

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand five hundred and eleventh plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 28 June 2019, at 2.40 p.m.

President: Mr. Duong Chi Dung Viet Nam

GE.20-01397 (E) 240320 240320



* 2 0 0 1 3 9 7 *

Please recycle 

The President: I call to order the 1511th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, as previously announced, this afternoon we will hear the address of His Excellency Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria. The rest of the meeting will be devoted to agenda item 4 of the Conference, effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons (negative security assurances).

On this subject we will hear from Mr. Peter Andreas Beerwerth, Ambassador of Germany, and Mr. Li Song, Ambassador of China. We will have also a presentation by Mr. Marc Finaud, senior adviser at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

Mr. Schallenberg will address this body at around 3 p.m. I therefore suggest that we start by giving the floor to our panellists first and then suspend the meeting at around 3 o'clock to welcome the Foreign Minister of Austria. After his remarks, we will resume our substantive discussion on agenda item 4.

Following the panellists' presentations and the remarks by Mr. Schallenberg, I will open the floor for discussion on the substantive topic of today's meeting. Once our discussion concludes, I will then open the floor for any other matter delegations would like to raise.

I would like now to give the floor to our first panellist, Mr. Peter Andreas Beerwerth, Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. Beerwerth (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President. Let me begin by expressing my gratitude for your invitation, Mr. President, to share with delegations in a personal capacity some reflections on what we call effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapons States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These reflections were taken into account in the work undertaken during last year's session of the Conference on Disarmament in subsidiary body 4, which was ably coordinated by my predecessor, now retired, Ambassador Michael Biontino, whom you all know well.

The work undertaken by this subsidiary body could also build on the productive discussions in the 2017 informal subgroup of the working group on the way ahead. In that context, I recall the German delegation also organized four public seminars that were held in Geneva and in New York in 2017 and 2018.

It is noteworthy that last year's subsidiary body 4 actually did agree on commonalities, as called for by the mandate set out in document CD/2119. I am expressly drawing your attention to that fact, because we all know that the report was not formally agreed upon by the Conference meeting in plenary last year. However, the commonalities themselves were not disputed in the final discussions of the Conference on that report. We should thus, in my view, not lose sight of these commonalities. In fact, we should use them as a starting point for future substantive discussions and possibly even negotiations on negative security assurances.

In my view, the essence of the elements that delegations agreed upon without formally adopting this report are the following: delegations acknowledged the positive effect of negative security assurances on the non-proliferation regime and disarmament in general; such assurances were seen as possible practical steps contributing to overall and general global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts; negative security assurances could reinforce other disarmament instruments; nuclear-weapon-free zones could be more effective if protocols were signed by all relevant States; and, finally, delegations considered that the Conference was the most appropriate forum for dealing with negative security assurances. The effect of these assurances on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is, in my view, of key importance in the context of enhancing global security and stability.

Assuring non-nuclear-weapon States – in particular their populations – that under no circumstances are they at risk of being subjected to nuclear-weapon strikes is a very potent incentive not to seek to develop nuclear weapons. This is what many argued. This incentive becomes stronger as nuclear-weapon States make their conditions for providing negative security assurances less stringent or remove them altogether.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize the practical relevance of negative security assurances as an intermediate step towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear

weapons. The confidence-building effect of negative security assurances was referred to by numerous delegations during last year's discussions in the subsidiary body, although they also stated that the only absolute guarantee was the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

It would seem to me that, in particular in the currently strained international security environment, negative security assurances could also be regarded as a vehicle capable of furthering the debate on nuclear disarmament issues at large. In this context, and in view of the fiftieth anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty coming up next year, it may seem the right time for the nuclear-weapon States to renew their negative security assurances, some of which were given more than two decades ago. They may also want to reflect on the continued need for any conditionality to be placed upon them or the nature of such conditionality.

With regard to the treaties on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, we can observe that 115 States have chosen to be part of such zones. Additionally, Mongolia has, as we know, declared its own nuclear-weapon-free status. This thus brings the number of relevant States up to 116. Any future debate on negative security assurances should also examine their relationship with these treaties.

I would like to recall that in the course of last year's debate in subsidiary body 4, a matrix of existing negative security assurances and nuclear-weapon-free zones was drawn up by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) with the very able assistance of Mr. Marc Finaud here on the right. The content of that paper as a reference document – even though it was not attached to last year's draft report – was not disputed openly and could thus also serve as a possible reference for future deliberations.

It was our assessment that the discussions clarified how negative security assurances would have to be formulated if they were to be effective and meaningful. There were also clear expectations expressed by those issuing such assurances regarding the way the recipients would have to comport themselves in order to be eligible for them.

In the broader context, light was shed on nuclear weapons and existing nuclear doctrines. There was a clear belief that the subject merited further consideration in the Conference. In my view, last year's agreement on these commonalities expresses the clear desire of States for the Conference to continue its work on negative security assurances, even though the agreement was not formal, as I said at the outset.

We understand that such discussion would be facilitated and best placed in a broader context, alongside the exchanges on existing nuclear doctrines and postures, such as the one that has recently commenced within the framework incorporating the five permanent members of the Security Council. The important role that negative security assurances can play in the area of confidence-building, non-proliferation and the disarmament of nuclear weapons undoubtedly calls for them to be given further consideration.

In closing, Mr. President, I would like to express my desire that the Conference be in a position to agree – in the very near future, I hope, perhaps even in 2020 or 2019, although that is probably too ambitious – to continue this important work in a more extensive working mode as part of its deliberations on its core agenda items. And with that, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and add for colleagues here in the room that, owing to circumstances beyond my control, I unfortunately will have to leave very shortly and thus will not personally be able to respond to any questions and queries. I regret that but could not change it.

The President: I would like to thank Ambassador Beerwerth for his presentation. We understand, of course, that he has a very busy schedule and that he has just presented a very comprehensive and also very enlightening speech on negative security assurances.

We still have 12 minutes, so shall I continue before the arrival of the Minister? I would like first to welcome Ambassador Li Song of China and invite him to take the floor.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, I was very happy to accept the invitation to take part in the Conference's panel discussion on negative security assurances. I hope today's discussion can help advance the reflections and understanding of all the members of the Conference regarding negative security assurances and help the Conference to begin substantive work on this important topic as soon as possible.

The non-nuclear-weapon States have undertaken not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons, and at the same time they require that they will not be threatened with nuclear weapons and that this type of security assurance should be confirmed in a legally binding form. This is a perfectly legitimate and reasonable security requirement. Under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the non-nuclear-weapon States' obligation not to proliferate and the negative security assurance obligation undertaken by the five nuclear-weapon States are two sides of the same coin. Thus, negative security assurances have never been a security favour extended by the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States, but a critical measure to prevent proliferation and defend the international non-proliferation system, with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as its cornerstone.

China is of the view that the fundamental solution to the problem of the security of nuclear-weapon-free States is the complete prohibition and full destruction of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States. Pending the realization of this goal, the nuclear-weapon States must make a clear commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances, unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-weapon-free zones and to conclude an international legally binding instrument in this respect, without delay. This is both the most effective way to address the problem of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and, at this point in history and in the current international security environment, one of the most realistic measures towards nuclear disarmament. At the same time, to address the security concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States, China has consistently said that the five nuclear powers must diminish the role of nuclear weapons in their national security doctrines. The respective nuclear powers must renounce nuclear deterrence based on their first use of such weapons. No country should be listed as a target for a nuclear strike, and no country should target any other country with the nuclear weapons under its own control.

In the 1960s, China came into possession of nuclear weapons in a very specific historical context. From the very beginning, it has actively called for the ultimate complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and has always adhered to a nuclear doctrine of self-defence. Our country's nuclear policy is based on the nuclear doctrine outlined above and is also the most open and transparent among those of the nuclear-weapon States. We have made a clear commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances. At the same time, we have unconditionally made the commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-weapon-free zones. Our country's policy regarding negative security assurances is a completely unconditional policy that is the clearest and most comprehensive of those of the five nuclear-weapon States. While China has unequivocally announced and unswervingly pursued the negative security assurance policies and commitments mentioned above, it has also, through several types of policy and legal instruments, specifically addressed the special situations of the relevant regions and countries and their concrete requirements, reaffirming and confirming these negative security assurance commitments. For example, we have signed and ratified the protocols to all the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties that are open for signature, and after the end of the cold war in the 1990s, we confirmed the negative security assurances described above for countries that voluntarily renounced the possession of nuclear weapons. The efforts we have made for the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty) are the most recent example. China has consistently and actively supported the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in their efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone and has taken the lead in reaching an important consensus with the ASEAN countries on the appropriate way to resolve remaining issues related to the Protocol. China has thus carried out the preparations to sign this Protocol.

This January, China, as the coordinator of the P5 process, actively pushed for the five nuclear-weapon States designated as such under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (P5 States) to reach a consensus at the Beijing Conference on the renewal of the dialogue between those five nuclear powers and ASEAN, with a view to signing the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone at an early date, so that the five nuclear-weapon States can provide negative security assurances in a legally binding form to the States party to the Protocol to yet another nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty. We are delighted to see that the Secretary-General of ASEAN, Mr. Lim Jock Hoi,

made a special trip to come to the Conference and delivered a statement on Tuesday that included mention of the Bangkok Treaty as one of its most important elements. His speech was well received by all members of the Conference. That afternoon, representatives of the P5 States and Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi held a dialogue at the Palais des Nations, in which both sides clearly indicated that they are willing to actively work to resume the dialogue with a view to signing the Protocol at an early date. China hopes to continue to play a positive and constructive role in this process.

The large number of non-nuclear-weapon States under the Non-Proliferation Treaty share a common aspiration to obtain unconditional and legally binding security assurances. Negative security assurances are one of the core issues on the Conference's agenda and negotiating and achieving an international legal instrument on negative security assurances is a long-standing unresolved item on the Conference's agenda. Many member States, in particular the countries in the Group of 21, believe the Conference should pick this low-hanging fruit. The consensus reached on this at all the review processes for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and in a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions, of which Security Council resolution 984 (1995) is representative, confirms and strengthens the important principles whereby the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and should serve as fundamental guidance for the Conference to make greater efforts in this field. With the evolution of the international political and security situation, the large number of non-nuclear-weapon States are urgently hoping and calling for the relevant nuclear-weapon States to take more positive and comprehensive steps to adjust each of their negative security assurance policies in a timely manner.

As in the past, the Chinese delegation is in favour of the Conference starting substantive work to achieve an international legal instrument on negative security assurances as soon as possible. We believe such an effort can help produce three kinds of benefits. First, it will consolidate and strengthen the international non-proliferation regime that is based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a cornerstone; secondly, it will strengthen the Conference's authority and effectiveness as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiation mechanism; and third, it will promote the Conference's substantive work and the clear objective of negotiating and concluding an international legal instrument. The Chinese delegation will work with all parties to uphold the principles mentioned above, and in this spirit, and to make new, greater efforts on the subject of negative security assurances.

The President: I thank Ambassador Li Song for his presentation. Colleagues, as you already know, I would now like to suspend the meeting for a brief moment to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, who has come to address the Conference on Disarmament.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: Distinguished colleagues, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria. Thank you, Sir, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

Mr. Schallenberg (Austria): Mr. President, distinguished delegates, it is an honour to be here, and I am happy to address this forum.

This year we will celebrate the centenary of the League of Nations. Over the last hundred years, we have established multilateral forums to provide platforms for dialogue even when bilateral relations were strained. We have worked tirelessly to strengthen international law as a foundation of the global multilateral order. However, today these achievements are being actively challenged, and there seems to be a growing readiness to backtrack even from what was previously agreed.

Mr. President, as my predecessor said one year ago in this very chamber, "*pacta sunt servanda*". This cardinal principle of international relations and of international law fully applies to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, a regime that is highly interconnected with complementary and mutually reinforcing treaties, nuclear-free-weapon zones and bilateral agreements.

Let me first turn to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the cornerstone of our regime. Next year, the Treaty will mark its fiftieth anniversary, and the 2020 Review Conference will, of course, evaluate the implementation of the Treaty, but this is only part of our task. It is vital that we also agree on further concrete progress towards the Treaty's ultimate goal – that is, a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was the last treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament. That was 23 years ago, and today we are still waiting for its entry into force, although the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its international monitoring system have again and again demonstrated their efficiency and importance. This is, in my view, not only a shame, it is a disgrace for the whole international community.

Nuclear disarmament has, in practice, ground to a halt. Worse, it is even being partially reversed. New nuclear weapons are being developed, more delivery systems are being deployed and trillion-dollar modernization programmes aim at keeping nuclear weapons in service for decades to come as, at the same time, security conditions keep worsening.

Against this backdrop, the 2017 adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a historic breakthrough. This treaty is indispensable to the fulfilment of the ambition of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty for a nuclear-weapon-free world. By adopting the Treaty, 122 States univocally affirmed that a nuclear-weapon-free world is a more secure world for each of us. There is no stronger commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Rapid technological advances raise new questions and challenges for all of us. Are current systems sufficiently shielded against cyberattacks? Can nuclear weapons be hacked? How to deal with the weaponization of artificial intelligence?

It is clear. Humans must remain in control of selecting and engaging targets. In this area, we have the moral obligation to act before we are overtaken by facts on the ground. Therefore, Austria fully supports the immediate start of negotiations on a legally binding instrument to ensure human control over decisions of life and death.

Mr. President, it is a basic principle of international humanitarian law to draw a clear line of distinction between combatants and civilians. At the same time, the increasing urbanization of conflicts is a major challenge for the protection of civilians. When an explosive weapon with a wide area of impact is used in a populated area, more than 90 per cent of the victims are usually civilians. How can this be compatible with the principle of distinction required by international law?

To address this issue, the Austrian Government will host in Vienna this autumn an international conference on the protection of civilians in urban warfare. I cordially invite all of you to join us in Vienna on 1 October.

Mr. President, there is no doubt we are living in challenging times, but challenges always bring opportunities, and disarmament plays a decisive role in safeguarding international peace and security. Nuclear disarmament and arms control never occur in a vacuum. It takes courage and foresight to take the right action. In the current security climate, we have no time to lose. Let us rebuild trust and let us work together.

Since the early days of Austria's United Nations membership, my country has been firmly committed to implementing, advancing and strengthening the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regime. We are therefore honoured to take the responsibility of chairing this distinguished forum next year. We look forward to engaging with all of you on how to preserve our achievements and accomplish urgent progress together. I thank you for your attention.

The President: I would like to thank Mr. Schallenberg for his statement. Now, distinguished colleagues, allow me to suspend the meeting for a brief moment in order to escort Minister Schallenberg from the Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like now to welcome Mr. Marc Finaud, a member of the Vietnamese delegation who is also a senior adviser at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Finaud (Viet Nam): Thank you, Mr. President. Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour for me to be invited again to speak as an independent expert in my personal capacity in this chamber on the issue of negative security assurances. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to you, Mr. President, and your delegation for this opportunity.

You may remember that last year, I had a chance to address this topic and present a background paper co-authored with my colleague, John Borrie, of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), to subsidiary body 4, then chaired by Germany. The purpose of that paper was to map all the existing unilateral declarations or legally binding commitments made by the nuclear-armed States regarding assurances of non-use or non-threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

I do not wish to repeat the detailed findings of that paper but just to recall our main conclusion: this mapping exercise demonstrates the diversity of positions of nuclear-armed States, including changes over time and, in particular, the variety of conditions required by such States to implement their assurances. Moreover, this exercise revealed a number of points that should be clarified because of the ambiguity of the way they are formulated.

Because not so much has been achieved on this topic in the past year in the Conference on Disarmament, I will limit my remarks to reminding some basic points.

First, the issue of negative security assurances has been on the agenda of this Conference and the whole international community for decades now. I remember that I was in charge of that issue 30 years ago, when I joined the French delegation in this chamber; since then, not much progress has been achieved – not since the 1995 Security Council resolution that endorsed the unilateral declarations of the five nuclear-weapon States designated under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Today, with the growing recognition that the risk of use of nuclear weapons has never been so high since the cold war, the issue is taking on new importance and urgency. This has been stated by former leaders who were once in charge of the nuclear deterrent of their countries, such as Mikhail Gorbachev and William Perry; and it has been confirmed recently by the study published by UNIDIR and presented by its director, Renata Dwan.

Second, although the international community is, as we know, divided on the question of the legality or legitimacy of nuclear weapons addressed in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, there is no doubt that the whole world, irrespective of these differences and including all nuclear-armed States, has a vital interest in preventing the use of nuclear weapons and therefore in working together to reducing this risk.

Third, the most effective and radical means of eliminating the risk of use of nuclear weapons would, of course, be their total elimination, as the Chinese Ambassador noted. However, in the meantime, if all States that have verifiably renounced nuclear weapons are protected against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, this will greatly contribute to this goal of lowering the risk of a nuclear war.

Fourth, dealing with negative security assurances as an effective means of nuclear risk reduction has the advantage of overcoming the current divisions on the legality of nuclear weapons without prejudice to the respective approaches to nuclear disarmament, either through the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons or through the so-called progressive approach or other interim steps.

Fifth, there is no doubt that the most comprehensive negative security assurance would be a no-first-use policy – that is, the commitment by all nuclear-armed States to make deterrence of a nuclear attack by another nuclear-armed State the sole purpose of their nuclear weapons. This is the policy proclaimed by China, as noted by the Ambassador, and India, and they should be encouraged to maintain it. In the United States, as we know, the previous Administration came close to adopting that policy, which is now required by a draft bill in Congress and is supported by leading think tanks and experts. Unfortunately, we are also witnessing discussions and doctrines calling for nuclear-war scenarios, threats of obliteration of a non-nuclear-weapon State, early escalation in case of conventional attack and the introduction of more usable, so-called low-yield nuclear weapons, as well as

hypersonic missiles, to nuclear arsenals, thereby lowering the threshold for nuclear war dangerously.

Sixth, the alternative to a no-first-use policy would be at least to clarify, once and for all, the conditions under which non-nuclear-weapon States can benefit from negative security assurances. Indeed, when you read some of the declarations of the nuclear-armed States, as recalled in the background paper of last year, you discover gaps or grey zones that do not constitute assurances but that, on the contrary, create unwarranted uncertainties and doubts. When one State claims that it would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States but reserves the right to use them in case of use of other weapons of mass destruction against it or its allies or in case of aggression involving conventional weapons that would threaten the very existence of the State, does this mean that it would also include attacks by non-nuclear-weapon States? When another State declares that it will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and complying with their international non-proliferation commitments in terms of weapons of mass destruction, does this mean that it could use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear-weapon State that had violated, for instance, the Biological Weapons Convention or the Chemical Weapons Convention, not necessarily in an attack against that State?

Seventh and, finally, when we discuss the risk of use of nuclear weapons, we should be aware of the continuity between conventional and nuclear weapons. This is explicit or implicit in the doctrine of nuclear-armed States that have not embraced the no-first-use policy. In Europe, as we know, it is related to the current tensions between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Russia. In this respect, let me take the opportunity to flag a study published at the end of last year on reducing the risks of conventional deterrence in Europe by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Network of Think Tanks to which I and other experts from Europe, the United States and Russia contributed. We advocate using and adapting the existing regional instruments of conventional arms control to reduce the risk of escalation to a nuclear conflict. In the same spirit, it would be useful if Russia could review its unilateral security assurance and drop the exclusion of non-nuclear-weapon States that are members of a military alliance with nuclear-weapon States, as France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, for their part, did at the end of the cold war.

I remain available for any questions and thank you for your attention.

The President: I would like to thank Mr. Marc Finaud for his presentation. Dear colleagues, I would like now to take this opportunity to make a few remarks in my national capacity on the topic of negative security assurances. I will then open the floor for any other delegation wishing to speak on the topic.

I would like first of all to express our sincere thanks to Minister Schallenberg of Austria for joining our discussion but also to thank all the members of the panel this afternoon for having shared with the Conference on Disarmament their expertise and views on negative security assurances, one of the very core issues on our agenda.

I believe that the thematic discussions held in a spirit of cooperation, constructiveness, openness, transparency and balance can contribute not only to a profound comprehension of the views and concerns of member States in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation but also to the promotion of the work of the Conference.

Negative security assurances are an important element in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. They have been in the mainstream of discussion in the Conference since 1979 and central to any discussion on nuclear disarmament, especially those that led to the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995 and the negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In the context of an increasingly unstable international security landscape, discussions leading to concrete action on negative security assurances may lay the cornerstone for States to re-establish the strategic trust to engage in substantive discussion of our eventual goal of general and complete nuclear disarmament.

It is the consistent policy of Viet Nam to advocate general and complete disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, with a particular focus on advocacy for the offering of negative security

assurances. We are proud to be a member to all major multilateral agreements on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation – namely, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, most recently, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In the regional context, in 1995, Viet Nam, along with all States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), brought the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, or the Bangkok Treaty, to life. This is one of the most important documents within the regional peace and security framework, ensuring that no ASEAN member States will venture into the development of nuclear weapons and related materials. In his statement at our first plenary meeting earlier this week, ASEAN Secretary-General Mr. Lim Jock Hoi stressed that the Treaty is ASEAN's foremost contribution to the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. He also shared with us some of the main features of the Treaty and recounted the efforts made by ASEAN to give effect to this important agreement over the past 20 years.

According to the Secretary-General of ASEAN, critical to the effective implementation of the Treaty is the Protocol thereto, which is open for signature by the five permanent members of the Security Council to enable them to offer negative security assurances to the States parties to the Treaty. In this regard, we welcome the meeting between those five countries and the Secretary-General of ASEAN during his visit to the Conference and their statement in the plenary meeting reaffirming their intention to renew discussions with ASEAN on this issue. We sincerely hope that all five countries engage with us in the discussion regarding the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty as the first concrete step towards a South-East Asia free of nuclear weapons.

I share the views expressed by some of my colleagues during previous plenary meetings that negative security assurances and the nuclear-weapon-free zones are interlinked and the establishment and implementation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all areas of our globe should be a first and positive step towards a global negative security assurance regime and help strengthen global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

At the same time, to move forward to a world free of nuclear weapons, progress should also be made towards the initiation of negotiations on multilateral legally binding arrangements for assuring the security for non-nuclear-weapon States. I am glad to see that negative security assurances remain one of the core items of the Conference on Disarmament agenda and sincerely hope the Conference will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting this progress, especially in the context of the Review Conference to take place in 2020.

I thank you all for your attention. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of France.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the experts for their briefings on the topic before us, negative security assurances. I would simply like to refer you to the statement I made on 25 June, which explained in detail the position of France. I said then that the French policy of deterrence was the most important of guarantees, because it is strictly defensive, and that the use of nuclear weapons would be conceivable only in extreme circumstances of self-defence, which is a right enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. I also said that France's commitments in this regard were set out in a statement made at the Conference on Disarmament in 1995 and that the Security Council had taken note of them in its resolutions 1984 (2011) and 2310 (2016). I added that the negative security assurances granted by France had been reiterated at the highest level by the President of the French Republic in 2015. Indeed, France is of the view that the granting of negative security assurances in a regional framework is one of the main routes to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. My country has granted negative security assurances to nearly 100 States under the protocols to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in several regions of the world. I will not mention them. You know them.

I would like to quickly respond to a point that was raised by one of the experts, Mr. Finaud, concerning reservations and the deterrence policy. First, with regard to the reservations that have been put forward by France, my delegation is prepared to explain how they are fully compatible with negative security assurances and are also consistent with my country's deterrence policy. On the issue of no first use, which was also raised, I would like to remind the expert, who was part of the French delegation a few years ago, that French nuclear weapons are part of a concept of deterrence aimed at protecting the vital

interests of the country from any aggression by a State that might threaten them, regardless of where the aggression comes from or what form it takes. No first use is therefore not compatible with the French logic of deterrence. It is very simple, and I am quite willing to explain this again to my countryman, Mr. Finaud.

Secondly, I would like to say, like my colleague the Ambassador of China, that the representative of France participated in the meeting of the five nuclear-weapon States designated as such under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (P5 States) with the Secretary-General of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The meeting was an opportunity to underscore the shared commitment of the P5 States to the successful conclusion of the consultations on the signing of the protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty). We hope that this will encourage the ASEAN States to take up the issue again, including in the framework of the Commission established pursuant to the Bangkok Treaty, which is expected to meet soon at the level of ASEAN ministers. We have fallen too far behind for no good reason. My country stands ready to broaden as much as necessary its consultations with the other P5 States and the ASEAN member States to identify and overcome the remaining obstacles. The signing of the protocol to the Bangkok Treaty would provide negative security assurances to the ASEAN countries, thereby making the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone fully operational. In addition, as has been stated in the run-up to the next review conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it would make it possible to move forward in the implementation of the 2010 action plan, which stressed the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and to the achievement of the objectives of nuclear disarmament.

The President: I thank the representative of France and I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): Thank you, Mr. President. We would, first and foremost, like to thank the Foreign Minister of Austria for his address to the Conference on Disarmament.

Since this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, I would also like to congratulate you very warmly, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You can rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation, and of our active participation in the Conference's work. We are pleased to note that you have planned substantive activities during your presidency in the form of thematic discussions on the Conference's agenda items. We also note that you intend to draft a programme of work, in accordance with your responsibility as the Conference President. We have already shared our detailed views with you on a draft programme of work, both bilaterally and through the Group of 21 platform, and we look forward to receiving the draft.

Mr. President, coming to the topic of today's discussions on negative security assurances, we thank the distinguished panellists for their introductory remarks. The issue of negative security assurances has been on the international agenda for over 60 years now. Already in 1966, General Assembly resolution 2153 A (XXI) called upon the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament "to consider urgently the proposal that the nuclear-weapon Powers should give an assurance that they will not use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States without nuclear weapons on their territories".

In 1978, the consensus Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament called upon the nuclear-weapon States to "pursue efforts to conclude, as appropriate, effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". The Conference began considering this issue an integral part of its agenda right from its very first session in 1979 – 40 years ago. Besides the broad support enjoyed by this issue, it is ripe for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference just by virtue of the mere length of time that it has been under consideration.

Mr. President, Pakistan has a long history of support for negative security assurances. From the late 1960s onwards, then as a non-nuclear-weapon State, Pakistan sought legally binding assurances to safeguard its territory from the use or threat of use of nuclear

weapons. These efforts assumed greater urgency after nuclear weapons were introduced in our region in 1974.

In 1979, Pakistan tabled a draft international convention to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons at the Conference on Disarmament, contained in document CD/10.

The ineffective and insufficient response from the international community was one of the reasons that compelled Pakistan to develop its own nuclear deterrent. Pakistan still did not abandon the cause of negative security assurances and has continued to support it. We feel that the option of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States is not only strategically untenable but also morally unacceptable. As a responsible State possessing nuclear weapons, Pakistan has unilaterally pledged not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any State not possessing nuclear weapons. We are ready to transform this pledge into a multilateral legally binding international commitment.

Since 1990, Pakistan has annually introduced a resolution on negative security assurances at the General Assembly. The most recent version was adopted last year without a single negative vote. The resolution recommends that the Conference should "actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement and concluding effective international agreements to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, taking into account the widespread support for the conclusion of an international convention".

Mr. President, Pakistan agrees with its fellow Group of 21 members that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination. Pending the achievement of that goal, the long-standing and genuine aspiration of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive negative security assurances should be fulfilled. Failure to make progress on this count will further erode the so-called grand bargain of the non-proliferation regime.

The responses of some of the nuclear-weapon States to this long-standing demand, as contained in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), are insufficient and partial. Apart from China, which has given unconditional negative security assurances, the other unilateral declarations contain qualifiers and caveats, the interpretation of which lies with the States making those declarations. They thus cannot replace the need for a credible, multilateral legally binding instrument on negative security assurances.

In our view, the principle of non-use of force or threat of force, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, extends to the use of nuclear weapons, without prejudice to Article 51, the right to self-defence. Concluding a legally binding agreement on negative security assurances is therefore, in our view, an obligation, not an option.

As long as the goal of nuclear disarmament eludes us, negative security assurances can bridge the security gap between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States. Concluding and implementing such assurances would cause no financial burden and is, therefore, a cost-free exercise with immense benefits for global peace and security. Once concluded, negative security assurances could also obviate the concerns that non-nuclear-weapon States have about new doctrines and technologies related to the use of nuclear weapons.

Negative security assurances can also make a significant contribution to strengthening the international non-proliferation regime. They would constitute a major confidence-building measure between the nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, thus leading to an international environment genuinely conducive to negotiations on other matters related to disarmament and non-proliferation. Commencing negotiations on this agenda item would meet the demands of all member States that advocate for the Conference to undertake treaty negotiations, thereby ending the deadlock in the Conference.

Mr. President, my delegation would urge the States that oppose the commencement of negotiations on negative security assurances in the Conference to shed light on the reasons for their opposition, including any security interests of theirs that might be at stake through the conclusion of such a treaty. We would also like to understand why their concerns, if they have any, cannot be addressed during negotiations on a treaty on negative security assurances in the Conference, as they state can be done in the case of another issue on the Conference agenda. In any event, they should at least acknowledge the role that their

refusal to negotiate a legally binding treaty on negative security assurances plays in perpetuating the ongoing stalemate in the Conference.

Mr. President, my delegation has been actively participating in the substantive and interactive discussions on negative security assurances that have been held in the Conference over the years, including in subsidiary body number 4 last year. While we regret that the report of subsidiary body 4 could not be adopted due to lack of consensus, we do acknowledge the value added by those discussions to the further advancement of this issue, including by identifying the major points of convergence and divergence. These mutual understandings and commonalities should be further narrowed down to build upon the already strong foundation. We hope that the discussions today will also contribute to that objective, heeding the legitimate demand of the vast majority of States for legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

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

Mr. Youssef (Egypt): Thank you very much, Mr. President. Since it is my first time to take the floor under your presidency, I would like to start by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Mr. President, I thank you for convening this meeting and dedicating it to discussing agenda item 4, on negative security assurances. Our thanks are extended as well to the distinguished panellists for their insightful contribution to this discussion.

My delegation associates itself with the statement of the Group of 21 that was delivered by the delegation of Pakistan in the plenary meeting of 19 June on negative security assurances. I would like to make the following remarks.

Egypt reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We remain convinced that, as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use and proliferation persists. Therefore, the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/32, leading to agreement on the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time.

Mr. President, non-nuclear-weapon States have long harboured feelings of insecurity in a world where nuclear weapons continue to be possessed by few States. Therefore, since the beginning of the nuclear age, they have looked for means to protect themselves against the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. A number of non-nuclear-weapon States have sought such security within alliances involving one or several nuclear-weapon States. Other non-nuclear-weapon States have sought other international arrangements to ensure their security effectively.

Egypt, for its part, has been a strong advocate of concluding a legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. While we welcome the progressive measures that have been taken by nuclear-weapon States to provide such assurances since the conclusion of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Egypt strongly believes that these measures should be further strengthened, taking into account the voluntary nature of the existing assurances.

Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, we reaffirm the urgent need to reach an early agreement on a universal, unconditional, irrevocable and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances, as called for in General Assembly resolution 73/29. Such an instrument should be clear, credible, without any ambiguity and non-discriminatory, and it should respond to the concerns of all the parties. We stress in particular that the negative security assurances provided under a legally binding instrument should be without any conditions.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Egypt for his statement and kind words for me. Now, I would like to invite the Ambassador of the Netherlands to take the floor.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): Mr. President, thank you for providing this opportunity to address the issue of negative security assurances under agenda item 4, one of the four core issues on our agenda. Allow me also to take this opportunity to thank the panellists for their insights and presentations and to thank the Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria, Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament today.

The Netherlands regrets that last year the Conference on Disarmament was not in a position to adopt a consensual report on the work of subsidiary body 4, as we believe that the discussion in the subsidiary body were useful and that the Conference made some progress by creating a better understanding among delegations. In this context, we consider the mapping of existing negative security assurances through the matrix a useful exercise that could be continued within the Conference, while we remain open to other proposals for further work on the issue.

In the absence of a consensus report to build on, I will use this opportunity to reiterate some of the key considerations for the Netherlands on negative security assurances. We are of the view that non-nuclear-weapon States under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have a legitimate interest in receiving unequivocal and legally binding security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. After all, those States have committed not to build, acquire or possess nuclear weapons. In this context, the Netherlands recalls Security Council resolution 984 (1995) and subsequent resolutions 1887 (2009) and 2310 (2016) and urges all nuclear-weapon States to respect the commitments with regard to security assurances in full. Moreover, those nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so are encouraged to extend security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Mr. President, negative security assurances play a central role in nuclear non-proliferation and are an important measure contributing to disarmament. They reduce the incentives for non-nuclear-weapon States to acquire nuclear weapons and the salience of nuclear weapons in the doctrines of nuclear-weapon States. Moreover, providing more clarity and strengthening existing security assurances could serve as an important confidence-building measure between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. In particular, in the current international security environment, more clarity on existing assurances and a dialogue on the doctrines of nuclear-weapon States will help build the confidence needed for further steps on nuclear disarmament.

The Netherlands underlines the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as reflected in article VII of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, including in the context of negative security assurances. They enhance regional and global peace and security and are means of promoting nuclear disarmament, stability and confidence within their respective regions.

We note that the respective Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga, the Bangkok Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia have not yet been signed or ratified by all the nuclear-weapon States. Only Additional Protocol II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been ratified by all nuclear-weapon States, although with reservations and interpretative declarations.

We urge nuclear-weapon States to further strengthen the regimes of the nuclear-weapon-free zones. In this context, we welcome the recent dialogue in Geneva between the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the five permanent members of the Security Council to identify a way forward on the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty.

Mr. President, in closing, allow me to briefly touch upon the way forward in the Conference on this issue. In the view of the Netherlands, the discussions in subsidiary body 4 demonstrated the need for further exploratory work in the Conference on Disarmament. Therefore, the Netherlands supports the continuation of substantive work on negative security assurances with a view to reaching a common understanding sufficient to launch negotiations in the Conference.

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

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, allow me to thank you for organizing these substantive discussions by ambassadors and experts on the four core issues on top of your efforts to provide new ideas on a possible draft programme of work. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly reiterate Japan's position on negative security assurances, today's topic, not necessarily on an interactive basis.

Mr. President, credible security assurances by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States are an important instrument that contributes to strengthening the global non-proliferation regime, building confidence among States and improving the security environment. We must recall what has been achieved so far, including the adoption of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) and the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, especially actions 7 and 8 of the 2010 action plan.

Japan believes that effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons could serve as an important intermediate step towards our ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Given the ongoing challenges to international peace and security, Japan recognizes that it is in the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty that are in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations to receive unequivocal and legally binding security assurances. It is our belief that negative security assurances, in order to serve as an important intermediary step for all States, need to be examined with due consideration for and an assessment of the security environment. To this end, we think that realistic, practical and focused discussions are required.

Mr. President, we also believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones can contribute to strengthening the international non-proliferation regime. As noted in action 9 of the action plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference, we encourage the establishment of further nuclear-weapon-free zones, where appropriate, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned, and in accordance with the 1999 Guidelines of the Disarmament Commission. By signing and ratifying relevant protocols that contain negative security assurances, nuclear-weapon States would make individual commitments with respect to the status of such zones not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against States that are parties to such protocols. These commitments will contribute to further improving the security environment and strengthening the global non-proliferation regime. In this regard, we welcome the willingness of five nuclear-weapon States to restart consultations with South-East Asian countries on the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, as just stated by the Ambassadors of China and France.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cleobury (United Kingdom): Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you, too, for the successful start to your presidency this week with two such good meetings – the one on Tuesday and this afternoon's discussion. I wanted to take this opportunity to set out the United Kingdom's position on negative security assurances. I will do so by referring to the document where this is set out, our strategic defence and security review of 2015.

The United Kingdom will not use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, signalling that we would not use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against a State that does not have nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom has been in various conflicts over the years where nuclear weapons were never part of the equation.

This assurance does not apply to any State in material breach of those non-proliferation obligations: if a non-nuclear-weapon State is in material breach of the Treaty, there is no assurance that it is not developing or does not hold nuclear weapons.

While there is currently no direct threat to the United Kingdom or its vital interests from States developing weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological capabilities, we reserve the right to review this assurance if the future threat, development or proliferation of these weapons makes it necessary. The United Kingdom does not hold chemical or biological weapons and is treaty-bound not to develop them. Were we

threatened by such weapons, we could come to judge, taking into account all our options, that our nuclear weapons were the most appropriate means of deterring that threat.

Moving to nuclear-weapon-free zones, the United Kingdom supports the principle of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which contribute significantly to bolstering the non-proliferation regime and enhancing regional and international security. By ratifying protocols to treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones, the United Kingdom has given assurances to around 100 countries covering much of the globe, including regions as diverse as Africa, Latin America and the Pacific.

I would like to turn now to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, or the Bangkok Treaty. Mr. President, we wanted to thank you once again for arranging for the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to brief us earlier in the week and to make a statement to the Conference on Disarmament on this issue. It was an important opportunity for him to update us on ASEAN's thinking on the Bangkok Treaty. His visit also gave the Ambassadors of the five permanent members of the Security Council the opportunity to meet with him, as the Ambassadors of China and of France have said, and it was a good opportunity for us, for our countries, to signal our willingness to renew engagement with ASEAN countries on the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty. We were pleased that the Secretary-General agreed to raise this with ASEAN foreign ministers at their forthcoming meeting in late July, with a view to trying to make progress on this issue.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Bauman (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to join my colleagues in thanking you for arranging today's panel discussion on negative security assurances. I would like, if I could, like my United Kingdom colleague, to take a few minutes to restate the position of the United States on this topic.

The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review reaffirmed the global policy on negative security assurances of the United States. The United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that are party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

The United States has repeatedly made clear that it would only consider the employment of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies and partners. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review clarifies illustrative types of non-nuclear attack which could constitute extreme circumstances, offering the example of significant non-nuclear strategic attacks which could include but are not limited to attacks on the United States, allied or partner civilian population or infrastructure and attacks on the United States or allied forces and their command-and-control or warning and attack-assessment capabilities. It does not add to or expand the role of nuclear weapons in the national security policy of the United States.

Given the potential for significant non-nuclear strategic attacks, however, the United States reserves the right to make any adjustment in its negative security assurances that may be warranted by the evolution and proliferation of non-nuclear strategic attack technologies and the ability of the United States to counter such threats. The United States does not support the negotiation of an unconditional and universal legally binding negative security assurances treaty.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States of America for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Bektikusuma (Indonesia): Thank you, Mr. President, and good afternoon, colleagues. Since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption as President of the Conference on Disarmament. It is always a pleasure to see a fellow representative of a State member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Group of 21 presiding over this august body. I wish you every success in performing your duties. Be assured of my delegation's full support for the success of your tenure.

My delegation, through the delegation of Austria, would also like to warmly welcome Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign

Affairs of the Republic of Austria, and thank him for addressing the Conference and his comprehensive elaboration on Austria's commitment and efforts in respect of disarmament. His presence in this chamber reflects the very important nature of the work carried out by the Conference as the international community's single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiation. I wish also to thank you, the three panellists – the Permanent Representative of China, the Permanent Representative of Germany, who has left the Chamber, and Mr. Marc Finaud – for the in-depth presentation on negative security assurances.

Mr. President, achieving total global nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for Indonesia. Pending that achievement, and as a State which has renounced the nuclear weapons option, we would like to emphasize that security assurances should be concluded as a matter of urgency. Negative security assurances have been deemed very important since the negotiations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the 1960s and have been constantly discussed not only under the Treaty but also by other instances of the disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessor, ever since.

In 1966, General Assembly resolution 2153 A (XXI) requested the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to consider urgently the proposal that the nuclear-weapon Powers should give an assurance that they will not use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States without nuclear weapons on their territories. Unfortunately, the response from the nuclear-weapon States, reflected in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), which included several reservations from the four nuclear-weapon States of the Security Council, remains incomplete.

In 1978, the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament asked nuclear-weapon States to "pursue efforts to conclude appropriate, effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". In addition, since 1990 the delegation of Pakistan has regularly introduced resolutions on negative security assurances at the General Assembly calling for negotiations in the Conference on effective international agreements that consider the widespread support for the conclusion of an international convention and giving consideration to any other proposal designed to secure the same objective.

In 2010, the Review Conference of the parties to the Treaty adopted a 64-action action plan of which actions 7, 8 and 9 mentioned negative security assurances. In particular, action 7 calls upon the Conference to immediately begin discussion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, to discuss substantively, without limitation, with a view to elaborating recommendations dealing with all aspects of this issue, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument. In the context of the Conference, an ad hoc committee was set up to discuss negative security assurances, but it did not make any progress. There have not been any efforts since 1999 to reconvene this ad hoc committee, despite requests to do so from many member States.

Turning to nuclear-weapon-free zones, Mr. President, Indonesia believes that these nuclear-weapon-free zones are essential regional efforts in our pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons. Our commitment to strengthening and expanding nuclear-weapon-free zones has never wavered.

Indonesia is of the view that an effective nuclear-weapon-free South-East Asia will provide security and stability that will help create an enabling environment for the welfare and prosperity of the peoples of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Such an environment can be achieved by, for example, providing assurances that the region is free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, we believe that there is a pressing need for ASEAN to expeditiously resolve the outstanding issues on the signing and ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone by nuclear-weapon States.

The signing and ratification by nuclear-weapon States at the earliest are essential, particularly with the ongoing dynamics in the surrounding regions, which have the potential to disrupt the peace and stability of our region. Indonesia welcomes the intentions of the nuclear-weapon States to resume consultations with ASEAN concerning the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. We are convinced that the discussions will contribute to reconciling our different views and positions on the

outstanding issues and finding common ground that will lead to the nuclear-weapon States' early signing and ratification of the Protocol.

Furthermore, we are of the view that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is scheduled to be held next year, will provide us with positive momentum to narrow the gaps between us and ensure the realization of the purpose of the Treaty.

Mr. President, while stressing the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones, Indonesia believes that neither the establishment of such zones alone nor unilateral declarations by States that possess nuclear weapons are sufficient to guarantee security assurances. These zones and declarations are building blocks that may constitute security assurances. However, they cannot serve as a substitute for universal legally binding security assurances that are designed to convince States not to pursue the nuclear weapons option.

To curtail nuclear proliferation, every nuclear-weapon possessor must be willing to provide assurances that it will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against States that do not possess these weapons. It is important that we be given unambiguous, legally binding and universal security assurances by nuclear-weapon States. Indonesia consequently wishes to underline the urgent need for an early agreement on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to assure States that do not possess nuclear weapons against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The President: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his statement and kind words for the President. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

Mr. Sharma (India): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for convening today's session of the Conference on Disarmament on the important theme of negative security assurances. I would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria, Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, for addressing the Conference and sharing his valuable thoughts and ideas in the context of international security and disarmament.

Let me also thank our panellists, Ambassador Li Song, Ambassador Peter Beerwerth and Mr. Marc Finaud of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy for their excellent presentations and laying the ground for today's discussions.

Mr. President, the issue of negative security assurances has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament since its very inception. The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament called upon nuclear-weapon States to take steps to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear-weapon States have a legitimate right to be assured against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

As also mentioned by a number of speakers before me, nuclear weapons pose the gravest danger to humanity and the best assurance against their use or threat of use is their complete elimination. India has been consistent in its support for global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

As part of its doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence, India has espoused a policy of no first use against nuclear-weapon States and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States. We are prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements. It may be recalled that in 2007 India presented a working paper on nuclear disarmament to the Conference on Disarmament. The paper, which is contained in document CD/1816, made a number of proposals, one of which was to undertake negotiation in the Conference of a universal and legally binding instrument on non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. This proposal remains as valid today.

India has supported the resolutions in the General Assembly recommending that the Conference actively continue intensive negotiations on the issue of negative security assurances. As part of the Group of 21, India has supported the conclusion of a universal, unconditional, legally binding instrument on negative security assurances as a matter of priority. The negotiation of such an instrument in the Conference on Disarmament will complement other measures to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and improve the international climate for promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

The discussion of negative security assurances cannot be limited to the context of a single treaty or confined to nuclear-weapon-free zones. The two Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) have not been able to fulfil the expectations of the international community.

India has been actively participating in the work of the Conference to establish an agreed programme of work and negotiate legally binding instruments on the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament, including one on negative security assurances. With this objective in mind, India participated constructively in the work of subsidiary body 4, constituted last year. We regret that the Conference could not adopt the report by consensus. However, non-adoption of the report does not diminish the value of work undertaken by the member States.

India maintains that the Conference on Disarmament is the most appropriate forum for negotiating a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances and stands ready to participate in such a negotiation as soon as the Conference commences negotiation on this matter.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Ms. Myung Eunji (Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, the Republic of Korea welcomes Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria. The Republic of Korea would like to express its gratitude to the President of the Conference on Disarmament and the panellists for leading discussions on negative security assurances, a topic that is one of the core items on the Conference agenda.

We all share the common goal of a nuclear-free world that can guarantee full assurance to everyone of not being threatened or attacked by nuclear weapons. To achieve that goal, negative security assurances are a useful interim tool for further strengthening the non-proliferation regime and contributing to nuclear disarmament. They are especially useful in that providing negative security assurances can reduce the incentives for developing nuclear weapons.

We also recognize the need to address the legitimate security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States. Nevertheless, assurances should be provided only within the context of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which represents a legally binding international obligation not to transfer, manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons. Therefore, full compliance with existing legal obligations should be the condition for implementing negative security assurances.

The Republic of Korea believes that effectively verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zones play an important role not just in promoting non-proliferation but also in enhancing regional and international peace and stability, as such zones can lessen the deployment of nuclear weapons and make the areas that are susceptible to the influence of nuclear weapons smaller. In this regard, we would like to see all relevant protocols, including the Bangkok Treaty, enter into force as early as possible.

The progress in the discussion regarding negative security assurances has long been hindered mostly by conflicting views on whether the existing assurances are sufficient or on how to best clarify and verify some essential elements in the current framework. However, the Conference was able to make substantive progress through the discussions of the working group on the way ahead in 2017 and subsidiary body 4 in 2018.

My delegation hopes that the Conference continues to lead an in-depth and fruitful discussion to seek common ground and bridge the gaps that divide us. We can start where we left off in last year's discussion, where we could gauge our convergences and divergences. This will also lead us to solidify our mutual confidence and trust.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wood (Australia): Thank you, Mr. President. In the interest of some interactive dialogue, I do not actually have a prepared statement, but, firstly, I would like to thank the Austrian Minister for his statement and also you for organizing this panel and colleagues for speaking.

I will not outline Australia's position in detail, because I have done that many times in the Conference on Disarmament before and in the subsidiary body discussions last year. In brief, we are very supportive of negative security assurances – we welcome those that have already been given and would like to see them strengthened. We are part of a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Treaty of Rarotonga, and I think that negative security assurances provide important non-proliferation and disarmament elements that help us with our toolbox.

I found last year in the discussion in subsidiary body 4 that the most useful element was probably the discussion on doctrine and the deepening of our understanding of the differences between the nuclear-weapon States. I know that sometimes this issue is referred to as low-hanging fruit, and it has been on the Conference agenda for a very long time, but I cannot help asking why we have not done something about it. And so I question the idea that it is low-hanging fruit.

I think I agree with the Ambassador of the Netherlands and our Republic of Korea colleague that we are still at the discussion point. We are still at the point of deepening understanding. I really struggle with how to actually build convergence on this issue in the Conference. A number of countries have outlined that they want a legally binding multilateral instrument. They think this is essential. Most Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty nuclear-weapon States have been very clear in outlining their positions, all of which differ slightly. Broadly, however, those States say they already offer negative security assurances with a range of conditions.

I was not actually aware of how Russia's position differed from that of the United Kingdom, France and the United States, so thank you for raising that mark – that is interesting. And then there is sensitivity over the issue of who can actually offer negative security assurances, which has just been raised by our colleague from the Republic of Korea.

What I am left with, then, is that we need more dialogue to understand what it is we are trying to achieve under this agenda item and how best to do it. For example, what would legally binding negative security assurances offer that does not exist now? And is this really the most important focus for us now and the best use of our time? I see the risks as being more between the nuclear-weapon States.

I had not thought about negative security assurances in a risk-reduction context before, so that was interesting to mark. I think that is worth exploring. If you are talking about one instrument being negotiated in the Conference, you have to think about how you deal with the different doctrines of nuclear-weapon States. And is it even possible to have a one-size-fits-all approach?

I then come back to something that Australia often speaks about: transparency on doctrines and transparency on reservations. It is really helpful for non-nuclear-weapon States to understand why countries have reservations, what those reservations actually mean and what is preventing them from withdrawing those reservations or those conditions.

So, those are just a few comments in my reaction to trying to bring positions a little closer together or to understand a bit better where the differences are.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for her statement and her comments and questions for the panel. I now give the floor to three more delegations and then we will get back to the panel. I would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Ukraine.

Mr. Klymenko (Ukraine): Thank you, Mr. President. Since this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, I would like to start by extending my warmest congratulations to you on the assumption of your duties and wishing you every success in this endeavour.

The Ukrainian delegation supports your ambitions to further search for common ground regarding the programme of work and considers your initiative to continue the dialogue on core Conference on Disarmament agenda items to be valuable and necessary as we strive to move towards our common goal of resuming work on negotiating legally binding disarmament instruments. Please be assured, Mr. President, of my delegation's full cooperation with you to advance the objectives of the Conference.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, as for the topic of our discussion today, the issue of negative security assurances is one of the veritable priorities of the international disarmament agenda and is supported by the vast majority of members. Ukraine has always considered negative security assurances to be a practical element of reducing insecurity, which in most cases is considered one of the key motives for the development of nuclear-weapon capabilities. It was against this backdrop that my country acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1994 and consequently received relevant security guarantees in the form of the Budapest Memorandum.

We all know what happened next. We have been repeatedly outspoken on this regrettable issue since 2014. In the light of the ongoing external challenges that Ukraine has been facing, including those outlined in the General Assembly resolution on the problem of militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine) as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov of 17 December 2018, our country proceeds from the understanding that, in order to protect the world from nuclear proliferation, it is worth giving serious consideration to the situation revolving around the violation of the Budapest Memorandum and foreseeing ways of avoiding further infringements of relevant international instruments in the future, which may have a detrimental effect on the willingness of other States to become parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Given the breach of the Budapest Memorandum, which undermines the United Nations-based security system, Ukraine seeks the adoption of an international legally binding agreement that would ultimately replace the above-mentioned document. Such an agreement should provide direct and reliable guarantees of peace and security, up to military support in case of threat to territorial integrity. It should also include provisions on the response procedure by the international community in case of violation by a nuclear State of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of a non-nuclear State. Such an agreement would further dissuade States from acquiring nuclear weapons as well as improve mutual confidence and trust, strengthening the non-proliferation regime and fostering a new form of regional and global security.

Furthermore, Ukraine supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones worldwide. With the establishment of zones free of weapons of mass destruction, we will move closer to the ultimate goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons. The establishment of such a zone in the Middle East should continue to be regarded as a matter of priority.

Mr. President, to conclude, allow me to reiterate Ukraine's belief that in order to move forward in the field of disarmament, including negative security assurances – and I am sure that many delegations in this chamber sincerely wish to do so – we have to, first of all, ensure the compliance of all United Nations Member States with the existing international arms control and non-proliferation instruments, and that compliance has to be confirmed by concrete actions. This, for its part, will consequently facilitate the reappearance of trust and confidence, key pillars of our productive work in the Conference on Disarmament.

Ukraine will continue contributing to genuine endeavours aimed at achieving the goals and objectives of the Conference, a vital element of the rules-based international order, and is looking forward to working closely with willing member States as a reliable and responsible partner.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Ukraine for his statement and his kind words for the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Azarsa (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation would like to thank you for providing us an opportunity for an in-depth discussion of negative security assurances, one of the four core issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation would also like to thank Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, the Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria, for his thoughtful and important statement. Allow me also to extend my gratitude to the distinguished panellists for their informative and thought-provoking remarks.

The topic of discussion of today's plenary meeting is security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, a very pertinent, significant and vital issue that is

rightly one of the four core issues of the Conference. My delegation would like to fully associate itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 21 in the plenary meeting held last week on 19 June 2019.

Dear colleagues, the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki created a human catastrophe of unprecedented dimension and an enormous threat to human security. It is a bitter fact that, as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use or threat of use persists. The only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be contrary to Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, general principles of international law and the rules of international humanitarian law and would constitute one of the most serious crimes of international concern.

Pending the realization of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, there should be, as an interim measure, assurances against the use or threat of use of these inhuman and illegitimate weapons. It is the legitimate right of all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to receive effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and irrevocable legally binding security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances.

Assurances that such weapons will never be used against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty would strengthen the security of such States, which have renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons, and promote the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

After the use of nuclear weapons in 1945, there have been repeated calls for security assurances by the overwhelming majority of the non-nuclear-weapon States in numerous resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. Such calls have also been made in all the review conferences of the parties to the Treaty. The application of provocative and destabilizing policies and measures, such as the improvement of existing nuclear weapons, as well as the development of new types of such weapons, in particular tactical nuclear weapons that increase the likelihood of the use of these weapons, continues to negatively impact the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty, and, regrettably, no substantial progress has been achieved.

Unilateral statements by nuclear-weapon States regarding security assurances are conditional and insufficient and, above all, can justify the use of such weapons by resorting to such vague and undefined concepts as defending the vital interests of a nuclear-weapon State or its allies and partners. Some nuclear-weapon States have even entertained the possibility of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States in their nuclear postures.

The development of new types of easy-to-use nuclear weapons and the allocation of billions of dollars to modernization of nuclear arsenals, the construction of a new facility for the production of nuclear weapons and the naming of non-nuclear-weapon States as targets of such inhuman weapons put non-nuclear-weapon States more than ever under the real threat of the possible use of nuclear weapons.

Some nuclear-weapon States argue that negative security assurances should be granted only in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Iran and many other countries reject this untenable argument because, firstly, the respective protocols to some treaties establishing such zones have not been signed or ratified by one or more nuclear-weapon States. Secondly, the protocols additional to a certain such treaty have been signed and ratified by nuclear-weapon States but with reservations and interpretative declarations contrary to the object and purpose of such instruments. Therefore, in practice, none of the countries of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones has received unconditional and irrevocable legally binding assurances. Thirdly, the prospects for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in some regions, such as the Middle East, are quite unclear due to the persistent refusal of the Israeli regime to accede as a non-nuclear-weapon party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty without any further delay or conditions.

Given the aforesaid facts and observations, in the view of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the full realization of the right of all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty to receive such assurances is of crucial importance and needs to be addressed in all related forums.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Berkat (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Algeria fully endorses the statement of the Group of 21 on negative security assurances. My delegation, which appreciates your method combining thematic discussions and consultations on the programme of work, is pleased to participate in the discussion on negative security assurances and would like to reiterate certain aspects of its position on this matter. At the outset, it should be stressed that the total elimination of nuclear weapons in accordance with article 6 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the only effective assurance against the use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of that goal, the question of negative security assurances, which are an essential component of the security needs of non-nuclear-weapon States, should be given special attention by the international community. This issue was already at the heart of discussions on the Non-Proliferation Treaty at the time of its conclusion 50 years ago, and it was enshrined in the Treaty review process, during which States parties to the Treaty agreed to take further steps to protect non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The issue of negative security assurances has also been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament since it was created. In the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, nuclear-weapon States were called upon to continue their efforts to make appropriate and effective arrangements to provide assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, on 26 September 2013, and the various resolutions that were subsequently adopted show that this issue remains a top international priority. However, it is regrettable that not all the efforts made in the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly have yielded results that meet the expectations of the non-nuclear-weapon States and the legal obligations of the nuclear-weapon States. At the same time, the unsettling rhetoric of nuclear deterrence has steadily increased.

Mr. President, my country believes that it is entirely legitimate for non-nuclear-weapon States to wish to receive credible and effective assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Like many countries, Algeria continues to advocate the conclusion of a universal legally binding instrument on negative security assurances with a view to enhancing the security of non-nuclear-weapon States and further strengthening the non-proliferation regime as a whole. The current international security environment, deterrence policies and the continuing modernization of nuclear arsenals further strengthen our belief in the need to conclude such an instrument. The Conference on Disarmament, by virtue of its mandate, is the appropriate forum to address this issue in the framework of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Mr. President, Algeria, which is part of the nuclear-weapon-free zone established in Africa by the Treaty of Pelindaba, is of the view that the assurances provided for within the framework of such zones do not cover all the regions of the world, in particular regions marked by heightened tensions, such as the Middle East. That is why Algeria reiterates its commitment to the effective implementation of the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference on the elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the region and welcomes the adoption of General Assembly decision 73/546 in this regard.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of Algeria for his statement. I would like now to give the floor to the members of the panel. Ambassador Li Song, you have the floor.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Thank you Mr. President. I have listened attentively to everyone's interventions. I believe, Mr. President, that today's thematic discussion on negative security assurances and your idea of organizing contributions from a few small groups of expert members, and especially the opinions expressed by the various delegations on this topic, further gives us an important basis for the Conference to immediately resume substantive discussions on this important topic. Last year's reports of the subsidiary bodies also serve as an important basis for our future work. I think many opinions have been put on the table during the discussion, including many different ideas

and concerns, and some pending questions that will need to be further explored. I think these are exactly the issues that we need to explore further in the subsequent substantive work of the Conference, so I do not want to respond to them in detail here at this juncture.

I just want to take this opportunity to emphasize one last point, which is that the Conference must make an effort to arrive at a concept of negative security assurances. The concept of negative security assurances is rooted in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and in the important non-proliferation principles and ideas that appear in that instrument. Thus, legal instruments that we undertake to reach in respect of negative security assurances must naturally become an important element in the current international regime under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, thus further strengthening the credibility, universality and effectiveness of that regime. I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of the members of the Conference, and all States, hope that the current non-proliferation regime should not be impacted by any historic elements or by the currently prevailing situation. The negative security assurance instruments that we are committed to achieving here must help strengthen the non-proliferation regime, and at the same time avoid weakening it in any way, shape or form. This is an important understanding that must be followed in our future work. The Chinese delegation, and I myself, are willing to continue to step up our work on this understanding. I believe that the Conference's work on negative security assurances can also make a significant contribution to the current review process of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The President: I thank Ambassador Li Song for his statement. I now give the floor to Mr. Marc Finaud.

Mr. Finaud (Viet Nam) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. In the interests of time and of the beginning of a well-deserved weekend for everyone here, I would like to say very briefly that I have noted two important points raised by the Ambassador of the Netherlands and by Ms. Wood, namely that today's discussions have further demonstrated the need for clarification and continued dialogue. This is obviously not the ideal framework for that, given the formal nature of the Conference and the need that some colleagues feel to reaffirm national positions that are well known to everyone, including myself. That is why the exercise we undertook last year, the holding of informal meetings, should perhaps be continued. In any case, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy is always ready to host such meetings. The other proposal we made last year was to conduct individual studies with each nuclear Power, to clarify some of their positions. As we have seen, the positions mentioned have evolved with time. That, then, is proof that they can change and adapt to new conditions. They are not always consistent with previous positions that may still be found, for instance, in the reservations to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. Perhaps, then, the various positions need to be clarified or updated. We therefore repeat that proposal, which remains on the table.

The President: (*spoke in French*) I thank Mr. Finaud for his contribution and his analysis.

(*spoke in English*)

Are there any other requests for the floor on this or other issues? I give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Thank you very much, Mr. President. It is on another issue.

Today is my last opportunity to address this august body as a special representative of Brazil. It has been an honour and a privilege to represent my country in the Conference on Disarmament in the company of so many accomplished diplomats. I have learned and benefited from all exchanges. I wish to acknowledge the invaluable support of my team at the Mission of Brazil, Minister Pedro Luiz Dalcero and Secretary Eden Clabuchar Martingo, as well as the excellent collaboration with the military adviser, General Alvani Adão da Silva of the Air Force, and his staff.

The Conference is not just a singular body for disarmament negotiations. It is a central venue for discussions on all things related to peace and security. In this very historic chamber, many great things have flourished. However, we have lived through two decades of stalled discussions, which put a heavy burden on the image of the Conference.

Today, we are challenged to resume work of relevance in the context of rapidly changing international security conditions that call for a response from this main body of the United Nations. Let us not squander our efforts or weaken our resolve.

Representing a view from Brazil, I have converged with others in exploring opportunities for advancing relevant work, because the issues we discuss are too important to remain stagnant. Asking for everything is a recipe for nothing. Flexibility and the will to succeed are always key. Evolving strategic technologies, the ever-changing nature of relations among world Powers and the legitimate interest of the international community all need to be factored into our discussions on a permanent and dynamic basis.

I leave you with the sense that we have achieved some very good things together as of late. And in spite of the hard talk and political tensions always present in all things disarmament-related, I maintain a positive view of what might be achievable in the near future if we put our creative minds together.

Hoping our paths cross once again, I remain at the disposal of disarmament colleagues and friends in my new role as the Consul General of Brazil in Mumbai, India, and as Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security.

Thanks to all of you. Goodbye and see you soon.

The President: I would like to thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement. Thank you very much, Ambassador. Let me, on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, express our sincere thanks and appreciation for all your contributions to and active participation in the work of the Conference. You will be missed. And let me express all our best wishes to you and to your family for your future endeavours. Thank you once again.

Now, on behalf of the Conference, I would also like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the members of the panel for their views and their deep understanding of this issue and for their contribution to the work of the Conference. In addition, I would like to thank all the delegates and Ambassadors for contributing to and participating in the very lively and fruitful debate.

I see no other requests for the floor.

Distinguished colleagues, I would like to inform you that the next plenary meeting will take place on Tuesday, 30 July 2019, on agenda item 1 of the Conference: cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. I wish to inform the Conference that it is my intention to invite the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to come and address the Conference.

I thank you very much and wish you a very wonderful vacation for July. We hope that we can work together at the end of July, but in the meantime we also intend to continue to consult individually, bilaterally, with some of the delegations, so that we can move work forward. But we will not violate the legitimate rights of member States to this very sacrosanct month of vacation for the Conference.

I would also like to inform you that the very first draft of the programme of work will be distributed at the end of this meeting. Once again, thank you. Thank you all and see you at the next plenary meeting. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.