritorial. It is even a bit odd.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Russian Federation. Would any other delegation like to take the floor before I introduce the draft programme of work? If not, I would like to take off my hat as President of the Conference on Disarmament and to make some remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to address the Conference now in my national capacity – since my country has been mentioned in this chamber earlier – and use this opportunity to express our gratitude to the delegation of the United States, and Ambassador Wood personally, for the attention he paid to Ukraine in his statement during our previous plenary session on 21 January. The Ukrainian side highly appreciates the solidarity of the United States with my country during these challenging times of our history related to the continuing external aggression against my country.

Concerning the issue of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which was raised many times – and in detail by Ambassador Wood last Monday – I would like to underscore that Ukraine understands and shares the deep concerns expressed by the delegation of the United States with regard to the realization of this agreement. Our State is a party to the Treaty, strictly adheres to its provisions and has ensured the elimination of the relevant class of missiles on its territory.

Ukraine has actively participated in the meetings of the Special Verification Commission requested under the Treaty by the United States in recent years because of systematic violations of Treaty provisions by the Russian Federation. The violations of the Treaty and other international instruments listed in the statement delivered by the United

States delegation last week, in our view, pose a direct threat to international security. I thank you.

I would now like to put on my hat as President of the Conference again. Would any delegation like to take the floor before I present the draft programme of work?

I see none. So, dear colleagues, on Tuesday, 29 January, the secretariat circulated a draft programme of work submitted by the Ukrainian presidency. It is my intention to discuss this draft today in order to listen to the reactions of delegations. As I said at the last meeting, I would like to assure all delegations that I intend to provide time to all States and regional groups to provide me with their comments on this draft whether in this setting, formally or informally, as well as bilaterally, and that I will do my utmost to listen to all suggestions and incorporate them into the text as best as I can.

Delegations that wish to do so may express their views in this formal setting. I will then move to an informal plenary meeting to allow delegations that do not wish to speak on the record to comment on this draft. I also intend to convene another plenary meeting next week to allow for further discussions. I may then present you with a new draft of this programme of work that takes into consideration the comments heard and received.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, in accordance with the rules 28 and 29 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, which state that on the basis of its agenda, the Conference, at the beginning of its annual session, shall establish its programme of work, which will include a schedule of its activities for that session, taking also into account the recommendations, proposals and decisions referred to in rule 27, Ukraine, as has been outlined in my previous statements in this chamber, is committed to fulfilling its responsibility to make efforts to establish a programme of work for the 2019 session.

In pursuance of this greatly ambitious goal, on the evening of Tuesday, 29 January, the secretariat of the Conference distributed Ukraine's proposal for a draft programme of work, which is contained in document CD/WP.618, to all the Permanent Representatives and heads of delegations of States members of the Conference.

The thought process of the Ukrainian delegation behind this draft document was quite clearly explained during my initial statement as the first President of this year's session on 21 January. This time, I would like to be more concrete and give member States a clear understanding of where Ukraine is coming from in terms of this initiative.

First of all, in its preamble, our draft programme of work includes a reference to the Agenda for Disarmament launched by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on 24 May 2018. Ukraine recalled that last year the Conference had not been in agreement on the issue of further consideration of this document in this chamber and that divergent views were expressed in this regard. At the same time, my delegation, as well as other delegations, sees the importance of the above-mentioned Agenda and its potential value. In this regard, our draft programme of work suggests taking the document into account during our work.

Moving to the substantive part of Ukraine's draft programme of work, my delegation would like to start by reiterating that, 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.

Believing that we should capitalize and build upon all efforts made by member States during the 2018 session of the Conference and take immediate action to reassert the rightful place of the Conference as a relevant negotiating body, and in an attempt to find a way to maintain this positive momentum, we have ensured that the key elements of our draft programme of work contain references to the work of the five subsidiary bodies established by the decisions contained in document CD/2119 of 19 February 2018 and document CD/2126 of 27 March 2018.

In this vein, paragraph 6 (a) of our initiative, corresponding to agenda item 1 of the Conference, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament",



contains a negotiating mandate with a view to reaching agreement on a non-discriminatory multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. A fissile material cut-off treaty, in our view, is the next logical, practical nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation step to take. It is essential to constraining the nuclear arms race and achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament.

Paragraph 6 (b) of Ukraine's draft programme of work, in accordance with agenda item 2, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", provides for negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on effective measures related to nuclear disarmament. These measures, in our view, can include practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of their elimination. We strongly believe that complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament is the only guarantee of humanity's protection from the deadly consequences of 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.

Paragraph 6 (c), on agenda item 3, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", suggests negotiating for the purpose of reaching an agreement on effective measures related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. 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 weapon.

Paragraph 6 (d), in accordance with agenda item 4, entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", contains a negotiating mandate with a view to reaching agreement on such effective international arrangements, which could take the form of an international legally binding instrument. Ukraine continues supporting the concept of negative security assurances as a practical component of reducing insecurity, which in most cases is considered to be one of the key motives for the development of nuclear-weapon capabilities.

Paragraph 6 (e), on agenda item 5, entitled "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons", suggests establishing a working group and associated schedule of work for the duration of the Conference session to conduct negotiations with a view to elaborating a globalized governance mechanism on existing and potential biosecurity threats. We recognize that the range of biological agents that could be used as weapons is rapidly expanding and can include a broad range of biological incidents, from naturally occurring endemics to the use of biological weapons by State and non-State actors. In this regard, we believe that the establishment of the above-mentioned working group is quite pertinent and has relevance to the work of the Conference, especially given the fact that the Biological Weapons Convention was negotiated within the framework of the Conference.

Paragraph 6 (f), according to agenda item 6, entitled "Comprehensive programme of disarmament", provides for the establishment of a working group for the duration of the Conference session to identify, elaborate and recommend conceptual approaches and effective measures in the area of emerging weapons technologies with a view to ensuring, inter alia, critical infrastructure protection. We believe that the Conference must pay close attention to new and emerging challenges in the field of international security. From dangerous biological agents, offensive cybercapabilities and the weaponization of artificial intelligence, these 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. The question of critical infrastructure protection is another crucial element that we, in Ukraine, have unfortunately been dealing with on a daily basis since 2013. In our experience, this issue should not be avoided when discussing security-related challenges and deserves a rightful place in our deliberations.

Paragraph 6 (g), on agenda item 7, entitled “Transparency in armaments”, suggests a negotiating mandate with a view to reaching agreement on the elements of multilateral arrangements on this matter, including legally binding agreements. Our delegation fully realizes that excessive and destabilizing arms build-ups pose a threat to national, regional and international peace and security, particularly by aggravating tensions and conflict situations, giving rise to serious and urgent concerns. Taking this into account, we have suggested this paragraph in our draft programme of work with a consideration that increased openness and transparency in the field of armaments could potentially enhance confidence, ease tensions, strengthen regional and international peace and security and contribute to restraint in military production and the transfer of arms.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, we fully understand that our draft programme of work, which at the moment fully reflects Ukraine’s national priorities in the relevant spheres of our common business, is quite full in substance. It contains many different elements that, while relevant in the context of ensuring disarmament, non-proliferation, peace and security, cannot fully accommodate at this stage the prevailing positions and immediate priorities of every single member State of the Conference. This is evident from the preliminary consultations my delegation has already conducted.

Furthermore, the Ukrainian side has noted the relevant statements delivered during our previous plenary sessions this year, including those regarding the notion of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work becoming an unattainable myth, as well as the perception that the schedule of activities is, in essence, a programme of work.

We share the frustration of member States regarding the stalemate in the Conference and we, too, wish for our forum to return to substantive work as soon as possible. However, being the first presidency of this year’s Conference session, the Ukrainian delegation has a certain sense of obligation to be ambitious and set the tone for our work for 2019, and we must place the bar high especially this year, which marks the fortieth anniversary of our Conference. At the same time, if we eventually find it to be a good solution, we always can streamline our ambitions in a more pragmatic and realistic channel.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to underscore that this draft programme of work you have on your tables is a living document open to all productive approaches, ideas and suggestions to advance the work of the Conference. Encouraging your further input into Ukraine’s initiative, my delegation invites all member States to be constructive and creative and to find common solutions to limitations that have been building up over the last two decades in the Conference, an essential task if the Conference is to fulfil its mandate. I thank you.

Dear colleagues, at this time, I would like to turn to the list of speakers who would like to speak in a formal setting. The first delegation in our list is the delegation of Belarus, followed by the representative of Ecuador.

**Mr. Nikolaichik** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, first allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of this important office. On behalf of the Belarusian delegation, I wish you and all the Presidents success in the course of this session of the Conference on Disarmament. You can count on the full support of my delegation.

I would like to take this opportunity to begin with a number of general comments. We have extremely serious concerns about the current state of the disarmament and non-proliferation system. The ongoing erosion of the system and also the need to assess and react to new challenges and threats make it necessary to begin comprehensive and balanced multilateral negotiations to overcome the security crisis without delay. In our opinion, the mandate and scope of the Conference allow an important contribution to be made to this process.

We therefore consider that using the platform of the Conference for mutual accusations or judgments of the internal political situation in one country or another, whether that be election results or the relationship between different branches of government, is a luxury that we cannot allow ourselves. We believe that this has a negative effect on the viability of the Conference as a multilateral negotiating mechanism.

The evolution of scientific and technical progress and new technologies requires varied responses. We consider that the development of substantive steps on issues of nuclear disarmament, including negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space and assessment and prevention of the risks associated with the destructive use of new technologies is long overdue and can be achieved by the Conference. The outcomes of the working group for the way ahead in 2017 and the five subsidiary bodies during the 2018 session leave us cautiously hopeful in that regard.

It seems that the key to overcoming the negotiating impasse is to look at the real issues facing the Conference. For example, the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction among non-State groups. There has been a lot of talk about that. Can the Conference develop procedures for the destruction of chemical and biological weapons and production equipment seized from non-State groups? Is it possible for the Conference to develop guiding principles to prevent chemical and biological weapons from falling into the hands of non-State actors in cases where, as a result of conflict, such weapons or equipment are under the control of one State on the territory of another State? We think that it can. That is what the initiative to develop an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism is all about. It is there in articles 14, 15 and 16 of the proposed convention. The same is true of many other issues.

As regards the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, for Belarus as for the parties to the Treaty, it is a highly sensitive issue. We are concerned by the decision of one of the parties to stop fulfilling its obligations under the Treaty. At the same time, we are sure that the Treaty cannot be saved by criticism. Both the United States and Russia had concerns about compliance with the Treaty. In our view, these concerns can only be assuaged within the mechanisms of the Treaty itself, including the Special Verification Commission, based on professional and mutually respectful dialogue.

Can the Conference make a positive contribution to this process? We are sure that it can. For example, by drafting a universal international agreement to restrict the development, deployment and use of intermediate-range missiles. We are also convinced that moving forward will be easier with a simple and functional procedural framework. We are not the only ones to call for the programme of work to be made as technical as possible, which will allow it to be adopted at the very beginning of the Conference session. We are pleased to note that such voices are increasing.

Mr. President, we are grateful for your efforts to maintain and develop the positive trend set by the 2017 and 2018 sessions. We support these efforts. We thank you for circulating the draft programme of work. It is currently being studied in our capital. In that regard, we would ask to be given sufficient time before the next plenary meeting to examine and study it.

Our preliminary comments are as follows.

The discussions in subsidiary body 5 showed that the new scientific discipline of synthetic biology may be the starkest example of the risks related to new scientific and technological achievements. At the same time, it is impossible to rule out threats appearing in other fields. Both delegations and invited experts have spoken about this. Therefore, it seems to us that, in paragraph 6 (e), it would be useful to consider the issue more broadly: to elaborate a globalized governance mechanism to assess the risks of new and existing technologies for international security, including biological and chemical security. More detailed proposals will be submitted to you once we receive the relevant instructions.

Let me assure you that the delegation of Belarus is prepared for constructive engagement on the draft programme of work in order to ensure substantive work for the Conference during the 2019 session.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement and for his kind words for the President and would now like to give the floor to the representative of Ecuador, followed by the representative of Colombia.

**Mr. Davalos Davalos** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. First, thank you for circulating the draft programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament

for 2019. In this regard, and although the document is still being considered by my Government, I would like to make a few preliminary comments.

Ecuador welcomes the effort you have made to propose an ambitious programme of work for 2019, taking into account the global geopolitical situation and tensions and the call made by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Disarmament, in which he clearly sets out the need for urgent progress in pursuit of multilateral disarmament agreements. We also consider it positive that the programme of work takes into account the progress achieved in 2018 by the subsidiary bodies, whose mandates, in our view, should contribute to the work of the Conference this year.

Nonetheless, I wish to reiterate that the position of Ecuador is that non-proliferation and disarmament must be taken together as a whole. Therefore, we would like to suggest revising the balance between the proposed outcomes for each agenda item. In particular, we believe that it is important to negotiate legally binding multilateral agreements not only with regard to fissile material – including the destruction of stockpiles – but also with regard to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. Similarly, we believe that it is important to link the topic of nuclear disarmament with the recently negotiated Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, an instrument with a growing number of signatory countries.

On the other hand, concerning agenda item 5, which is specifically linked to biological weapons, we believe that the Conference is not the appropriate forum in which to address this topic; rather, we believe it crucial to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention.

Finally, on the subject of transparency, Ecuador supports transparency arrangements and the greatest possible engagement therewith, and therefore it supports the negotiation of legally binding instruments in that area.

Mr. President, I thank you again for this first draft and I reiterate my delegation's readiness to work with you to secure agreements so that this Conference may begin substantive work. Thank you very much.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Ecuador for his statement and would now like to give the floor to the representative of Colombia, followed by the representative of India.

**Mr. Dimate Cárdenas** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to begin by thanking you for your proposal for a programme of work, on which basis we hope to reach agreements that will allow us to resume our mandate to negotiate legally binding instruments on disarmament. Colombia welcomes your ambitious initiative, which constitutes a basis for negotiation and which, together, we will be able to strengthen in the coming weeks, as we seek to build a robust document with a clear and concise mandate and realizable goals for this 2019 session.

We are pleased to see that your proposal aims to build on what was achieved during the 2018 session. The excellent work done by all delegations in the subsidiary bodies allowed us to understand the principal positions on the core items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament and to identify middle ground from which we are confident that we will be able to attain better outcomes during this session. To that end, my delegation recommends that the programme of work should contain clearly established mandates, allowing no room for doubts to arise in the future. The technical negotiations will be complex and extensive, and we must not hamper them with procedural discussions that can be avoided with a sound programme of work and the rules of procedure that govern our Conference.

Mr. President, we recognize that the items included in the draft programme of work are at different stages of development. However, it is necessary for our work to have continuity and to serve the purpose of promoting and developing the negotiation of legally binding international instruments in the sphere of disarmament. We know that your programme of work includes issues that are of concern for some of the delegations here present. Yet we hope that they will all show their flexibility and commitment to the Conference, so as to achieve tangible results for international peace and security. Obtaining

consensus – the supreme rule by which this Conference works – is a test of political will. The fact that the international system needs this forum to fulfil its negotiating mandate obliges us to work together constructively to find solutions to the concerns of all delegations.

Mr. President, in conclusion, please allow me to reaffirm the commitment of Colombia to the Conference and to the resumption of substantive work within its area of competence. Your programme of work brings us closer to that goal, and we are confident that, with the support of all delegations, we will be able to demonstrate the relevance and urgency of this important multilateral forum.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Colombia for his statement. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of India, followed by the Ambassador of Japan.

**Ms. Bhandari (India):** Thank you, Mr. President. The delegation of India thanks you for sharing with us your draft programme of work for the 2019 session, as contained in document CD/WP.618. In accordance with rule 29 of the Conference on Disarmament's rules of procedure, it is incumbent upon the President to present a programme of work to the Conference for consideration and adoption. Furthermore, in accordance with rule 28, such a programme of work should be established at the beginning of the annual session. Consequently, the obligation of presenting a programme of work remains paramount for the first presidency in particular, and we therefore acknowledge and appreciate your efforts in the discharge of this cardinal responsibility.

We also thank you for taking time to meet with the Group of 21 yesterday, upon the Group's request, to discuss your draft programme of work. We are appreciative of your willingness to take suggestions and ideas from all member States to improve the initial draft.

Mr. President, India remains committed to the adoption of a programme of work in the Conference. We shall therefore extend our full support and cooperation towards this collective endeavour. It is in this spirit that we put forward a few suggestions for your consideration.

First, as a general comment, while we welcome the negotiating mandates for the core items on the Conference agenda, we believe it would be appropriate if these negotiations were conducted with the objective of concluding legally binding instruments. Otherwise, they would essentially remain discussion mandates rather than negotiating mandates.

Second, India attaches high priority to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament remains the top priority for the Group of 21 as well. We would therefore support addressing nuclear disarmament as a priority under agenda item 1 and as paragraph 6 (a) of your draft. This would also be in line with the decisions of last year, as well as the work conducted under subsidiary body 1. We would also welcome a strengthened mandate aimed at the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention.

Third, without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference. We welcome your proposal and would suggest that this be addressed under agenda item 2, as was done last year, and as paragraph 6 (b) of your draft. We would also suggest a drafting change, so that the negotiating mandate would read clearly as follows: "to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein".

Fourth, we would be willing to go along with your proposals under agenda items 3 and 4 on the proposed prevention of an arms race in space and negative security assurances, respectively, but would suggest strengthening the negotiating mandates in both cases by referring to the conclusion of international legally binding instruments.

Fifth, under agenda item 5, while we remain aware of the magnitude and the gravity of biosecurity threats, both existing and potential, we are not wholly convinced about the merit of establishing a working group in the Conference to address this challenge and would therefore like to seek clarity about your proposal. We would also request further clarification regarding the proposed globalized governance mechanism that is referred to in your draft.

To conclude, Mr. President, as mentioned earlier, we remain committed to working with you and other delegations for the adoption of the programme of work you have proposed. However, in the event that a programme of work with negotiating mandates is unable to command consensus in this room, we would suggest advancing substantive and technical work in the Conference on all core agenda items by reinstating the subsidiary bodies of last year.

I thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of India for her statement and would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan, followed by the representative of Indonesia.

**Mr. Takamizawa (Japan):** I am attending as Japanese chargé and would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the first Conference on Disarmament presidency and, joining other countries, assure you of our utmost cooperation in your efforts to fulfil your important duty.

Japan highly appreciates your recent effort to draft a comprehensive programme of work, which, we understand, is an expression of your eagerness and commitment to revitalize the discussions in the Conference. Japan welcomes all efforts to revitalize the Conference and is ready to take part in such discussions in the most positive and flexible manner. Allow me to make three preliminary comments on your draft programme of work.

The first one is on paragraph 6 and its subparagraphs, which refer to taking into account and building upon the progress made in the subsidiary bodies of the Conference in 2018. Japan is of the view that we have achieved quite a lot – substantial discussions were held in the subsidiary bodies last year. We should build upon discussions and achievements this year. Such continuity is very important, so we strongly support these efforts.

The second point is on the negotiating mandate for the four core items on the Conference agenda. On embarking upon very difficult assignments, it is always good to try challenging and ambitious tasks. In this respect, Japan has great expectations that the President will tackle those challenging issues. However, considering past efforts, such as the 2015 programme of work submitted by the Mexican presidency, we are also of the view that it may be useful to exercise some caution and to take into consideration the feasibility and necessary energy to achieve it. In addition, we are of the view that, of those four core agenda items, some are more ripe for negotiations. Japan believes that a fissile material cut-off treaty, which is broadly considered by the international community as the most mature instrument, is most ripe for negotiation, taking into account the concrete outcome of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

The third point is that we have to start substantive discussions as soon as possible. This year is the fortieth anniversary of the Conference, and we really have to show that we are carrying out substantive discussions. From this viewpoint, even though it is desirable to agree on a programme of work in 2019, in case it is found difficult to tackle due to the time constraints and cost effectiveness, we strongly suggest that we should work on other ideas, such as subsidiary bodies or other possible alternative plans, in order to start substantive discussions as soon as possible.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement and for his kind words for the President. I would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Egypt, followed by the representative of Indonesia.

**Mr. Youssef (Egypt):** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I would like to start by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to

assure you of my delegation's full support in your efforts to fulfil your mandate. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation for all the strenuous efforts you have made to carry out the substantive work of the Conference.

The early engagement is indicative of your commitment to the work of the Conference. In this connection, I would like today to offer my delegation's preliminary views on the draft programme of work, which you have provided to us. I will make a general statement in the next plenary meeting.

Mr. President, Egypt considers that the utmost priority for the Conference at the beginning of its annual session is to adopt a balanced and a comprehensive programme of work. Responsibilities in this regard, as entrusted to the President of the Conference under the rules of procedure, in particular rule 29, are beyond any doubt.

The Conference has a number of issues of paramount significance on its agenda for negotiations, with the aim of concluding legally binding instruments. While we appreciate the view that the seven items on the Conference agenda should be pursued equally, and possibly simultaneously, we would like to underscore that the four core agenda items are of the utmost priority for the Conference. In this context, it is highly relevant to refer to the conclusions of the final report on the work of the informal working group established in 2015, as contained in document CD/2033. The focus of the Conference, in accordance with these conclusions, should remain on the core agenda items, and the primary objective should remain the negotiation of legally binding instruments. The Conference should not lose focus on this primary objective.

Mr. President, while we value the proposal that you have submitted, we wish to make the following observations:

Firstly, we take note of the reference to negotiating with a view to reaching an agreement on several agenda items. The Conference is not a deliberative body but rather a negotiating one, and we would much prefer having this language strengthened across all agenda items to reflect the fact that negotiating legally binding instruments is the primary objective of the Conference.

Secondly, the order and focus of the agenda items as presented in the draft programme of work, items 1 and 2 in particular, are not acceptable to my delegation. Agenda item 1 always has a special focus on nuclear disarmament, as indicated in its title: "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". This item should contain a negotiating mandate for a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention that would ultimately aim at the realization of the complete, irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame and under effective international verification and control. Furthermore, we propose to follow the approach implemented in previous years, with the merger of agenda items 1 and 2 and a focus on negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable legally binding instrument banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in accordance with the report of the special coordinator (document CD/1299 of 1995) and the mandate contained therein. The instrument aspired to should fulfil both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament objectives.

Thirdly, on agenda item 4, concerning negative security assurances, we support your proposal to negotiate an effective international arrangement and would like to include language that confirms the universal, unconditional, irrevocable, effective and legally binding nature of such an arrangement.

Fourthly, on agenda item 5, we believe that the special focus on biosecurity should be discussed and that the relevant forum mandated to deal with biological weapons should be the Biological Weapons Convention.

Fifthly, on agenda item 6, we are of the view that the topic of emerging weapons and technologies is discussed thoroughly in other forums, mainly the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Sixthly, agenda item 7, on transparency, with the focus proposed in the draft programme of work, is misplaced. There are other mechanisms for catering to more transparency in conventional arms transfers and trade.

Mr. President, we would like to reiterate our appreciation for your efforts and we stand ready to engage with all the Conference members in a constructive and interactive manner to resume the substantive work of the Conference.

I thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Egypt for his statement and would now like to give the floor to the representative of Indonesia, followed by the representative of Pakistan.

**Mr. Sidharta** (Indonesia): Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on becoming the first President of the Conference on Disarmament for the 2019 session. I wish you every success in performing your duties and assure you of my delegation's full support for the success of your tenure. Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor in the 2019 session, allow me also to warmly welcome all the new Ambassadors and experts to the Conference and the new Secretary of the Conference, Ms. Radha Day. We look forward to working closely with you.

Mr. President, my delegation thanks you and your delegation for the draft programme of work (document CD/WP.618) circulated by the secretariat on 29 December. We thank you for your honest efforts to bring the Conference back to substantive work, in accordance with its mandate as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. We have sent the programme of work to our capital and received feedback. To be concise, I will try not to repeat the same issues or concerns that were already raised by previous speakers, except for the topics my country values as a principal position.

Mr. President, firstly, my delegation is surprised that the long-standing position of the Group of 21, which is to commence negotiating nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction, which my country fully subscribes to, is not in your proposed programme of work. For Indonesia and the 32 other members of the Group, this issue is the highest priority. Mr. President, without prejudice to the priority Indonesia attaches to nuclear disarmament, my delegation is flexible on how we would like to proceed with the issue of fissile material. However, we are of the view that fissile material is not the sole issue that falls under agenda item 1 of the Conference. In fact, for many years, we combined agenda items 1 and 2 to form an umbrella item under which two core issues of the Conference were discussed – that is, nuclear disarmament and fissile material.

Secondly, Indonesia is fully aware of current developments in respect of biological weapons and the need to further strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. Nevertheless, we are still not convinced that the issue of biological weapons should be prioritized in the Conference, taking into account our protracted stalemate on the four other core issues: nuclear disarmament, fissile material, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. My delegation believes that, for the sake of effectiveness and efficiency, the biological weapons issue can be further addressed under the regime and mechanism of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Thirdly, we noticed that, in your proposed programme of work, there are different types of expected outcome under each agenda item. We fully understand that different issues might involve different levels of maturity. However, we have to also take into consideration that different countries have different priorities and we have to respect that. For that reason, we always aim to achieve a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, especially with regard to the Conference's four core issues.

Mr. President, for my delegation to the Conference and many others, it is important that the programme of work should be crafted in a balanced and comprehensive manner. Your draft provides a good basis. However, we believe that it should be improved in many



ways, so we can finally reach consensus on it. My delegation stands ready to work with you and all delegations in this endeavour.

I thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Indonesia for his statement and for his kind words for the President. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, followed by the representative of the Netherlands.

**Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan):** Thank you, Mr. President. We thank you for circulating a draft programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament's 2019 session. We have forwarded it to our capital and are awaiting comments and instructions. Our initial reaction to the draft is as follows.

We appreciate your attempt to suggest negotiating mandates on the issue of nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. These important matters have been languishing on the Conference agenda for decades and require immediate and urgent attention. We are of the view that their mandates should be strengthened and made more result-oriented towards the conclusion of concrete legally binding treaties.

We note with satisfaction that you have also attempted to propose negotiating mandates on some other issues falling under agenda items 5, 6 and 7, such as biological security, emerging weapons technologies and transparency in armaments. While greater precision can be added to the exact mandate and topics for negotiations under these items, and more clarity is needed, it is certainly a step in the right direction.

In short, my delegation would be amenable to going along with the negotiating mandates on six issues identified in paragraph 6 (b) to (g) of your draft programme of work with appropriate modifications.

Mr. President, we were disappointed to observe that you did not address our concern in proposing a mandate for negotiations on the issue of fissile material. As conveyed to you during our bilateral consultations and later during the last plenary meeting, Pakistan is not able to join negotiations on a treaty that is limited to only banning the production of fissile material on the basis of the Shannon Mandate. We will, however, be positively disposed to it if the negotiating mandate expressly covers existing stocks in the treaty's scope.

There are two major glaring differences between the mandate proposed by you for negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices contained in paragraph 6 (a) and the mandates proposed by you for the negotiations on the other six issues mentioned in paragraph 6 (b) to (g). Let me explain.

Firstly, the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty is envisaged to be held on the basis of document CD/1299, or the Shannon Mandate. This restricts the mandate and scope of the negotiations in advance, in a manner that would contribute little to nuclear disarmament and prove detrimental to Pakistan's national security and regional stability. This is not the case for the other six issues mentioned in the succeeding subparagraphs, which neither prescribe any preconditions nor restrict the scope of negotiations.

Secondly, paragraph 6 (a) mentions that the negotiations on the fissile material issue will be held to reach agreement on a treaty, whereas for the other six items in paragraph 6 (b) to (g), the formulation states that the negotiations will be held to reach agreement simply on some undefined effective measures. Only the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty is being treated in a preferential and differentiated manner. These two inconsistencies need to be addressed.

We would therefore like to propose amendments to the entire paragraph, paragraph 6 (a) in particular. We could also live either with the deletion of paragraph 6 (a) altogether or with a discussion mandate identical to that of subsidiary body 2 last year. We can provide you with concrete language amendments on the various options for paragraph 6 (a) as well as for the other subparagraphs. As we have explained on numerous occasions, the matter of a fissile material negotiating mandate concerns our supreme national security interests and therefore leaves us with no room for flexibility or ambiguity.

Before concluding, I would once again like to stress that for a consensus-based body like the Conference, the views and concerns of all member States must be taken on board before tabling any draft decision. We sincerely hope that the Conference will be able to achieve consensus on a programme of work in order to commence its substantive business as soon as possible. Should that not be the case, it would be advisable to start exploring other options and alternatives for resuming substantive work, building on the momentum generated last year. Lastly, Mr. President, we greatly welcome and sincerely appreciate your remarks that you would be open to collecting all views and proposals and remain open to revising this draft programme of work accordingly.

I thank you very much.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

**Ms. Claringbould** (Netherlands): Thank you very much, Mr. President. We would like to thank you and the Ukrainian presidency more generally for the draft programme of work. As noted in our statement on 22 January, the Netherlands is eager to continue our substantive work, building on the progress made in the subsidiary bodies last year.

As we stated then, we are flexible on the format on which the Conference on Disarmament will continue its work. Your current draft, we believe, contains many useful elements to ensure that the Conference conducts that substantive work, which, in general, we welcome. Turning to the proposal in front of us, in more detail, we would like to make a few preliminary remarks and suggestions – and I understand that you will be looking at these remarks for a revised version, something we very much appreciate.

First, with regard to the issue of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other explosive devices – which was already mentioned by the Indian delegation – we believe that was discussed under agenda item 2 in subsidiary body 2 rather than subsidiary body 1, as the Ukrainian draft suggests. On this issue, however, the Netherlands is of the opinion that the suggested mandate for negotiations could be enhanced by taking into account the consensus report of subsidiary body 2. We feel that the current suggestion may not sufficiently reflect the discussions we had, in particular in terms of scope and the issue of preconditions and the progress that was made. We have come up with a few textual suggestions in that regard and we are happy to submit them to you or the Conference in general if that is deemed useful.

Concerning agenda item 6, the Netherlands notes that the work will focus on emerging weapons technologies and identifying, elaborating and recommending conceptual approaches and effective measures in that regard. For us, it is important that this is done within the framework of existing international law. Therefore, rather than ensuring that critical infrastructure is protected, as your draft suggests, we feel that a more general approach, in which we will look at the conceptual approaches and effective measures with a view to ensuring the application of international law, is merited. That will of course automatically extend to critical infrastructure protection as well. Again, we are happy to make some concrete language proposals in that regard.

The Netherlands is also keen to learn more about what is meant under agenda item 5, where reference is made to elaborating “a globalized governance mechanism on existing and potential biosecurity threats”. You have provided us a bit more information in that regard, but, as we stated earlier, we feel that these issues are already addressed under current mechanisms like the Biological Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We are therefore keen to learn more about what precisely this topic would entail.

In a similar vein – this is the fourth point I would like to make – we would like to know a bit more about the intentions under agenda item 7 on transparency in armaments. We feel that that issue was broadly discussed in the past. It resulted in the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which is still in use, more than 25 years ago. In terms of transparency in armaments, we are also keen to hear more about your thoughts on what exactly should be discussed under that agenda item.

To conclude, let me reiterate my delegation's readiness to engage with you and the Conference membership on ways to finding agreement on a programme of work. On that programme of work, we said in our earlier statement on 22 January that we see rule 28 as stating that the programme should be simply a programme of work with a schedule of activities, nothing more and nothing less, as long as it means that we make substantive progress in the Conference and build on the substantive work of the Conference in recent years, in particular last year's subsidiary bodies.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Netherlands for her statement. I have on my list the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Lee Jang-keun** (Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I would like to join others in thanking you for presenting the draft programme of work as you promised on Tuesday. Considering the frustration and expectations of the international community in respect of the work of the Conference on Disarmament, especially as we know that they are largely due to our failure to come up with a programme of work, discussing this matter and giving it priority this year should be our natural first step. Therefore, we would like to speak highly of your efforts and proposal, which we believe could provide a basis for our consideration.

Although we still need time to look into it in depth and have not received instructions from the capital yet, our very general preliminary assessment of the proposal is that, as some delegations have already mentioned, it looks very ambitious, and it has some unrealistic elements, especially with respect to negotiating on five items; establishing two working groups in one year will be too ambitious.

For my delegation, our priority is to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which we believe is the most mature subject on which to start negotiations. However, as we also recognize that member States have varying priorities, in order to reach a possible consensus, we are ready to constructively participate in the discussions with considerable flexibility. Considering that the adoption of the programme of work is a procedural matter, we believe that it would be desirable to simplify the text by including minimal elements that can be agreed on, such as the subjects of negotiation or discussion, and brief timelines for them. We also support the idea of maintaining the momentum we built last year in the subsidiary bodies and favour having more substantive and focused discussions within that framework as well. Here again, however, we are flexible, and, once again, I assure you of my delegation's full support for your very important endeavour. We will provide further comments and suggestions as discussions proceed.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, we note your sustained and persistent efforts in the preparation and promotion of the draft programme of work, which is our main common concern, or rather the common concern of all participants in the Conference on Disarmament. But now, as we are beginning the initial but important discussion of the draft proposed by the Ukrainian presidency, I ask you to look around and see how depleted our numbers are. I was not planning to speak, but we were assuming that the rules of procedure and work on the programme of work were a priority for Conference participants. Why are there so many empty seats? I will tell you. Because right now Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu is giving a briefing in Room V and our colleagues, especially those with small delegations, are forced to go back and forth between two events. Generally speaking, I personally find it odd that such a high-level United Nations official is in Geneva and did not find the time to talk to the Conference on Disarmament. I hope that you, Mr. President, will pass on our concerns.

As for the draft itself, in that regard and considering that differing opinions have been expressed about the agenda, we have grave doubts over whether it is appropriate to reflect it in the draft programme of work. Moreover, that document has not been agreed upon, has not been adopted by the members of the Conference on Disarmament and is not a

Conference document. The scope of the agenda itself is far beyond the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament. That is our reasoning.

Some people in this room have made comments about subsidiary bodies 1 and 2. We think that would be easy to harmonize things there. Secondly, to achieve a balanced draft programme of work, we also consider it necessary to harmonize the wording for how we describe the outcomes of the subsidiary bodies. There should be identical wording for all subsidiary bodies: we either write about progress or we write about work, so that it is consistent, because in principle they were working on different issues but they were doing the same thing with broadly similar results.

I have one more point, and the rest I will leave for consultation in an informal setting, if of course we get that far. Paragraph 8. In accordance with rule 23 of the rules of procedure, it is the Conference that establishes subsidiary bodies, not its President. I think that can also be corrected easily.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. The representative of China has requested the floor.

**Mr. Ji Haojun (China):** Thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts to come up with this draft programme of work. I have sent the draft to the capital but have not received any feedback yet and, starting this weekend, our people in the capital will be on holiday for a full week.

Without a mandate or authorization from the capital, I can only make some personal observations. I agree with many of the points made by the previous speakers, especially with the points made by our Indian and Russian colleagues. In particular, regarding paragraph 6 (c), on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we also feel that the mandate in that regard should be enhanced and that there should be a mention of negotiations on legally binding instruments rather than a vague reference to effective measures. We are ready to work with you and all the other delegates in the coming days.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of China for his statement. I see no more requests for the floor. I will now suspend the meeting and move to an informal setting.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.20 p.m. and resumed at 4.30 p.m.*

**The President:** Excellencies, dear colleagues, I wish to thank you for your comments and reassure you that I will endeavour to take them into consideration, along with those that will be shared in the next plenary meeting, in a revised draft of the programme of work. I also invite delegations to contact me bilaterally should they have issues pertaining to this document that they wish to discuss in further detail.

The next plenary meeting will take place on Tuesday, 5 February, at 10 a.m. I also would like to inform you that I am planning to have Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, address the Conference on the afternoon of 7 February via teleconference.

This meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.*