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

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*President:* Mr. Aidan Liddle..... (United Kingdom)


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**The President:** I call to order the 1485th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, this afternoon, we shall continue the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament that we started this morning. We shall hear the address of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, who will be our first speaker, followed by Australia, Ireland, Slovenia, Brazil, Italy, Hungary and India. Allow me at this stage to suspend the meeting to welcome Mr. Guterres.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is resumed.

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General. Mr. Guterres, thank you for coming to address the Conference on Disarmament. We very much appreciate your presence here with us today. You have the floor, Sir.

**Mr. Guterres** (Secretary-General of the United Nations): Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a privilege to take the floor here in this Council Chamber, a space that was created to nurture the agreements that make our world a safer place. The words inscribed outside these doors are as urgent as ever: “Nations must disarm or perish.”

I will be blunt. Key components of the international arms control architecture are collapsing. The continued use of chemical weapons with impunity is driving new proliferation. Thousands of civilian lives continue to be lost because of illicit small arms and the use in urban areas of explosive weapons designed for open battlefields.

New weapon technologies are intensifying risks in ways that we do not yet understand and cannot even imagine. We need a new vision for arms control in the complex international security environment of today.

But, as we work toward this new common endeavour, we must take great care to preserve our existing frameworks which continue to bring us indispensable benefits.

Many of the most successful and ambitious disarmament and arms control initiatives over the past several decades were those led by the major Powers. That is perfectly natural. Their drive to regulate and eliminate arms was the product of a strategic understanding of how cooperation and agreement could be the most effective security tools to help prevent, mitigate and resolve armed conflict.

And that is why it is one of my highest priorities. Over the past seven decades, United Nations Member States have made great gains in this field. But our efforts are in increasing jeopardy. States are seeking security not in the proven collective value of diplomacy and dialogue, but in developing and accumulating new weapons. And the situation is particularly dangerous as regards nuclear weapons.

The demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), should it be allowed to happen, would make the world a more insecure and unstable place. That insecurity and instability will be keenly felt here in Europe and we simply cannot afford to return to the unrestrained nuclear competition of the darkest days of the cold war.

I call on the parties to the INF Treaty to use the time remaining to engage in sincere dialogue on the various issues that have been raised and it is very important that this treaty is preserved.

I also call on the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty) before it expires in 2021. This Treaty is the only international legal instrument limiting the size of the world’s two largest nuclear arsenals and its inspection provisions represent an important confidence-building set of measures that benefit the entire world. I urge Russia and the United States to use the time provided by an extension to the Treaty to consider further reductions in their strategic nuclear arsenals. I dream of the day when these bilateral arrangements become multilateral. And at their summit in Hanoi, later this week, I hope that the leaders of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the

United States agree to concrete steps for sustainable, peaceful and complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, the treaties and instruments that make up the existing nuclear arms control and disarmament regime were painstakingly constructed over years. States enter into dialogue despite their harbouring deep suspension towards each other. At that time too, the world was suffering from a serious case of trust deficit disorder. But in the absence of trust, governments sought the strictest verification measures – the bilateral arms control process between the Russian Federation and the United States has been one of the hallmarks of international security for 50 years. Thanks to their efforts, global stockpiles of nuclear weapons are now less than one sixth of what they were in 1985. That is the legacy that is in grave danger.

The arms control and disarmament regime is built on the good-faith implementation of provisions – and on rigorous verification and enforcement of compliance. I hope that the parties will make use of both, while there is still time.

More broadly, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains an essential pillar of international peace and security and the foundation for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Distinguished delegates, since I last addressed this Conference, I launched my Disarmament Agenda “Securing Our Common Future”, which includes 40 specific commitments to support disarmament.

I have directed the Office for Disarmament Affairs to work with the entire United Nations system to implement these, and significant progress has already been made. The Agenda is a useful guide for action by the United Nations system. But it was created to serve as a tool to support the work of Member States, which have responsibility for providing a clear, ambitious and realistic vision.

This vision should be a bridge from the lessons of the past to the emerging challenges of the twenty-first century.

The slow demise of the cold war era arms control regime is already having profound consequences. Member States cannot let the world sleepwalk into a new nuclear arms race.

And I urge you in the strongest possible terms to take decisive action to safeguard and preserve the existing system through dialogue that will help restore trust.

The development of risk reduction measures fit for this evolving environment, including transparency and confidence-building tools, would help to alleviate tensions and take us back from the nuclear brink.

Such steps could take into account regional nuclear challenges, along with technological developments including cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and so-called “hypersonic weapons” that could be used to launch attacks at unprecedented speed.

I stand ready to support you in any way that I can to facilitate your efforts to develop a new vision for arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament in today’s world.

*(spoke in French)*

Mr. President, the firm support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons shows that the majority of Member States wish to eliminate these terrible weapons of mass destruction. Although we can only achieve this through constructive dialogue, such as at the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral body of the international community for negotiations on disarmament has concluded no negotiations on this matter for 20 years. Arms control negotiations are, therefore, taking place increasingly often in other forums, including the General Assembly and outside of the United Nations framework.

I urge the Conference to demonstrate that it can provide added value to the multilateral system. If the members of the Conference wish the Conference to find the place that its founders had envisaged for it, they must once again seek to negotiate multilateral agreements. The history of this chamber reminds us that the inability of the Council of the League of Nations to address the most pressing security problems of the day contributed significantly

to the loss of its *raison d'être*. The establishment of subsidiary bodies and the work undertaken are encouraging. I invite members to build on the progress achieved. Innovative procedures are important, but the Conference will be judged above all by the results it secures. We are counting on both your technical competence and diplomatic skills, as well as leading international experts in matters of disarmament. You must get back to work, and I invite you to show that you can live up to your forebears.

For the first time in many years, arms control and disarmament are at the top of different agendas for the wrong reasons. One of the main achievements of international diplomacy is under serious threat. We must take decisive action. The Organization and I myself will do all we can to provide assistance, but it is nevertheless incumbent on the Member States to create a dynamic and a strategy. We must act promptly.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Guterres for his statement and his call to action as well as his continued support for our work in this Conference. Allow me to suspend the meeting for a short moment while I escort our next speaker to the podium.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is resumed.

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, Her Excellency Senator Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

**Ms. Payne (Australia):** Mr. President, Secretary-General Guterres, Secretary-General Møller, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Ms. Nakamitsu, distinguished Ambassadors, Excellencies, one and all, as Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs and, immediately preceding that, as a former Australian Minister of Defence, I am acutely aware of the complexity of the issues with which the Conference on Disarmament grapples.

Chief among these is the importance of maintaining adherence to and respect for long-standing, carefully negotiated arms control regimes. It is this system of treaties and agreements that underpins our international rules-based order, and delivers the stability, security and certainty that we all work towards. These agreements give us confidence that we can deal with regional or global crises on equal terms.

But it is fair to say that there is a frustration that this Conference has not maintained the momentum and ambition that it was established to provide. That it has a proud tradition but perhaps is not currently living up to that.

Australia believes that we urgently need to infuse new energy into our work so that this Conference can play the important part that it should in the international rules-based order on which, as I have said, we depend.

The Conference has worked hard over the last two years on technical issues, on forging cooperation, on making preparations for the time when negotiations are possible. The next step, logically, is to declare an intention to do just that – to commence negotiations.

An Australian priority in this regard is a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We see no substantive reason why negotiations cannot start on this treaty now – with differences fleshed out over the course of discussions. That is the purpose of negotiations. We encourage strongly all members of this Conference to be positive and constructive in this endeavour. As we have also continued to make clear: the rules-based global order extends to space. And Australia will continue to work with other nations to ensure the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the outer space domain. We do not, however, support the current proposed draft treaty that has been submitted to this Conference on outer space. Our view is that, at this point in time, efforts are more effectively focused on limiting unacceptable behaviour in space.

Next year, Australia will preside over this Conference, along with Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh and Belarus. We look forward to active coordination, to ensure productive outcomes and purposeful continuity between presidents.

Indeed, Australia's presidency in 2020 comes at an important time for disarmament – the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and 25

years since its indefinite extension. I can assure you that our commitment to uphold and strengthen the Treaty has not waned.

Australia remains firmly committed to working towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. But efforts must be both practical and feasible. No matter how well intentioned, initiatives that disregard the global realities in which we live in the hope of accelerated progress are more likely to be counterproductive. Experience tells us that there are no short cuts to disarmament.

When we consider the difficulty of the task ahead, we should acknowledge the progress made so far – progress to which the Secretary-General adverted in his opening remarks. During the cold war, the number of nuclear weapons peaked at over 70,000. Today, those numbers have fallen to around 14,400 – many of which are proposed to be dismantled.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) defined cuts to the nuclear weapons stockpiles of the two top possessor States. So did the New START Treaty in 2010. It is critical for global stability that this arrangement is extended. In 1987, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was a pioneering agreement bringing about, for the first time, a bilateral reduction in nuclear weapons.

Australia remains disappointed that Russia has so far not addressed its issues of non-compliance with this treaty – placing its very viability in question. We urge Russia to return to compliance in the period of time available. It is in no one's interest to return to an arms race like that witnessed during the cold war.

We should use this time ahead of next year's Review Conference as an opportunity to consider our future. It is a clear fact that we cannot rid the world of nuclear weapons today or realistically within this decade, but we can absolutely work towards further significant reductions. I offered that view to the General Assembly in September last year, and I offer it again today. We cannot achieve our shared aims if we look only in the short term. Ours is a problem that needs tenacity and persistence over time, and we should prize these ambitions.

In March 2020, Australia will host the International Youth Nuclear Congress. It is a reminder to me that our work or our inaction will be inherited by the generations that follow us. And there are gains of which we can be proud. One of my early priorities as Foreign Minister was to co-chair, with the Japanese Foreign Minister, Taro Kono, the ninth ministerial meeting of the Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York last year.

At that meeting, we welcomed further progress towards the universalization of the Treaty. With Thailand's recent ratification, we can celebrate that all members of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are now party to the Treaty. This is a significant regional achievement. We also welcome the most recent ratification of the Treaty by Zimbabwe earlier this month.

Australia remains convinced that transparency, compliance, verification, and if necessary, enforcement, are foundational issues that require solutions. Australia, with others, is working through the technical challenges of disarmament through the United States-initiated International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. Similarly, Australia has worked through many of the technical issues surrounding a treaty banning fissile material for nuclear weapons including in two United Nations-mandated groups. Through the 12-member cross-regional Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we are in dialogue with nuclear-weapons States on ways to enhance transparency.

We also support the vital role of Security Council resolutions in moderating destabilizing influences. Australia supports the Security Council's resolutions calling for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. These efforts have provided the framework for much of the effort to address tension on the Korean Peninsula. We also welcome the second summit meeting between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Hanoi later this week.

It is Australia's view that the Conference on Disarmament has no time to waste because the international community has no time to waste. We must continue to build areas of common ground and commit ourselves to both the technical work and the broader efforts

needed to conduct negotiations. Australia stands ready to be a strong partner in all of those efforts.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Payne for her statement. Allow me to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Ms. Payne and the Secretary-General from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is resumed.

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Simon Coveney, Tánaiste – or Deputy Prime Minister – and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland.

**Mr. Coveney (Ireland):** Mr. President, Excellencies, it is an honour to have the opportunity, here in Geneva today, to address the Conference on Disarmament.

Geneva is recognized the world over as the city of peace and humanitarian action, a city where the diplomatic resolution of the world's most challenging issues is tackled every day and a city where multilateralism offers us a means of preventing future conflict.

The year 2019 represents a historic year for multilateralism. It is 100 years since the formation of the League of Nations, when the international community first came together to recognize the necessity of collective dialogue and cooperation. Given the global challenges that we face today, this approach is needed more than ever.

For the first time since the cold war, disarmament and non-proliferation issues have returned to daily headlines. Issues such as the repeated incidents of chemical weapons use; the unacceptable humanitarian and development consequences of increased use of explosive weapons in populated areas; and, most worryingly, the growing threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons, demand our attention now. Disarmament diplomacy has a key role to play in addressing these challenges.

In recent years, however, we have witnessed the creeping erosion of the rules-based international order, a rollback on commitments previously undertaken and the failure of multilateral forums to fulfil their work owing to growing polarization.

Regretfully, the Conference on Disarmament has, in many respects, come to represent the malaise that is affecting the traditional disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. The inability to adopt a programme of work or reach agreement on new membership applications in over 20 years, indeed, ever since Ireland has been a member of this body, is not sustainable.

Growing geopolitical divisions must not allow us to forget that no individual State can address today's threats in isolation. As W.T. Cosgrave, the first leader of a newly independent Ireland, said during his inaugural address here in Geneva, we all "reach a much fuller liberty and a much fuller dignity in the harmonious society of nations".

The potential for multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation to confront global challenges should be seen as a precious opportunity. That is why Ireland warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. His goal of restoring disarmament to its central role in building international peace and security, and also of helping to facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, is fully shared by my country.

The Agenda recognizes that disarmament is more than a security issue. For Ireland, it is cross-cutting and has relevance across a broad spectrum of multilateral issues, including international development, the environment and cultural heritage. Ireland is working to bring the horizontal issue of gender and disarmament to the fore in international disarmament negotiations. This applies both to the gender-related impact of conventional and nuclear weapons and the need to ensure greater agency for women in all disarmament-related discussions and negotiations. When I look around the table here today, I think that that is even more the case. It is particularly welcome that the Agenda focuses on this important issue.

Humanity is, after all, at the centre of all our efforts on disarmament. As a tangible manifestation of Ireland's support, I am pleased to announce that Ireland will act as a champion for three of the actions outlined in the Agenda. These include facilitating dialogue

for nuclear disarmament; moving forward international efforts to develop a political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas; and building understanding on the impact of arms on conflict management.

Ireland looks forward to working with the Office for Disarmament Affairs and all Member States of the United Nations to make progress on implementation of the Agenda.

The urgency of the issues that we confront today cannot be understated. Agreements are unravelling or are being undermined deliberately. We face the possibility of a new arms race; the development of new weapons that could lower the threshold for use of nuclear weapons; and modernization programmes that take us further away from the promise of nuclear disarmament enshrined in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The last multilateral nuclear disarmament treaty negotiated in this room, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, has yet to enter into force and a long-promised treaty banning the production of fissile material has yet to be negotiated.

Some States have argued that the deteriorating international security environment means that progress on disarmament cannot be made; that we must wait for a more appropriate time. But multilateral disarmament is not a luxury. It is a necessity whose urgency grows as prospects for peace and security diminish.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is a case in point. Introduced by Ireland during the height of the cold war, when the accepted wisdom was that the number of nuclear-armed States would grow rapidly and exponentially, the Treaty represents what is possible through effective multilateralism. It represents a recognition that increased security for one State does not have to come at the cost of the security of others. It represents that all States, regardless of size, have a stake in global disarmament and can play their part.

The 2020 Review Conference, which will mark the passing of 50 years since the entry into force of the Treaty, will be an opportunity for all States and States parties to reflect on what has been achieved and look forward to what remains to be done. As we enter this critical stage of the Treaty review cycle, Ireland will work with its partners in the European Union, the New Agenda Coalition and the Vienna Group of Ten to ensure a successful outcome. For Ireland, there can be absolutely no rollback on the commitments set out in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or undertaken at previous Review Conferences and we will strive for meaningful and balanced outcomes across the three pillars of the Treaty.

The nuclear-weapon States cannot continue to deflect calls by the majority of the international community for the disarmament of their nuclear arsenals. Russia and the United States must take the lead in restarting the reduction of nuclear weapon stockpiles and to extend every effort to ensure a new arms race does not happen.

There are also many other significant actions the nuclear-weapon States could take within the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. These include legally binding negative security assurances, risk reduction measures and increased transparency. These and the full and effective implementation of past agreements would significantly reduce international tension and reinforce the multilateral system to which we are all committed.

We must also be creative and original in our approach to achieving our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons and not be limited by traditional, one-dimensional thinking. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons offers us a path to nuclear disarmament by finally putting in place a workable legal framework for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty is fully complementary with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons strengthens and reinforces the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and reaffirms it as the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is a facilitator, not an impediment to progress. As recognized in the treaties and throughout the discussion on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the only true guarantee against the horrors of nuclear war is the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

All present here will be well aware that Ireland is a determined and ambitious candidate for a seat on the Security Council at the elections to be held in 2020. The primary

task of the Council is to preserve international peace and security and prevent future conflicts from emerging. It is our firmly held view that the long-term sustainable peace and security can only be attained through multilateralism, effective cooperation and disarmament. Stagnation in this field cannot be allowed to continue; for the sake of this and future generations we must not gamble when the stakes involve nuclear weapons. A loss is simply too risky.

Allow me to conclude, Mr. President, by reaffirming our continued support for all efforts to bring the Conference on Disarmament back to work. It is a key element of the United Nations disarmament machinery and I urge the Member States gathered here not to let the memory of past failures stymie ambition for future progress.

There is no greater just and steadfast purpose than the cause of multilateralism and disarmament.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Coveney for his statement. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Mr. Coveney from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is resumed.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, Her Excellency Simona Leskovar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia.

**Ms. Leskovar (Slovenia):** Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Liddle, on assuming the duties of the President of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to express Slovenia's full support for your endeavours to effectively guide our work.

I am honoured to present the national views of Slovenia as an observer State at this high-level segment of the Conference. I fully share the Secretary-General's view that we must do more in the area of disarmament.

Promoting rules-based international order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core is at the heart of our interests and of our commitment. Global challenges need global solutions. My country is firmly committed to preserving effective, treaty-based international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation as the key elements of security for Europe and beyond. Slovenia regrets that no agreement could be reached over the last six years to return to full compliance with the INF Treaty. We encourage the Russian Federation and the United States to remain engaged in constructive dialogue to preserve the INF Treaty, which is crucial for Europe's security. We call on the Russian Federation to return to its verifiable implementation. Slovenia will support all efforts to strengthen international arms control.

We also encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the New START Treaty in 2021 for another five years.

In the same vein, Slovenia firmly believes that the proliferation of the use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, in Iraq, Syria and Malaysia, and also in the United Kingdom, by State or non-State actors, is an unacceptable breach of international law, and may amount to a war crime or crime against humanity. As such, it must be condemned in the strongest terms. The international community must not allow impunity.

Turning to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, we commend the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in ensuring Iran's continuing implementation of its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a part of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture that is crucial for the security of the region. As long as Iran honours its obligations, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action should be preserved.

Slovenia supports all diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions and we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which would pave the way to its entry into force. We also call on the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

It is our firm belief that we need to achieve our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons progressively, through the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; next year, we will be celebrating fiftieth anniversary or 50 years of its entry into force. For us, Slovenia, the Treaty remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. We believe that progress has been made in all three areas, and we encourage all States to continue implementing the Treaty. In our view, effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament requires not only appropriate technical and security conditions, but also the active engagement of States that possess nuclear weapons.

With the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons approaching, Slovenia calls for full implementation of the 2010 Review Conference action plan, including the action that calls for the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons in the context of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

My country supported the General Assembly resolutions related to this issue, including the convening of the Group of Governmental Experts, open-ended consultative meetings and sessions of the high-level expert preparatory group led by Canada, which reached a consensual outcome. We hope that all these efforts, including the report recently presented here, will enable the Conference on Disarmament to start the treaty negotiations without delay.

As an observer, Slovenia is open to any decision that could lead to substantive work on all agenda items of the Conference. Let me also reiterate that Slovenia would like to contribute to international peace and security, and to disarmament too, by participating fully in the work of this Conference. We therefore look forward to a positive decision on expanding the membership of the Conference on Disarmament in order to ensure universality, transparency and multilateralism. In this context, Slovenia fully supports the proposal to establish a coordinator for exploring issues related to expanding the membership of the Conference.

I would like to conclude by stressing that the equal participation and leadership of women in non-proliferation and disarmament are vital to achieving peace and security. Slovenia is fully committed to providing support and also to delivering results in this field.

**The President:** I thank Her Excellency Ms. Leskovar for her statement. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Her Excellency Ms. Leskovar from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is resumed. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Fabio Marzano, Vice-Minister for National Sovereignty and Citizenship of Brazil.

**Mr. Marzano (Brazil):** Let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and, through you, all distinguished representatives to this august body.

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament established this Conference 40 years ago. By that act, weapons of mass destructions held by competing super-Powers were recognized to be a central issue of concern for world peace and security. The Conference was thus construed as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, with a clear treaty-making function activated and guided by specific mandates, as agreed. Restrained membership under a strict rule of consensus was meant to provide a level of comfort for discussion and negotiation on even the most sensitive matters of security interest.

Realistically, however, the Conference's credibility has relied on key treaties directly arrived at by the major Powers, such as those addressing anti-ballistic missiles, intermediary nuclear forces, open skies and strategic nuclear arms reduction. Upholding and extending the

existing arms control treaties, verifying compliance with their core provisions and building up from their legal bottom line towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction are the measures that provide a credible backdrop to multilateral disarmament.

Brazil welcomes the Secretary-General's Disarmament Agenda as a notable effort to recognize, assess and respond to that which we can all agree is a deteriorating international security environment. In support of Member States, he has articulated timely suggestions and action points dealing with three orders of threats: threats to the very survival of humanity posed by the prospect of a new weapons of mass destruction arms race; threats to the lives of humans as a consequence of conflict and conventional weapons; and threats posed by the evolution of technology applicable to weapons and warfare. There are many scenarios in which ever more autonomous weapons systems increase risk and lethality, reduce human control over life and death, disrupt relations of power and accountability and challenge the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience.

But no number of disarmament agendas will protect us from a resumed arms race at a higher level of risk if existing norms are laid to rest, superseded by worrisome trends at the national, regional and international levels, with no indication of what new agreements or what new regime could be established in their place.

Last year's session of the First Committee was a sign of growing disarray. While the record number of resolutions and decisions underscored a shared concern about the current strategic environment, growing differences in how to address this concern were evident in the record number of votes on resolutions – 42 – and on separate paragraphs – 53. Two resolutions on cybersecurity were adopted and will be implemented, reflecting a split vision among nuclear Powers at odds with one another on how to curb the weaponization of cross-cutting and unstoppable technologies at the heart of the digital era.

Of course, the international community is not keeping quiet, as tensions and conditions deteriorate. In this chamber, we have seen an effort to break 22 years of deadlock with sensible attempts at more viable approaches to resuming substantive work. Brazil was among those involved in moving forward decisions that would allow the Conference on Disarmament once again to discuss the international security landscape, with flexibility and constructive nuance, but effectively. The creation in 2018 of five subsidiary bodies focusing on the core issues of the Conference's agenda was a breakthrough of sorts, to be continued this year under progressively more detailed and committed agreements, paving the way towards negotiating mandates as issues mature.

Brazil is ready to shift gear on a fissile material cut-off treaty. With a view to bridging positions, we have reaffirmed our 2010 proposal to the Committee on a framework agreement approach to fissile materials, underpinned by additional protocols dealing, respectively, with existing and future stocks.

On another issue of critical importance, we have also agreed to facilitate convergence on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, chairing the current Group of Governmental Experts created by resolution 72/250 of the General Assembly, and also the subsidiary body set up in 2018 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Nuclear weapons remain the gravest existential threat to humanity. While arsenal numbers have greatly decreased, mostly thanks to reductions by the United States and Russia, nuclear risk has not diminished at the same rate. On the contrary, newfound reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines, along with modernization programmes, are currently driving up the risk of nuclear war. Brazil agrees with the Secretary-General that the joint affirmation by President Reagan and President Gorbachev at the Reykjavik summit of 1986, that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought, needs to be reaffirmed.

Following in the footsteps of other binding instruments, such as the chemical and biological weapons conventions, and joined by the majority of United Nations Member States, Brazil actively supported the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The new treaty is an unequivocal statement of the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of any nuclear weapon use or detonation. It is a legal expression of disarmament to save humanity. Negotiated in good faith and in an open-ended manner, we have no doubt that this Treaty

complements and is consistent with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, translating to the fullest extent its key article VI obligation.

As we witness the unravelling of disarmament and approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons under most unfavourable circumstances, an extensive dialogue on disarmament seems to be in order. Taking the form of a high-level conference or another suitable arrangement, such dialogue would permit joint assessments of where we currently stand and provide renewed direction towards a better place where we might wish to be. It could break new ground for bridging perspectives, where possible, and for respectfully understanding and dealing with existing divergences. A search for commonalities across the disarmament spectrum might open the gate for new important steps to be taken.

The disarmament machinery and toolbox can be mobilized to this end. The Secretary-General's Agenda provides a point of reference already, outlining a range of action points which can be taken up by States to the extent that they are useful.

There is no need to have general acceptance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in order to work together in pursuit of the goal of a nuclear weapon-free world. Such steps comprise full implementation of the commitments from the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the resumption of negotiations on international disarmament instruments.

This Conference on Disarmament can rise to the occasion and play a vital role. While the immediate start of negotiations seems unlikely, much can be done to deepen common understanding on the main issues and to agree on general parameters for going back to the treaty drawing board. Brazil supports substantive work which builds upon last year's progress, independently of the form that such work takes. Simply remaining aware of the deteriorating status quo does not seem a reasonable or safe alternative.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Marzano for his statement. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Mr. Marzano from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, Her Excellency Emanuela Del Re, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy.

**Ms. Del Re (Italy):** Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament. Let me start by reiterating Italy's full commitment to the work and mission of this body and expressing my delegation's full support to the President, the distinguished Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom. I would also like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Michael Møller, and to his team for their invaluable support to the work of the Conference.

A rules-based international system and effective multilateralism are of the utmost importance in tackling global challenges and threats to international peace and security. We underline the fundamental need for a collective renewed commitment to preserving international institutions and instruments and guaranteeing their proper functioning. We need the same determination in the fields of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, in order to preserve the results achieved so far and further to advance relevant processes, thus working together to enhance global security.

In this regard, the United Nations disarmament machinery and its three mutually reinforcing forums remain central. The Conference on Disarmament was created as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Major multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements have been negotiated within this Conference, and these still represent impressive accomplishments, which have made tangible contributions to a safer world.

We remain convinced that the Conference on Disarmament is an indispensable and unique body in the toolbox of the disarmament community, even though at the current stage

its potential remains clearly unfulfilled. We fully understand and share the sense of frustration stemming from the long impasse in the Conference's work.

We also view with concern the growing tendency to take disarmament negotiations outside the Conference on Disarmament. Today, more than ever, we face the perceptible risk of the marginalization of the Conference, and ultimately of its irrelevance. It is up to us to act in order to preserve and relaunch its role and ensure that it fulfils the purpose for which it was established.

Italy appreciated the constructive and substantive discussions held last year in the five subsidiary bodies to reach an understanding on the areas of commonalities, to deepen technical discussions and broaden areas of agreement, and to consider effective measures, including legal instruments for negotiations. The adoption of four substantive reports for the first time in years was an important step forward and we firmly believe that, this year, we should build and expand on this solid basis.

Italy fully shares the goals of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons and is firmly committed to disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation as essential components of its foreign policy. Our efforts to achieve effective progress on nuclear disarmament are underpinned by our utmost apprehensions about the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons' use.

In this regard, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of the international regime, with its three mutually reinforcing pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Italy still believes that the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference remains a very good basis for progress in each of these areas.

The forthcoming third session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Review Conference itself provide opportunities to assess the substantial progress achieved so far in the framework of this historic instrument, and also to identify ways to support, uphold and preserve it in the difficult current environment. In view of these crucial events, we would also like to reiterate our support for the convening, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty provides the only realistic legal framework for the attainment of a world without nuclear weapons, in a manner that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. Such a goal can be attained only through a progressive approach based on effective measures, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty, involving all relevant stakeholders, following an approach based on the search for consensus.

Among these measures, the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is one of our key priorities. We call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the remaining eight annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

We continue to support the immediate commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the report of the high-level expert preparatory group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/259. We believe that it would be important to build on the group's work and, with its fruitful inputs, to enrich our negotiation of such a treaty within the Conference on Disarmament. Pending the conclusion of such a treaty, we believe that all relevant States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

We also support the resumption of substantive discussions on negative security assurances, within the context of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, with a view to elaborating recommendations dealing with all their aspects, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument.

Italy also values all initiatives undertaken in the field of nuclear disarmament verification, as important tools to build trust and confidence among nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States. In this regard, we support the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and welcome the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear-weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities for the implementation of article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. While welcoming the reductions made so far by most of them, we encourage them to seek further reductions in their nuclear arsenals. We greatly welcome the announcements by the Russian Federation and the United States that they have met the central limits of the New START Treaty in February 2018. We call on them to extend the Treaty and to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting.

We are aware of the extremely positive results we can achieve when diplomacy works. After a deeply troubling 2017, when nuclear and missile tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had threatened international peace and security, and also the non-proliferation regime, high-level diplomatic efforts in the first half of 2018 brought about positive developments. We strongly hope that the high-level summit between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea scheduled to take place in the next few days will set a firm basis for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We strongly believe that international sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must remain in force and be implemented to sustain the current negotiating process. A durable collective commitment remains necessary.

In the context of international efforts aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation architecture, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains a key element. We firmly believe that the international community needs to remain committed to a full and effective implementation of that Plan of Action, as long as Iran continues to strictly abide by its nuclear-related commitments. We also reiterate the importance of a full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors, in particular for the perpetration of terrorist acts. In this respect, we support the strengthening of the mechanism established by the 1540 Committee to strengthen national capacities in the implementation of non-proliferation measures and we welcome the positive outcome of the 2016 Comprehensive Review of the status of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), as set out in Security Council resolution 2325 (2016).

Italy also remains deeply committed to the full implementation of international instruments on conventional weapons and to international efforts to address their negative humanitarian, social, economic and security impacts. We have ratified all the disarmament and arms control instruments which ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately. These include the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and the conventions banning anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. We also devote significant material, technical and financial resources to the implementation of these instruments, most notably in the field of humanitarian demining, with a particular focus on victim assistance.

We have also ratified or joined all instruments aiming to counter the humanitarian, social and economic impacts of illicit, unregulated, or irresponsible transfers of conventional arms, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the International Tracing Instrument, and the United Nations Firearms Protocol. Across all these issues, Italy promotes policies and approaches that enable the full empowerment of women and take into due regard the gender-related impacts of armed violence and the importance of including women in disarmament negotiations and peacebuilding programmes.

To date, Italy has adopted three national action plans to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which for the first time, addressed not only the disproportionate impact of war on women, but also the pivotal role played by women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and also in the achievement of sustainable peace.

My country stands ready to work with all partners to advance disarmament goals and values, in the Conference on Disarmament and in all other relevant forums, starting from the forthcoming third session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, we support the efforts by the presidency to reach an agreement enabling the immediate resumption of substantial discussions. In order to build upon the important results achieved last year within the five subsidiary bodies, we believe it would be important to focus the discussions more sharply, with the aim of identifying areas ripe for the elaboration of common approaches, including legally binding instruments.

Lastly, Italy believes that greater interaction between the Conference on Disarmament and civil society – broadly encompassing the academic sector, non-governmental organizations and the private sector – could make a key contribution to our work, as testified, for example, by the very useful input provided by experts to last year's subsidiary bodies, which helped deepen our technical discussions and substantively enriched our debate.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Del Re for her statement. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Ms. Del Re from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is resumed. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

**Mr. Szijjártó (Hungary):** Excellencies, dear colleagues, thank you very much for the opportunity given to me to be able to address the Conference on Disarmament. I come from a small Central European country, so you may be sure that I will take great care with the words and the arguments that I choose here, because we understand that disarmament is more determined by the big players in the global economy and global politics and that we, the small countries, should therefore be careful in this regard. At the same time, however, this entire new set of serious security challenges that the world has been facing have an impact on all of us, so that is why we must take the opportunity to address this distinguished audience.

From our perspective, it seems clear that the strategy which we follow here together should tackle the emerging challenges and the traditional threats that lie ahead of us. Given that the issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control are all connected to both these kinds of threats, if you allow me, I would like to address these issues in two groups. First, let us consider the emerging threats.

My country may be a small Central European country, but this small Central European country was faced an enormous challenge of illegal migration back in 2015, as 400,000 illegal migrants marched through our country, violating our border, disrespecting our rules and regulations and the code of conduct which we expect and which we apply, and we came to understand the sort of serious challenges and security threats that migration poses to countries which are either countries of transit or destination and even source countries. These threats are something about which we have learned not from television or radio news or from the Internet, but from what, unfortunately, we have experienced in our everyday life. And we understood at that time that illegal migratory flows definitely give terrorist organizations a chance to send their terrorists – and with their terrorists, their weapons – across regions and through borders.

By saying this, I am definitely not saying, regardless of what the media might suggest, that we believe that all migrants could be terrorists, but we do most definitely believe, and of this we are convinced, that uncontrolled waves of migration definitely offer more scope and more opportunity to terrorist organizations to send their terrorists and their weapons through borders. As we are proud contributors to the global coalition to counter ISIS, by deploying 200 troops on the ground: of course, from an American or Italian or German or British perspective, that might be a very low number, but from the perspective of Hungary, it is significant. We are therefore a proud participant in that global coalition and we understand that it has been successful in pushing ISIS back from 98 per cent of the territories that they had occupied before, but in the meantime, ISIS has developed a new strategy and new tactics,

sending its former foreign terrorist fighters back to the places from which they originally came.

In this context, we must keep in mind that 5,000 European citizens, mostly citizens of European Union member States, went to fight in the framework of ISIS, they were trained in the use of weapons and now they are making attempts to come back to Europe. Here we must congratulate Northern Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for the actions that they took, just last week, to identify and then to detain and arrest former ISIS fighters. This demonstrates very clearly, however, that the western Balkans route is one which will be favoured by those attempting to return to Europe as foreign terrorist fighters and, in this regard, I would like again to draw your attention to the fact that those people who fought in the framework of ISIS also had the chance to gain access to weapons.

For this reason, if this policy and strategy of ours is to address the emerging threats, these should include countering terrorism, definitely, but should also be firm on the issue of illegal migration, they should be firm on the protection of borders. This, I might add, is one reason why we voted against the global compact on migration in the General Assembly, because the compact suggests that border protection should be taken into consideration as a human rights issue and this must emphatically not be the case, because the protection of borders is the obligation of the States. It is a matter of how to guarantee the security of a given country and of the citizens of that country, so the protection of borders must remain a central focus for us, along with countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and, in particular, preventing terrorist groups from acquiring such systems and such weapons.

As a second point, I would like to emphasize the need for cooperation in combating the traditional threats. This comprehensive approach must also address the more traditional challenges of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We Central Europeans have drawn very clear conclusions from our history. When there was a conflict between East and West, we always lost. We do not want to be losers any more. So when we – I will not say “urge” because we are too small a country to be able “urge” any others in this regard – but when we express our hope for a pragmatic cooperation between East and West, this is because we are aware of our own national interests. By this I do not mean being pro-Russian or pro-American or pro-anything else, I mean pro-Hungarian.

When we seek cooperation between East and West based on mutual respect and respect for international law, this is because such cooperation is in our national interest and we do not really care how, in many cases, the mainstream media in Europe might regrettably choose to depict it. We believe that the only way forward in this regard is that of constant dialogue. This is exactly what we hope for where the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is concerned and we really do hope that the Russian Federation and the United States will maintain dialogue on the future of that Treaty and we also hope, for the maintenance of stability, that the START Treaty will be preserved.

We must also seek ways to strengthen the international arms control and disarmament architecture. International treaties and the domains of non-proliferation and the suppression of chemical and biological weapons remain the cornerstones of our stability and we must also focus on making the best use of existing forums for strengthening the international disarmament architecture, such as our Conference on Disarmament.

In conclusion, allow me to observe that we are undoubtedly undergoing a fourth industrial revolution, as evidenced by the global economy and global trade; new technologies are becoming preconditions of success and technologies that, only a few years ago, were the stuff of science fiction are now becoming technologies of everyday use and it is evident that there are continuous advances in military, space and even commercial technology. It is also evident that proper control mechanisms also need to be devised and implemented. If I might make a parallel with the world of sport, those who engage in doping will always be a step in front of those who carry out the controls, but this must not be the case in disarmament. In this regard, the Conference on Disarmament has invaluable experience in creating the necessary legal instruments that should be applied in setting in place the new arrangements.

Added to this, we also share the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, created step by step, and we understand, of course, that there is no fast-track approach to this goal, only an inclusive and incremental process, consisting of specific and practical steps,

since tangible results in this respect can only be achieved through engaging the nuclear countries and improving international security.

Once again, I would like to underline that we know our place, we are aware of our strength, we are aware of our dimensions, but we still offer our assistance and help and hope to play a constructive role in helping the Conference on Disarmament to find its way out of the stalemate and regain its real power, because we, instructed as we are by the historic lessons learned in Central Europe, understand that the critical need for this organization, a need that is greater than ever before: this is something that I can affirm from the perspective of our national security.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Szijjártó for his statement. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Mr. Szijjártó from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** Our next speaker on the list of speakers is our colleague, His Excellency Pankaj Sharma, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament.

**Mr. Sharma (India):** Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, my country would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on chairing this high-level segment, which has fallen during your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. The United Kingdom and India enjoy excellent bilateral relations and cooperate closely on global issues, including in the area of disarmament and international security. It is therefore an added pleasure to see you in the chair. We were also honoured to hear the address by the Secretary-General and other high dignitaries earlier today.

The world is experiencing considerable stress and is undergoing a process of upheaval. If we look at developments around us there are waves of change everywhere, not all of which are positive. This is not a new phenomenon, however. The world has witnessed major upheavals throughout history, including two world wars and the ensuing cold war. At the same time, important global institutions and arrangements have emerged in response to such events. The League of Nations, the centenary of which we commemorate this year, and the United Nations are key examples in this regard.

From a disarmament perspective, one of the most significant milestones has been the first special session devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, which unequivocally affirmed the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The Conference on Disarmament and its predecessor institutions have a number of achievements to their credit, including the successful negotiation of the Biological Weapons Convention and Chemical Weapons Convention. Questions are now being raised, however, about the effectiveness and efficacy of the Conference, and even about its relevance, since for more than two decades now the Conference has been unable to conduct negotiations in the discharge of its mandate. Attempts have been made to explore alternative forums. It is India's firm belief that the Conference on Disarmament is the most relevant and appropriate forum, as it brings together all militarily significant States, including all States possessing nuclear weapons. It enjoys legitimacy through its mandate, membership and the rules for the negotiation of legally binding universal instruments for strengthening international peace and security. Instead of trying to doubt the relevance and effectiveness of a well-established forum like the Conference on Disarmament, we must seriously examine our thoughts and reflect on the purpose for our existence and consider where we have got to. We must ask: is it the fault of the Conference, or the lack of political will which has prevented the Conference from working effectively? We could draw inspiration from the successful consensus outcomes achieved by the Disarmament Commission.

In our view, the need of the hour is to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament, and to place it once again at the core of global disarmament efforts. In this context, India has welcomed and supported various efforts, including the establishment of the working group on the way ahead and the subsidiary bodies last year. India remains committed to the adoption of a programme of work for negotiating legally binding instruments on the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament. It is our sincere hope that the Conference will be able to

advance our substantive work in order to deliver on its core mandate through the early commencement of such negotiations.

In his address, the Secretary-General referred to his Agenda for Disarmament. One of the important aspects of the Agenda is the attention that it gives to emerging developments in science and technology. For its part, India has tried to put these developments on the global agenda through its resolution on the role of science and technology in the context of disarmament and international security. When the world is divided on most issues, this is one area where the international community has come together, adopting the resolution by consensus for the last two years.

Terrorism poses the greatest threat to international peace and security. This threat becomes more grave when terrorists are able to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Having recognized this threat, since 2002 India has been drawing it to the attention of the world through a consensus resolution in the General Assembly on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

No subject arouses as much interest as nuclear disarmament. The very first resolution of the General Assembly, adopted by consensus on 24 January 1946, called for “the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction”. India remains committed to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. It believes that this goal can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework. In 2007, India presented to the Conference on Disarmament a working paper on nuclear disarmament, set out in document CD/1816, which made a number of proposals, as part of a step-by-step process, which remain relevant today. We support the proposal for the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention in the Conference on Disarmament, as also called for by the Group of 21. India has espoused the policy of no first use against nuclear-weapon States and of non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States. We are prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements to be further negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament.

To further these goals, India has been tabling two resolutions in the General Assembly, namely, since 1982, the resolution on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons and, since 1998, the resolution on reducing nuclear danger, both adopted by a significant majority. Without prejudice to the priority attached to nuclear disarmament, India remains committed to the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the mandate set out in document CD/1299. With this aim in view, India also participated in the Group of Governmental Experts in 2014–2015 and the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group in 2017–2018. India is also participating in the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

Where the realm of space is concerned, India supports the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference on Disarmament and is actively participating in the current Group of Governmental Experts on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

With reference to conventional weapons, India shares the concerns about the challenges posed by their illicit transfers, including small arms and light weapons, to terrorists and non-State actors, which pose a major threat to international peace and security. India remains committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its annexed protocols, and also to the humanitarian principles which those instruments embody. A collective success in this framework was the adoption by consensus of the reports of the 2017 and 2018 sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, which India had chaired.

India today is a key partner in the efforts to strengthen global disarmament and the non-proliferation order. In this context, I am pleased to announce that, starting this year, India has launched an annual disarmament and international security fellowship programme. The first such programme was successfully held in New Delhi with the participation of 27 member States of the Conference on Disarmament. The programme, which was jointly launched by the Foreign Secretary of India and the High Representative for Disarmament

Affairs in New Delhi on 14 January 2019, covered the entire gamut of key disarmament and international security issues. We have received excellent feedback about the programme and look forward to extending it to other fellow member States.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate India's commitment to upholding multilateralism and the institutions that it engenders. The Conference on Disarmament holds an important place in this framework and my delegation assures you, Mr. President, of its full support and cooperation in your efforts as you lead this august body in its fortieth anniversary.

**The President:** I thank Ambassador Sharma for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. Is there any other delegation who would like to take the floor at this time? I recognize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Ju Yong Choi** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Today, some speakers made reference in their statements to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. While listening to their statements, I had the impression that they were trying to put the blame on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the lack of progress and to impose unilateral demands on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Let me reiterate the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on this issue. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains firm in its position on establishing new bilateral relations with the United States, as clarified in the 12 June joint statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, and on building a lasting and durable peace regime and advancing towards the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The joint statement underlines the commitments of both parties to the agreements and is not about one action from one side. The imposition of a unilateral action on one side with the aim of applying pressure at the very moment when we are about to hold the second summit meeting is not appropriate; it is not acceptable. I would like also to make it clear that sanctions are not compatible with dialogue about mutual cooperation.

**The President:** I thank the distinguished delegate of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement. Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor at this time? That does not appear to be the case.

In which case, ladies and gentlemen, this concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, 26 February 2019 at 10 a.m., when we will hear addresses from high-level dignitaries from Slovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Latvia and the Netherlands.

The meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.*