

Conference on Disarmament

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 14 February 2020, at 3.15 p.m.

President: Mr. Rachid Belbaki (Algeria)

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The President (*spoke in French*): I call to order the 1530th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Ladies and gentlemen, the objections raised are such that a consensus on the package of documents is not within reach at this stage. I regret that we have not managed to submit and adopt this package proposal, which was the product of a collective effort made by the six Presidents and all of you, with the aim of resuming substantive work, so that this body can fulfil its mandate as the international community's sole multilateral body for disarmament negotiations.

As many representatives have already noted, this proposal has been a good basis for discussion. It may not be perfect, but it is our best attempt to adopt a package of documents. I think all the delegations and their capitals should be allowed more time to think about the content, the merits of the package and the way forward. To this end, and given that this is the last plenary meeting I will be presiding over, I will leave the package of documents in its current form to the Presidents who will come after me for their consideration. I will read out a closing statement from my country. I would like it to be put on the record in the name of the Algerian Mission.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, in my opening statement at the first meeting I outlined the Algerian presidency's approach to the activities of our current session. The ambition behind that approach was to work with you to create a climate of constructive and responsible cooperation, instilling calm and developing trust so as to enable member States to use the keys of success, which they hold in their hand, in order to restore the Conference to its traditional role.

The approach, which focused on fostering a spirit of cooperation between the six Presidents of the current session, aimed to establish a conceptual framework for the programme of work, one that distinguished between its broad outlines and its implementation. That approach, which contained all necessary details, drew on the mechanisms available in the rules of procedure and the established practices of the Conference as well as on the successful experience of decisions ratified by consensus, just as it sought to take account of new proposals and initiatives that could help to move the work of the Conference forward.

The combined efforts of the six Presidents led to the presentation of a package of documents that would have enabled an early resumption of substantive negotiations on the agenda items. The continuing inability of the Conference to adopt a programme of work must not be described as a failure on the part of the members of the Conference or as a surprise to any of us. The Conference has repeatedly witnessed this kind of situation, which has come to constitute the basis for its work. Armed with good intentions and fully aware of the burden of responsibility, duty and trust placed upon us by members, we have sought to contribute to advancing the work of the Conference in a positive, transparent and open way. We have worked to involve all sides, privileging the language of dialogue and consultation, listening to all points of view and working to present a draft programme of work for the attention of member States within the shortest possible time, in order to enable the Conference then to allocate enough time to work on its contents.

We may, perhaps, have come close to achieving that, but the points of contention in the draft, which lie at the heart of the divisions that the Conference has been facing for two decades, cannot be resolved by a simple drafting process. At its core, the issue concerns the positions member States have adopted and the concerns of most of them have about thematic questions and specific priorities. Moreover, despite the flexibility shown and the courageous decisions taken by certain delegations with a view to facilitating the work of the presidency, it was clear that adherence to priorities remained a fundamental obstacle to breaking the stalemate of the Conference.

The draft package, which was presented under the Algerian presidency, has now become an official document of the Conference. It belongs to the Conference and is at your disposal. More specifically, it is at the disposal of future Presidents of the Conference. It

may be possible to make use of it in the future, and should subsequent presidents decide to do so, Algeria will give them its full support.

Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank once again the delegations that supported this initiative of the presidency. We are proud of the confidence those delegations placed in us and in no way do we regret the efforts we made as we followed tortuous and complex paths for no other reason than a sense of responsibility as a member State of the Conference.

At this point, I would like to express my appreciation to the authorities in my own country for the support I have enjoyed as I discharged my duties as President of the Conference. I would also like to thank the members of my delegation and to commend members of the Conference, without exception, for all the efforts they made to reach a consensus. I place great store by the spirit of collective endeavour shown by the six Presidents of this year's session plus the last President of the 2019 session and the first of the 2021 session. In expressing thanks for the recognition I have received, I must also reiterate my gratitude for all the kind words that you have addressed to the six Presidents and to me personally.

Furthermore, I would like to thank all those people who have striven to ensure that our work was able to run smoothly: the officials of the secretariat and the interpreters, who are to be highly commended for all the efforts they have made. I hope, just as we all do, that our efforts might have contributed something, if only a little, to the Conference, which, we trust, will be able to resume its substantive work as soon as possible. Thank you to you all.

(spoke in French)

I give the floor to Ambassador Foradori, the representative of Argentina, in his capacity as the next President of the Conference. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Foradori (Argentina) *(spoke in French)*: Thank you, Mr. President.

(spoke in Spanish)

I will be very brief. First of all, I would like to thank all the delegations for the cooperative spirit that they have shown. I would especially like to thank the President – the Ambassador of Algeria – for all his efforts. We have reached this point thanks to his energy, drive, ability and desire to achieve a consensus. Fortunately, we have managed to change the paradigm. This document is the work not of Algeria or Argentina but of the six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament of this session.

Consequently, this situation is not the end but a continuation, and I urge all of us to consider it as such. In fact, we are going to continue with the consultations on Monday. We are going to schedule the next meeting. We do not know whether it will be on Tuesday or Wednesday, but we intend to continue this process. We are very close. We know that there are problems and drawbacks, but I also think that all the strengths displayed by all the members of this Conference might bring about the positive outcome that we all wish to see. We have a strong desire to work in a cooperative spirit without engaging in any kind of politicization. We believe that it will be for the good of all and that we are here to achieve this common goal.

I am available now to any representatives of member States who wish to undertake consultations. We will also try to step up our interaction with you so that we can reach a final agreement.

I would like to point out once again that this is a collaborative document. This is a document that we have worked on and produced as a team, and I believe that we are very close to reaching an agreement. This is not the end but merely a continuation. Once again, then, I would like to thank the President, all the six Presidents of this session, in addition to the last President of 2019 and the first President of 2021, who are working with us continually, and those who have acted as regional coordinators, whose support has been really invaluable and for which we are also grateful. We also hope that collaboration will continue in those cases where the coordinators are changing on Monday. You can count on the delegation of Argentina to raise any questions or engage in any consultations that you

may wish to undertake. In this manner, we are placing ourselves at your disposal. It is important to understand that we will not be swayed by any kind of political or ideological position. We wish to achieve a common objective and will achieve it for the common good of all States. We believe that we are close to our goal, and, in that regard, you can count on all of us.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Foradori for his address and for his kind words for the presidency and for me. I would also like to assure him once again that we are absolutely ready to work with him and his presidency to continue our work and get as far as possible. The farthest possible is, of course, a consensus. It seems that we have reached the end of our plenary meeting today. Colleagues, before ending, I give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Elsayed (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to begin by commending you on your successful leadership of the Conference on Disarmament over the previous month. I also wish to thank you for the efforts you have made to arrive at a consensus among member States on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that would enable the Conference to restart its work and resume its activities after the stalemate that has been affecting it in recent years.

As we expected, when your country resumed its leadership of this forum after an absence of more than ten years, you have worked outstandingly and submitted constructive and positive proposals, which not only took account of the concerns of all member States but also avoided crossing the red lines set by any State.

Mr. President, Egypt believes that the Conference on Disarmament plays a central role in the disarmament system. It is the only multilateral forum with a clear mandate to negotiate legal instruments in the area of disarmament. It must therefore be revitalized and enabled to carry out its mandate, as stated at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The protracted deadlock in the Conference should not persist and should certainly not prevent us from doing our utmost to achieve substantive progress during the current year.

Mr. President, during the previous plenary meeting we affirmed our full support for your efforts to reach consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work with a view to resuming multilateral disarmament negotiations. Today, we were willing to support the adoption of your proposals by the Conference on Disarmament in the hope that this would constitute an important and valuable step that could be built upon in the current session and so open the way towards the start of negotiations on the four core items on the agenda.

Mr. President, we understand the concerns raised by a number of delegations this morning and we agree that they are well founded. However, we believe that the fleeting opportunity before us today will not soon come back and we call upon all member States to work with future Presidents in a positive spirit in order to move the work of the Conference forward.

Once again, I would like to express my thanks, appreciation and recognition to you, Mr. President, for all the efforts you have made. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Egypt for the kind words he addressed to the presidency and to me, and I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al-Fatlawi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. In my turn, I too would like to thank your delegation and to express my appreciation for the effective, sincere and tireless efforts you made while you held the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, during which you were able to employ all your personal and diplomatic skills. Those efforts culminated in the presentation of the package that, we believe, would unquestionably serve to revitalize the Conference. It would send a clear sign to the international community that achieving the common goals of preserving international peace and security and protecting humankind can be achieved if there is a shared political

will and good faith. Despite the fact that some member States are of the view that the agreement is not at the level of our ambitions, after having waited for it for two decades, in our view it constitutes a step towards revitalizing the Conference and does not detract from its role or its negotiating mandate.

Mr. President, Iraq understands that the Conference does not work in a vacuum but is connected to the security environment and the international and regional situation. The responsibility to adopt a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that responds to the concerns of all member States does not lie with the presidency alone, or with the six Presidents; it is a collective responsibility of all member States.

I must not fail to express my thanks to the six Presidents, in whose sincere and continuing efforts we have complete confidence. In addition, my thanks go to the members of your delegation and to the secretariat. I wish to give all members of the Conference assurances of the commitment of Iraq to constructive cooperation with all States at the present stage in order to achieve what we are all looking to: a comprehensive programme of work for the Conference.

In closing, Mr. President, I wish to reiterate my gratitude and appreciation to you for all your efforts.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency of Algeria and the group of the six States that will occupy the presidency this session.

(*spoke in French*)

I give the floor to the Ambassador of Cuba.

Mr. Pedroso Cuesta (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the enormous efforts that you and your team have made to bring us to this point. We also commend you and your team for the transparent and professional way in which you have undertaken the work of the past four weeks, which has undoubtedly brought us very close to reaching an agreement.

As far as Cuba is concerned, your presidency has been a success because, although we have unfortunately not reached an agreement, it has produced an outcome on which we hope to continue building, above all by exercising our political will. In undertaking that endeavour, we will be supporting the work of the forthcoming presidencies.

Thank you.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Cuba for his statement and for his kind words for the Algerian presidency and for us. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): Thank you very much indeed, Mr. President. I will not detain you very much longer, but I wanted to put on record my delegation's sincere thanks to you and to your team for the extraordinary efforts that you have made over the four weeks of your presidency. You said that you would try to foster a constructive atmosphere, and I think you have succeeded in doing that. The way you have taken on board the priorities of all delegations, the sensitivities involved and the transparent way that you have worked have been a lesson to us all, I think. And the fact that you have done this in such close coordination with the five other Presidents of the 2020 session is absolutely the way this body should be working. I want to commend you very sincerely, then, for all the work that you and your team have done.

I also want to commend the statement of our colleague, the Ambassador of Argentina. He has shown the spirit of positivity and optimism that we all need. And I agree wholeheartedly with his intention to carry on working on this in his presidency to come.

The draft package that is before us is an ingenious one. It includes all the different interests and priorities of all delegations. It is, yes, comprehensive and balanced, so I would support the incoming presidency in pushing forward with it. We need to prove that we all mean what we say when we say that this vital forum should get back to work. There is

nothing here that prevents that goal; in fact, this is the way that we will achieve that goal. So let us all work together in the spirit of flexibility and compromise and determination to get this done, not to waste any more time. And in the next week, under Argentina's leadership, with the other Presidents of the session behind him, let us get this adopted and get this forum back to work. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to express its heartfelt congratulations to you on your successful accomplishment of the first rotating presidency of the Conference on Disarmament this year. With the advocacy and efforts carried out by you and the six Ambassadors acting as Presidents at this session, we nearly achieved a programme of work for this year's session, and although we are still one step away from achieving this programme of work, as you said, we have no reason to be too disappointed with today's result. We have every reason to express our sincere congratulations and gratitude for the efforts made by you and the other Ambassadors who will serve as President.

Having heard the statements made just now by you and the Ambassador of Argentina, I agree with what several of our colleagues have just said. Their statements reflect the fact that in this meeting room, in this afternoon's meeting, there is still an atmosphere of trust and confidence. Therefore, we look forward in the near future, under the coordination of the Ambassador of Argentina, to seeing the Conference's member States reach a programme of work on the basis of today's draft, and subsequently start substantive work as soon as possible. Once again, we would like to express our congratulations and appreciation. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Bauman (United States of America): On the last day of your presidency, let me express the thanks of my delegation, Mr. President, for your leadership and guidance over these past four weeks. We appreciate your hard work and that of your team, which have brought us to the brink of being able to adopt these decisions establishing a programme of work and a path forward. We would also like to express our gratitude for the work of the six Presidents of the 2020 session, the last President of the 2019 session and the first President of the 2021 session and all their coordination efforts. Again, thanks also to all those who volunteered to serve as coordinators under this package, including the Ambassador of Switzerland, who had agreed to hold open, informal, open-ended consultations focused on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. We encourage discussion, engagement and review of how the Conference conducts its business. In our view, there is a full range of issues that could be addressed, and we look forward to having these necessary discussions here in this body.

Regarding the five subsidiary bodies that were addressed in the package presented to us for discussion today, my delegation recalls the productive discussions held in 2018. In terms of the specific focus in this package on legally binding instruments and additional measures and options for negotiations, my delegation recalls its well-known and widely shared position that the one issue ripe for negotiations is a ban on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In fact, there are a number of other proposals proffered in this body for negotiation on various agenda items that we cannot support for a number of reasons. In our work, though, as we continue efforts here in this body, we should remain focused on the value of transparency and confidence-building measures and flexibility and cooperation. Given some of my delegation's views regarding this package, which was not perfect and not perfectly aligned with our positions, my delegation displayed significant levels of flexibility and cooperation in the interest of achieving progress in this body. And we thank all those others who joined us in the spirit of flexibility and cooperation. Again, Mr. President, thank you for all your hard work and your efforts. We look forward to continuing the discussion.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United States of America for her statement and for her kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the Ambassador of France.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation – also for the record of the Conference on Disarmament – would like to take the floor to thank you wholeheartedly for all your efforts. You have presided over the Conference with panache. That is a term you will understand easily, that needs no translation, and you will pass that panache onto the Argentine presidency, which I am sure will know what to do with it. I would also like to commend the six Presidents, who have accomplished a great feat of transparency with a sincere attitude. Thank you very much.

You said in your closing address that you had no regrets and you were absolutely right not to have any. I think, as do the other delegations that took the floor before me, that the package of documents submitted takes into account – and here I use the present tense, not the past – all the concerns of the members of our Conference. This package of documents protects everybody; it is balanced and in the strategic interest of all. We are sure of that. That is why we are prepared to join the consensus on this package of documents. I did not say so this morning because there was no need, but obviously my delegation remains ready to support the consensus on this intelligent proposal.

We believe that a step forward is being taken, as the Ambassador of Argentina said, and the next step is for everyone to be aware that it is time to take responsibility. It is time to act in a way that is consistent with the ideas that are regularly expressed in this chamber about the need for us to get back to work to make the world a safer and more stable place; acting in such a way means doing as you advise others to do. For our part, we are prepared to do that, as we always have, and we remain ready to engage as soon as possible in consultations with the Argentine presidency, using these documents as a point of departure. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of France for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. September (South Africa): Thank you, Mr. President. On behalf of the South Africa delegation, I would like to commend you for your sterling efforts in trying to get the Conference on Disarmament back on track. I would like to thank you for the professional and transparent way in which you and your staff conducted yourselves. I would also like to express our appreciation to the delegations of the five other States members of the Conference that will hold the presidencies in 2020, in addition to the last delegation to hold the presidency in 2019 and the first to hold it in 2021; the approach was groundbreaking and much appreciated.

South Africa is committed to a functioning Conference on Disarmament. It is therefore regrettable that even though we have a body that is mandated to negotiate multilateral disarmament instruments, it has not discharged its basic mandate for almost a quarter of a century.

Mr. President, as member States gather here in the Conference on Disarmament, bound by our collective commitment to advance substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, my delegation will continue with its efforts to seek a meaningful mandate to deliver on the promise and the expectation of the Conference to deliver on its responsibility as the single multilateral negotiating forum. While the primary responsibility for taking the necessary steps for the elimination of nuclear weapons lies with nuclear-weapon States, all of us must play our part to achieve our common goal. It is therefore incumbent upon all States to engage without further delay in an accelerated process of negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all aspects under strict and effective international control, with a meaningful mandate of a programme of work, which we look forward to reaching agreement on under the leadership of the Ambassador of Argentina, as a point of departure. Finally, Mr. President, your efforts in nudging the Conference in that direction are greatly appreciated, and we are hopeful that they will lay a basis to restore the credibility of and trust in the Conference. I thank you.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency and now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Ms. Díaz Mendoza (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. On behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we would like to express our gratitude for the efforts that you and your team have made and for your leadership in conducting our work. We appreciate the work undertaken by the six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament and we congratulate them on the progress made in pursuit of results and their attempts to bring the Conference out of the impasse at which it finds itself. The importance of the smooth functioning of the informal coordination mechanism comprised of the six Presidents of this body has been demonstrated.

My delegation appreciates the package proposal presented by you on behalf of the six Presidents. We appreciate the broad, transparent and inclusive consultations that the Algerian presidency has carried out in drafting the documents. We understand the concerns expressed this morning, which show that we are in a complex international situation. Venezuela would like to restate its belief that multilateralism, diplomacy and understanding are the key factors in achieving consensus.

Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for her statement and for her kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): Thank you very much, Mr. President. We deeply appreciate your leadership, your hard work and your and your team's sincere efforts. We also thank you for the extensive consultations that you undertook in order to find a solution acceptable to all members of the Conference on Disarmament. Given the realities, the proposals that you put forward represented a potential way for the Conference to resume substantive work. But, as you said earlier today, the difficulties that we are faced with cannot be overcome by smart drafting exercises. We could not agree more. They require, instead, approaches and efforts that are realistic and take on board the views of all member States.

Mr. President, going forward, we must remain mindful of these realities that exist but, at the same time, address the legitimate concerns of all delegations. We very much hope that as we move forward, all of us draw the right lessons from this exercise. I wish to place on record, once again, our deep appreciation and commend you for all the work that you did. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. Ogasawara (Japan): Japan appreciates and thanks you for the tireless and constructive efforts that you, together with the five other Presidents of the 2020 session, the last President of the 2019 session and the first President of the 2021 session, have made. Japan supported and continues to support the draft package proposed by you on behalf of the year's six Presidents, which, we believe, could have enabled and can enable us to engage in meaningful substantive discussions. Under the coming Argentinian presidency, Japan will continue to be as supportive as possible of the joint efforts of the year's six Presidents and the two other Presidents in order for the Conference on Disarmament to resume, as soon as possible, its substantive discussions and thematic discussions based upon a programme of work. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Rosandry (Indonesia): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation would like to echo the acknowledgement made by other delegations in commending you for your able presidency, which has put the Conference on Disarmament back to substantive work since the beginning of this session.

Mr. President, we are close to agreeing on a package, and my delegation concurred that the package could be a good basis for our work. We do, however, understand that there are still concerns and different views regarding the package and that further discussion is needed. In this regard, Indonesia remains committed to continue engaging constructively in the future deliberations that will be undertaken in the Conference, the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament issues. At the same time, we once again underline the need for constructive dialogues based on confidence and trust among member States. I thank you once again, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Indonesia for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Aala (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to add my voice to that of colleagues who spoke earlier and express the gratitude of the Syrian Arab Republic to you, Mr. Ambassador, and to your team for the professionalism and transparency that have marked your efforts over the four weeks of the Algerian presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

We had hoped that what you described as the good work would successfully lead us to the best of outcomes here in this room. In other words, we were hoping that the formation of the subsidiary bodies would contribute to enabling us to hold a useful thematic discussion on the programme of work of the Conference and allow us to reach a point where the Conference could resume negotiations.

Of course, we understand that the documents you presented to the Conference were not perfect as far as many member States are concerned, although there was a conviction that the approach you adopted was the most realistic and flexible in the light of the current international situation. However, it was also clear that an additional step needs to be taken in order to arrive at the hoped-for agreement, which would take account of all the concerns present in this room.

In the coming stage, we look forward to moving ahead along the path opened by the Algerian presidency and to building on the spirit of leadership and professionalism with which that presidency conducted our work towards an agreement that – as I mentioned earlier – takes account of the concerns of all member States and follows the compass of our work as set down in the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We remain ready to cooperate with you and your colleagues in future presidencies to reach this goal in the coming stage. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and for his kind words to the presidency and to the Algerian delegation.

(*spoke in French*)

I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President. We would like to convey our deep appreciation and gratitude to you and to your team for the tireless efforts that you have made for the past weeks. And we are pleased that we have worked with you for the past four weeks in your challenging journey towards a programme of work acceptable to all delegations. As you said, you have provided the Conference on Disarmament with the results of your professional and persevering endeavours, which will certainly serve as a model for future deliberations in the Conference on Disarmament. Your contribution to the work of the Conference is and will remain important, as this is not the end of our discussions. My delegation will continue its constructive engagement with the Conference presidency and with other delegations to reach consensus on a programme of work.

We have no doubt, Mr. President, that the world will be safe only if we get rid of nuclear weapons. That is why we stress that the Conference must be allowed to deliver on its critical mandate – that is, negotiating a legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Martínez Ruiz (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, my delegation would like to express its sincere appreciation for the intensive and serious efforts that you have made during your presidency. There is no doubt that you and your entire team have demonstrated responsibility, commitment and transparency in the way that you have carried out your work. We also appreciate the close and efficient collaboration between the six presidencies of the 2020 session, which, as the Ambassador of Argentina has said, is sure to continue. We hope that this will become a good practice for the future that will greatly benefit the Conference on Disarmament.

Mexico is aware of the difficult international environment and of the need to strengthen any forum for rapprochement that helps to enhance understanding. In the circumstances, we hope that the fruitful collaboration that has taken place during this session, and the need to avoid a repetition of the situations that we experienced in 2019, will contribute to the revitalization of the Conference.

My delegation has been clear in its view that the necessary political will is required to take the Conference out of the bog in which it has been mired for over two decades. However, we believe that this will actually be achieved when the Conference's negotiating mandate is recognized. Mexico will continue to work with the Argentine presidency and the other presidencies in order to ensure that the Conference functions in the manner envisaged by our predecessors, who adopted the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency and now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Masmejean (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to reiterate what the delegations that took the floor before me said and express our gratitude for the way you have accomplished your task. The perseverance with which you tried to get the Conference on Disarmament past the obstacles in its way has been exemplary. Algeria holds the presidency of the Conference only once every 11 years, but its presidency seems to be consistently marked by major progress. The approach you suggested we follow is not only sensible – it is probably the only one possible today, broadly speaking. We welcome the fact that the next country to preside over the Conference, Argentina, plans to follow in your footsteps. It can count on our full support. Thanks are also due to the group of six Presidents, whose close cooperation this year is an encouraging development. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Switzerland for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

Mr. Sharma (India): Thank you, Mr. President. Like others, I have taken the floor to put on record our sincere appreciation for all your efforts, along with those of the six Presidents of 2020, the last President of the 2019 session and the first President of the 2021 session. You have played an important role in bringing us close to consensus. All of us in this room are grateful to you and the members of your delegation for all the hard work carried out by your team.

When India announced its decision to join the consensus this morning, it was with the objective of our getting back to substantive work. We retain the hope of reaching consensus in the coming days under the presidency of Argentina and assure the delegation of Argentina, the group of the year's six Presidents – of which you, Mr. President, will remain an important part – and the first and last Presidents of 2021 and 2019, respectively, of our continued support and cooperation. I thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I would like to echo the words of thanks already expressed in this chamber. I believe and hope that the other delegates will agree with me that, through you and your team, Algeria, in accordance with rule 29 of the rules of procedure, has provided a model for a professional, creative and responsible approach to fulfilling the obligations of the President and demonstrated professional skill in leading a forum as challenging as the Conference on Disarmament.

It is a pity that today we did not manage to take the last small step towards approving the package you submitted. However, we believe it is important for it to remain on the table and to be further considered as a basis for our future attempts to reach consensus on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

I would like to assure the Argentine presidency that the Russian delegation is ready to work closely with it to achieve our common goal of beginning negotiations on the agenda items here at the Conference. I am prepared to give the same assurances to the other Presidents. I hope that, based on the proposal of the Algerian presidency and joint efforts, we will soon be able to achieve the desired result.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Güneş (Turkey): Thank you very much indeed, Mr. President. I have taken the floor briefly to commend you and your team for your tireless efforts to revitalize this invaluable forum. We know and believe that you have spared no effort to get this forum back to work. We all also know how difficult a target that is even within the existing structure and membership status of the Conference on Disarmament. Obviously, it has not been possible in more than twenty years to start substantive work due to such difficulties. Nevertheless, we believe that we should not give up on attempts to reach this goal. In that regard, continuity is important. Therefore, we are happy to hear from the incoming President, the Ambassador of Argentina, that his presidency will follow up on the efforts that have been made so far. We also wish the delegation of Argentina success. Mr. President, once more, we would like to thank you, your team and the secretariat for your outstanding work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Kabbaj (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to express our disappointment about our inability during this first month to reach common ground on the adoption of a programme of work to overcome the stalemate that is paralysing the Conference on Disarmament, despite the efforts of the six Presidents for the session. This failure is, unfortunately, no surprise given the difficulty of reconciling diametrically opposed viewpoints on highly complex issues requiring in-depth dialogue and the time needed to smooth over disagreements. Therefore, my delegation would like to emphasize the idea that these matters of contention will require perfectly clear communication between all the delegations of member States if the contribution of each one is to facilitate a consensus resting on solid foundations; due weight should be given to the implementation of the programme of work, not only its negotiation.

While offering its best wishes to the next presidencies, my delegation would like to confirm that it is fully ready to participate with a constructive mindset in the upcoming discussions, which we hope will contribute to relaunching the work of the Conference, enabling it to fulfil its mandate to negotiate legal instruments on disarmament. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Morocco for his statement. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Mushayavanhu (Zimbabwe): I also wish to join others in thanking you, Mr. President, and your team for your dedication, professionalism and inclusive approach in your sterling efforts to find consensus on a programme of work. I also wish to thank the six Presidents of the 2020 session for their efforts and for working in unity. Your efforts, Mr. President, which went beyond the four-week tenure, as you started in December, to build on this work will not have been in vain, because we have heard from the Argentine presidency that it will continue to build on your work. My delegation, as one of delegations in the so-called P6 plus 2 – the six delegations holding the presidency in 2020, the first to hold the presidency in 2021 and the last to hold it in 2019 – is in favour of the package and will continue to support the ongoing efforts to arrive at a consensus on it. I thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Zimbabwe for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Ecuador.

Mr. Izquierdo Miño (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. Allow me to express our thanks to you for your tireless efforts over these past few weeks.

Ecuador supports the proposal, which we believe reflects the delicate balance made possible by the flexibility that many countries, including our own, have shown and our shared recognition of the urgent need to initiate dialogue and find agreements that will reduce international tensions. We hope that the consultations due to be carried out under the next presidency will enable the proposal to be adopted, which will not only signal a change of direction after 22 years of deadlock but will also send out a positive message of renewed political will in the field of disarmament.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate that you and the other five Presidents of this session can count on our unqualified commitment and engagement.

Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Ecuador for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I give the floor again to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Elsayed (Egypt): Thank you again, Mr. President, and please allow me, before we end this meeting, to give you a round of applause and to have it be on the record of the formal session, as you deserve it. It is good to end on a positive note. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): I will depart from the rules and personally thank the representative of Egypt for this very touching and also very encouraging proposal. Thank you very much.

Distinguished colleagues, before ending I would like to thank you all for your support and comments and for your collegiality. Allow me also to thank the conference officers, the secretariat and the interpreters for all the support we have received over the past four weeks.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

In closing, I would like to return to the moment I entered this room for the first time, when I was attracted by its singular character and struck by the cheerful faces that I encountered here. This aroused strong feelings that became clear to me as the days of my presidency of this Conference passed and my delegation enjoyed a welcome the likes of which is rarely seen. Thank you to you all.

(*spoke in French*)

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.