

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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**Final record of the one thousand five hundred and thirty-fourth plenary meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 25 February 2020, at 10.15 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Carlos Mario Foradori ..... (Argentina)

**The President:** I call to order the 1534th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. Today we will continue the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament. I have nine speakers on my list. Allow me to suspend this meeting to welcome our first distinguished guest.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** This meeting is resumed. Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Gordan Grlić Radman, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Mr. Grlić Radman (Croatia):** Thank you very much, Ambassador Foradori. Allow me to congratulate you on assuming the important role of President and to thank the previous presidencies for their achievements. I am pleased to have the opportunity to present the views of Croatia at today's high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament. The efforts of this Conference remain crucial in dealing with the most significant global security and disarmament issues.

Croatia forged its independence in the early 1990s, in a cruel war which shaped our security architecture. Due to that experience, we appreciate the value of peace and security much more than many other countries who have not faced the disaster of war in their recent history. Since then, Croatia has committed to preserving a stable security environment in its neighbourhood and beyond and to promoting multilateralism and a rules-based international order, especially in the sphere of disarmament. The effective fulfilment of all regional and international agreements in this area is of the utmost importance. Unfortunately, we see that disarmament goals face a difficult challenge in today's multilateral arena, and we need to increase our efforts to find sustainable solutions.

The Conference remains the most relevant negotiating body on disarmament. We regret that the Conference has been unable to start substantive work for a long time, and we would welcome all initiatives that could reverse this situation, since we strongly believe that the Conference could enable the coherent implementation of relevant international treaties and conventions for the benefit of all.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be the only comprehensive instrument aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament while preserving the right of States to pursue the civil use of nuclear energy. On its fiftieth anniversary, we must encourage the universalization of this Treaty. Croatia strongly supports all three pillars of the NPT and continuously promotes the implementation of the 2010 Review Conference action plan. Ahead of the 2020 Review Conference, it is particularly important to meet all obligations and commitments under the Treaty, in particular those under article VI, with a view to ensuring the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Croatia condemns à la carte approaches to the implementation of the NPT, especially in pursuit of an arms race in the context of a zero-sum game. We call for de-escalation and restraint, in particular in Central and Southern Asia, the Korean Peninsula and the Middle East. The NPT is not a perfect instrument, but without it the world would have been much less stable and secure. We should spare no effort to ensure its viability in the future.

Mr. President, we face a worrying trend in that some States have announced that they will relax restrictions on the use of anti-personnel landmines. Allow me to stress that Croatia is an engaged and trusted partner that shares its knowledge of demining operations with many countries around the world. Croatian experts carry out difficult demining activities responsibly, often risking their lives, while trying to eliminate traces of mines for the safety of future generations. We call upon States to align themselves with the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and to implement them without delay.

Croatia advocates the empowerment of women, who play an important role in security and disarmament; particularly in post-war reconstruction, confidence-building and reconciliation. We have adopted two national action plans with a view to implementing

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, which marks its twentieth anniversary this year.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to point out that Croatia – already an observer State to the Conference on Disarmament – is ready to become a member of this body. We support all initiatives that are favourable to the admission of new members to the Conference and, in particular, proposals to appoint a special coordinator to lead consultations on the expansion of the membership.

Croatia, both in its national capacity and as the current holder of the presidency of the European Union, remains fully engaged in constructive dialogue to strengthen the international disarmament machinery and global security. I thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Grlić Radman for his statement. Allow me to suspend the meeting for a moment in order to escort His Excellency from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** This meeting is resumed. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Mr. Lavrov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Distinguished colleagues, thank you for this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament. This year we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the creation of which, as you know, was made possible by victory in the Second World War. It was that great victory that laid the foundations of a modern world order based on the rule of international law. The system of multilateral agreements on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, a system that has guaranteed peace and international security for decades, was built on that solid foundation. The unique disarmament machinery of the United Nations, of which the Conference on Disarmament is a key component, was established. The most important international instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a fundamental treaty whose entry into force fifty years ago we will celebrate on 5 March, were put together here, in Geneva.

We also remember, unfortunately, that nearly seventy-five years ago, when it dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States, the only State to have used these most terrible weapons, triggered a nuclear arms race whose consequences are still being felt. At the same time, it should be emphasized that in the latter half of the twentieth century, much was done cooperatively to guarantee strategic stability and prevent the recurrence of such tragedies.

In the twenty-first century, regrettably, there has been a build-up of dangerous and destructive tendencies caused by the resurgence of the aggressive foreign policy egocentrism of one State. Washington's withdrawal in 2002 from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, a treaty that was fundamental to strategic stability, dealt a severe blow to the entire arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. More recently, the desire to dominate everywhere and to impose its "rules" on the world community, to the detriment of the interests of other States and international law, has become the prime mover of United States policy. All multilateral agreements and mechanisms that prevent such domination are declared obsolete and ineffective.

Last year, the United States ripped up the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Almost immediately thereafter, flight tests of previously banned American systems began. The stated intention is to deploy them in various parts of the world. In announcing that it will be compelled to act in similar fashion, Russia has taken the most responsible approach, making a unilateral commitment not to deploy Russian ground-based intermediate- and shorter-range missiles in those areas of the world until such time as the corresponding American-made weapons appear there. We invite the United States and its allies to declare a similar moratorium. There have been attempts to sow suspicion of our initiative. Let me remind you, however, that we proposed the joint development of a possible regime for the verification of such a mutual moratorium as a means of allaying suspicion. The deaf ear

turned to this honest proposal confirms only that the real reasons for the destruction of the Treaty have nothing to do with Russia's position and actions.

The plans of the United States, France and the North Atlantic Alliance in general to put weapons in space are taking on an increasingly real form. We are convinced that it is not too late to come up with generally acceptable measures that can prevent armed confrontation in outer space. The only constructive proposal in this regard, which was put before the Conference by Russia and China, is still the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects. The draft Treaty is comprehensive and open for full-scale negotiation. While a treaty is taking form, political commitments to refrain from being the first to place weapons in space can play a stabilizing role. This initiative is steadily winning more and more supporters.

The uncertainty regarding the fate of the New START is a matter of concern. Last year, from this rostrum, I told you why we think it is important to preserve it. A renewal of the New START would be a reasonable means of preventing further erosion of strategic stability, avoiding a complete collapse of the mechanisms for the control and limitation of nuclear weapons and gaining time for the discussion of approaches to the control of new weapons and military technologies. Russian President Vladimir Putin therefore proposed to the United States that the New START be renewed without any preconditions. We are awaiting a response.

We note with alarm that, in new American policy guidelines, the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons has been lowered significantly. Remarkably, that change is taking place against the backdrop of the refusal – the official refusal, I wish to emphasize – of the United States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as the continued deployment of American nuclear weapons on the territory of some of its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the ongoing practice of so-called joint nuclear operations. The Americans have even gone so far as to conduct exercises involving the simulated use of nuclear weapons against targets on Russian territory. The Europeans are also being drawn into these exercises.

In the interest of relieving artificially created tensions and preserving opportunities for further strategic dialogue, we proposed at least to confirm – or, better still, to strengthen – the Gorbachev and Reagan credo that there can be no winners in nuclear war and that such a war must never be fought. We believe that in the current situation, such a statement would send a positive signal to the entire international community. For a year and a half now, however, Washington has not responded to this proposal, either.

We look forward to constructive work by all interested States at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be held in New York in late April. I will not anticipate events. I will note only the main thing: in the current difficult circumstances, it is important for the outcome of the Review Conference to be an unconditional strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, regardless of whether a final document is adopted. The Treaty is self-sufficing – its provisions have been tested over time, and amending them or interpreting them arbitrarily in the current circumstances could not but do harm.

In the context of the NPT review cycle, the first Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held in November 2019, was an important and positive development. Russia actively contributed to the convening of the Conference. The main outcome was the beginning of an open, inclusive dialogue on finding a solution to this long-standing problem.

At one time, the nuclear deal with Iran was a major non-proliferation success. Five years ago, the world let out a sigh of relief with the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a plan designed to settle the Iranian nuclear issue and unanimously endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 2231 (2015). The Plan was an example of how to effectively address a crisis that nearly turned into a “hot” conflict. A breakthrough was made when the parties involved showed a genuine readiness to listen to each other and take each other's interests into account. Today, however, we are witnessing the collapse of this unique achievement of multilateral diplomacy as a result of the renunciation by the

United States of its international legal obligations under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the inability of European colleagues, for all their efforts, to do their part under the so-called nuclear deal. Iran had simply no choice other than to respond, but in so doing it took advantage of the perfectly legitimate means provided in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, suspending purely voluntary limitations, while continuing, to this day, to comply with all its legal obligations under both the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the country's safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Joint Commission of the Parties to the Plan of Action is due to meet tomorrow in Vienna, and that meeting will naturally provide an opportunity, albeit not one that is a sure thing, to put an end to the escalation before it is too late.

The profound crisis continues to spread to all components of the United Nations disarmament machinery. Everywhere, moves away from substantive dialogue are made and discussions are politicized. What the West has done to turn once quite successful and professional multilateral disarmament structures into instruments with which to exert pressure on "undesirable" States is discouraging. At the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, for example, our colleagues from the West succeeded in their push for a completely illegitimate decision to give the Organisation's technical secretariat a mandate to assign blame, in direct violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and with complete disregard for the prerogatives of the United Nations Security Council. Similar steps are being taken in connection with the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, where work on a legally binding, universally acceptable multilateral verification regime is being blocked. Instead of that work, we are seeing attempts to use the United Nations Secretariat to cover up the non-transparent, bilateral relations on biological security between the United States and partners of interest to it.

In 2019, for the first time, the Disarmament Commission did not hold a session, as the American authorities did not issue visas to the head and other members of the Russian delegation. As a result of the destructive behaviour of the delegation of the United States, it was not possible to agree on a substantive report on the annual work of the Conference on Disarmament. We are also seeing attempts by our American colleagues to impart an ideological flavour to the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly.

All this leads to the fragmentation of the international community and thus to a turn away from real international security problems. We call on our American colleagues to return to the normal path of respectful inter-State dialogue and cooperation, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of the United Nations Headquarters Agreement on entry into the territory of the United States.

At this session of the Conference on Disarmament, there have been some encouraging developments: under the Algerian presidency, the six delegations that will hold the presidency this year have re-established contact. We welcome this development and the resumption of efforts to adopt a programme of work. The possibility of re-establishing subsidiary bodies with exploratory mandates is being considered. Such a step would undoubtedly be useful, on the understanding, of course, that it should not be a substitute for progress towards the main goal – the early commencement of negotiations.

All of us must demonstrate political will in our efforts to reach universally acceptable outcomes. To achieve consensus on starting negotiations on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, we call once again for the serious consideration of the Russian initiative on developing in the Conference on Disarmament an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. Strengthening the international legal framework for combating terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction, the threat of which is very real, is in the interest of all States, with no exception. Negotiations at the Conference could be revived on this unifying basis.

We also call for reflection on how to put an end to the deterioration of the international arms control architecture. The need to revitalize efforts in this area is reflected in the General Assembly resolution entitled "Strengthening and developing the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements", which was adopted by 174 votes to none, with 5 abstentions. The collective political will enshrined in this resolution must now be translated into the language of practical action. Russia is ready

to engage in such work. It is also open to working with all members of the international community in a manner underpinned by the principles of equality and consensus-building through a balance of interests.

It was precisely this multilateral cooperation in solving global problems that the founding fathers of the United Nations had hoped for. The permanent members of the Security Council have a special unifying role to play by drawing on the Charter of the United Nations to formulate updated proposals for global stability that should demonstrate, at this critical juncture, their particular responsibility for international peace and security.

As you know, Russian President Vladimir Putin invited his colleagues to hold a summit of the five permanent members of the Security Council. Such a summit would naturally be a starting point for crucial decisions in the interest of the entire international community. The reaction to the suggestion was encouraging. We are going to work to ensure that it becomes a reality.

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

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** This meeting is resumed. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Mr. Ahmad** (United Kingdom): Thank you, Mr. President, and good morning. May I first congratulate you, Mr. President, on your appointment and assure you of the continued cooperation and support of the United Kingdom.

This year is an important one for arms control. The fiftieth anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its forthcoming Review Conference are important moments to reflect on what we have achieved together through this Treaty. Much has changed since 1970, but the core principles of the Treaty's three pillars have endured. We believe it has been and continues to be a great success. It has severely curtailed the spread of nuclear weapons and it continues to provide the only credible framework for reducing the number of stockpiled weapons and for achieving complete nuclear disarmament. Moreover, it has enabled many States across the world to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, not just for electricity generation – which we believe is crucial for achieving carbon neutrality and protecting the planet from the worst impacts of climate change – but also for medical, agricultural, environmental and other uses. These achievements during the Treaty's first half century are encouraging, but it is clear there is much more still to do.

States such as Iran and North Korea continue to pose proliferation concerns. These must be addressed, which is why the United Kingdom is working intensively with partners to persuade Iran to return to compliance with the landmark nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Furthermore, despite the dismantlement of huge arsenals of warheads, I recognize that some States feel the pace of nuclear disarmament is still slower than many would like to see.

The United Kingdom position on this issue is one of pragmatism. We remain committed to the multilateral, step-by-step approach to disarmament, as the security situation allows, and we have a strong track-record on disarmament. We have reduced our warhead stockpile to the minimum level consistent with the maintenance of a credible deterrent. We observe a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing and the production of fissile material and for over 20 years our nuclear weapons have been de-targeted. We also offer the assurance that the United Kingdom will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the NPT that is in compliance with its non-proliferation obligations. This has all been possible thanks to the framework of the NPT, which we believe remains essential to a safe, prosperous and peaceful world.

Against this background and given the value it attaches to the Treaty, the United Kingdom is working hard for a successful Review Conference. We will of course submit a national report on our implementation of the Treaty since the last Review Conference. We have already made the draft report public. We continue to play a leading role in nuclear disarmament verification. This is a complex area, but developing effective measures for verifying that nuclear disarmament has occurred will be vital for achieving our goal of a world without nuclear weapons. And as the Chair of the dialogue process between the five permanent members of the Security Council (P5), we have enhanced transparency and dialogue between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, and with civil society. Under the leadership of the United Kingdom, the P5 States have intensified their talks.

On 12 and 13 February 2020, the United Kingdom hosted a conference of the P5 States in London. Discussions covered all three pillars of the NPT and included improving transparency and P5 cooperation on a range of initiatives. The P5 States spoke in depth about disarmament initiatives, including our nuclear doctrines, risk reduction and a glossary of nuclear terms. In keeping with our focus on transparency, the conference included a day for civil society and think tanks to engage directly and to discuss these important issues with the officials of P5 States. We are grateful to China, France, Russia and the United States of America for their continued engagement with this process.

The United Kingdom hopes that all NPT States parties approach the coming milestones with a shared determination to build on what we have achieved together and to reinforce the NPT as a central pillar of the rules-based international system. There are three areas in particular that require our attention.

The first is disarmament. We must all recognize that the Conference on Disarmament has been blocked for far too long. Last year, our presidency proposed to break the deadlock by establishing new subsidiary bodies to deepen understanding and eventually prepare the ground for negotiating mandates. We believe this proposal could still form the basis of a programme of work in the near future. We hope that the package you put forward, Mr. President, can be adopted later this week. In the meantime, we remain committed to the step-by-step approach to multilateral disarmament. That is why we continue to call for a universal membership of the NPT, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in this Conference. The United Kingdom is committed and ready to start negotiating such a treaty. As a sign of our commitment, we have observed a voluntary moratorium on our production of fissile material for over 20 years and we call on all nuclear-possessor States that have not already done so to do the same.

The second area that requires our attention is to define responsible behaviours in space, to avoid miscalculations and mitigate threats. Threats to our space systems are increasing on and from the Earth, as well as in space. Nations have placed weapons in space and are developing ever more powerful ones on the ground. We must build trust and transparency between spacefaring nations to reduce the risk of misunderstandings, miscalculations and accidents. We want to work with all nations to begin establishing an international consensus on responsible space behaviours and have reached out in capitals with an invitation to engage in this work.

Finally, here in the Chamber where our predecessors negotiated the Chemical Weapons Convention, the third priority for our work must be to rid the world of these abhorrent weapons once and for all. In recent years, we have seen direct challenges to the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons: they have been used to kill and maim men, women and children in the United Kingdom, in Iraq, in Malaysia and – repeatedly and with devastating and tragic effect – in Syria. Last November, at the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, two new families of Novichok agents were added to the Schedules of the Convention in response to the chemical weapons attack that took place in the beautiful town of Salisbury, United Kingdom in 2018. We welcomed this positive action and the clear message it sent: the international community will not tolerate the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances. This year, States parties must prioritize an appropriate response to the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; a report

that will attribute responsibility for chemical weapons attacks in Syria. We must continue to uphold and strengthen our conventions and instruments to ensure that they remain both relevant and effective in the face of new threats.

Mr. President, to conclude, the United Kingdom remains a strong supporter of the NPT and is committed to multilateral nuclear disarmament. We are working hard to achieve a successful outcome at the Review Conference and we will continue to strive for greater transparency, including through the dialogue process between the P5 States. Mr. President, let me again assure you of my delegation's continued support. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon for his statement. Allow me to suspend the meeting for a moment in order to escort His Excellency from the Chamber and to welcome our next guest.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** This meeting is resumed. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Nikolaos-Georgios Dendias, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Mr. Dendias (Greece):** Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success in your endeavours. It is an honour for me to address this Conference, which during its tenure has produced important multilateral treaties that continue to guide the global community through the uncharted waters of the post-cold war geopolitical environment.

Mr. President, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are key components of strategic stability under our rules-based international system. Greece is committed to a treaty-based, legally binding, viable and functional arms control edifice which is cooperative in nature, consistent with the principles of international law and able to provide security assurances to all States parties and to address asymmetries and imbalances. To this end, the verifiable transparency of modern military capabilities, taking into account both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of military developments, will bolster security and stability. Given that in the past, the Conference has produced tangible results in formulating mutually reinforcing agreements, it is high time that its deliberations recommence in the form of an honest, pragmatic and inclusive dialogue with the aim of addressing traditional and new challenges, such as space security and cybersecurity. We have to take into consideration, firstly, the impact of emerging technologies in weapons system capabilities; and secondly, the ethical, legal and political challenges they constitute. I would like to note the importance of maintaining human control over the use of force, since accountability cannot be attributed to machines.

Today, more than ever, the preservation and universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its three pillars are at the core of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. Addressing the NPT triptych must be at the centre of our deliberations at the tenth Review Conference, scheduled to take place later this year. It is only through this balanced and holistic approach that we will gain the momentum that will guide us towards our common objective of a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, in today's increasingly turbulent world, we stress the need to renew multilateral efforts and to revitalize multilateral negotiating bodies, in particular the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference must once again fulfil its obligations to the international community. Since there are no quick fixes, we remain steadfast in the belief that the way towards complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament is a step-by-step approach. An appropriate first step would be the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty, while the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would contribute to international peace and security. Greece calls upon all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The complementary role of the fissile material cut-off treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-



Test-Ban Treaty can only add impetus to the NPT and bolster the double helix of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. President, Greece is the longest-standing observer State that has formally expressed an interest in joining the Conference on Disarmament. Thus, allow me now to turn to an issue which has great importance for us. I am referring to the question of enlargement, as foreseen in rule 2 of the Conference's rules of procedure, which states that "The membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals." From a national perspective, given our contribution to the establishment and preservation of peace and our constructive engagement in all disarmament forums, we see no legitimate reason or moral justification for prolonging this limbo. At a time when global challenges require collective solutions through global partnerships, it is an anachronism that the single disarmament negotiating forum does not evolve accordingly to meet the demands of the post-cold war international system. In the same spirit, it is equally outdated to hold enlargement hostage to bilateral issues with absolutely no relevance to the subject matter of the Conference.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the world is facing multiple global security challenges. We are of the firm opinion that the Conference cannot afford to remain in an indefinite negotiating deadlock and should finally begin substantive work, through the adoption of a programme of work. If this is not possible, the Conference should restart deliberations in the format of subsidiary bodies, which should aim to build convergence on all agenda issues. Greece stands ready, as a responsible member of the international community and in a manner commensurate with its responsibilities, to contribute to ending the deadlock. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Dendias for his statement. Allow me to suspend the meeting briefly in order to escort His Excellency from the Chamber and to welcome our next guest.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** This meeting is resumed. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, Her Excellency Ms. Asako Omi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Ms. Omi (Japan):** Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to express my gratitude to Ms. Valovaya, Secretary-General of the Conference, and her team, for supporting the Conference's work.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Achieving a world free of nuclear weapons is now the shared goal of the international community. As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan is fully aware of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons. This is why it is our solemn responsibility to lead international efforts towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, we face a severe international security environment. There are various approaches towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons and different views on how to best advance nuclear disarmament in a concrete and practical manner. Last year, Japan submitted a draft resolution to the General Assembly which was adopted with the support of 160 countries. The resolution encourages Member States to take immediate and united action, while engaging in future-oriented dialogue on nuclear disarmament. It reaffirms the responsibility of all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to remain committed to the full and steady implementation of all aspects of the Treaty, including article VI.

While we are fully aware of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, it is nevertheless necessary to address real security threats. With this resolution, Japan underlined the importance of promoting realistic and practical measures to be undertaken in cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. Japan is confident that this resolution offers a solid basis to achieve substantive progress on nuclear disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament is the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament that brings together key stakeholders, including all nuclear-weapon-possessing countries. As members of such an essential body, it is our shared responsibility to achieve tangible results. However, the Conference has been in a stalemate for more than two decades. The Conference should be a venue where member States are willing to understand divergent views and to compromise while seeking common ground. Building upon previous negotiations, we need to prioritize substantive discussions on agenda items according to their degree of maturity. From this perspective, Japan reiterates the importance of the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

In addition to the Conference's traditional agenda items, it is essential to discuss emerging technologies, as underlined in the Agenda for Disarmament of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It is urgent for the Conference to resume substantive work in order to address current needs and challenges. Discussions on the working methods are important in order to revitalize the work of the Conference. Japan highly appreciates the consecutive efforts of the previous and current Presidents – Ambassador Belbaki of Algeria and Ambassador Foradori of Argentina – and the other Presidents of this session to reach consensus on the adoption of a programme of work, including the establishment of subsidiary bodies. We encourage the adoption of this programme of work so that the Conference can resume substantive discussions and fulfil its mandate at the earliest possible date. Japan will continue to support the efforts of the President and the other presidencies of this session.

Mr. President, 2020 also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT. Maintaining and strengthening the Treaty – the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime – improves international security. Through the resolution submitted to the General Assembly, Japan seeks a meaningful outcome to the 2020 NPT Review Conference. It will continue to make concrete proposals towards a successful outcome, in close cooperation with members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), on the basis of NPDI Joint Ministerial Statement issued on 23 November 2019 in Nagoya, Japan. And, building on the outcomes of the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament, Japan intends to organize a track 1.5 meeting next month, whose outcome will be presented at the Review Conference.

In parallel to nuclear disarmament, we should work together on nuclear non-proliferation. Japan continues to support the United States-North Korea process. Japan reaffirms its strong commitment to the goal of achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of North Korean weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We call on all member States to fully implement relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President, last but not least, I would like to stress that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education contributes to the realization of a world without nuclear weapons. Education is a valuable tool to foster understanding of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and of potential nuclear risks. Education nurtures the critical thinking skills needed to bring us closer to our common goal. It is critical to engage the younger generation, the leaders of the future, while integrating a gender perspective into our work. Thank you for your attention.

**The President:** Thank you, Excellency, for your statement. Allow me to suspend the meeting for a moment in order to escort Ms. Omi from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** This meeting is resumed. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Cornel Feruță, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Mr. Feruță (Romania):** Thank you very much. Mr. President, Madam Secretary-General, Excellencies and distinguished delegates, I am pleased and honoured to come before you with a strong message of support for the work of this unique forum in the field

of disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Foradori, on assuming the important role of President of the Conference on Disarmament, and to wish you every success.

While my country fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the European Union on 21 January, I would like to highlight a few aspects of particular importance for my country. It is our fundamental belief that the Conference remains a crucial multilateral negotiating forum. It has a unique place in the framework of multilateral bodies dealing with arms control, non-proliferation, disarmament and all related issues, with an undeniably important role for peace and international security. It is regrettable that the Conference is still unable to start real work and genuine negotiations. For too long now, we have confined ourselves to expressing concern at the Conference's inability to overcome its differences and resume substantive work. The Conference has the potential to become, once again, a major source of solutions to the challenges and concerns facing the international community. It is up to us to realize this potential and Romania stands ready to play its part. I am here today to reaffirm that Romania strongly supports efforts to overcome the stalemate in the Conference and to advance the multilateral disarmament agenda. In this context, allow me to thank the six Presidents of the 2020 session for the revised package aimed at broadening areas of convergence, building on the work done so far and enabling the resumption of substantive work. Romania is ready, with an open mind, flexibility and political will, to support any practical proposals that may achieve consensus, as we want to be part of the solution. To achieve tangible results and to revive the Conference, it is important to achieve a convergence of opinions. We need to engage more politically and to show more determination in addressing our differences.

As a country which highly values the notion of peace through diplomacy, Romania has consistently advocated for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control as essential pillars of the international security architecture. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the international community should applaud the Treaty's remarkable success. It has stood the test of time remarkably well and has made an almost unparalleled contribution to making our world a safer place. This work must continue. That is why we consider that the 2020 NPT Review Conference represents a major opportunity for States to renew and intensify their commitment to the NPT as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We should all strive to further strengthen the NPT framework and contribute with practical, effective and future-oriented actions to the 2020 Review Conference. Together, we should be able to manage properly the end of the current review cycle, acknowledging areas where the Treaty has been implemented successfully. In short, a successful Review Conference requires us to take stock, honestly, of the progress made and to use this evaluation as the basis for tangible follow-up steps.

Romania is ready and willing to contribute to the advancement of disarmament in all its aspects. We remain committed to upholding and preserving the integrity of the NPT. We call on all parties to show responsibility and to work together towards the goal of achieving the universality of the Treaty and to enhance its implementation across all three pillars, which are equally important and mutually reinforcing. When we encounter a disagreement on the pace of the implementation of the Treaty's provisions, we must focus on the manner of addressing the challenges and not on changing the machinery. The Treaty offers the best route towards nuclear disarmament, with no shortcuts in the process, and we remain committed to it. We consider that tangible progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament and in strengthening international arms control and non-proliferation regimes can be achieved only by taking into account the prevailing security environment. In the end, the outcome of the 2020 review process will depend on our collective effort to strengthen the authority of the NPT, a treaty which so far has delivered on its promises.

Mr. President, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference calls for concrete action in the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including in the Geneva disarmament community. For an irreversible nuclear disarmament process, one key issue is the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a fissile material cut-off treaty. On several occasions, this delegation has

stated its position that the commencement of negotiations on this treaty is the next logical step for advancing nuclear disarmament and preventing proliferation. We are also convinced that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would be a further step towards a safer and more peaceful world. It is our duty and responsibility to work together to ensure that this issue remains high on the international political agenda. We continue to stand behind this initiative.

The complex circumstances that have arisen from the challenging security climate require creative and constructive approaches. It is against this background that Romania welcomed and fully supported the “Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament” initiative of the United States. Only an approach based on a realistic analysis of our strategic environment, avoiding idealistic expectations that undermine the credibility of the NPT, can help us improve conditions in the global security environment and make further progress towards nuclear disarmament. Given the current nuclear threats and challenges to the non-proliferation regime, it is our responsibility to strengthen the rules-based international system by seeking multilateral solutions that will enable us to achieve a more stable global security environment.

Mr. President, let me conclude by expressing my conviction that it is indeed high time for the Conference to reassert its unique role for a safer and more peaceful world. Today, the most essential issue is to maintain the relevance of the Conference. We all need to assume our responsibilities, creating an atmosphere of compromise and flexibility to enable the resumption of substantive work. It is up to us to act in order to preserve and relaunch the Conference’s role, to show much needed political will and to foster mutual understanding. Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** Thank you, Excellency, for your statement. Allow me now to suspend this meeting for a moment in order to escort Mr. Feruță from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** This meeting is resumed. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Erki Kodar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Mr. Kodar (Estonia):** Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, let me congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You can count on my delegation’s full support. I would also like to extend my best wishes to other Presidents of the 2020 session and commend them for the cooperative spirit that they have shown this year.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, the international security environment has been deteriorating over recent years and the rules- and treaty-based international security order has started to erode. It is of serious concern that some States have disregarded long-standing core principles of international law and violated their international obligations. In this uncertain situation, there is an urgent need to collectively respond to global and regional security challenges and make efforts to uphold and strengthen the existing multilateral security architecture.

In January, Estonia was elected as a member of the Security Council for the first time. Our priorities in the Security Council include standing up for international law, applying common rules and agreements, countering aggression and promoting human rights. We will emphasize the connection between international security and the protection of human rights and will work towards conflict prevention. In commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations this year, it is important to remember that commonly agreed international rules and effective and inclusive global institutions, within and beyond the United Nations system, are essential to ensure peace, security, human rights, prosperity and sustainable development.

As we approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we must do our utmost to ensure its successful outcome. Since its entry into force 50 years ago, the Treaty has been a cornerstone of global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear

energy. It is crucial to reinforce the Treaty's viability and further strengthen its role as a major multilateral instrument of international security. Estonia shares the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons and continues to advocate for a progressive approach to be pursued in a realistic and responsible way.

To this end, Estonia supports the immediate commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We recall the report presented by the high-level FMCT expert preparatory group, in which an Estonian expert actively participated. We hope that the Conference will take the opportunity to build on the valuable outcome of the work undertaken by the group.

In this context, I would like to voice our strong wish to take part in such future negotiations, since we believe that matters of global importance must be addressed by bodies with universal representation that include all sovereign States wishing to be part of them. The Conference has a central role in negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties, according to its mandate. We emphasize that since 2001, Estonia has requested to participate fully and equally as a member State in the work of the Conference. We support the idea of appointing a special coordinator to lead substantive consultations and lay out possible scenarios on the expansion issue for the consideration of Conference members. Estonia deeply regrets that the request for observer status of its fellow European Union member State, Cyprus, was rejected at this year's opening session.

Mr. President, the repeated use of chemical weapons in recent years has gravely undermined the universal prohibition of the use of such weapons. It is vital to maintain and further advance the global norm of prohibiting chemical weapons and enhance the effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Estonia has full confidence in the technical secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the independent, impartial and professional work of its investigative missions. We attach great importance to the decision taken in 2018 at the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention to improve the Organization's capacity to identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons use and to develop a universal attribution mechanism. We welcome the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team and commend the technical secretariat for the progress made to date. We look forward to the issuance of the Team's first report, which will be a first step towards identifying those responsible for chemical weapons use in Syria. Furthermore, Estonia supports the efforts conducted within the framework of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

We note with concern that the proliferation of ballistic missiles, especially those capable of delivering nuclear weapons, remains a serious challenge. In this regard, we believe that the Missile Technology Control Regime and The Hague Code of Conduct play an important role in preventing missile proliferation. We believe that Estonia becoming a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime would strengthen both the Regime and international non-proliferation efforts. We strongly advocate the membership of all European Union member States in the Regime, since they all meet the highest standards and criteria established therein.

The entry into the force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is yet another challenge. We support all international efforts towards this end and urge all States, particularly the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

Lasting peace in the Korean Peninsula can only be achieved through peaceful means. The repeated ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are in violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. We call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocations, take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and return to compliance with its international obligations. Until the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has taken these actions, all countries should strictly enforce existing sanctions.

We would also like to call for maximum restraint in conflict escalation and for regional stability in the Middle East. Estonia continues to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the long-term mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency to verify and monitor the nuclear-related commitments of Iran. We call on Iran to continue to

strictly abide by all its nuclear-related commitments and to return without delay to full compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Mr. President, Estonia considers that cybersecurity is a crucial issue in the context of international peace and security and that new threats require new international consensus. International cooperation in cybersecurity has become particularly relevant for States in order to prevent and mitigate malicious activities in cyberspace. Estonia has been a leading advocate of building a strategic framework for conflict prevention and stability in cyberspace and we welcome the opportunity to further advance global understanding of this framework in United Nations forums. Estonia is participating in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security for the fifth consecutive time and is honoured to have a delegation currently attending the meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts here in Geneva. Over the years, Groups of Governmental Experts have reached consensus on a number of recommendations which the General Assembly has repeatedly endorsed. Cybersecurity, awareness-raising about norms of responsible State behaviour, the application of international law, regional confidence-building measures and capacity-building in the cyber domain are also priorities for Estonia on the Security Council.

Estonia, too, recognizes the need to maintain a safe, secure and sustainable outer space. Preventing an arms race in outer space and preventing outer space from becoming another area of conflict are essential for strengthening international security and stability. While not excluding the future negotiation of a legally binding norm that is comprehensive, effective and verifiable, we believe that nations should first agree on voluntary principles of responsible behaviour in outer space.

Mr. President, many countries approached this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament in the hope of reinvigorating substantive work towards concrete negotiations. We support a pragmatic approach that avoids long procedural discussions and establishes a schedule for the Conference's activities, as many member States have suggested. This is vital to ensuring that the Conference remains the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body. In this regard, we regret that it was not possible to adopt the package of decisions put forward during the Algerian presidency, despite the President's strong efforts to reach consensus. We truly hope that there will be enough political will to find consensus on the revised package during your presidency, Mr. President.

To conclude, Estonia is determined to contribute to strengthening the implementation of international law. It remains fully committed to the rules- and treaty-based multilateral system; to the effective implementation of non-proliferation and arms control instruments; and to international efforts to revitalize multilateral negotiating bodies, particularly the Conference on Disarmament. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Kodar for his statement. Allow me to suspend this meeting for a moment in order to escort His Excellency from the Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** This meeting is resumed. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Mohsen Baharvand, Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Mr. Baharvand** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President.

*(spoke in Arabic)*

In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful.

*(spoke in English)*

Mr. President, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament.

*(spoke in Spanish)*

First, allow me to thank you, Ambassador, for your work in the Conference.

*(spoke in English)*

I would also like to commend the tireless and professional efforts of the presidency of Algeria, the first of the Conference's 2020 session.

This year is a critical one for the disarmament community, as we approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a staunch advocate of nuclear disarmament and a believer in multilateralism, urges all parties to demonstrate good faith in order to steer the Conference out of its long stalemate. That will only be possible if we all live up to our commitments to current and future generations to free our planet of nuclear weapons, by focusing on the Conference's core mandate. The commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament is an important task that the Conference needs to undertake. We think that the Conference has a good opportunity – and an essential one, given the advent of the 2020 NPT Review Conference – to launch negotiations on nuclear disarmament as an integral part of its programme of work. We should avoid politicizing the Conference and respect its rules of procedure.

We attach great importance to the effective functioning of the Conference, but we do not see any linkage between its long stalemate and its methods of work. In fact, the Conference's ground-breaking achievements were made possible by the same rules of procedure and methods of work. We all know that the underlying cause of the acute stalemate is a lack of political will on the part of those who, against the overwhelming will of the international community, have no desire or motivation to take forward nuclear disarmament. We believe that the Conference needs to allocate its time and energy to the most immediate concerns, which are nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances, among other substantive core issues. We stand ready to work with you, Mr. President, and with other delegations to have a fruitful outcome to the 2020 session.

The Conference and its predecessors have made major contributions to the cause of international peace and security by taking key steps towards a world free from the threat of weapons of mass destruction. The Conference is credited with establishing critical treaties prohibiting chemical and biological weapons, containing the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and constraining nuclear test explosions. However, it has remained deadlocked over its programme of work for more than two decades. The Conference is badly paralyzed and is unable to serve its crucial mandate. My delegation urges all members to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work to commence negotiations on substantial elements for a legally binding instrument on core issues, without further delay. It is the responsibility of all members to observe and uphold the Conference's position, role and mandate as the single international negotiating forum devoted to disarmament and to oppose any attempts to turn this august body into a deliberative body.

The deterioration of international security, the rise in military expenditure to \$1.8 trillion, the demise of disarmament and arms control treaties, the erosion of multilateralism and the insatiable search for global dominance are all highly alarming and dangerous. Nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential threat to humanity. A new nuclear arms race is accelerating. Non-compliance with nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments has seriously undermined faith and trust in the capacity and credibility of the NPT to realize one of its main goals, which is nuclear disarmament.

The recent deployment of a new low-yield nuclear warhead by the United States administration has not only increased the role of nuclear weapons in United States military doctrine, in violation of its NPT commitments, but has also made the use of nuclear weapons as possible as that of conventional weapons, so that nuclear war is more likely. The United States has also recently conducted a military drill to see how this new nuclear weapon might be used against Russia. Such provocative actions must be condemned. This policy is being pursued at the expense of collective global security and in breach of the obligations of the United States under the NPT.

There exists a sense of common concern and frustration, shared by almost all member States, about the future of multilateralism. The disrespect that the United States

shows for the collective will and shared concerns of the international community presents the gravest threat not only to the objective of nuclear disarmament and the future of the NPT, but also violates the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. This policy is part of a systematic attempt to undermine the value, significance and efficacy of multilateralism; to decapitate multilateral institutions, to undercut international agreements, and to invalidate the oldest principle of international law, which is *pacta sunt servanda*.

Mr. President, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was crafted to alleviate any concern, real or concocted, over the nature of the peaceful nuclear programme of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran has shown the utmost restraint and has continued to implement the Plan. The country's impeccable performance record has been confirmed more than 17 times by the International Atomic Energy Agency. This not only indicates the peaceful nature of the nuclear programme of Iran, but also proves our long-held view that the whole misadventure concerning our nuclear programme was created as a pretext to pressurize our nation for other purposes. The withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, in breach of its commitments and in stark violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), represents a living example of a vicious attack against multilateralism. Not only does the United States continue to systematically violate its commitments under the Security Council resolution, but it also brazenly calls on others to do the same. It is bizarre that, at the same time, the United States criticizes Iran for non-compliance with the JCPOA. We cannot understand the logic of this diplomacy.

Under these circumstances, the remedial measures taken by Iran are in full conformity with the JCPOA, particularly paragraphs 26 and 36, and are reversible, should the other JCPOA participants take a meaningful decision to live up to their commitments. Otherwise, Iran will be unable to shoulder the heavy weight of sustaining the most important achievement of multilateral diplomacy of the past two decades. Needless to say, Iran continues to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to voluntarily implement the Additional Protocol. Transparency is the hallmark of the peaceful nuclear programme of Iran.

There is no alternative to multilateral cooperation and collective interaction to address our common security challenges. We have to shield multilateralism and multilateral institutions against the danger of unilateralism. This is the only way to protect the rule of international law and ensure that it flourishes.

Before I conclude, Mr. President, I have heard from my colleagues that some delegations, including those of Poland and the United Kingdom, made comments about the peaceful nuclear programme of Iran. I do not think that there is a word to explain how we feel about this. If they are concerned about this issue, I would recommend that they implement the JCPOA, rather than moving away from it.

Furthermore, I saw a report that the honourable Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia made some political comments in this Conference about my country and the war in Yemen. I wanted to remind His Excellency that this is not the political organ to discuss and resolve bilateral issues. The situation in Yemen was not created by Iran, but by Saudi Arabia itself. It is not Iran that is attacking Yemen, killing Yemeni children, starving people and enslaving more than 10 million women and girls. We have always given the opinion that we are in favour of a peaceful solution to the Yemeni conflict. But you have waged this war and you continue to kill people, so it is your problem: please do not blame others, in this Conference, for something that is your own fault. You must realize that we are in the twenty-first century. It is not the 1950s or the 1960s: you cannot treat other nations however you like. If you attack them, they will fight back. That is not the fault of Iran: it is your fault.

With that, I thank you, Mr. President. I wish you every success. We will try our best to break the deadlock in this Conference, so that it can continue its work. Thank you.

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

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*



**The President:** This meeting is resumed. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Faisal bin Muhamad, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor.

**Mr. Muhamad (Malaysia):** Mr. President, at the outset, as this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the post of the President of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of my Government's support for the presidency and for all constructive initiatives to enable the Conference to deliver its mandate.

Mr. President, 2020 is a significant year which marks important milestones for various instruments and organizations. For instance, this Conference enters its forty-first year of existence; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) marks the fiftieth anniversary of its entry into force and the twenty-fifth anniversary of its indefinite extension; and the United Nations itself celebrates 75 years since its establishment. These milestones are important, as they reflect the international community's commitment to multilateralism and the rules-based international order.

My country's membership of the Conference is underpinned by our unwavering commitment to international peace and security, to global disarmament and non-proliferation and, in particular, to the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Malaysia continues to attach great importance to this Conference, which at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, was recognized as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. This Conference has achieved many significant outcomes since its inception in 1979. Together with its predecessors, it has a proud history of having been central in the formulation of many of the instruments that form the basis of today's disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Nonetheless, in recent decades the Conference has been criticized and dismissed. It has not been able to adopt an appropriate programme of work, nor has it been able to make progress on its substantive mandate to negotiate disarmament and arms control instruments.

Over the years, this Conference has moved towards a pragmatic approach to advance its work. In 2018, subsidiary bodies were established, while in 2019 – a particularly difficult year – consensus remained elusive and only thematic discussions were possible. This year, the Conference started with good momentum under the presidency of Algeria in collaboration with the other presidencies of the 2020 session. We witnessed the Conference come close to adopting the package of the programme of work, which we view as being comprehensive and elegant. We commend your positive approach, Mr. President, of continuing and intensifying the work carried out by your predecessor in seeking a programme of work that accommodates the different interests and priorities of all delegations. We note that the revised draft package was circulated yesterday. We will study it carefully and share our views with you in due course. My delegation believes that for the Conference to move forward, all member States should demonstrate strong political will and a willingness to compromise and to exercise the utmost flexibility. Please be assured of my delegation's readiness to do so.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons represents a serious threat to humanity. It was in the context of its long-standing and principled commitment to the common goal of a world without nuclear weapons that Malaysia signed the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and is striving towards its ratification.

In preparation for the upcoming 2020 NPT Review Conference, States parties to that Treaty need to ensure that they remain committed to its success. We believe that while the Treaty will continue regardless of the outcomes of the Review Conference, we need to rise to the international community's expectations of success, and not to lower such expectations. As the Chair of Main Committee I, Malaysia will continue to work closely with NPT States parties and other stakeholders to create the necessary momentum and to enhance the prospect of a successful Review Conference.

Let us be resolute in fulfilling our collective obligations, honouring our commitments and striving for progress through cooperative multilateralism in this

Conference. My delegation remains ready to work with you, Mr. President, and other member States, to achieve positive outcomes to the 2020 session and to the future sessions of the Conference. We welcome every opportunity to advance the multilateral disarmament agenda. I thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Muhamad for his statement. I apologize for the technical problem with the audio, which we are trying to resolve as soon as possible. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Andreano Erwin, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and other international organizations in Geneva. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Erwin (Indonesia):** Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Rest assured that Indonesia will continue to lend its support to the Conference. I also wish to thank the Algerian presidency for its efforts in developing a package including a programme of work and to express our hope that the presidency of Argentina will be a fruitful one.

For Indonesia, and I believe for the other non-nuclear-weapon States that have been faithfully committed to the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), developments in the sphere of disarmament are worrying. We are witnessing the re-emergence of a nuclear arms race, of the use of other weapons of mass destruction in conflicts and, in the last two decades, of non-traditional security issues. We also see the collapse of the global disarmament architecture; increased defence spending on nuclear modernization; a widening trust deficit between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States; and the dismissal of global concern about the indiscriminate humanitarian impact of a nuclear weapon explosion.

As the only multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference should serve to address all arms control and disarmament challenges. However, it is no secret that the Conference's work has been gridlocked for two and a half decades. The question of the Conference's relevance and its contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security inevitably has been raised.

On that note, Mr. President, allow me to emphasize the following points. First, we need to reinforce the global nuclear disarmament architecture. Nuclear disarmament is and should be the highest priority. The Conference should immediately negotiate and eventually conclude a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. We should pursue negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time. Indonesia sees the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as an adequate instrument to attain those objectives.

Second, negative security assurances are an important building block in a multilateral process to reduce nuclear weapons towards "global zero". Indonesia and other committed non-nuclear-weapon States have a legitimate right to an early agreement on effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, irrevocable and legally binding security assurances. Despite previous commitments and numerous initiatives, no single legally binding instrument has emerged that would guarantee the attainment of negative security assurances. In that context, we call on nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their promises.

Third, Indonesia is highly committed to the development of a balanced fissile material cut-off treaty which addresses the concerns of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. Such a treaty should be non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable, in accordance with the mandate set forth in document CD/1299. The scope of the treaty should not be confined to future production.

Finally, we urge the member States of the Conference to strengthen their collective efforts to address the potential threats of the weaponization of outer space and of cyberspace. The exploration and use of outer space and celestial bodies should be for

peaceful purposes only and should benefit all States. We urge the Conference to commence substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with the aim of achieving a consensus-based, legally binding multilateral instrument on this matter.

I understand that in order to move forward, the Conference needs to have a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. Therefore, it is important that the programme of work is finalized so that the Conference can perform its real task and fulfil its mandates. For that purpose, I call on members to engage constructively and to exercise flexibility. As we head towards the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT, it is time for us to renew our political will, to strengthen trust among us and to make full use of this multilateral forum to implement the global disarmament agenda. Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Erwin for his statement. I am sorry for the inconvenience caused by this technical problem. Now, I give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States, who wishes to exercise her right of reply.

**Ms. Plath** (United States of America): Mr. President, thank you for giving me the floor to exercise my right of reply. First, to the misleading and inflammatory statement from the Russian Federation, which again accepts no responsibility for the demise of agreements such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and deflects the blame for the woes of the world entirely onto a single nation. If only the world were that simple.

Mr. President, before Russia accuses anyone of implementing an aggressive, egocentric foreign policy, perhaps they should ask their neighbour Ukraine what they think of the self-proclaimed non-aggressive foreign policy of Russia. Let me be clear, regardless of whether it is the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or the New START, the United States will not be the sole compliant party to any treaty. I will not rehash in this room the numerous and egregious Russian violations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty but I will say, and please heed this, that the United States will not enter into, extend or renew any treaty whose compliance is not fully verifiable and equally respected by all parties. For treaties and arms control agreements to meet any threshold of credibility, there must be full compliance by all parties. Furthermore, speaking of an evolving security environment in which Russia and China continue to develop and build up their nuclear arsenals, no treaty would effectively address these growing security challenges and it would be short-sighted and irresponsible at best if a new security treaty did not include Russia and China. The United States will not disadvantage its own national security for the benefit of Russia and China.

**The President:** I apologize for the interruption, but we have been unable to fix the technical problem with the audio, which is also causing problems for the interpreters. I would suggest, if you would be so kind, that you postpone your statement until the next meeting. I also have other speakers on my list, but under these circumstances it is going to be difficult to hear them.

**Ms. Plath** (United States of America): I understand and would certainly prefer that everyone is able to hear my words. I would ask, however, that I am able to exercise my right of reply at the very beginning of the next meeting.

**The President:** Very well, you may deliver your statement at the beginning of the next meeting. Thank you. That concludes our business for this morning. The next meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place tomorrow, Wednesday, 26 February 2020, at 9.45 a.m. We will see the continuation of the high-level segment and hear the statements of distinguished guests from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Slovenia and South Africa. We will also see to it that colleagues who could not be heard in full today are able to repeat their statements, so that all voices are heard in the proper way. Thank you for your patience. The meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.*