

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and ninety-fourth plenary meeting


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva on Tuesday, 12 March 2019, at 10.10 a.m.

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

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The President: I call to order the 1494th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Excellencies, dear colleagues, before we proceed with our order of business for the day, it is first my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to our new colleague who has assumed her responsibilities as the representative of her Government, Her Excellency Ambassador Ms. Silvia Alfaro Espinosa, Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva. On behalf of my own Government and on behalf of the Conference, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of our full cooperation and support in your new duties.

Ambassador, I understand you would like to make a statement. You have the floor.

Ms. Alfaro Espinosa (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. Firstly, I would like to thank you for your warm welcome this morning and to extend my own greetings to all permanent representatives and delegates of member States and non-member States invited to participate in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. It is an honour for me to take the floor in the historic Francisco de Vitoria Hall, surrounded by these monumental frescoes that depict the world and the lofty ideals of humanity, such as justice, hope, peace, freedom and law.

The year 2019 marks the 40th anniversary of the Conference, and I am privileged to be here with you to commemorate the efforts of the hundreds of colleagues who have contributed to the significant progress achieved in the area of disarmament and arms control. It also marks 100 years of multilateralism in Geneva and 50 years since the establishment of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. President, we have been working together for five consecutive decades, ensuring the full implementation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which created the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area and has served as a source of inspiration for four other regions in the world. Today, to mark this anniversary year, I would like to renew the commitment of Peru to peace, disarmament and the strengthening of international security. My country is party to all international regimes on disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and arms control and supports all initiatives leading to general and complete disarmament, laying a particular emphasis on the prohibition and total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. This is one of the pillars of our foreign policy and our commitment to multilateralism, international law and the principle of peaceful dispute resolution.

Mr. President, consensus on a programme of work has eluded us once more. From a principled position, this is regrettable as we are further postponing the commencement of negotiations under the mandate of this forum. However, we have the opportunity to continue substantive discussions, such as those held last year, to pave the way for the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. As a sign of my Government's political will to energize the work of the Conference and of my delegation's determination to make your presidency a success, you may count on the support of Peru for the revised draft decision circulated yesterday, which accommodates most, if not all, of the sensibilities and uncertainties expressed by the various delegations. You also have our utmost appreciation, as this achievement is thanks to your tireless and constructive efforts.

Mr. President, allow me to share a few brief comments on the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.619/Rev.2. These are in no way intended to express a reservation or opposition to the draft decision, which, as I indicated, my country is prepared to support. My delegation welcomes the precise descriptions of the subsidiary bodies given in operative paragraphs 1 (a) to (d), which avoid a selective approach to issues. We also view positively the explicit references to legally binding instruments that contribute to disarmament and non-proliferation, negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent, universal and effectively verifiable basis.

That said, my country favours the continuation of work based on deliberation, provided the conditions exist for the adoption of reports that reflect areas of convergence and divergence among members, in the context of both the subsidiary bodies and the special coordinators. In that regard, we are sympathetic to the most recent version of

operative paragraph 5 – drafted to bridge the gap in the decision contained in document 21/19 of 2018, which unfortunately did not allow subsidiary body 4 to adopt a report. We are confident that the drafting changes made to this latest version will address the concerns raised by delegations last week.

The appointment of the special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference and the expansion of its membership, in our view, offers an opportunity to engage in dialogue without prejudging results, to share assessments of the methods that guide our work, to discuss possible alternatives and to propose mechanisms for accommodating new members and whatever that entails. In this sense, the special coordinator has my delegation's approval. The ambassadors serving as coordinators have my country's full support and gratitude for their willingness to take on the delicate task of leading our work.

Finally, we have the following concern about the schedule of meetings. The annex to the decision presents the dates of only the subsidiary body meetings. We would like to know when the special coordinators' meetings are scheduled to be held, given that they are due to present their reports in the last week of June. We understand that these meetings are more flexible by nature, but they should not overlap with those of the subsidiary bodies.

Mr. President, allow me to conclude by broaching the subject of women, peace and security. Peru is convinced that women's empowerment and gender equality have a direct impact on maintaining justice, peace and security, and that defending and promoting women's rights reduces their vulnerability. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, my country is actively promoting work in this critical area. A key element of women's empowerment is combating sexual violence in conflicts, in which regard the Security Council has a fundamental role to play. Having said that, I am very happy to share this work with other women in the room, and with accredited women ambassadors in Geneva in general. I would like to mention specifically those who have committed to incorporating the gender perspective into their efforts to revitalize discussions on disarmament for a safer and more predictable world. They include the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his disarmament agenda; the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu; the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs; and a number of delegations, including those of Canada and Chile, which promote the gender agenda within various international bodies, and Latvia, which is currently promoting this important issue under its presidency of the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Thank you, Mr. President. It is an honour for me to be in this room with all my fellow representatives.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Peru for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and, once again, warmly congratulate her on the assumption of her duties.

Colleagues, it is also my pleasure this morning to welcome another distinguished guest to the Conference. I have the pleasure now to give the floor to His Excellency Ambassador Syed Mohamad Hasrin Aidid Tengku Hussin of Malaysia, who will assume his duties as Chair of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons at the end of next month. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Tengku Hussin (Malaysia): Thank you, Mr. President. I am honoured to be here in the Conference on Disarmament, the main multilateral forum for disarmament.

First of all, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to the family and friends of those who passed away in the tragic Ethiopian Airlines flight. Many of the victims were from the United Nations and the multilateral family, and their loss is a loss for us all.

I intend not to address the Conference on substantive matters but to take this opportunity to note that I will be undertaking consultations in the coming days for the upcoming third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference and that I will be meeting you in the various consultations planned.

The work undertaken by this Conference very much relates to the work of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This Conference and the Treaty do not work in a vacuum. There has been much talk of the current geopolitical environment. This continues to evolve, of course, but we cannot allow it to prevent work from taking place. With every challenge, there are opportunities. Collectively, we need to identify them and utilize them for the common good. Thus, I wish all of you well in your deliberations and look forward to engaging with you in the coming days. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the Ambassador for his statement. Allow me, on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, to echo his words of condolence to the victims of the tragic air crash and their families.

Dear colleagues, as previously announced this morning, I would like to discuss the revised draft decision contained in document CD/WP.619/Rev.2, which was circulated by the secretariat yesterday, Monday, 11 March. Once again, I would like to thank all those delegations that have expressed their views either in plenary meetings or bilaterally. I am very grateful for their suggestions. I have endeavoured in this latest draft to take on board as many of those points as possible while maintaining the overall balance of the text. Allow me to present, briefly, the main changes to this draft, although none of them are radical.

First, I have taken on board several proposals for preambular paragraphs. Second, I have attempted to further improve the balance of the mandates of the subsidiary bodies while retaining the specificity and the balance between them. Third, there is a further clarification of the reporting procedure for the subsidiary bodies and of the mandates for the special coordinators. Fourth, it is now made explicit in paragraph 8 that any recommendations or conclusions offered by the special coordinators could only be taken forward by consensus of the Conference. Fifth, the nominations for coordinators of the subsidiary bodies and the timetable are now included in the decision. And sixth, you will note that each subsidiary body is now scheduled to have 8 meetings, or up to 8 meetings, and not, as in the previous draft, up to 10.

I have not included or scheduled meetings for the special coordinators because of the flexible nature of their work. I have judged it best to leave it up to the special coordinators to decide exactly how many meetings to hold and at what point to schedule those meetings they feel that they would require. Of course, I will urge the special coordinators to take into account the wider disarmament calendar as well as the meetings of the other subsidiary bodies in planning their work, so as to allow for the greatest engagement of delegations.

I remind delegations of what I said previously – that this is a procedural decision. It is not a legally binding instrument; it is not a treaty. It is not, I understand, ideal for every delegation in this room. There will be something in the draft decision, I suspect, that every delegation finds difficult. I hope that there is enough in the decision that every delegation will find to its liking, but it is important to remember that this decision does not bind anyone to anything apart from beginning a conversation – or rather, I should say, to renewing a conversation, because this is building on the work of last year. At the same time, I consider it to be an important measure. It is important for the Conference to have sufficient time and space and access to the sufficient expertise to consider the substantive items on its agenda this year, building on the work that we did last year, as a step towards negotiating mandates, I hope, in the very near future.

I firmly believe that this draft decision is the best and probably the only way of doing that this year. In the light of the discussions held thus far, and with the end of the presidency of the United Kingdom nearing, I do not now plan to submit any further revisions of this draft. If there are any further specific proposals, we will consider whether they might be accommodated as oral amendments, but I consider this, overall, to be the text with the best chance of achieving consensus on this measure. We now need to decide whether we want to proceed in this way in 2019 or not at all. I therefore intend to table the decision for adoption at our next plenary meeting on Thursday, 14 March.

Dear colleagues, with all that said, is there any delegation that would like to take the floor at this time? I recognize the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wood (Australia): Thank you, Mr. President. My comments are all positive. I would like to thank you for the revision. I think, as you said, it represents a good balance, and we support it. You have clearly listened and you have taken on board many different perspectives and ideas that you heard in the room. As not everything is spelled out, it clearly involves an element of trust, which I think is a good thing. We need to build trust in this forum, but, as you said, we are all protected by the consensus rule and we should be able to talk about the issues before us.

We should not overthink matters. It is not a treaty negotiation. It is a framework, and how we use it is really up to us. We could continue to talk about this decision for many, many more hours, but to what end? I am not sure we would get any closer to a compromise. I think this represents the best we are going to get. So we support the draft and we urge everyone to take a step in the direction of supporting the draft. We look forward to your putting it for adoption.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for her statement and give the floor to the Ambassador of Morocco.

Mr. Zniber (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation and my country would have liked us to adopt a genuine programme of work this morning in line with the Conference's mandate and the role it was assigned by the international community. However, given the complexity of the current state of affairs and the persisting differences between our different priorities, my delegation has, since the start of our work this session, called for the establishment of subsidiary bodies in order to allow the Conference's substantive work to resume as soon as possible. The planned adoption of your draft text next Thursday, Mr. President, should, we hope, pave the way towards a genuine programme of work following our discussions during last year's session. Mr. President, we have supported the two drafts submitted by you and we wish to express once again our full support for this draft, for several reasons.

First, as you said this morning, you have taken it upon yourself to conduct extensive consultations and to consider all possibilities that might lead to the adoption of the text. I can say without exaggeration that the text before us today is a carefully balanced compromise that, at least in our view, broadly takes into account the concerns and priorities expressed in this chamber since work began this session.

Mr. President, as you also said this morning, you made sure to include the necessary procedural adjustments to allow the subsidiary bodies to operate effectively and the special coordinators' work to continue, and to allow their reports to be adopted. I do not wish, of course, to presume that the text will be adopted on Thursday – though we hope that it will be – but I would in any case like to thank all the coordinators who have made themselves available to take the Conference forward.

Morocco also thinks it helpful to set up coordinating bodies to consider expanding the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, reviewing its working methods and addressing emerging issues in the light of scientific and technological developments, as we have discussed at length. Morocco has always fully supported the idea of opening the Conference to new members, whose involvement and engagement will surely bring added value to the Conference on Disarmament.

Lastly, by adopting this decision, we will be able to avoid the politicization and effects of the current political climate that have characterized some of our debates and, we hope, to focus once again on the Conference's mandate. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Morocco for his statement and give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Davison (Canada): Thank you very much, Mr. President. I think Australia and Morocco have spoken very eloquently. I will just agree with them that what you have presented here is what we asked of you three weeks ago when you first started your presidency and said, "we saw what happened with Ukraine – let's try to find some other course of action for us for the rest of 2019". You heard a lot of positive comments on what happened in 2018. We have the concrete results of that in terms of three reports and a

memory of the discussions on subsidiary body 4 from 2018. In the ensuing meetings, you heard some of the challenges that different delegations had.

This revised decision, as you have already said, is what is on the table for now and I think it is probably as good as it can be. If we cannot agree this during this week, we will spin off in all sorts of directions this year, but we will likely not have substantive discussions for the bulk of 2019.

You have done your job. It is up to us now. Canada supports this decision as it stands. We would like to see a few tweaks, if they could be agreed to in the room, but this is good enough for us, and we would like to proceed with it.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for his statement. Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor at this time? I recognize the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, we welcome your efforts to find a compromise on the draft decision, which should ultimately lead us to the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

In this regard, we have from the outset been in favour of a direct link between the work of the subsidiary bodies and the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament. We supported the concept of a two-track approach, namely working in parallel on the draft programme of work and in the subsidiary bodies, as proposed by one delegation. Moreover, we proposed two concepts that would take into account the basic principle mentioned in the preamble to your decision: a balanced, comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach to all agenda items.

I shall not go into too much detail, as we have stated our point of view on a number of occasions. I would just say that not all of the points of principle raised by us are taken into account in your final draft decision. We have therefore sent the draft to Moscow for comprehensive analysis and the decision now rests with the capital.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and give the floor to the Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. Beerwerth (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President. Like our colleagues from Canada, Australia and Morocco, and following your introduction, I can only agree with the considerations you have voiced. This week is the time of decision-making for the Conference on Disarmament. It is time for the Conference to show that it is able to continue the work that started last year – or restarted – with the establishment of subsidiary bodies. And I would like to remind everyone here in the room that what we are deciding on is, as you said, Mr. President, just a procedural decision. It is not a decision where we adopt any substantive issues. What we decide here is merely to continue discussing what we are mandated to discuss.

My delegation entirely agrees with the text you have put forward. It does not make us 100 per cent happy. We would like to see some changes to it, but in the light of what I have just said, we are ready and fully endorse the draft you have put forward. It is the result of extended consultation and extensive listening on your part, Mr. President, to the various and differing opinions on how this text should be formulated, and I feel that you have done a very good job in taking on board a lot of the proposals that were made here in the Council Chamber and, I suspect, in the extensive bilateral consultations you have held.

I therefore agree entirely with the conclusion that this is the best we can get. The optimum is the enemy of the doable, and time is running out, so I would say only: let us agree on what we have in front of us.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Germany for his statement and give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Thank you very much, Mr. President, and, again, let me salute you and your team for the efforts that you have put in to trying to gain consensus on this draft decision.

I think I have been very clear from the beginning that I was very sceptical about renewing the subsidiary body discussions for another year. I know you have tried to make very strong efforts to beef them up, so that we can really have some conversations that move us forward and do not keep us in the same place. And I am a bit disappointed that the language on the subsidiary bodies has been watered down in each of them. As I said, then, it is a bit disappointing, but I do understand the circumstances under which you are operating. And so I do think, as others have said, that this is probably the best that we are going to get.

I do want to say, on a positive note, that we really appreciate the efforts that you made to incorporate the proposals made by the United States on having discussions and appointing a special coordinator to look at the issues of enlargement and working methods. My delegation and I are very much looking forward to engaging on these two issues in formal as well as informal sessions.

There are some specific issues that my delegation will want to focus on during these discussions, and I want to offer my delegation's full support to the Swiss Ambassador as she undertakes her duties going forward.

Again, Mr. President, thank you very much for the effort you and your team have put forward. I think this is the best we are going to get in terms of a draft that can garner consensus. Hopefully, we will be able to get consensus in this room.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States of America for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Lee Jang-keun (Republic of Korea): Let me also thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts to revive the work of the Conference on Disarmament by launching substantive discussions through subsidiary bodies and coordinators.

We welcome your revised draft decision. We believe that the text is very much enriched and improved, accommodating many comments and proposals raised during the consultations, and that it is very close to enjoying consensus. I would like to express my delegation's readiness to support the draft text as it is. In particular, we are pleased that the revised text includes a more reasonable time frame, including the possibility of up to eight meetings for each subsidiary body. That will allow the other special coordinators to manage their consultations with our member States. We also appreciate your efforts to maintain regional and gender balance in the composition of the coordinators. I hope, then, that all delegations can show maximum flexibility and the greatest cooperation for the timely adoption of our substantive workplan.

Again, Mr. President, I would like to assure you of our full support for your efforts. Lastly, I would also like to welcome the new Ambassador of Peru to our group. I very much look forward to working closely with you, Ambassador, during your mandate here.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of France.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. I, too, would like to give a warm welcome to the Ambassador of Peru. I look forward to working with her and my delegation is at her disposal.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for all your efforts aimed at putting this Conference back to work on substantial matters. I would like to avoid repeating what was said in particular by the Ambassador of Morocco. I think his proposals were full of wisdom and I support virtually everything the Moroccan delegation said.

However, I would just like to add a few points. As you know, my delegation has had the opportunity to voice its opinion on this process several times, stating its preference for the first version of your text and the revised version (Rev.1). To be completely clear, we believe that the first two versions were a more appropriate reflection of the current stage of our deliberations and work – and that of the disarmament community – on the four substantive matters before us, which should be dealt with separately. We continue to believe that we are losing ground by cutting back the mandates of the subsidiary bodies and we would have preferred to organize the work of the subsidiary bodies by topic and build

on last year's work. That said, as others before me have pointed out, the text is not ideal but it is clearly the most likely to win a consensus. I have received instructions from my capital along these lines, but I have also had very clear instructions not to stop short of what is written in the text. To put it another way, having something that is even more watered down, especially something that would change the general thrust and structure of the draft, would pose problems for my delegation.

Lastly, I would like to mention that the choice of coordinators is excellent and we support it. We must act now, without delay, as time is running out. We are already behind last year's schedule and we cannot afford to miss another opportunity to resume the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament this year.

To conclude, we join the consensus and I would like to assure you once again of my country's commitment to participating constructively and substantively in this work, which we hope will be carried out as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of France for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): Thank you, Mr. President. I really appreciate your hard work. I notice that there is some very unfamiliar language or wording, but it may be a reflection of your very extensive and intensive consultations with other member States. Having said that, one thing that I would like to focus on at this time is the less specific nature of the revised draft decision. It is not really what we had hoped for, but it is clear from your draft that these coordinators will work hard on building on past achievements, particularly the work in subsidiary bodies 1 to 4 and on negative security assurances.

I hope that the schedule of activities and the explanations of the workplan for each subsidiary body will tell us what specific area the coordinators would like to focus on. The specific nature of the action items or items that we need to work hard on should be made clear at the outset of the formal meeting. I hope, then, that all the coordinators and special coordinators will focus on substantive planning and on the items that should be given priority, so that we can work hard on them.

With that said, Japan can support the decision at this time. I would like to emphasize that last year, we were not able to start substantive work even after the second presidency. I hope that we can agree on starting work this time.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement. Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor at this time? I recognize the Ambassador of India.

Mr. Sharma (India): Thank you, Mr. President. In fact, I was hesitating to take the floor today, seeing the wide, vast support that you have for the draft decision, but then it would have deprived me of the opportunity of welcoming my friend and colleague from Peru, the Ambassador of Peru, so that is why I was constrained to take the floor. And India has one more friend in the room. Welcome, Ambassador.

Mr. President, like all delegations, India would also like to salute your efforts to try to produce a text that can command consensus, and I believe we are almost there. However, I have a few observations and, as you said that there was still some scope for tweaking and for oral amendments, I would like to make a couple of observations and queries.

First, coming from one of the most diverse, multicultural and multi-ethnic countries, I would have no problem in accepting the last preambular paragraph, but I wanted to understand the rationale for it, because we have not previously seen this text about aiming at promoting multiculturalism. We would welcome an explanation of the genesis of that formulation, of how it appeared in the draft.

Second, during the last few meetings, we pointed out that we were expecting negotiations on legally binding instruments in all four subsidiary bodies. And now we see references to legally binding instruments for only three of the four subsidiary bodies, those mentioned in paragraphs 1 (a), (c) and (d). There is no reference to a legally binding instrument under subsidiary body 2. That is the only subsidiary body for which that reference is missing. I would like to understand why. You had mentioned that you were

looking for consistency and that that was why you had included options for negotiations in all four bodies. If we go by that logic, it is only appropriate that we also opt for a legally binding instrument in subsidiary body 2.

Third, I want to thank you for taking on board our suggestion that there be a particular focus on elements of legally binding instruments, which you included in paragraph 1 (a). But in the same vein, I would also suggest that we could also tweak paragraph 2, where we are mentioning the aim of the subsidiary bodies, to refer to legally binding instruments as the prime focus or aim and to consider effective measures the secondary focus, exactly as you have done under the subsidiary bodies.

Fourth, I wanted to point out a practical difficulty that we all faced last year. You have addressed it through the reporting mechanisms, but I wonder whether, given the way we have defined the format of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies (formal and informal), two formal meetings will give delegations enough time to express their views and put their positions on record. After all, there is a possibility that, in view of the great interest that these subsidiary bodies may generate, all delegations may want to put their positions on record. We should allow sufficient time to be given to all the delegations. In that context, I would suggest that we give flexibility to the coordinators.

We can give coordinators the power to declare an informal meeting formal or a formal meeting informal. Informal meetings, in any case, are not enough, so if the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies feel that there is a need for another formal meeting, whether during the adoption of reports or even at the very beginning or somewhere in between, they should have the authority to call such a meeting. Once we adopt the decision, including the timetable, it will be very difficult for us to change the format of the meetings, as it will then require another Conference on Disarmament decision. It would be a good idea, then, if in this decision we could build in flexibility for the coordinators, our distinguished colleagues – they are all Ambassadors, so I am sure we can all trust them with decision-making.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement. I will of course reflect on the specific points he has raised and I welcome the views and reactions of delegations to those proposals bilaterally. I would simply say that the preambular paragraph referencing multiculturalism was a suggestion from one delegation. I will check bilaterally with that delegation to learn whether that is indeed what was meant. With regard to the question on legally binding instruments, as the Ambassador notes, paragraph 2 does say that the aim of these bodies, all the subsidiary bodies, is to consider effective measures, including legally binding instruments.

I am very aware that delegations have different interpretations of what a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices entails, and I have attempted in my draft to maintain as much balance as possible, respecting the views of all delegations. Once again, this is a means to continuing our conversation rather than a way of concluding that conversation, which I suspect still has some way to run. But I will reflect on the proposals that the Ambassador has made.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Elsayed (Egypt): Thank you very much, Mr. President. First, I would like to welcome the Ambassador of Peru, congratulate her on joining the Conference on Disarmament, wish her the best of luck and assure her of our full support. Allow me also to reiterate, of course, my sincere appreciation for all the efforts that you have been making, Mr. President.

As we received the second revised version yesterday, we sent it back to the capital and are still waiting for further instructions. However, we have some comments. Many of them are positive; some are observations that we think should be taken into consideration. I will try to go very quickly in my comments.

We welcome the introduction of the preambular paragraph, as suggested by our Russian colleagues, drafted to reiterate the importance of working in a balanced and comprehensive manner, the new titles of the four subsidiary bodies, in which the agenda items are mentioned, and the acknowledgement of the remarks made by our delegation and

other delegations regarding the elements of a legally binding instrument. We fully understand the explanation that you have provided regarding the second subsidiary body.

We took note of the coordinators proposed for the subsidiary bodies and the proposed special coordinators. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the Ambassadors for their willingness to assume this responsibility. We are confident that they will carry out their duties with the highest level of professionalism, impartiality and integrity.

In general, we appreciate the amendments introduced with regard to the mechanism under which the subsidiary bodies are to report and the enhanced clarity of the process whereby the reports are to be adopted. Nevertheless, we believe it would be more appropriate for the coordinators to submit the reports for adoption to the Conference, through the President.

I would like clarification on the mechanism – the report in statement form that you propose – under which the special coordinators are to report. What will the status of this statement be? Is it going to be a personal statement of the special coordinator? If so, that should be clear in the text, with language similar to that used in paragraph 5.

We thank you for the inclusion of the timetable of the subsidiary body meetings and welcome the newly proposed number of meetings for the subsidiary bodies, which would ensure better effectiveness. However, I would like to point out that, as proposed, the timetable will coincide with the holy month of Ramadan for Muslim delegations. Ramadan will last from 5 May to 6 June, and we ask that the meetings be distributed equally throughout the three months allocated for them. As we can see from the timetable, the meetings are concentrated in May, and the morning and afternoon meetings are in this period of time that will coincide with Ramadan. That period of time also includes the holy festival of Eid al-Fitr. I can of course provide you with the exact dates, if you wish. We can also look into the suggestion made by the Ambassador of India regarding giving the coordinators more flexibility to arrange the schedule.

Mr. President, in the past weeks, my delegation has supported your considerable efforts to produce a balanced and comprehensive decision that would allow us to start the work of the Conference. We believe that the current revised draft puts us only one step away from reaching our goal and we stand ready to support you in your final efforts. We are looking forward to starting substantive work.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and I will indeed reflect on those points, particularly on the timetable. We have endeavoured to balance the availability of coordinators and the other meetings in the Geneva disarmament timetable to distribute them as best we can, but if there are specific proposals on how we can accommodate those and other concerns even further, we will do our best to take them into account. And indeed, as the representative said, the reports of the special coordinators would be made on their own authority. As has been the practice previously, the reports would take the form of a statement, which would then be reflected in the procès-verbal of the Conference on Disarmament. But if it would be helpful to clarify that further, we can reflect on that.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mahomed (South Africa): Thank you, Mr. President. Let me start by welcoming the distinguished Ambassador of Peru. We would also like to thank you for all your efforts to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work.

We will make our final comments on Thursday. Like most other delegations here, we are still awaiting instructions from our capital. But please allow me to place on record, once again, our concerns with the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.619/Rev.2. It is a pity that the operative text of the proposal does not include the word “negotiate”. It merely mentions options for negotiations when it refers to a particular focus on elements of legally binding instruments or other international arrangements and options for negotiations.

As you are aware, South Africa has generally been supportive of all efforts to get the Conference back to work and pave the way towards negotiations, as long as they do not

undermine our policy priority, which is nuclear disarmament. However, the primary responsibility of each Conference session is still to adopt a programme of work with a view to commencing substantive work. The Conference was established for the purpose of conducting multilateral disarmament negotiations. Actions short of this mean that the Conference is not discharging its mandate.

We welcome your efforts but would like to caution against rushing into a decision. As I have said earlier, we are awaiting instructions from our capital. I thank you, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Martínez Ruiz (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, we would like to welcome the Ambassador of Peru and assure her of our readiness to work with her. Mr. President, notwithstanding my delegation's position on the establishment of subsidiary bodies, of which you are well aware, we greatly appreciate the effort that you have put into negotiating this draft decision and the due attention that you have paid to the various delegations' comments in producing a more balanced text.

I will not specifically mention the positive aspects of the draft declaration, but I would like to place on record at this formal meeting our delegation's serious misgivings about the possible interpretation of the wording "building on the possible ways forward identified in document ... (each of the reports of the subsidiary bodies)" in paragraphs 1 (a), (b), (c) and (d). As complicated as it may seem, we simply wish to make it clear that, in the view of our delegation, this wording should not impose any limitations on how issues are addressed within each of the subsidiary bodies, but should be read in the context of the final clause of operative paragraph 2, which provides that all relevant views and proposals, past, present and future, must necessarily be taken into consideration. We understand that full consideration of these issues will begin within the subsidiary bodies, free of the constraints of the previous year's reports.

My delegation would also like to address the proposal made by the Ambassador of India regarding the balance between formal and informal meetings within the subsidiary bodies. As previously, the preference of my delegation is for a greater number of formal meetings. In principle, we would prefer formal meetings to be the norm and informal meetings to be the exception. But I believe that one way of approaching this is to provide the flexibility for the coordinator to decide when a formal meeting could be held. Obviously, we will closely follow any further comments that delegations may have on the draft text and will continue to be constructive with regard to any decision that may need to be taken next Thursday.

The President: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for giving me the opportunity to reiterate that, indeed, the mandates of the subsidiary bodies are neither exhaustive nor restrictive and, of course, under the rules of procedure, any delegation may raise any issue which it deems pertinent. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to provide some preliminary comments on my country's views of the proposal and draft decision before us. First of all, I would like to thank you for your hard work as President in seeking a solution that accommodates all delegations, and for the professionalism you have shown throughout your presidency. We appreciate how you have tried to harmonize the wording used for the subsidiary bodies, which we believe was a wise decision. It was important to mention, in respect of all subsidiary bodies, the need for a focus on legally binding documents – although this wording was ultimately not retained for subsidiary body 2. We recognize the efforts made to clarify the wording on the lack of any need to involve experts in purely procedural matters, although, clearly, experts will need to bring all their specialist knowledge to the substantive work of disarmament.

We also welcome the additions you have made to the preamble and the inclusion of paragraph 4 and the final sentence of paragraph 5, in an attempt to reflect some of the reservations of our delegation and others in previous consultations. However, I would like

to raise a number of concerns, particularly with regard to the limited scope of the mandate of subsidiary body 2. This is the first time that coordinators have been included in the draft decision. We should be mindful of the methods and criteria used to select the coordinators, as they have an important job to do based on the principles of multilateralism, impartiality and respect for the rules of procedure of this institution. We will therefore be examining these proposals carefully. To be quite frank, we do not understand why, this year, we do not want to establish a subsidiary body to examine emerging issues and we are still proposing to appoint a special coordinator, in a break with practice and the consensus reached last year. We believe that could further facilitate the adoption of a decision. Perhaps, as recommended by our colleague from the Chinese delegation at the last meeting, it may even be a good idea to resume the previous year's practice.

Cuba supports the substantive work of the Conference. However, I would stress that our mandate is to negotiate treaties. It is not to deliberate, which is essentially the mandate that the subsidiary bodies will have. This leaves us in a quandary: while the subsidiary bodies undoubtedly offer a way out of the stagnation that has hampered the Conference, they also distance us from our mandate. This type of exercise repeated over time could undermine the objective of the Conference. Like other delegations, we would like to voice our concern about this course of action that distances us from the mandate of the Conference.

Following the consensus reached last year, the proposal made this year to focus on procedural matters also continues to move us away from the Conference's mandate to negotiate legally binding treaties and instruments. We feel that the appointment of a single special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference and the expansion of its membership is a step backwards. We recognize that you consider this to be a possible compromise solution for achieving a balance in such a delicate area, but our delegation, like others, remains concerned as to whether it is really necessary to bring this topic before the Conference, particularly at a time when this forum is so highly politicized. We still see ambiguity in the mandate of the special coordinator, the absence of any time frame for the mandated meetings and wording that provides for consultations without the involvement of all member States of the Conference.

Further, we note the contradiction, or apparent contradiction, between the wording of paragraph 8 on the one hand and paragraphs 4 and 5 on the other. From paragraph 8, it would seem that the special coordinator does not need to comply with rule 35 of the rules of procedure, which is binding on us all and is correctly reflected in paragraph 4 for the subsidiary bodies. This is the rule which ensures broad consultation with all members in a transparent and inclusive manner. Paragraph 8 also fails to make clear the nature of the report to be presented in a statement. You clarified just now that this is done in a personal capacity. However, while paragraph 5 mentions this in relation to the reports to be submitted by the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies, paragraph 8 does not. Whatever the reason for this ambiguity, these subtle differences in wording are conspicuous. We also understand, in paragraph 5, that the reports that may be submitted by coordinators of subsidiary bodies should be conditional on the absence of a consensus report, since, logically, if a consensus report has been adopted by a subsidiary body, then the submission of a further report by the coordinator, albeit in his or her personal capacity as coordinator, would undermine his or her role as coordinator and obscure the fact that a consensus report had been adopted and national positions had been established. Suddenly there would be this other report, and we would not know how to gauge it.

Finally, as we have pointed out since the very beginning of these negotiations, there is no schedule for the meetings of the special coordinators. We take on board that this flexibility could help to make the mandate more flexible. However, organization does not necessarily go against flexibility. If that were the case, then we would be saying that the subsidiary bodies do not have flexibility. But actually we are concerned that the flexibility which we are affording, or planning to afford, by not setting a work schedule for the special coordinators would destroy the balance, and that is something that our delegation is not prepared to accept. Suddenly we are not only deliberating rather than negotiating treaties, but we are talking amongst ourselves and spending more time on procedural matters than on substantive ones. We believe that it is important to include special coordinators'

meetings, both formal and informal, in the work schedule and that would not make our work any less flexible but, rather, would give it structure and maintain a necessary balance between substantive and procedural issues.

Moreover, we do not understand why the special coordinators have to present their respective reports before the last week of the second part, when we do not know how quickly or slowly this work will advance. On the one hand, we are avoiding adding meetings to the work schedule to give coordinators more flexibility and, on the other, we are limiting their flexibility by insisting that they present their reports before the last week of the second part of the Conference. In other words, we appear to be faced with yet another unwelcome contradiction.

We are awaiting instructions from our capital at the moment but are eager to do as much constructive work as we can. We hope that our most pressing concerns can be addressed, as we have not detected any direct opposition to them. For instance, we do not want to have meetings simply to hold 45 meetings; that is not what we have talked about here. We believe there is scope to accommodate these types of concern. We remain open to exploring this draft decision from both a substantive and a procedural perspective, and even to a third party deciding who the coordinators should be and what the full schedule of meetings should look like, provided that this would help to advance our work – as our main aim is, of course, to make progress on the substantive issues.

As I mentioned, the subsidiary bodies, while representing a step forward – in which respect we agree with a number of other delegations – do not truly facilitate our substantive work, since our aim is not to deliberate, but to negotiate legally binding instruments. And in adopting this draft decision, we would not be agreeing on a programme of work for the Conference or embarking on negotiations for any treaty or legally binding instrument. However, we appreciate that a step-by-step approach could perhaps bring us closer to the decisions under consideration at this Conference, the urgency of which, I am sure we would all agree, is paramount. The fact that 20 years have passed without result shows, I believe, how committed some delegations are to advancing this Conference, so I do not know whether four or five more days would really be a problem for us.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. Once more, and not only in a diplomatic sense, I truly appreciate the professionalism with which you have led these debates, and the effort that you have made to achieve consensus on the wording of this draft decision.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): Thank you very much, Mr. President. First of all, my delegation would like to welcome the distinguished Permanent Representative of Peru to the Conference on Disarmament family. We look forward to working with her and her delegation in the days ahead.

We thank you, Mr. President, for circulating the revised draft decision. We also take note of your opening remarks. It is indeed a very sincere attempt to bring us closer to consensus, to common ground, on the adoption of a draft decision. We appreciate the extensive consultations you have held and the very receptive manner in which you have been open to all views and suggestions.

It is, of course, never easy, probably not even possible, to reconcile all views and all preferences in the Conference, but we are deeply grateful for your efforts in that regard. We see many improvements to the text – for instance, to the preamble, to the paragraphs in which the mandates of the subsidiary bodies are rationalized and harmonized, thereby making them more balanced and comprehensive, and to operative paragraphs 5 and 8, in respect of the procedures, which have been made clearer, whereby the subsidiary bodies and the two proposed special coordinators are to report.

We also salute the Ambassadors who have volunteered to act as the coordinators for the different subsidiary bodies and as special coordinators. We lend them our full support. All are eminently qualified for this role. Thank you, also, for this timetable; it provides clarity and predictability and seems perfectly fine to us.

At the same time, Mr. President, of course there are some preferences that were expressed by Pakistan that could not be accommodated in the draft decision. For instance, we would have preferred that the subsidiary bodies be titled, as was the case last year, in accordance with the items on the Conference agenda and that their framing be closer to last year's model. We had also expressed a preference for a dedicated subsidiary body on new and emerging issues to cover items 5, 6 and 7 of the Conference agenda.

Nevertheless, we note that the revised draft is but a compromise that cannot take into account all views. We are approaching it in that spirit and see the framework that will be established through this draft decision as a very substantive and concrete contribution to advancing the work of the Conference. It would allow substantive discussions on all agenda items and relevant issues, and, given the lack of consensus on commencing negotiations, we see it as the next best alternative, an alternative that does not prejudice any member State's national positions and interests.

To sum up, while the draft decision might not be ideal for our delegation or for many other delegations, we recognize that it is but a compromise and have accordingly sent a positive recommendation to our capital. We are hopeful of receiving a favourable response soon. We look forward to its adoption by consensus after the views and concerns of all delegations are taken into account and thus to substantive technical and multicultural work in the Conference. Lastly, Mr. President, in case any further changes are introduced, we would of course have to go back to our capital to get fresh instructions, but if the text is open, my delegation would also like to put forward some amendments of its own. Thank you very much.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of Venezuela.

Mr. Valero (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela appreciates the efforts made by the President of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Aidan Liddle of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and by the secretariat to present a second revised draft decision. As this draft was received yesterday, we are currently consulting with our colleagues in Caracas. We believe that this document provides a sound basis for progress and are confident that, under your presidency, the necessary steps can be taken for the Conference to reach consensus on the draft decision.

We reiterate that our preference is to consider the workplan and the immediate commencement of negotiations. We also note with growing concern the apparent tendency of the Conference to establish subsidiary bodies with the aim of systematically evading disarmament negotiations. Therefore, my country supports the establishment of these bodies only on the understanding that they should be a tool to help the Conference resume its substantive work. In the same vein, we are convinced that the vital work of these bodies cannot be conditional on procedural matters and must be carried out in a strictly transparent, balanced and comprehensive manner.

We believe and propose that a subsidiary body should be established to examine emerging issues and new technologies. We would also like to see a clear and definite link between the work and activities of the presidencies and those of the subsidiary bodies and their coordinators. We consider it positive that the preamble alludes to the need for the Conference to carry out its work in a balanced and comprehensive manner. It should be recalled that, according to the rules of procedure, all member States of the Conference shall take part in its work in conditions of full equality as independent States in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The principle of sovereign equality implies that, for its own success, the Conference must ensure respectful treatment of the institutions and Governments of these States. Delegations assuming responsibility for leading subsidiary bodies should ensure that they have conducted their work neutrally and transparently. My country regrets that countries which cannot make such a guarantee are being proposed as coordinators.

Our country has already expressed its preference for the establishment of a subsidiary body to examine emerging issues and new technologies. This would help to ensure consistency with the paragraph in the preamble of the current draft decision which

states, as a reminder, that all agenda items of the Conference carry equal weight. With respect to the special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference and the expansion of its membership, we understand that this initiative and the proposed designation correspond to previous initiatives of the Conference to overcome the situation of stagnation. However, we still do not know what the reasons were, or what the achievements of these initiatives were and how they improve the current situation. We believe that the failure of these initiatives is reflected in the current state of stagnation in which the Conference so clearly finds itself, and serves as evidence that no review of working methods can guarantee a solution to this stagnation without the necessary political will.

In such a politicized context, the implementation of this initiative can serve only to limit and hamper discussions on substantive issues of the utmost importance to the Conference. This situation and the way in which the proposal was introduced to the Conference serve only to politicize things more. My delegation has repeatedly requested that guarantees should be given to ensure that the proposed mechanism is not used as a platform for politicization and the harassment of certain countries. Many delegations in this room have asked for further clarification and information on the mandate and working parameters of this Conference, in order, in particular, to improve its functioning and effectiveness and expand its membership. Clarification has also been requested on the format of consultations and the modality of reporting. We note with concern that safeguards have been reduced rather than increased, as only one coordinator has been appointed, as opposed to three from the regional groups. Paragraph 7 of the revised draft decision refers to the special coordinators consulting with member States in formal and informal meetings, but does not propose a calendar of meetings to this end.

We are also concerned that, while the subsidiary bodies will continue to work until August 2019, the special coordinators will only be able to work until the final week of the second part of the Conference. This means that the special coordinators, including the special coordinator on emerging issues and new technologies, will need to work quickly and selectively. We reiterate that we would prefer not to make the discussion of substantive matters conditional on the discussion of procedural matters. This, we repeat, would only contribute to the continued paralysis of the Conference. My delegation recognizes the need for a review of the membership of the Conference, provided that it is expansion-oriented, as this could bring fresh impetus and new ideas to the forum. However, my delegation strongly opposes any effort to exclude member States.

The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela repeats that the revised draft decision provides a sound basis for negotiation. Much work is to be done if consensus is to be reached in the coming days. This work must be done thoroughly and transparently, in line with the sentiments and views expressed by all delegations. Therefore, and in the light of the points raised so far, we recommend the following courses of action. Option 1: split the revised draft decision into two parts, the first of which would establish the five subsidiary bodies, including that on emerging issues and technologies, to be coordinated by Belarus, and the second of which would appoint the special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference and the expansion of its membership and identify the names of those who would serve as coordinators of subsidiary bodies and/or special coordinators. Option 2: adopt an initial decision to create five subsidiary bodies, including one on emerging issues and technologies, to be coordinated by Belarus, a second decision appointing the special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference and the expansion of its membership, and a third decision identifying the names of those who would serve as coordinators of subsidiary bodies and/or special coordinators. We submit these proposals for the consideration of all members and remain open to any other option that allows us to reach a consensus.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for his statement and I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Al Ashkar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. While I await instructions from my capital, I would like to make some comments regarding the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.619/Rev.2.

First, the revised draft still does not provide the clarifications requested by several delegations regarding the mandate of the special coordinator on improving the working methods of the Conference and the subjects and goals that are expected to be addressed. The mode of presentation and timing of this proposal raise doubts about the motives behind it. While we are certain that there is always room for improvement when it comes to the working methods of the Conference, we must not forget either that the Conference has already made great strides using its current working methods. The reasons for the stalemate faced by the Conference do not lie with its working methods or its membership, but rather with a lack of political will to achieve its objectives and the increasing propensity of certain Member States to use this forum to promote political agendas. In our view, to pursue this proposal without first clearly defining its content would do nothing to serve the aims of the Conference; it would probably only create further complications and draw the Conference into futile discussions. Therefore, we would not be able to join a consensus on this ill-defined proposal – which, as I said, would only tie the Conference up in futile discussions – unless it is set out more clearly, since, as we have seen in recent years, the Conference has yielded few results, even without the atmosphere of politicization and polarization that now prevails. We believe, therefore, that we should not rush this proposal through, but should allow sufficient time for its consideration. We should also like to point out that the Conference does not agree on whether this matter should even be discussed, a fact which we ask the members to take into account when the final text is presented for adoption.

We wish to reiterate our proposal that we should have separate decisions, one on procedural matters and the other on substantive matters, in line with the practice established by the Conference when it adopted the decision contained in document CD/1464 in 2011 and that contained in document CD/1667 in 2002. While we are concerned that to continue with subsidiary bodies may lead to the institutionalization of this process, which, in turn, could gradually lead us away from the negotiating mandate that is the very *raison d'être* of the Conference, we support this approach of providing safeguards to ensure that the work of the subsidiary bodies will add value, contribute to the achievement of progress and open the way for balanced and comprehensive negotiations. This would be achieved by ensuring that the mandates of the subsidiary bodies are more evenly balanced, by avoiding bias in the selection of the themes that they will address and by linking their objectives more clearly to efforts to draw up legally binding instruments.

In our view, the meetings of the subsidiary bodies should be informal, as defined by the rules of procedure, and the reports that they produce should be presented for adoption at the plenary meetings of the Conference, after first being adopted by the body in question, as was the practice in 2018. Where a report is adopted by consensus, we see no need for the coordinator of the subsidiary body to make a statement, which would be merely a reflection of his or her personal view. This should be mentioned in the relevant paragraph of the draft decision.

It is important that items 5, 6 and 7 of the agenda be addressed on an equal footing to the four core themes. To this end, the Conference should establish an independent subsidiary body to examine the key themes under those agenda items, given that, for many Member States, addressing the emerging challenges in those fields is a top priority.

With regard to the two proposed coordinators, it is important that all such nominees should demonstrate the utmost integrity and impartiality and should be approved by the members of the Conference, particularly as there are some concerns as to whether certain nominees will remain impartial and will refrain from politicizing their work. We should focus first on setting the standards for the work of the subsidiary bodies, after which we can appoint the coordinators, as was the practice during the 2018 session. This will ensure that the nominations do not dissuade members from endorsing the formation of the subsidiary bodies. Thank you.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like first of all to join others in welcoming our new colleague, the distinguished Ambassador of Peru. I look forward to working positively together with her personally and with her

delegation in support of the Conference's work. Regarding the new draft decision that you have put before us, we have studied it closely and have already reported on it to our capital. We note that in the draft, you and your team have made new efforts to move forward in taking on board constructive opinions and suggestions from all sides, and we very much appreciate that. I have also listened carefully to the comments that have just been made, and our delegation, like everyone else, looks forward to making full use of the time left to move forward with consultations at various levels so that we are able to adopt this decision on Thursday.

I have listened to everyone's statements and I have a few brief comments that I would like to share. One concerns the last paragraph of the preambular section, which the Ambassador of India spoke about, and which mentions promoting "multiculturalism". I would like to make a suggestion, which is to change this word to "multilateralism". I think no one objects to promoting multilateralism by supporting the work of the Conference.

Regarding some of the specific content of the draft decision, in establishing four subsidiary bodies, we note that the title of subsidiary body 2, unlike those of the other three, is not taken from the agenda of the Conference. We still hope that this subsidiary body's title can, like that of subsidiary body 1, refer to Conference agenda items 1 and 2, later specifying that it would have a particular focus on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). On that point, I have also noted that very many delegations have said that it should be a legally binding instrument. We share this view. We believe the Conference is the only appropriate venue for the negotiation and conclusion of such a treaty. I think that, even if the Conference has not reached agreement to start negotiations last year or this year, and although it has not yet reached a consensus for the time being, everyone is committed to carrying out substantive work on important issues, including an FMCT. These efforts are in themselves a continuation of the work to push forward negotiations on important items in these areas through the Conference, including an FMCT.

As to the specific wording in this decision, we will of course not insist on our own preference, because we hope for the smooth adoption of this draft decision by the Conference. We understand that this draft decision is procedural in nature. As for the four subsidiary bodies and the coordinators, they can also serve to let the Conference carry out substantive discussions, debates and work in these areas, through the procedural process. So, although I understand and respect everyone's ideas about the possible functions and mandates of the subsidiary bodies and coordinators, I also have some things to say on these points. We believe that, in relation to the way the subsidiary bodies will work, their activities and the actions of the few coordinators appointed by the President as they lead specific work in their respective fields will still fully respect and take on board the views and opinions of all the member States.

I also have a second point. I would like to speak specifically about the coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference and the expansion of its membership and what that coordinator should do. I have noticed that some delegations have reiterated their views and comments on this point on many occasions. These include opinions, suggestions, concerns and worries. Different delegations obviously have different opinions and positions on the subject. These differences and the related misgivings and concerns may even become an important factor influencing whether or not our draft decision can receive sufficient support for adoption.

In view of this situation, I would like to reiterate once again the understanding of the Chinese delegation on this issue. I have already stated on numerous occasions in this forum that we agree with the establishment of this coordinator's position in order to facilitate discussions. All delegations can fully express their views on how to further improve the work of the Conference, or even expand its membership. Such discussions are in themselves a clear indication of democracy within the Conference. During this discussion, the opinions of all delegations must be respected and given due attention. In my opinion, given that there are obviously different views on this issue, we should make sure these different opinions, regardless of whether there are just two, or several, are fully expressed. I think that in this process, we must expect neither the opinions of a few countries to be accepted by the majority, nor the opinions of the majority to be imposed on the few. If these

discussions do not result in a consensus, then the meetings and discussions organized by this coordinator do not have to produce any specific conclusions.

And, Mr. President, as you have already made very clear in the draft decision, after mentioning the coordinators at the end of paragraph 8, “the Conference shall decide ...”. I therefore believe that this kind of provision already ensures that the conclusions that may come out of discussions held by such a coordinator on improving working methods and expanding membership cannot ultimately be detrimental to the positions and concerns of any member States. That is how our delegation understands the arrangements made by the Conference this year, and we will take part in this work on this understanding. That is what I wanted to share with everyone today.

Mr. President, my delegation and I will continue to support your work and will make full use of the limited time we have available to make further efforts with a view to the smooth adoption of this decision on Thursday.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement. Let me confirm that his understanding is also my own in that respect. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Azarsa (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for all your efforts to bridge all the gaps. I sincerely appreciate the efforts you have made to produce the new draft decision contained in document CD/WP.619/Rev.2. I should emphasize that, as work has been slow, it has taken us a lot to reach this point. We have exhausted our precious time and effort on issues of a non-substantive nature and have now fallen behind schedule.

Mr. President, with the limited time since we received the revised draft decision yesterday, I would like just to reiterate that I am waiting to receive clear instructions from my capital regarding this draft. However, I will try to be precise and brief in sharing some preliminary comments.

The observation made by my delegation on 7 March 2019 in the plenary meeting was made with sincere belief and flexibility, with a view to leading us to a consensus-based document. Nevertheless, I feel obliged to repeat myself on some key elements. My delegation believes that each subsidiary body should deal with one agenda item. In this regard, subsidiary body 1 should address agenda item 1 and subsidiary body 2 should address agenda item 2. It is a positive aspect that the legally binding instrument is highlighted in your new draft, Mr. President. However, the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate legally binding instruments still needs to be made more robust and taken more seriously. In the meantime, my delegation would also like to emphasize that the mandate of subsidiary body 2 should be treated and formulated in the same manner as that of the other subsidiary bodies. We have already provided you with the pertinent language for each of the subsidiary bodies and, again, we are firmly of the view that it should be used, all in a very balanced manner. As stated before, the wording used to describe the responsibilities of the coordinator for matters related to agenda items 5, 6 and 7 should clearly reproduce the wording used in document CD/2153.

As for paragraph 3, we urge you to follow the rules of procedure by having the subsidiary bodies meet in informal settings. Nevertheless, if the chamber agrees to hold one or two formal meetings, it is our strong belief that they should be limited to the first two sessions. The new draft before us shows that the power and responsibility of the special coordinators are far greater than those of the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies. We would welcome greater clarity on this point and an explanation of this excess of power. Moreover, the quality and number of the special coordinators and the session during which they will work are not reflected in the timetable.

Despite your explanations earlier today, Mr. President – it seems you have put a lot of time and effort into addressing every detail of our future work, which I am very much thankful for – when it comes to the special coordinators, we see very little clarity and not enough detailed information, which we requested in previous plenary meetings. The ambiguity in respect of issues of membership and working methods, issues to be considered by the special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference,

remains. We are willing to consider the issue of membership with a view to increasing the number of new and potential member States. The formula my delegation proposed in the plenary meeting of 7 March was along those lines. However, we are still waiting for more clarification from the chamber as to the dimension, scope and the specific agenda in respect of working methods. Having said that, we strongly believe that the rules of procedure, even with their existing elements, can contribute to our addressing the Conference's four core agenda items and negotiating legally binding instruments if political will is demonstrated by all.

Mr. President, I hope sincerely that by Thursday, 14 March 2019, we will have adopted a balanced decision or programme of work and can start our substantive work.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor at this time? I recognize the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Berkat (Algeria) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, first of all I would like to welcome Her Excellency the Ambassador of Peru and assure her of our readiness to work together with her delegation to contribute to the success of our Conference.

(*spoke in Arabic*) Allow me, Mr. President, to express my delegation's appreciation for your efforts to revitalize the work of the Conference through this revised draft decision, which takes into account many of the proposals and comments made by Member States. Although we are still awaiting the final opinion of our Government on the draft, allow me to make a few initial observations.

Firstly, we believe that there is overall agreement among Member States regarding the need to revitalize the work of the Conference on the basis of its negotiating mandate, as this will help ensure that initiatives to facilitate this shared goal, such as the formation of subsidiary bodies to examine themes on the Conference's agenda, come to fruition.

Secondly, the sense of initiative and responsibility demonstrated by the coordinators and the special coordinators should be applauded and encouraged. We should make concerted efforts to ensure that these persons are successful in their mandates, as this will have a positive impact on the work of the Conference.

Thirdly, we believe that the inclusion of a timetable in the proposal will give us a clear vision of how to move forward with our work.

Fourthly, my delegation, which supports the position of the Group of 21 regarding the need to respect the rules of procedure, believes that further clarifications regarding the special coordinators are required in order to respond better to the proposals and comments made by numerous delegations.

Lastly, allow me, Mr. President, to commend you on your strong sense of responsibility and professionalism and assure you that my delegation stands ready to cooperate with you and the members of the Conference in order to make progress in our work.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement. I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Distinguished colleagues, I did not intend to touch on any specific provision of this draft, but, given that some delegations have drawn attention to the concept – one might even say philosophy – of multiculturalism, which has come out of nowhere, I would like to address this matter in more detail.

It seems that there is a much deeper problem than the appearance in the text of a provision so pregnant with meaning, especially without a preliminary discussion. In fact, a closer look at what is written suggests that the Conference on Disarmament should promote this concept, or philosophy if you will, and, what is more, without a specific reference to disarmament issues since further on is the conjunction "and". However, with all due respect, the Conference on Disarmament does not deal with matters such as this. That is not its mandate.

I therefore have a natural question to ask, one that has also been raised by other colleagues. I understand that the President cannot name the delegation that proposed the amendment to the text at some point behind the scenes or in bilateral consultations and, I would like to stress, without a preliminary broader discussion, in other words in a non-transparent and non-inclusive manner. And such working methods are a matter of deep concern for us.

We pointed out this phenomenon in relation to the previous version of operative paragraph 5, where reference to a statement of the coordinator appeared from nowhere. This part has now been worked on, but there are other provisions that raise serious questions, to say the least. Given the sensitivity of the topic for the President, I would like to directly ask the delegation that introduced the provision to provide clarification. That is my first point.

Secondly, in contrast with such a questionable method of work, the Russian delegation was absolutely transparent throughout the entire process of discussing the draft. What we have said to our fellow presidents has been reiterated in this room in informal and formal plenary meetings. In that regard, we would greatly appreciate it if the President would raise such issues for general discussion. It turns out that, two days ahead of the adoption of the decision, serious provisions that require reflection and analysis in view of their consequences have been thrown in, two days ahead of the adoption! How can one then expect to have any kind of serious discussion of the draft?

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. I have tried to be as inclusive and transparent as possible with 65 members. We have had extensive and exhaustive discussions, I think, in plenary session, and indeed I have made myself available to any delegation that wishes to meet bilaterally. I believe all the proposals have been fully explained, but, of course, we remain ready to make further clarifications if they would be useful.

As far as the question about the reference to “multiculturalism” is concerned, the Ambassador of China has already suggested that we change it to “multilateralism”. I believe that is the intention behind the proposal, but the Ambassador can clarify.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Thank you, Mr. President, and I would also like to thank our Russian colleague for raising this question. In fact, this text was what we provided to the President, and this word is no doubt a typographical error. It should say “multilateralism”, and I apologize for this technical error. In fact, this sentence was added to the preambular paragraph, and it was in the text I introduced in the plenary meeting last Thursday, so this text was not at all communicated to the President through any other channels. At that time, in my speech, I explained our delegation’s thinking about this sentence. We believe that promoting multilateralism by pushing forward the work of the Conference should be an idea that all the member States of the Conference will support. So now that some colleagues have raised doubts just now, I wanted to offer this brief explanation in the hope that our delegation’s suggestion will garner everyone’s support. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and for clarifying that for us. I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Ağacikoğlu (Turkey): Thank you, Mr. President. Let me begin by adding my voice to that of the previous speakers and commend you for your efforts in preparing a draft decision, given the possible concerns of all delegations. As we received a new version of the decision yesterday, like many other delegations, we can only make preliminary remarks. We have forwarded it to Ankara and are waiting for instructions.

Mr. President, our delegation expressed its views on the first version of the decision in the plenary meeting of 28 February. Since then, we have been closely following the discussions that have been taking place on the draft decision. It is encouraging that there is a general consensus on the establishment of the subsidiary bodies to delve further into the technical discussions and broaden areas of agreement. This may eventually pave the way to starting substantive negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. As we underlined, the

starting point should be the reports of last year's subsidiary bodies. We are pleased to see that these reports are referred to in the draft decision.

Reporting responsibility is another important issue for the work of the subsidiary bodies. The reports, as well as any commonalities that are reached and recommendations that are made, should be adopted by consensus.

In order to prevent any ambiguity, we propose to put the phrase "by consensus" before the words "a report" in the first line of paragraph 5. In a similar vein, we also propose to add the phrase "of the subsidiary bodies" to the fifth line of the same paragraph, after what should be the plural word "reports", not the singular "report". The clause would state that "the reports of the subsidiary bodies shall be presented to the Conference through the President".

Mr. President, since the first draft of the decision was circulated three weeks ago, many delegations have expressed their expectations of an early start to the work of the subsidiary bodies this year. They have also underlined their concerns about the way the decision was prepared as a package of the substantive and procedural issues of the Conference. For Turkey, creating linkages between substance and procedure in the Conference and placing them on an equal footing are concerns. This mix is counterproductive to the achievements of 2018. As we noted on 28 February, such parallelism could be a burden for the Conference in the coming years. After all the discussions on the three different versions of the decision, we are yet to be convinced of the utility of appointing special coordinators. We believe that, at this stage, the Conference should decide only to establish subsidiary bodies and continue discussions on its effective functioning.

Turkey's position on these matters is well known and on the record. The current impasse in the Conference is not a result of its current composition or its rules of procedure. Turkey is not against discussing effective functioning or the membership issues, which could always be taken up by the Conference itself at any stage. However, we do not see any need to appoint a special coordinator for this purpose now.

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Thank you very much, Mr. President. I take the floor first of all to welcome the Ambassador of Peru and to pledge Brazil's continued collaboration with her and her team on all matters related to the Conference on Disarmament. Secondly, I wish to indicate that we have forwarded this draft decision to our capital with a positive recommendation. We have looked at it with the utmost flexibility. Of course, it is nobody's ideal text, but I think that you are on the right track and that this is as close as we can get to something that may be adopted in the period of time that is still ahead of us.

I would also like to make a comment regarding coordinators. My original intention was not to speak, as my name is being proposed for the coordination of subsidiary body 3, but at this point, having heard some remarks from colleagues, I think it is important to state that I see the role of coordinator – if this decision goes forward and my name is retained – as a facilitator, an impartial, neutral facilitator at the service of the Conference and nothing more. And that is the spirit in which I would try to fulfil this role if the role is confirmed.

The way you have explained how you intend to proceed with the decision is, in my view, the only possible way to move. I guess there will be no additional revision, although tweaks may be accommodated through oral amendments if that is needed for a consensus. I fully support you in that endeavour, but I wish to make just one substantive comment, which is that there is still a certain imbalance in the text that you have proposed – specifically, in the way in which you describe the "end game" for the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies on the one hand and that for the special coordinators on the other. For the subsidiary body, we have a buffer of sorts, because reports and statements by the Chair are made in the subsidiary bodies before they are put forward through the President to the plenary of the Conference, whereas the special coordinators are to report directly to the Conference on their own behalf, not through the President, and without having to secure

prior adoption of their reports on their consultations in a formal setting. In the end, they can not only make a formal statement directly to the plenary of the Conference but also put forward any action or proposals that they may wish to present as special coordinators to the Conference. This gives them a capacity that has much more impact and is much more direct than what we are giving the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies.

The coordinators will have to work hard in the subsidiary bodies – eight sessions, some of which will be formal – and then manage to achieve the adoption, still in the subsidiary body, of a report not necessarily containing action-oriented proposals but expressing a view on how much progress we have managed to make towards options for negotiations, elements of legally binding instruments or commonalities. For me, then, this is still a considerable imbalance.

I would be a bit wary at this point as to the sort of action to take pursuant to any proposals or recommendations that the special coordinators might make to the Conference after a series of consultations – how many such consultations we do not know, because the number is not mentioned in the schedule. What, then, will we be faced with in the end? And will we all be ready to take that decision on the spur of the moment or not, if progress has not been made in a formal setting during one of the final meetings of the Conference towards a consensus view that these are valid proposals that merit our attention? For me, this is still a matter that could legitimately be raised; it probably makes it more sensitive for members to work on this basis, and these are difficult matters, because they could imply a critical modification of methods of work or very sensitive decisions regarding the membership of the Conference. I raise this issue of concern, but of course my delegation is ready to support the text if you put it forward for adoption.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement. Allow me to clarify that point. This method of presenting conclusions from special coordinators' work was indeed our practice at the beginning of this century, when we had special coordinators on both substantive and procedural items. The practice was that they would present their findings in an oral statement at a formal plenary meeting. It was occasionally the case that they would present a recommendation that the work should be continued the following year, which I believe was actioned at the time. I would imagine that any further recommendations or substantive proposals would indeed take time if they were ever to come to action at the Conference on Disarmament, so the inclusion of that language was not intended to suggest that immediate action would be taken on any proposals. Indeed, delegations were to take as much time as they needed to consider them, but I take the point the Ambassador is making.

Allow me also to take the opportunity to thank him for his statement of his intent if his name is indeed approved as coordinator of the subsidiary body – that is, that he would act as an officer of the Conference and discharge his duties in an impartial way, taking into account the views of all delegations. Let me reassure the Conference: I have spoken to all the proposed coordinators and special coordinators, and that is the assurance I have received from each of them and indeed my understanding as to how they would approach their work.

I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Nikolaichik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, we would like to thank you for your efforts to finalize the draft decision. My delegation supports your endeavours to ensure that we carry out substantive work. We believe that it might be possible to complete all the organizational formalities already during the second presidency. However, we would like to make a number of comments on what has been said in this room and express some of our concerns. We think that these comments will help to add the finishing touches to the decision we have before us.

First of all, we would like to point out, as we did during the high-level segment, that dividing the agenda into core and non-core items is not entirely appropriate to the current situation in our view. My delegation stands ready to make sustained efforts to find ways to overcome such a division.

While we find the comments of a number of delegations about the need to avoid repeating last year's experience to be fair, for our part, we continue to be flexible about the form in which issues concerning new challenges and threats may be considered by the Conference with a view to building and achieving a consensus. We believe that there would be good reason to expressly provide in the draft decision, for example in an annex, for the right of the special coordinators to hold at least two informal meetings, at the beginning and the end of their work.

Furthermore, in the light of paragraph 6 (a) of the draft decision, which provides for coordination between the special coordinator and the subsidiary bodies in addressing the effect of new challenges and threats on the issues dealt with by the subsidiary bodies, we believe that it would be useful to have a footnote in the schedule of meetings, or some other way, to allocate to each subsidiary body a meeting devoted to such a discussion.

Paragraph 7 of the draft decision establishes the right of the special coordinators to consult the members of the Conference in formal and informal meetings. We believe that this provision can be supplemented by a reference to rule 35 of the rules of procedure, along the lines of paragraph 4. In this case, the paragraph may read in the following way. I will read it in English:

(spoke in English)

In discharging their duties and functions, the special coordinators shall consult the members of the Conference in formal and informal meetings open to all member States of the Conference and to those non-member States that the Conference has invited to participate in its work during the 2019 session, in accordance with rule 35 of the rules of procedure, as well as in consultation with delegations, taking into consideration all relevant views and proposals past, present and future.

(spoke in Russian) We have also submitted these proposals, in writing, to the President for review and possible further development.

In addition, we have heard concerns about the mandate of the special coordinator mentioned in paragraph 6 (b) of the draft decision. We believe that some amendments to the text could perhaps address such concerns. For example, we suggest that the second sentence in paragraph 6 (b) might be amended as follows:

(spoke in English) "The special coordinator shall examine ways to improve the organization of work of the Conference and consult member States."

(spoke in Russian) The text then carries on as it is.

We believe that clear and concrete proposals at the final stage will contribute to improving the draft decision and make it possible to achieve a much needed consensus. For our part, let me assure you, Mr. President, of our full support for your efforts.

The President: I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement and his proposals and I give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

Mr. Sharma (India): Thank you, Mr. President. Since my delegation raised the issue of preambular paragraph 9, I have taken the floor to express gratitude to the Ambassador of China for his clarification and suggestion. We believe that this is a very important concept and objective and fully endorse inclusion of that preambular paragraph.

Now that I have the floor, Mr. President, I wanted to tell you that I never envied you too much, but whatever little envy I had for you has completely disappeared after these two and a half hours of discussion. I also wish to reassure you of India's support in your further endeavours to reach consensus and hope that we can adopt a decision by this Thursday.

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

Mr. Foradori (Argentina) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Thank you, Mr. President. First, I would like to welcome Ambassador Alfaro Espinosa of Peru and Ambassador Tengku Hussin of Malaysia. The delegation of Argentina would like to reiterate its appreciation for the efforts made to prepare the draft decision, which we believe provides a balanced

response to the concerns and needs of all members of the Conference on Disarmament. We consider that the draft before us today largely reflects the discussions held in this room since the first draft was circulated on 22 February, resulting in a very clear and comprehensive text that my delegation is prepared to support in its entirety.

We would like to highlight the addition to the preamble of a reference to the need for the Conference to resume its substantive work, establishing a causal link between this decision and the lack of consensus reached on a work programme. We also appreciate the efforts of the President to balance, to the extent possible, the scope of the mandate of the four subsidiary bodies, in particular through operative paragraph 2. With regard to this paragraph, we are pleased that the identification and consideration of legally binding instruments for negotiation are mentioned as part of the mandate of the bodies, since the negotiation of such instruments is the main aim of this Conference, and the subsidiary bodies should prepare the basis for such negotiation once the conditions are in place for the Conference to adopt a substantive programme of work.

We also appreciate the efforts of the President to develop a schedule of meetings for the subsidiary bodies. We believe that holding formal meetings at the opening and closing of sessions is a step forward with respect to the decision taken last year, since it will enable the Conference to keep a record of the various national positions and debates among its members on the different agenda items and provide clarity with respect to our areas of convergence and divergence. In this regard, Mr. President, and bearing in mind that it is in the interest of my delegation, and surely also of the great majority of the members of the Conference, that this decision should be taken during your presidency, we reiterate our agreement with the text submitted and urge the other members of the Conference to demonstrate the greatest flexibility in seeking to adopt this text as soon as possible, especially in the face of the danger of a new arms race and the widespread recognition of the need to revitalize this forum, and with a view to the 2020 Review Conference.

Finally, with regard to the appointment and nature of the coordinators, I would simply like to reaffirm what our Brazilian colleague said and what you confirmed. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Argentina for his statement and I give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wood (Australia): Thank you, Mr. President. Just a very simple suggestion. Listening carefully to the thoughtful comments of my Brazilian colleague, I think the purpose, as I read it, of that second sentence in paragraph 8 is to underline not that we expect the Conference on Disarmament to take action, but that, if action is to be taken, it is by consensus. So you could quite easily fix that nuance just by flipping the sentence, not by changing any words but by saying that “any action pursuant to any proposals or recommendations that may be presented by the special coordinators shall be decided by consensus”. That may give you the emphasis that you need and address some of the caution in the room. I am not usually a fan of a passive sentence, but I think that it might work in this instance.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for her statement and her proposal. I now recognize the Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): Thank you very much, Mr. President. First, a warm welcome to our new colleague from Peru. She can count on the full support of our delegation and our readiness to work closely together. I would also like to thank the President for all his and his team’s efforts. You really worked tirelessly, and I heard a lot of praise for the impartial way you conducted business and steered us to a text that seems to reflect a compromise between many delegations, as has been echoed by so many colleagues. For my delegation, the text is not exactly what we wanted to see, especially not with the naming of the subsidiary groups, but we can go along with it in the spirit of compromise. Like many colleagues here, we also hope that on Thursday we are able and willing to make a decision on this text as it is, or perhaps with a bit of fine tuning, although I do not see much room for big changes.

I fully support what you said with respect to the position of the coordinators, and what our Brazilian colleague said about his proposed nomination echoes what I would say about mine. Again, thank you very much. My delegation can support the text as it is.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement. I give the floor again to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, in this case I have a procedural question, namely how are we to proceed with our work? There is only one full business day left before Thursday. Given the number of proposals and written amendments, if they are taken into account to some extent, there are expected to be substantial changes to several provisions in the text. I do not know how the matter stands with other delegations, but ours will need to consult the capital, which also requires time, especially if there is a new text. As we know, even in a procedural decision, every word has weight, and the question of the difference between multiculturalism and multilateralism has already given rise to conflicting opinions. One delegation is in favour, another makes corrections, and a third is at a loss what to think of the version you might come up with in the updated text if you are preparing to draft such a text. I would simply ask that consideration be given to the fact that delegations, especially those with time differences, need to consult their capitals without fail, and we would very much like to avoid a situation in which we come on Thursday and someone does not have instructions.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. I will say a word at the end on how we intend to proceed. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Chile.

Mr. Eguiguren (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I would like to welcome the Ambassador of Peru, Ms. Alfaro Espinosa, to the Conference on Disarmament. Mr. President, allow me to reiterate how grateful we are for the work that you and your team have done, and in particular for the presentation of the second revised draft decision. We appreciate the inclusion of the proposal for the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies, which, as we said last week, we are in a position to support. We would particularly like to thank the delegations that expressed their willingness to assume this responsibility. We would also like to thank you for including the timetable and, indeed, for reducing the maximum number of meetings – a measure which we believe to be prudent.

We note the particular effort that you have made to accommodate the vast majority of interests and positions expressed by various delegations at our previous meetings. In this regard, we consider the clarification of the wording of paragraphs 2 and 5 to be a step forward. We believe that this will help to avoid misinterpretations later in the process, or interpretations that prejudice intentions and ultimately undermine trust among member States.

With regard to the special coordinators, we thank you for the additional specifications and supplementary text. However, we still believe that there is scope to refine the wording to provide greater clarity, especially in terms of how they are expected to carry out their work. We refer in particular to paragraph 8. I wish to underline that, in our view, the special coordinators should have sufficient freedom to organize their work according to the particularities of the issues under their responsibility, and they will certainly require extensive consultations with member States. However, given the sensitivity around the subject of special coordinators, we would also stress the need for a degree of procedural predictability.

Mr. President, Chile would like to assure you of its flexibility and willingness to support this draft decision as it has been presented from the outset. It is the result of a series of consultations and has been refined and enriched. Our preliminary comments are made in a constructive spirit that allows for the prompt adoption of this draft decision – a course of action which, in the absence of a programme of work, we can aspire to at this time.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Chile for his statement. That now concludes the list of speakers, so let me say a few words about how we proceed from here. I thank delegations once again for their openness and their engagement with this process and for the proposals that have been made this morning. As I said at the beginning of our

meeting, I do not intend to circulate a new draft of this decision. I believe that the overall structure that lies behind it is the best we can do, as has been expressed by many delegations. So, while there is still indeed room for improvement, I believe that room is limited to clarifications and limited amendments to the text, which I believe can be handled orally on Thursday. If delegations do have specific proposals, I invite them to submit them in writing and I thank those delegations that have already done so.

As such, I would like to urge all delegations to seek their final instructions from their capitals in order to allow us to take action on this draft decision on Thursday morning. I would like to finish just by reiterating that the design behind this draft decision is not to dilute our work or to move us further away from our core mandate, which is negotiations, but to move us back towards it. We have had a good discussion, I think, about that over the last few weeks, building on the discussions that we had under the presidency of Ukraine, and I believe that there is a widespread feeling in the room that this is the way forward this year, so I look forward to welcoming you all back on Thursday morning, when I intend to table this decision for action.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.