

Conference on Disarmament

English

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

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President: Mr. Germán Edmundo Proffen..... (Argentina)

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The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Good morning, everyone. I call to order the 1539th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Ladies and gentlemen, today's plenary meeting will be devoted to the gender perspective in disarmament. After introductory remarks by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, we will hear a presentation on the issue by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. I will then give the delegations the floor, first on this issue and then on any other matter. Before we continue, however, the secretariat has asked to briefly address some health-related issues.

Ms. Day (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament): Dear delegates, as you are aware, the World Health Organization has declared the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. While the emphasis of this decision is on global measures to control the outbreak, individuals can contribute by following the advice to think globally and act locally.

All attendees of the Conference on Disarmament are therefore urged to follow guidance as follows: to strictly not attend meetings, including this one, if you are unwell, have a fever, a cough or other respiratory symptoms; to try to leave empty seats between you and other participants if the room allows it; to contact the United Nations Medical Service immediately by telephone at 022 917 2520 or the United Nations Security Control Centre at 022 917 2900 or 112 from any internal phone if you are unwell and have been to an at-risk location for coronavirus in the last 14 days; and to undertake regular preventive measures such as cough etiquette and regular hand washing.

These measures are for your safety and to safeguard our well-being. Thank you very much. The telephone numbers I have mentioned are available with the secretariat should you need them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We will now return to the substantive issues. With respect to prevention, after we address the issue of gender, I will give the floor to or ask the next President, from Australia, to discuss the possible measures that we could take, including the use of other rooms.

On Friday, 6 March, the secretariat distributed a document on the Conference on Disarmament and the issue of gender. The document is intended to serve as a basis for discussing the issue of gender from a holistic perspective, a perspective that includes, in particular, women's increased participation in disarmament. Gender is a cross-cutting issue approached in a deliberative and substantive manner by the bodies established in relation to most disarmament and arms-control instruments. In addition, the texts of two recent international instruments, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Arms Trade Treaty, include the issue. The former recognizes the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on girls and women and the obligation to provide age- and gender-sensitive assistance to victims. Under the latter, States exporting conventional arms must take into account the risk of the use of those arms to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children. In this context, we believe that it is necessary for the Conference to foster an environment of equal opportunity for all and to take new approaches that will help ensure substantive progress. To that end, we are required to do more than make mere declarations.

Before giving the floor to the delegations, I would like to invite the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, to make some introductory remarks on the issue.

Ms. Valovaya (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting and for presenting the non-paper that will serve as the basis for today's discussion on gender in disarmament. I would like also to mention that this topic has been discussed in the Conference on Disarmament over the last several years and I would like to thank all the member States that have participated in these discussions and relaunched these discussions in previous years. It is a very important topic for the Conference on Disarmament.

The year 2020 is a milestone in global efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. It marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the

tenth anniversary of General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. These anniversaries represent the global recognition of the crucial role that women play in decision-making processes in peace and security, including disarmament.

The United Nations Secretary-General continues to emphasize that ensuring the equal, full and effective participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament is essential for the promotion and attainment of sustainable peace and security. In his Agenda for Disarmament, he has gender parity in these processes as both a moral duty and an operational necessity. Women have always played a crucial role in the development and implementation of disarmament instruments. Their contributions must be acknowledged, and their voices further amplified.

In tandem with our efforts to enable the meaningful participation of women in disarmament, we must also address the differential impacts of various weapons on different segments of our populations. It is my hope that the Conference, in its consideration of its core agenda items, will consistently factor in its deliberations the topic of gender.

I am encouraged to hear that the Conference is holding dedicated discussions on this topic today and welcome the calls made by many delegations that consistently raise the need to adopt a gender perspective in the work of the Conference. I am proud to say that as an International Gender Champion, I, together with my team, stand ready to support you in promoting gender perspectives in the Conference on Disarmament. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much for your remarks, Madam Secretary-General. I now invite Ms. Renata Dalaqua of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to speak on the issue of gender in disarmament.

Ms. Dalaqua (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research): Good morning. Dear Mr. President, dear Director-General and distinguished colleagues, I would like to start by expressing my thanks to the President of this session and to the Argentine team for convening this discussion today.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I would also like to thank you for the kind invitation you extended to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

(*spoke in English*)

I am Renata Dalaqua and I am here on behalf of UNIDIR Director Renata Dwan. She would very much like to be here today. She sends her apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.

Today's discussion, as has been said, is about advancing the gender perspective in disarmament, more specifically in the Conference on Disarmament. Those of you who have been covering arms control and disarmament for some years have probably noticed that gender has become a common topic of discussion over the past couple of years. We have seen the United Nations Secretary-General include gender parity in his Agenda for Disarmament and enact measures to achieve gender parity in every disarmament body established under his auspices.

We have seen the creation here in Geneva of the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group. We have also seen establishment of the network Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy, which started in the United States of America and is now also present in Europe. We have seen an increasing number of First Committee resolutions that address gender. In 2019, approximately one third of First Committee resolutions included language on gender.

Last year, the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty made gender a priority topic. Several working papers on gender have been produced as part of the review cycle of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and last year the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention had its first side event on gender issues, on potential gendered impacts of biological weapons. So there has been a growing number of initiatives and of statements by countries calling for equal, full and effective participation of women in matters related to arms control and disarmament. And that has been followed by a more systematic effort to track and understand women's participation in this forum.

Last year, UNIDIR published “Still behind the curve”, a study that offered a baseline analysis of women’s participation across different arms control and disarmament forums. Secretariats – our colleagues from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, for example – are also tracking the participation of women in different disarmament forums.

Now, then, we are starting to get the data, and what we have seen here in the Conference on Disarmament is that the participation of women has followed a pattern similar to that of the participation of women in the First Committee and also in the NPT review process – from less than 10 per cent in the 1980s to approximately 30 per cent in 2015. The share of women delegates attending the Conference is actually above that. In 2018, women made up 37 per cent of participants in the Conference on Disarmament. However, what we are seeing is that women’s role has not progressed at the same pace as their nominal representation. While women may be in the room representing 30 or 35 per cent of delegates, they do not have the same opportunity to speak, and we know that because our colleagues from the secretariat have also been tracking who gets to deliver statements and shape the discussions. And the numbers that we see are often below 20 per cent.

Moreover, last year we had several panel discussions in the Conference on Disarmament, and out of nine panel discussions, seven panels were all male. This shows that the ideas about who and what makes good policy in this field are very much associated with masculinities and norms attributed to men. For instance, the idea that you would expect a good diplomat who is involved in making policy in arms control and disarmament would have such traits as toughness, risk-taking and military experience, all of which are only associated with men.

These numbers show that, although people say we are seeing momentum in arms control and disarmament – gender is being mainstreamed in different treaties, as the President said earlier – we still have a long way to go. And this is not only about arms control and disarmament; society at large still holds pervasive biases and prejudice against women.

The United Nations Development Programme just released the Gender Social Norms Index. I recommend that you look at it. It includes data from 75 countries covering over 80 per cent of the world’s population. According to the Index, about half of the world, both men and women, feels that men make better political leaders. Over 40 per cent feel that men make better business executives and that men have more rights to a job when they are scarce. And 28 per cent think it is justified for a man to beat his wife. This should encourage us to keep working for gender equality, because we are still very far from that goal.

When we talk about creating a gender-equal culture, it is not simply about adding women. It is actually about assigning value to diversity and change, and that requires fundamental shifts in the culture of the arms control community. It probably means that, if you want to have gender-balanced discussions, you have to reach out to younger and more diverse experts. It also probably means rethinking longevity as a priority value in arms control and contemplating career breaks for women and men to prioritize childcare, for instance.

Embracing empathy and negotiation skills may encourage a little less emphasis on attributes such as toughness or risk-taking. It may also be accepting women who have built their careers in other fields of international security. We therefore believe that acknowledging the linkages between arms control and other domains, such as gender equality or development, will actually broaden the field of international security and encourage new perspectives and thinking in arms control.

How do we do that? How do we work to improve women’s participation in this field and bring with it new perspectives and thinking? Together with Canada, Ireland, Namibia and the Philippines, UNIDIR is a co-Chair of the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group, an initiative that seeks to promote dialogue and shared knowledge and to advance opportunities for gender-responsive action in arms control and disarmament.

I hope you are aware of our activities; we have been doing lots of things in Geneva and actually we put together this gender and disarmament resource pack that was circulated

to all members of the Conference on Disarmament before the session started this year. If you look at the resource pack, or toolkit, you will see some recommendations that it may be useful to consider here in the Conference. We talk about including gender-responsive language in statements or about organizing gender briefings related to the substance of the work. For instance, one could think about examining the core issues of the Conference through a gender perspective as part of the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

We also talk about institutionalizing gender balance on panels by setting guidelines and including a checklist on how to achieve gender balance on panels. It usually means planning early and focusing on expertise. We also talk about supporting side events or holding informal meetings on gender on the margins of meetings. This point is linked with the broader engagement of the Conference with civil society. Civil society has been a leading force behind bringing gender equality into international security discussions. We have seen leadership of civil society as one of the main enabling factors for gender mainstreaming in arms control. I would thus encourage the Conference to find ways to engage with members of civil society.

In addition, Argentina proposed a non-paper that also has really interesting recommendations, some of them similar to what I have been saying. It talks about taking a gender perspective into account when planning your work and also when discussing the work and trying to see the specific challenges that there may be in each region or each specific group.

I am very happy with this discussion – I have been working on gender and arms control at UNIDIR for the past year and a half, and it has been a pleasure to see this discussion picking up. I hope we can discuss some concrete ideas of how to advance gender equality in the Conference on Disarmament. I look forward to listening to your comments and your views. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much for your contribution, Ms. Dalaqua. I will now give the floor to the delegations that have asked to speak on this issue. On the list of speakers, I have Chile, Switzerland, Ireland, Canada, Australia, Slovenia, Croatia, Norway and Peru, in that order. If any delegation would like to be added to the list, please give a sign and you will be added. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Chile.

Mr. Tressler Zamorano (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. Before coming to the specific subject of this meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to express my delegation's gratitude to you and the other Presidents of this session for the work you have done during the weeks of your presidency, which ends today. We are especially grateful for the significant efforts made by Ambassador Foradori and his team to seek the necessary but still elusive consensus on a programme of work for this Conference. If we do not succeed on this occasion, it will certainly not be for a lack of effort.

Mr. President, we appreciate the timely circulation last week of the non-paper on the Conference on Disarmament and gender issues. As you indicate in the document, several anniversaries are being observed this year, including those of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, both extraordinarily important instruments for bringing a gender perspective into peace and security issues and, more broadly, for bringing about more egalitarian and inclusive societies by empowering women as key stakeholders and agents for change at all levels.

Mr. President, taking your non-paper as our starting point, we would like to share with the delegations the following elements of our domestic policy that address this important issue. Women and peace and security is a priority area in Chilean multilateral foreign policy. We have, accordingly, promoted stronger regional and global cooperation on the issue with the aim of fostering government policies that guarantee women the full exercise of their rights, bringing about radical cultural and structural change, achieve inclusive societies and put women's empowerment and the prevention of sexual violence at the centre of the international efforts.

At the United Nations, Chile participates in and promotes different initiatives linked to the women and peace and security agenda and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). As a founding member of the National Focal Points Network, a cross-regional forum, we seek to develop and review high-impact national strategies as tools to

systematically integrate gender into assessment and prevention, increase the presence of women in the security sector and peace and mediation processes and move forward in implementing resolutions on conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

In addition, in 2009 Chile became the first country in its region to prepare a national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The second such plan, which covered the period from 2015 to 2018, reflected Security Council recommendations and international best practices in the field and emphasized education and training for military and civilian personnel. Under the plan, quantitative indicators were developed and institutions responsible for meeting the goals that were laid out were designated, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability. Gender protection has been incorporated into the country's doctrine on and planning and execution of peace operations under the four thematic areas and goals established by the United Nations: first, participation; second, prevention; third, protection; and, fourth, relief and recovery.

An expert committee on resolution 1325 (2000), which brings together the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior and Public Safety and the Ministry for Women and Gender Equity, is currently evaluating how the Second National Action Plan was implemented in 2019. In addition, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) and to promote the women and peace and security agenda, the committee is organizing a seminar to assess the Chilean action plans and meetings with academics, civil society, the armed forces and UN-Women, among others.

Mr. President, as you indicate in your non-paper, it is becoming increasingly clear that peace and security are impossible without the effective participation of women in the political, economic, social and cultural processes that cut across all our societies. Chile supports a preventive approach based on the promotion of democratic and inclusive societies that make room for the active participation of all stakeholders, particularly women and girls.

Lastly, we would be remiss in ending our statement if we did not acknowledge the enormous help that the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on gender and disarmament has been for my delegation and, we are certain, for others. We particularly welcome the distribution, at the beginning of this session, of the gender and disarmament resource pack. We also recognize the value and positive impact of the International Gender Champions initiative, which, through hard work, has revitalized institutional involvement in the issue of gender.

Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your contribution. Switzerland is next on the list. The Ambassador of Switzerland has the floor.

Mr. Baumann (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Madam Secretary-General, Mr. President, I, too, would like to begin my statement by thanking you, the Argentine presidency and the six Presidents of this session for your efforts to adopt a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament. We regret that a consensus could not be reached on this matter. We remain convinced that a pragmatic approach, allowing the Conference to work on substantive elements and thus move closer to negotiations, is the approach that holds the most promise of allowing the Conference overcome its long-standing deadlock. In the absence of a programme of work this year, it would be appropriate to use our meetings as productively as possible. We therefore welcome the fact that this meeting is devoted to the important topic that is the link between disarmament and gender.

It is crucial to note that the proliferation and use of weapons, and armed conflict more generally, affect women and men differently. Men continue to be the main direct victims of conflict, but women are affected in a distinct way, with conflicts often reinforcing social, economic and political inequalities and inequities. Women also face a high risk of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as difficulties in accessing victim assistance. These are, of course, just a few examples, but they do underline the importance of taking this dimension into account in disarmament activities.

On this subject, I would like to highlight certain aspects. First, a few words about the foreign policy of Switzerland in the area of peace and security. Switzerland adopts a gender-sensitive approach by taking into account the different needs of women and men and ensuring that it promotes peace while respecting gender equality. It takes the gender

dimension into account, where relevant, in the implementation of its programmes and it encourages its partners to do the same. At the national level, the 2018–2022 national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) incorporates specific measures related to arms control and disarmament. At the international level, Switzerland is working in a number of areas. For example, it cooperates with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Another example is the country's work to enhance knowledge of the impact of arms and ammunition on women, an area in which Switzerland supports the work of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

We also welcome the initiative undertaken by the Permanent Representatives of Canada, Ireland and Namibia and by the Director of UNIDIR to establish the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group in Geneva, and we are determined to contribute to its work to advance gender-sensitive measures in disarmament processes. Indeed, while mainstreaming gender is important at the national level, its integration into multilateral processes is equally crucial. In this context, we welcome the fact that some disarmament processes have fully taken up this topic. This is notably the case with the Arms Trade Treaty and, as mentioned in the working paper circulated by the presidency, with the Ottawa Convention; I am thinking in particular of the action plan adopted at the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention in Oslo last November.

Likewise, Switzerland intends to fully mainstream the gender dimension during its presidency of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It will be especially important to integrate gender into the practical and operational measures contained in the action plan that will be adopted at the Review Conference in November 2020 and that will guide the States parties to the Convention for the next five years. Several working papers that have been presented within the framework of the current review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons contain proposals to better integrate the gender dimension in work related to the Treaty. The States parties to the Treaty should aim to capitalize on these proposals at the next review conference.

Before concluding, I would like to address one final point – namely, the equal participation of men and women in disarmament processes. We support the calls made in this regard and are mindful of the progress that remains to be made. This issue has been highlighted by UNIDIR in the studies it has produced. The measures you have submitted for our consideration in your working paper concerning the topic of participation correspond to those that are envisaged or have been implemented in a number of multilateral processes. I have two reflections to make on this issue of participation. The first is that the equal participation of men and women should not be considered only from a quantitative point of view; the qualitative dimension must also be taken into account. The second is that while proactive measures such as those advocated in the working paper can be useful, it is also especially worthwhile to facilitate and encourage young women diplomats' involvement in disarmament activities. Training plays an important role in this regard, as does the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, and above all the efforts undertaken by national ministries of foreign affairs. Thank you.

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

Mr. Davison (Canada): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to present a non-paper to the Conference on Disarmament on the gender issue. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) for addressing us on gender in disarmament and arms control. I am just going to make an observation that if risk-taking was associated particularly with men and this room is particularly populated with men, the Conference is not living up to that risk-taking tendency.

Based on both our national policies and our international commitments, Canada advocates consistently for gender equality. To this end, we have supported specific measures to enhance gender perspectives in disarmament, such as the 2019 Oslo Action Plan, on anti-personnel landmines, and Latvia's work to strengthen the gender and gender-based violence elements of the Arms Trade Treaty. In the First Committee, we have worked with other delegations to introduce and improve gender perspectives in resolutions, in terms of both equal participation in disarmament processes and the reality that weapons may have

a differentiated impact on women and girls, men and boys. Finally, we are, along with Ireland, Namibia and the Philippines, part of the steering committee for the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group, which works in collaboration with UNIDIR to support the disarmament community in translating gender awareness into practical action across multilateral processes and has organized side events, issued fact statements on gender perspectives in specific conventions and treaties and produced the gender and disarmament resource pack, which offers practical ideas to assist diplomats in applying a gender lens to their work, as noted so eloquently by Madam Dalaqua.

For Canada, it is clear that disarmament has fundamental gender dimensions. These are key to our policymaking and programming, underpinning the effectiveness of disarmament work within the broader peace and security framework. We believe that the gender perspective of disarmament merits the attention it now receives because it expands the scope of our knowledge and understanding of the challenges and solutions to achieve greater progress in disarmament.

Mr. President, returning to your non-paper and its specific proposals, points 1 to 5 seem eminently reasonable to Canada, and we believe they could easily be put into place. On points 6 and 7, which are a little more challenging – though we appreciate the ambition of what is being proposed – we are ready to explore with other Conference members how these initiatives might be applied.

Thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Sir, for your statement. I give the floor to Ambassador Mansfield of Australia.

Ms. Mansfield (Australia): Thank you very much indeed, Mr. President, and thank you, Madam Director-General, Renata and colleagues.

Australia really welcomes Argentina's commitment to gender equality and diverse perspectives in the Conference on Disarmament and we thank you very warmly for circulating the non-paper, which we will give our close attention to. We particularly welcome the practical suggestions that we can all consider.

International Women's Day commemorates the political, economic and social achievements of women. We reflect on progress made, call for increased focus, but, more importantly, we should all ask ourselves – what more can we do? Treaties this body negotiated should benefit everyone, so it stands to reason that we should ensure all voices not only speak but are also heard.

Mr. President, colleagues have rightly referred to important anniversaries this year, notably those of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. But why do we think it is important to increase the role of women in international security, including here in the Conference on Disarmament? And the answer is really quite simple: it is about diversity – it is about the diversity that we do see in terms of countries represented here, because we believe that diversity leads to better outcomes for disarmament and arms control, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and development.

Allow me to talk briefly about an Australian woman who wrote and spoke in the 1930s and 1940s. Her name was Jessie Street. She focused in particular on helping women enter every aspect of the workforce. And in 1945, Jessie Street attended the foundation conference of the United Nations, the only woman in the Australian delegation. In doing so, she became the first Australian female delegate to the United Nations.

Although from a different generation, I clearly feel a connection to the issues Jessie Street championed. And I think others in this room will feel that connection, too. But the singular reason for bringing the legacy of Jessie Street to this meeting is that it was Jessie who was instrumental in ensuring the passage of a clause in the Charter of the United Nations forbidding gender discrimination. On the eve of the United Nations Conference on International Organization in 1945, Jessie Street sent a very short cable to the Secretary-General of that Conference which was subsequently provided to every delegation. Her cable was very short. It said: "Request United Nations International Conference incorporate into post-war plans the democratic principle of equality of status, opportunity, responsibility and reward for men and women and elimination of all discriminations based on sex."

Today, we see some great examples, that of not just forbidding discrimination but of genuinely effective and inclusive participation. The United Nations itself is setting an excellent example, with women in key leadership positions – including the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, and the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ms. Tatiana Valovaya.

Mr. President, we are really pleased to see positive developments in the past year to raise the profile of gender equality and support for mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda across all disarmament and arms control forums. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research is doing excellent research, and the work of the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group has led to a terrific resource pack for use by all delegates.

Australia acknowledges the concrete progress made across key disarmament conventions such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, as well as increased attention on gender diversity, inclusion and analysis at the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and meetings to prepare for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. President, we would also like to thank Germany for holding the inaugural Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control Conference in Berlin in February, which examined best practices in making small arms control more gender-responsive. This was a really excellent initiative. We can and must do more. We must do more to integrate gender perspectives in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and to foster a more inclusive institutional culture. We intend to lead by example when we take on the presidency next week, including through suggesting how we might make the Conference's rules of procedure gender-neutral. Mr. President, if we all value this body, if it is to deliver on the substantial challenges before it, we must work together to deliver inclusive participation and leadership and make those the norm.

Thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your statement. I give the floor to the delegation of Slovenia.

Ms. Travnik (Slovenia): Mr. President, in addition to the statement that will be delivered by Croatia on behalf of the European Union, I wish to contribute further remarks to the discussion in my national capacity. Gender equality is a priority of Slovenian foreign policy, and we welcome the proposal of the Argentine presidency to discuss gender perspectives also at the Conference on Disarmament.

The upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is of great importance for Slovenia. Gender equality will be one of the priorities of my country, and we will seek to include gender perspectives, as well as discussions pertaining to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Gender equality features prominently in a number of Slovenian interventions connected to the field of disarmament. For instance, just recently the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr. Matej Marn, stressed at the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament on 26 February that equal participation and leadership of women and men in non-proliferation and disarmament are vital to achieving lasting peace and security. For this reason, Slovenia will continue to promote and support gender equality in international forums.

At the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention last November, Slovenia supported the inclusion of gender-specific actions and indicators in the Oslo Action Plan, as well as gender mainstreaming in the structures of the relevant committees. These are all important steps ensuring that mine action operations better represent the concerns and priorities of women and girls.

In addition, Slovenia has aligned itself with numerous statements on gender equality – for instance, the joint statement on gender and disarmament machinery at the First Committee of the General Assembly last year and the joint statement on gender delivered by Argentina at the most recent Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Last but not least, Mr. President, Slovenia supports the International Gender Champions, which originated in Geneva. For this reason, my country took an active part in launching the Vienna chapter of the International Gender Champions in June 2017. I thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of Slovenia for its statement and give the floor to the delegation of Croatia.

Ms. Kemppainen (Croatia): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Let me start by expressing our appreciation to you and the other countries that will occupy the presidency this year for your tireless efforts to achieve consensus on a programme of work for the 2020 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is of great regret to the European Union that although a large majority of Conference members overwhelmingly supported your proposal to reinvigorate substantive work in five subsidiary bodies towards concrete disarmament negotiations, a small number of delegations once again chose to prevent consensus. Despite this disappointing outcome, we can and should make the best of the 2020 Conference session, focus on substantive issues and pave the way for concrete progress in this and other disarmament forums.

In this context, Mr. President, we welcome your initiative to devote attention to gender issues at the Conference plenary meeting on the occasion of International Women's Day. As noted by Secretary-General of the Conference Ms. Valovaya, 2020 is a milestone for women's rights and gender equality, marking twenty years of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and twenty-five years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

While recognizing the significant progress made over the decades, it is not yet time to celebrate. In recent years, gender equality has been stalling and, in some cases, backsliding, as reported by the United Nations. Violence against women is widespread and continues to affect approximately a third of all women and girls worldwide.

The promotion of gender equality, awareness of gender issues, empowerment of women and prevention of gender-based violence are all important cross-cutting priorities for the European Union. On 5 March, the European Commission adopted the new European Union Gender Equality Strategy for the next five years, based on the fundamental principle of equality for all. Later this year, an ambitious new gender action plan will be adopted for European Union external action, which will also take into consideration the European Union Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which was adopted last year.

We are convinced that active and equal participation and leadership of women at all levels of decision-making and implementation in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is crucial to achieving peace, security and sustainable development. This is why the European Union has decided to become a supporter of actions 36 and 37 of the United Nations Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his continued engagement on this matter. We would also like to thank the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for its valuable awareness-raising efforts.

We welcome the integration of gender considerations in an increasing number of General Assembly resolutions and in key outcome documents adopted at important review conferences, including those relating to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. All United Nations Member States have agreed to mainstream gender into their efforts to implement the relevant United Nations Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument and to improve the collection of data disaggregated by gender on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We are also pleased that the Oslo Action Plan makes a commitment to consider gender in all aspects of mine action.

Mr. President, recognizing the differing impact of armed violence on women, men, girls and boys is a key objective for the European Union. The 2018 European Union Strategy against Illicit Firearms, Small Arms and Light Weapons and Their Ammunition

underlines that the European Union will systematically mainstream gender considerations in its assistance for the control of small arms and light weapons. The European Union is also supporting a dedicated project, implemented by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, in support of gender-mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against small arms trafficking and misuse, in line with the women and peace and security agenda.

We recall that the Arms Trade Treaty is the first arms control instrument to explicitly include the gender dimension, establishing a link between gender-based violence and the international arms trade. The effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty can contribute to eliminating violence against women and girls, as set out in target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In line with the European Union Common Position, European Union member States shall take the risk of gender-based violence into account in their national export control risk assessment before authorizing arms exports. The European Union welcomes the action-oriented decision in relation to gender and gender-based violence by the States parties to the Treaty at their 2019 annual meeting. Once again, we would like to commend Latvia for choosing gender as a thematic priority for its presidency of the meeting.

Mr. President, we are convinced that gender equality benefits men and women and girls and boys alike, and we encourage all Conference members to take this agenda forward, as you have proposed in your paper.

Thank you, Mr. President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Croatia for her statement and give the floor to the delegation of Norway.

Ms. Cervenka (Norway): Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for raising this important topic here in the Council Chamber. There is no reason why gender and disarmament should be something that we only discuss in side events.

Twenty years after Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security was first passed, it is well established that women are and can be powerful agents for peace. Women's right to participate in decision-making enjoys wide support, and the added value of gendered analysis in peace and security matters is well understood.

We have seen significant achievements when it comes to increasing women's participation and decision-making power in peace processes. And yet, it seems that in disarmament and non-proliferation, progress still seems to be lagging. And to paraphrase the report that the representative of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research just mentioned, we are still behind the curve when it comes to gender parity. There is no reason why this should be so. After all, disarmament and arms control lie at the heart of international peace and security.

At the same time, in these disarmament forums, we hear repeated concerns over the fraying of the disarmament architecture. So, maybe it is time to consider whether the Secretary-General of the United Nations has a point when he argues in his Agenda for Disarmament that involving more women will help revitalize disarmament discussions.

Norway firmly believes that bringing more women into international security is not simply an act of altruism. Diversity in a room of decision makers leads to better decisions – which benefit us all.

Representation and diverse voices are important. But there is also another piece of the puzzle that we must consider. We know that women, men, girls and boys experience different threats during and after conflict. We know that they are differently impacted by weapons and their flows in non-conflict environments. We must take this into account if we want to tailor effective solutions that improve the human security of all members of society.

Norway's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security commits us to endeavour to ensure that the gender perspective is included in processes relating to humanitarian disarmament and arms control.

Last year, Norway held the presidency of the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. For years we had heard from mine action operators and national mine action authorities that carrying out a solid gender

analysis as part of landmine survey and clearance while planning risk education or victim assistance makes their work more effective and more targeted. We thus decided to make gender one of the four main priorities of the presidency.

At the Review Conference in Oslo in November, the States parties adopted an ambitious action plan for the next five years. The Oslo Action Plan contains concrete actions States parties will take to implement all parts of the Convention. Importantly, the Oslo Action Plan mainstreams gender throughout all areas. It also contains a separate, cross-cutting action that commits all States parties to ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation. States parties will also strive to remove barriers to the full, equal and gender-balanced participation in mine action and in Convention meetings. And because the Action Plan also contains indicators, the States parties will collectively be able to monitor their progress in implementing this important action as well.

We are encouraged by this strong commitment on the part of all the States parties and we hope that other disarmament forums will build on this in the time to come – not least during the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Finally, I would like to make one important last point. It is not the responsibility of women to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into our work. Everyone who is involved in peace processes or in disarmament negotiations – both men and women – has a responsibility to strive for holistic, non-discriminatory solutions. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Norway for her statement and give the floor to the Ambassador of Ireland.

Mr. Gaffey (Ireland): Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Let me start by expressing my appreciation to you and the year's six Presidents as a whole for making every effort to reach consensus on a programme of work for the 2020 session of the Conference on Disarmament. While it is disappointing, I hope that the novel approach taken by the six Presidents this year – of working collectively to reinvigorate the Conference – will set an example for future presidencies.

Despite the outcome, we have a responsibility to use the time available to us in this chamber to focus on substantive issues, and in this context we welcome the opportunity to speak on gender perspectives during this plenary meeting. A particular priority for Ireland is ensuring a diversity of voices in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts, including through the full and equal participation of women and men in disarmament and security decision-making. Beyond this, the integration of gender perspectives to disarmament and non-proliferation issues is a significant priority. Simple logic dictates, surely, that if 50 per cent of the population affected by an issue is not sufficiently represented in its resolution and its interests are not explicitly taken into account, outcomes will be deficient.

Ireland encourages member States to consider practical ways to improve gender diversity in their delegations at all levels as a means of achieving effective and sustainable outcomes for our work. It is encouraging that the research conducted by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), including in the important publication “Still behind the curve”, is being increasingly acknowledged. Ireland, along with Norway and Sweden, was pleased to provide funding to enable this research, which demonstrates the need for increasing the participation of women in the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery.

However, increased participation in simple number terms is not sufficient. The increased participation of women will not overcome gender inequality or the slow progress being made on disarmament and non-proliferation unless women can meaningfully influence decision-making and until there is a general appreciation among multilateral practitioners of the ways in which substantive disarmament and non-proliferation issues are often gendered.

To this end, Ireland welcomes the suggestion that UNIDIR provide a short course on gender perspectives to the coordinators of the working bodies of the Conference and would suggest that it be open to participants from all member and observer States.

Mr. President, the Agenda for Disarmament of the United Nations Secretary-General calls for gender parity and for the full and equal participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament and international security. Applying a gender analysis (or gender lens) to our work will result in outcomes that are more equitable. A gender analysis examines the relationships between women, men, girls and boys, including their access to and control of resources and the constraints they may face relative to each other. Gender analyses can be integrated into policy development, implementation and review, to contribute to realizing a safer and more secure world for all, in line with the Sustainable Development Agenda.

In recent years, important research has been conducted across the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control machinery by States, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society with a view to identifying and eliminating the gendered impacts of armed conflict. Ireland is proud to have contributed to these efforts both in a national capacity and as co-Chair of the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group here in Geneva, along with co-Chairs Canada, Namibia, the Philippines and UNIDIR. We encourage member States to engage with the wealth of resources available in this area to inform our discussions and guide the implementation of our work.

It is also encouraging to see gender issues integrated into disarmament instruments. The effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, the first international agreement to recognize the link between the arms trade and gender-based violence, provides an important opportunity to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons also includes ground-breaking provisions on gender. It is the first international legal instrument to recognize the disproportionate impact on the health of women and girls of ionizing radiation from the use of nuclear weapons and also promotes the equal participation in the Treaty's work by women and men.

We can and should work to include gender perspectives in existing disarmament instruments, too. And as we approach the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, States parties have the opportunity to consider how these perspectives can be better integrated across the three pillars of the Treaty. Ireland stands ready to work with colleagues to ensure that the Review Conference gives adequate consideration to the urgency of these issues. In this regard, Ireland presented the first official working paper on gender in the context of the Treaty to the 2017 Preparatory Committee and submitted two further national working papers on gender issues to the 2018 and 2019 Preparatory Committees.

In conclusion, thank you, Mr. President, for providing us with the time to reflect on the issue of gender perspectives. We encourage all member States to use this opportunity to revitalize our efforts towards gender equality in participation and strengthen awareness of gender perspectives in our work. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Ireland for his statement and give the floor to the Ambassador of Peru.

Ms. Alfaro Espinosa (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, we thank Argentina for its decision to introduce a discussion on the gender perspective in the Conference on Disarmament. We particularly appreciate the non-paper circulated for the occasion. We thank Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Secretary-General of the Conference, and Ms. Dalaqua of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for their presence and their valuable interventions.

Peru is convinced that women's empowerment and gender equality have a direct impact on the maintenance of international peace and security. Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a progressive road map for gender equality, it is time to assess the progress made and to reduce inequalities with decisive action. We concur with the analysis contained in the Argentine non-paper that there is still much to be done to incorporate a gender perspective into the work of the Conference.

However, in Geneva, we have recently seen significant steps forward in other areas of disarmament and arms control. For example, the document provided by Argentina points to the discussions held on the issue by the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging

Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and in connection with the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It also refers to substantive documents adopted at the Fourth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in November 2019 under the leadership of Norway, which make multiple references to the inclusion of a gender perspective in implementing the Oslo Action Plan 2020–2024.

My delegation would also like to highlight three additional efforts. We have the working paper from Finland, sponsored by several States, with recommendations on how to effectively monitor the implementation of a gender perspective under the Oslo Action Plan. We also have the contributions of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, one of the most recent being the publication “Missing Links”, in which a gender perspective is described as an intangible asset to help States in their response and recovery plans in the event of a biological incident. Lastly, we have the example of Latvia, which, during its presidency of the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in 2019, focused on implementing an obligation based on a gender perspective and geared towards ending violence against women. All these examples can be summarized by the slogan “Small actions, big impact”, used by UN-Women when encouraging States to take decisions that help break down barriers to gender equality.

Peru remains a firm proponent of a gender perspective in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We therefore find that the ideas put forward in the Argentine non-paper on the way forward and in the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group document have merit, particularly with respect to promoting the increased participation of and leadership opportunities for women in the coordination of the Conference on Disarmament and of the subsidiary bodies.

The ultimate goal of the Conference is to maintain world peace. What better message to send to the world than to unceasingly promote the role of women in the search for peace? In fact, this is an important message even for ordinary citizens around the world and for the societies around the world where domestic violence kills thousands, if not millions, of women in silence, in a manner more terrible than any disease or virus.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Peru for her statement and give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Ms. Claringbould (Netherlands): Thank you very much, Mr. President. In addition to the statement delivered by Croatia on behalf of the European Union, allow me to highlight some national perspectives on the issue of gender and disarmament. The Netherlands very much welcomes the opportunity to discuss these issues in the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference for addressing us today on this topic and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) for substantiating our discussions with research: facts, figures and recommendations. We would like to thank the Argentine presidency for providing us with the non-paper as a basis for our discussions today.

As pointed out in the non-paper, 2020 is a fitting year to reflect on the adoption and implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The gap between, on the one hand, the commitment to the women and peace and security agenda and, on the other hand, its implementation remains wide. This is something we all have to take responsibility for. The Netherlands is committed to full implementation of all elements of the women and peace and security agenda and is currently in the process of developing its fourth National Action Plan, in which it will draw upon the lessons learned over the past two decades.

As one of the lessons learned, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs will develop an internal Ministry-wide implementation plan, which will be developed together with the forthcoming National Action Plan. This will enable us to be more proactive and result-oriented on the women and peace and security agenda internally as well as in our foreign policy.

Mr. President, on the occasion of International Women’s Day, our Mission here in Geneva held an internal discussion among colleagues in which we exchanged perspectives on the issues related to gender and diversity. It was apparent that these topics go beyond the binary perspectives of men and women, but also touch upon a more diverse range of issues related to sexual orientation and identity. These perspectives must be taken into account

when aiming for inclusive societies in which we all can participate. Also, some of our female colleagues were hesitant about International Women's Day, as they felt showing respect for each other and abiding by the principles of equality is something we should do every day rather than be reminded of once a year.

The full and inclusive participation of women in international forums, including in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, is a key prerequisite to achieving full equality in our societies. Studies show that teams that are more diverse make better decisions, including by ensuring that different perspectives are brought to the table and taken into account. Therefore, the Netherlands continues to advocate for more women in leadership roles and decision-making processes. The statistics provided by UNIDIR on the participation and leadership of women in the Conference show that we have a significant way to go in this body.

The appointment of the first female Secretary-General of the Conference in forty years is a positive first step, and the Netherlands encourages delegations to strive for gender parity in their delegations and in particular to increase women's roles in leadership and decision-making.

And before I close, following on from Norway's last remarks that it is not the responsibility of women alone to address gender issues, I wish to thank my colleague Reint Vogelaar, the Netherlands' disarmament delegation gender focal point, for preparing my country's statement today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Netherlands for her statement and give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Ms. Hammer (Austria): Thank you, Mr. President.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the issue of gender and disarmament today. We also wish to thank Argentina for its non-paper, which provided useful food for thought and actionable recommendations. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) for the insightful contributions.

This year the international community pays tribute to the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, the first United Nations resolution to highlight the particular impact of conflict on women and to affirm the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning and peacekeeping operations. Austria remains firmly committed to this resolution and regularly reports upon its implementation – most recently, the Austrian Government adopted the tenth implementation report on the National Action Plan in October 2019. It is simply a fact that women, men, girls and boys are differently impacted by armed conflict and by specific weapons.

Austria is fully aligned with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. We also would like to recall the joint statement on gender perspectives, endorsed by 80 delegations, including my own, in the First Committee in 2019. In our national capacity, I wish to focus today on two dimensions: first, equal participation of women and men and, second, the gendered impact of specific types of weapons.

First, equal participation of women and men in international security forums remains to be achieved. Austria shares the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his Agenda for Disarmament. As eloquently outlined by previous speakers and the representative of UNIDIR moments ago, there continues to be a significant gender imbalance in the design, setting and implementation of multilateral disarmament policy. Austria reiterates that equal representation is mutually beneficial and remains firmly committed to continuing to take action in all relevant forums to achieve that end.

Second, a gender-sensitive perspective on disarmament encompasses properly taking into account gender-based vulnerabilities to effectively prevent human suffering. For the sake of brevity, I would just like to give two concrete examples.

A report by the Gender and Mine Action Programme stated that civilian casualties in explosive hazard incidents in 2017 were composed of 55 per cent men, 35 per cent boys, 7 per cent women and 7 per cent girls. Humanity and Inclusion had previously reported that 80 per cent of the victims of cluster munitions are male, while 30 per cent are boys. The reasons for the disproportionate impact are manifold, but exploring them is critical to prevent and minimize human suffering during and after armed conflict. In such a case, need-tailored risk awareness programmes provided to the most vulnerable groups are an obvious example of an effective impact of a gendered perspective in our disarmament efforts.

Another important dimension is the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on girls and women. In recent years, more and more studies have been conducted on how the consequences of the detonation of nuclear weapons affect men and women differently. At the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, for example, Mary Olson of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service presented her findings that a woman is at a significantly greater risk of suffering and dying from radiation-induced cancer than a man who gets the same dose of ionizing radiation. Additionally, age-related radiation exposure plays a significant role. But, as is well known, radiation exposure may result not only in cancer but also in an increased risk of other health deficits, such as reduced immunity, reduced fertility – again a gendered impact – and of other diseases, including heart disease, birth defects, including mental retardation and heart defects. These facts led to the recognition of the gendered impact of ionizing radiation in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. President, Austria continues to support putting the human at the centre of our efforts. A gendered perspective on disarmament helps us to develop and identify more effective policy and implementation tools, by taking particular vulnerabilities duly into account. I thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Austria for her statement and give the floor to the Ambassador of Latvia.

Mr. Kārklinš (Latvia): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for organizing this discussion, which is timely and topical, as well as for providing a background document. It captures important initiatives that have been launched in order to promote gender equality in disarmament circles and diminish gender-based violence in the world.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement pronounced earlier on behalf of the European Union. I would like to take a few minutes to inform this august body of another process that may provide some ideas for the Conference on Disarmament. Though it has already been mentioned, during the Latvian presidency, the 2019 Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty defined as priorities gender and gender-based violence with the aim of achieving concrete actions to advance this aspect of work under the Treaty. The topic was an important one both for Latvia and in respect of the Treaty, which is the first treaty to include the term gender-based violence and to make this explicit link between gender-based violence and the tools of violence.

The decision focused on three aspects. The first was the issue of greater gender balance and equality within delegations and at Arms Trade Treaty forums. Here, the recommendations covered both the balance within delegations and the level of representation. If half the room is not adequately represented at all levels, then we have only half of our potential. Equality must be meaningful and therefore include the level of representation as well as balance of numbers.

The second is the issue of the gendered impact of armed violence in conflict. Throughout our discussions, in preparation for the decision, we recognized that men and boys and women and girls are affected differently by armed violence and conflict. Better understanding of the precise nature of this through the increased collection of data and analysis would improve our ability to respond appropriately. States were therefore encouraged to collect such data and made it publicly available.

Third are the specific aspects of risk assessment of gender-based violence. While gender-based violence and violence against women and children fall under international human rights and humanitarian law, the advantage of article 7 (4) of the Arms Trade Treaty

is that it draws attention specifically to an aspect of risk assessment that has historically tended to be less focused on, if at all. Meaningfully implementing this aspect of the Treaty could mean that States take steps towards concretely reducing arms-related gender-based violence, which would enable the realization of a core goal of the Treaty – reducing human suffering.

Recommendations were made for ongoing sharing of State practices in this assessment, further elaboration of some of the relevant terms in the Treaty and the development of a voluntary training guide. This decision was adopted by consensus and represented a significant advance in gender issues within the framework of the Treaty. Now, of course, it is a question of follow-up and implementation.

In closing, Mr. President, I would like to use this opportunity to thank all those delegations that spoke favourably about the Latvian initiative within the Treaty framework. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Latvia and give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Fay (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President and Madam Director-General. My delegation celebrates the positive views expressed in the Chamber and wishes to add its own on this important issue on global security and global equality. The national security strategy of the United States identifies women's equality and empowerment worldwide as integral to security.

Mr. President, it is the policy of the United States to support efforts advancing women's equality, promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls and developing programmes that empower women and youth. Moreover, we recognize the role of women in disarmament. Women practitioners in disarmament ensure a fulsome view and understanding of the issues.

The United States remains firmly committed to expanding meaningful participation of women in the establishment and maintenance of global peace, security and prosperity as we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) this October. We urge all member States, subregional and regional organizations, the United Nations and specialized agencies to promote equal opportunities for the representation of women in all decision-making processes relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, in particular relating to prevention and reduction of armed conflict and armed violence.

As part of the disarmament context, in 2017 the United States signed into law the Women, Peace and Security Act, making the United States the first country in the world with such a comprehensive law on the issue. In June 2019, President Trump signed the first-ever United States Strategy on Women, Peace and Security, recognizing the instrumental role of women in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and stabilization.

The United States Department of State will be releasing a plan for implementing the Women, Peace and Security Strategy. This ongoing implementation process aims to institutionalize the protection of women in conflict and their engagement in decision-making processes. We are modernizing foreign assistance, developing new tools and improving training, so diplomats, development experts, security professionals and defence personnel have knowledge and resources and are more effective at integrating women, peace and security principles. The United States remains committed to expanding the role of women in the establishment and maintenance of global peace, security and prosperity. Thank you, Mr. President and Madam Director-General.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United States of America and give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): Thank you, Mr. President. First, let me join others who have expressed their appreciation for your efforts, with the rest of the group of six Presidents of this year's session, in pursuing your proposal on a programme of work. We, too, deeply regret that, once again, we were not able to reach consensus on a way to deepen our work on the substantive agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

That said, thank you for giving us the opportunity this morning to discuss gender issues as they relate to the work of the Conference and to disarmament, non-proliferation

and arms control more broadly. Let me also thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and Dr. Dalaqua for their introductory remarks, and the delegations that have spoken so far, for some thought-provoking points.

This is a subject of great importance to the United Kingdom, which has long been a champion of gender perspectives across many forums. Most notably, the United Kingdom has played a leading role in the Security Council to promote the women and peace and security agenda; this year, of course, as others have noted, we mark the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

In that context, we have supported efforts to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in institutions and mechanisms for the resolution of conflict. I am also pleased to announce that the United Kingdom is funding the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research's Gender and Disarmament Programme, which seeks to better integrate gender perspectives into arms control and disarmament in the multilateral space, ensuring that relevant treaties and conventions deliver for all.

Mr. President, the United Kingdom firmly believes that women must be properly represented in disarmament and arms control discussions, negotiations and processes – their input and involvement are key to developing and delivering sustainable action.

As your non-paper points out, Mr. President, we have made some good progress in increasing women's participation in our work. But, as the Ambassador of Switzerland said, the quality of that participation is as important as the quantity. I am pleased to say that the three senior officials leading the United Kingdom's preparations for the forthcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in the Foreign Office, Ministry of Defence and energy ministry are all women. Indeed, whenever I take the floor here or in New York on questions of nuclear disarmament, it is on the basis of instructions prepared in London by the desk officer and section head responsible for nuclear disarmament, and signed off by the head or deputy head of department – all of whom are currently women.

Moreover, for 14 of the last 40 years, the supreme decision-making responsibility on the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons has been in the hands of female Prime Ministers. One of them, Margaret Thatcher, had clear views on nuclear deterrence and disarmament, which were shaped by the experience of war. In a speech in Moscow in March 1987, she said:

The fact is that nuclear weapons exist and the knowledge of how to make them cannot be erased ... Two world wars showed us ... how terrible a war fought even with conventional weapons can be, yet nuclear weapons have deterred not only nuclear war but conventional war in Europe as well. A world without nuclear weapons may be a dream, but you cannot base a sure defence on dreams. Without far greater trust and confidence between East and West than exists at present, a world without nuclear weapons would be less stable and more dangerous for all of us.

But, as you rightly note, there is more to do. During our presidency of this Conference last year, as you have done, we tried to bring a gender perspective to the appointment of subsidiary body coordinators and special coordinators, though we were not able to achieve the gender balance we would have wanted. This serves to underline the importance of increasing the number of senior women in our delegations from which office holders can be appointed.

It is also crucial that we strive for more equal representation in civil society organizations working in the disarmament field, as well as in Governments. In that regard, it was especially pleasing that, during the recent conference in London of the five nuclear-weapon States designated as such under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 54 per cent of the participants in the civil society segment were women.

To conclude, Mr. President, we welcome your timely initiative and your thought-provoking paper. My delegation is committed to playing its part in making a difference on this important issue. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his statement and give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Martínez Ruiz (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. We would first like to thank Argentina for putting gender and disarmament on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament and for the valuable non-paper that its delegation submitted on the issue. We find this discussion, which moreover coincides with International Women's Day, celebrated on 8 March, to be a timely occasion for promoting dialogue and identifying specific measures that will facilitate the incorporation of a gender perspective into the areas of disarmament and international peace and security. We would also like to underscore the remarks just made by Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Secretary-General of the Conference, and spotlight its female leadership.

As Renata Dalaqua of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has reminded us, disarmament forums, and the Conference in particular, have historically been dominated by men and lack a gender perspective. It is well documented that the absence of women in discussion and decision-making forums in the various areas of work of the United Nations, including the peace and security agenda, translates into policies that ignore the needs and concerns of half the world's population. If there are more women's voices, new perspectives on and aspects of the issue will come to the fore. Twenty years ago, the Security Council adopted the landmark resolution on women and peace and security, which recognized women's important role in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and reconstruction, and stressed the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security.

We must move beyond the patriarchal structure and conception of international security that have dominated the world from time immemorial. We therefore welcome the introduction by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, of specific measures to move towards this objective, both through his Agenda for Disarmament and through his appointment of highly capable women to management positions. We will gradually begin seeing the benefits of these measures. We welcome the recognition of a gender-based approach in recent instruments such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Arms Trade Treaty, the importance accorded the issue in the plans to implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which we hope will be made greater still at the next review conference, and the growing number of resolutions that refer to the need to adopt a gender perspective. It is also cause for satisfaction that we are adopting resolutions and attending panel discussions with such a perspective more and more often. Nevertheless, we are aware that these are just the first steps and that they must be consolidated.

Mexico recently joined the ranks of the countries that have adopted a feminist foreign policy and is the first Latin American country to have adopted such a policy. Together with France and UN-Women, we are organizing the Generation Equality Forum, which will be held in Mexico City in May and in Paris in July, to step up efforts on gender equality. One of the Forum's areas of focus will be technology and innovation. In addition, in Geneva, my delegation forms part of the International Gender Champions and the Disarmament Impact Group.

Mr. President, we welcome the proposals contained in the non-paper submitted by your delegation. They are feasible and practical measures that the Conference on Disarmament can take to ensure the greatest representation of women and to allow members of the body to develop a full understanding of the gender perspective. My delegation is ready to work with other members to ensure that these proposals are implemented. Furthermore, we believe that this issue should also be addressed in connection with the efforts to improve the functioning and streamline the work of the Conference. It will be crucial to find mechanisms that give civil society greater access to our work, given the important contributions civil society can make, in terms of ideas, knowledge and constructive criticism, to advancing the cause of women's full inclusion in disarmament negotiations.

We must continue to work closely with UNIDIR and continue making use of its studies on gender and disarmament in order to make progress on the issue. The Conference should also take a more in-depth look at the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, in particular the disproportionate effect of radiation exposure on women and girls, and carry out the necessary negotiations on measures to prevent such catastrophic impact.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate that by paying more attention to the link between gender and disarmament, we will be able to better understand persistent challenges and generate new ideas and proposals for more sustained progress on disarmament, including by breaking new ground that could end the paralysis of this body. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and give the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's discussion. Let me also thank Director-General Valovaya for her remarks and the representative of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for an insightful presentation.

Mr. President, the United Nations Member States have championed the cause of the gender dimensions of arms control through both Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the General Assembly biennial resolution entitled "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control", adopted again in 2018. Pakistan continues to support these initiatives as complementary steps to advance the international peace and arms control agenda.

Mr. President, Pakistan, too, has made a modest contribution in amplifying the gender dimension to the disarmament regime and processes. During our presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in May 2016, our delegation organized an open-ended plenary meeting on the same topic. This was in line with Pakistan's full support to the effective participation of women in peace and security and disarmament discussions and decision-making processes.

Nationally, Pakistan has taken several steps to incorporate a gender perspective in peace, security, arms control and related subjects. We have a proud tradition of women leaders in this arena. Our women have served as Prime Minister, Speaker of the National Assembly and Foreign Minister and as decision makers on questions of peace and security. Our women have led policy institutions concerning security and arms control, including as foreign secretaries and additional foreign secretaries in charge of arms control. Women ambassadors have represented Pakistan in New York, at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague and of course here at Geneva. All of them have been active participants in the discourse on peace, security and disarmament.

A number of Pakistani women are currently serving as ambassadors and diplomats in various capitals all over the globe. We have over six dozen women peacekeepers in the United Nations peacekeeping missions around the world today. Pakistani women continue to be part of our armed forces not only as auxiliary staff but also in combat roles, including fighter pilots. This demonstrates the commitment of the Pakistan Armed Forces to promote equal opportunities for our women as well. Yet, as has been noted before, despite progress, much remains to be done, internationally and nationally, to achieve the goal of gender equality and diversity in arms control deliberations, negotiations and outcomes.

Mr. President, lastly, we thank you for circulating the non-paper, which has a number of interesting ideas. We look forward to discussions on how these proposals can be taken forward; you can count on our support in this regard. Thank you

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement and give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, dear colleagues. After having listened to delegations that have spoken about including the gender issue in our discussions and possibly in a legally binding instrument and provided some information regarding the actions and plans by individual States that have been implemented in the context of the treaties and agreements, I personally wonder how this issue would help this body to fulfil its mandate. Of course, if we conclude legally binding instruments, then we will have certainly the opportunity to insert these interesting proposals for gender parity and equality.

If you allow me, Mr. President, I would like to refer to another topic. As last week marked the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), I should emphasize that the mere existence of nuclear weapons constitutes the greatest threat to international peace and security as well as the survival of

humankind. The best and the only guarantee of the removal of these threats is transparent, irreversible and total elimination of all nuclear weapons. This is the only absolute guarantee against the use, intentional or unintentional, or the threat of use of nuclear weapons. That is why nuclear disarmament as a central obligation is one of the Treaty's key objectives. Under article VI, as unanimously decided, and as stated by the International Court of Justice, there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. This is an explicit legal obligation with no ambiguity or conditionality.

Mr. President, the deteriorating international security environment, the demise of disarmament and arms control treaties, the erosion of multilateralism and the voracious lust for global dominance are highly alarming and dangerous. A nuclear arms race is being accelerated. The faith and trust in the capacity of the Treaty to realize nuclear disarmament as its main goal, as well as its credibility and legitimacy, are under two important threats.

The first and foremost is the disrespect for the collective will and shared concern of the international community by one State, which not only presents the gravest threat to the objective of nuclear disarmament and the future of the Treaty but also violates the fundamental principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. 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 – that is, *pacta sunt servanda*. Just as an example, and beyond its new nuclear posture review, the recent development of a new low-yield nuclear warhead by the United States Administration has not only increased the role of nuclear weapons in the United States military doctrine in violation of its obligation under the Treaty and seriously undermined the faith and the trust and the capacity and credibility of the Treaty to realize nuclear disarmament but has also made the use of nuclear weapons as likely as that of conventional weapons and made nuclear war more likely.

Mr. President, the second threat is the lack of full universality of the Treaty. In this regard, we would like to emphasize that the lack of progress in achieving the full universality of the Treaty will threaten its objective, erode its credibility and effectiveness and thus pose a threat to international peace and security. We urge the non-parties to accede promptly, unconditionally and as non-nuclear-weapon parties to the Treaty and to place all their nuclear facilities and activities under the International Atomic Energy Agency's full-scope safeguards. In the same vein, we reaffirm the commitment of all States parties to cease and prohibit completely the transfer or sharing of any nuclear-related equipment, information, materials, facilities, resources or devices or the extension of scientific and technical assistance in the nuclear field to non-parties to the Treaty without exception.

With these challenges and threats, Mr. President, as well as the accumulated, unfulfilled commitments during the past NPT review conferences, especially those of 1995, 2000 and 2010, one might ask whether we should celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty or whether we should be warned off against these challenges and should raise the concerns and frustrations of the international community about the prevailing situation. At this juncture, our focus should be on nuclear disarmament as the urgent need of the international community, and we should avoid any attempts that might dilute in any way the role and the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament or waste the Conference's energy, time and resources on less important issues. We should focus on the Conference's agenda.

Mr. President, that is why we have persistently emphasized preserving the role and the mandate of the Conference and the responsibility of all members to help this august body to fulfil its core mandate. In this regard, the nuclear-weapon States have the lion's share of the responsibility for the realization of this goal.

To conclude, Mr. President, instead of the new process called Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament, which aims to create conditionality for nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI and to reinterpret this provision as well as the obligations related to nuclear disarmament agreed upon at the previous review conferences, we must vigorously follow our own comprehensive convention on nuclear disarmament. We should reaffirm the urgent need for nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their disarmament obligation agreed in the Final Documents of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences.

I thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Ms. Choi Soonhe (Republic of Korea): I thank you, Mr. President. I would like to go back to the gender perspective issue in the spirit of consistency with today's discussion. I would like to join other colleagues in thanking you for initiating the discussion today on this very important topic. I also appreciate the thoughtful statement by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the comprehensive and insightful presentation by the representative of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

UNIDIR's work, including its Gender and Disarmament Programme, has always been very helpful in advancing our collective efforts. And for that reason, it is highly appreciated by many delegations, including my own. The gender and disarmament resource pack especially is highly valued, as echoed by many previous speakers. Korea is also exerting its efforts to address and advance on the issue of gender and disarmament. It provides strong and continued support to the United Nations Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, one of the initiatives in which the gender perspective is one of the important elements.

Here in Geneva, we are focusing on what we can actually and realistically do. In this vein, Korea is actively involved with the Geneva International Gender Champions. In 2020, in addition to the panel parity pledge by all parties to the platform, Korea has made two additional commitments to be fully implemented this year in this regard.

First, Korea is committed to contributing to international efforts in response to and for the prevention of gender-based violence in armed conflict. The efforts are varied, including financial support for the victims and survivors of gender-based violence in armed conflicts. This is indeed in line with the Korean Government's initiative for action with women and peace, which was launched in 2018. Second, the Korean Mission in Geneva is committed to achieving gender parity, in both quality and quantity, in all events the Mission is organizing in 2020.

I thank you again for bringing this important topic to the Council Chamber today.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea and give the floor to the Ambassador of Spain.

Mr. Sánchez de Lerín García-Ovies (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. Allow me to begin by expressing my regret at this chamber's inability to commit to the adoption of your programme of work. Despite the tremendous efforts of the six presidencies, we have not been able to move forward and break the deadlock that we have been in for the past twenty years. We already know that we are not in a position to take on a negotiating mandate overnight, but it is for that reason that adopting a structured schedule of discussions as a programme of work, even if it does not contain a negotiating mandate, would be a first step towards restoring confidence and enabling the reasonably early return of negotiations to this chamber.

Given this void, our session today is devoted to an issue that is fundamental to Spanish foreign policy: the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in diplomacy. I am particularly grateful for this initiative, Mr. President, for the encouraging words of the Director-General and for the helpful research from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. My Minister has defined the foreign policy of the first Spanish coalition Government as a feminist foreign policy. Gender issues will therefore always be on our list of priorities, as they have already been over the past few years. Spain has been engaged in a steady, continuous effort to bring a gender perspective into the entire process of preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding and disarmament, which has earned us recognition as International Gender Champions at the United Nations. The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has set an example in this respect, as the new Deputy Director for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation is a woman, and she heads a department where women make up more than 50 per cent of staff. The Ministry is also giving priority to disarmament matters in its continuing education, with support from the Ambassador at Large for Equality. It is not only in the diplomatic corps but also in other administrative corps that the meaningful participation of women is actively promoted, from the armed forces, where women already

serve at the highest levels of command, as generals, to civilian stakeholders involved in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform initiatives.

The Interministerial Board on Foreign Trade in Military and Dual-Use Goods, the Spanish arms control body that issues licences for arms transactions, is chaired by a woman. Spain sponsored the creation of the Focal Points Network in connection with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and is leading Commitment 2025, an initiative on women and peace and security that sets medium-term objectives for the promotion of a gender perspective in this area.

My country implemented a national action plan to put into practice Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and, as a member of the Council from 2015 to 2016, supported the high-level review of the resolution, which resulted in a new resolution, resolution 2242 (2015), and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the documents, language and work of the Security Council. The action lines of our plan with respect to gender in the areas of disarmament and security focus on several aspects: the protection of women and girls in conflict situations (protection from sexual violence, gender-based violence and other violations of their rights in particular); the protection of women in situations of vulnerability as a result of conflict, such as refugee or displaced women and indigenous women; the situation of victims, especially in connection with humanitarian demining and situations of violence; women's meaningful participation in the decision-making process in preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and peacebuilding; and awareness-raising in society through language, communication and outreach tools.

Mr. President, as a signatory to almost all the disarmament conventions, Spain has also advocated the adoption of a gender perspective in both multilateral and bilateral policies and in development cooperation. We have therefore supported the introduction of gender issues into the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the discussions at the last Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and the recent Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We are now a coordinator of the Victim Assistance Committee under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, in connection with which women have the least desired role, that of victims. Countless projects under our policy on development cooperation and disarmament have a gender perspective at their core: the support we provide for the Victims and Land Restitution Act in Colombia, the protection of displaced persons in Honduras, provided together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the EL PACCTO project between the European Union and Latin America on the involvement of women in gangs and urban violence, the safe cities for women projects in Honduras and Morocco and many more.

I would like to conclude by announcing that the seminar on disarmament and gender that Spain hosted in Madrid in 2019 will be held again this year, possibly in both Madrid and New York.

In short, Mr. President, my country is a fervent proponent of gender equality in the field of disarmament, and you can count on our support in any initiatives that arise in this area, so that we can improve our prospects in this Conference. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Spain for his eloquent statement, which saves me from having to respond to certain questions or doubts raised in this chamber. I give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Ms. Celasin Rende (Turkey): Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, we express our appreciation to the Argentine presidency for convening today's debate on the gender perspective in disarmament and for the non-paper presented on this important matter. We also thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ms. Valovaya, and the representative of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for their presentations.

Taking this opportunity, we would also like to commend the efforts of the Argentine presidency to get the Conference back to work, in cooperation with the five other Presidents of this year's session, the last President of the 2019 session and the first President of the 2021 session. That being said, Mr. President, as we will mark the twentieth anniversary of

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which laid the foundation for the women and peace and security agenda, we find today's debate a timely occasion on which to reflect on achievements and to discuss how to address the remaining gaps and challenges in realizing the overall goal of increasing women's engagement in this field.

Mr. President, Turkey believes that the increased use of the women and peace and security agenda is a critical tool for conflict prevention and resolution, as well as for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Through resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent related resolutions of the Security Council, a solid normative framework has been established towards this end. We are pleased to see that these resolutions encourage the United Nations system and the Member States to step up their efforts and develop programmes to increase women's participation as leaders in military and law enforcement and as peacebuilders in treaty and peace agreement negotiations.

There has been deeper awareness of and more serious attention given to the vulnerability and asymmetric impact of conflict on women. In that context, Turkey acknowledges the establishment of the position of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2009, the formation of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security in 2015 and the development of the United Nations Secretary-General's uniformed gender parity strategy 2018–2028 as important steps towards strengthening the role of women in maintaining peace and security, including arms control and disarmament.

Mr. President, despite the progress, there is still much work to be done to fully translate the women and peace and security agenda into action. This requires more concerted efforts and commitments by United Nations entities and Member States as well as regional organizations and civil society. Moreover, we believe it is imperative to directly address these root causes of conflict, including through the promotion of gender equality and greater and meaningful participation of women in all forms of mediation, prevention of conflict, United Nations peace operations, post-conflict recovery, peacebuilding processes and disarmament.

We also support the importance of increasing the number of gender advisers in United Nations peace operations. Further efforts are required to see more women gaining positions of leadership or seats at the negotiating table and enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making at all stages of peace processes, as well as for the implementation of peace agreements.

As we look forward, Turkey sees the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) as an opportunity to shape the agenda for the next decade with new commitments and priorities and stands ready to play its role in international efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda and in increasing the engagement of women in disarmament and related topics. I thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Turkey for her statement and give the floor to the delegation of the United States of America.

Ms. Bauman (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President. I apologize for taking the floor – it was not my intention. I have really enjoyed this discussion today on gender issues, but because my delegation was mentioned by name, I just wanted to exercise a quick right of reply.

I wanted to share with the group a quote that I recently came across that resonated with me. It says that the biggest communication problem is that we listen not to understand but to reply, and I want to say, Mr. President, today, this session was a great example of the former. We as a group have really listened to one another and listened and heard about each other's national statements on this gender issue. And I for one have appreciated that discussion.

It is unfortunate, however, that one delegation felt the need to take this opportunity to divert the discussion to other topics. But the topics raised by that delegation make it clear that this body does have a lot of substance we need to discuss, that there is a lot of disagreement and that we have to delve into that substance.

But from a perspective of understanding each other, not just replying or waiting for an opportunity to reply, it is ironic that this delegation is the same delegation that has kept us from being able to have those substantive discussions by standing in the way of the

adoption of a programme of work. That said, taking a positive approach to the future, I do look forward to hearing from Australia and the five other member States that will occupy the presidency this session on their plans for the rest of the 2020 session on how we can, in an organized, structured way, approach these substantive issues that we need to address and how we start delving into the discussion on working methods. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of the United States of America for its statement and give the floor to the delegation of Indonesia.

Mr. Rosandry (Indonesia): Thank you for giving me the floor, Mr. President. Allow me to thank you for initiating this discussion on the gender perspective in disarmament and for presenting the non-paper to the Conference on Disarmament.

Indonesia shares the views of many other delegations that gender is a cross-cutting issue with direct relevance to the implementation of broader peace and security efforts. Furthermore, women can contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). We believe as well that women are agents of peace and tolerance and deserve a greater role in the work of disarmament, including in terms of building networks of experts in disarmament.

Mr. President, in the last few years, we have witnessed the enhancement of the gender perspective in the area of disarmament, although there is more work to be done. In this context, then, pursuing the gender perspective in our work is important if we are to strengthen diverse and meaningful participation by women and men in all aspects of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

To conclude, Mr. President, we need to collectively incorporate the gender perspective in all efforts in arms control and disarmament with a view to fostering international peace and security. I thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Indonesia for his statement and give the floor to the delegation of Cuba.

Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. In Cuba, the importance of women is real; it is not a fiction or something to which only lip service is given. It is State policy to adopt a gender perspective in all areas, with hard data rather than slogans or speeches. Women are empowered in Cuba not because men have been generous to them but because they won their rights. Women were present from the very beginning, as far back as 1868, in our struggles for independence in Cuba. They burned their homes and cities to keep them from falling into enemy hands. They taught their children about the fight for freedom and pushed them towards it, standing shoulder to shoulder in the long struggle that lasted for more than a hundred years. Women often took on risks that many men were incapable of facing.

Before the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, Cuban men outnumbered Cuban women, who were subject to political, legal and cultural discrimination. With the passing of the years, the ratio has been reversed. Today, women outnumber men in Cuba and carry significant weight in all aspects of the country's economic, political and social life. Women's life expectancy, which has reached 80.45 years, is more than three years longer than that of men and is higher than in many of the world's developed countries.

In short, in my country, women fought for freedom from Spanish colonialism and the neo-colonialism that the Platt Amendment imposed on Cuba in 1902, and today they are fighting to build an ever fairer and more just society in Cuba in the midst of the cruellest and longest-lasting economic, commercial and financial embargo to which a people has been subjected in the history of humanity.

Mr. President, this reality reflects a consistent State policy that promotes all human rights for everyone, with a special emphasis on gender issues. We are not yet satisfied and will continue working in all areas, in particular to bring about a lasting, radical change in the traditional patriarchal culture prevailing around the world. Today, Cuban women fully enjoy all their rights and exercise them on an absolutely equal basis with men. Women's sexual and reproductive rights are guaranteed, and any form of discrimination is sanctioned and prosecuted by law. Currently, 53.22 per cent of the members of the Cuban National Assembly, which is the highest State and government body in Cuba, are women. I am convinced that if the Conference on Disarmament had a similar composition, we would not

be talking about gender today, but rather would be fulfilling our mandate to negotiate legally binding treaties that put an end to proliferation and guarantee disarmament. We would be closer to peace, and that would be our real contribution to the hundreds of thousands of women and girls who die as victims of wars of plunder, the arms trade, the many conflicts that serve to increase financial gain and the unilateral measures and genocidal embargoes that are adopted extraterritorially and illegally by the major Powers and imposed on sovereign peoples, made up in large part by women and girls.

Mr. President, Cuban women are mainstays in the defence of our country and the promotion of peace and harmony. Examples abound and, to cite just one that is closely related to our work today, I would like to mention that, five years ago, the Cuban Ambassador to this Conference was a woman. Immediately thereafter, she became the Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations, and today she is the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs with responsibility for multilateral affairs and bilateral relations with most of the world's countries. My predecessor in this Conference was also a woman, and, at a deeper level, the person who brought me into the world is a woman, the one who supports me and whom I support every day is a woman, and the person I helped bring into the world is a girl who will one day also be a woman empowered in Cuba, for the world.

I would like to end with two sentences by José Martí, the national hero of Cuba, who lived the nineteenth century, long ago, when there was no discourse on gender. José Martí believed that the homeland was humanity and said that the whole homeland is in woman: if she fails, we die; if she is loyal to us, we are. Woman's abnegation compels man to virtue. I hope that this Conference will find that virtue and start to negotiate legally binding treaties for complete nuclear disarmament or outlaw an arms race in space, to give only two examples. I am convinced that we therefore need for women not to fail us and for them to be present in great numbers in this room.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Ms. Díaz Mendoza (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela): Thank you, Mr. President. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to take this opportunity to thank the Argentine presidency and its excellent team for their bold efforts. We welcome Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and thank her for her important remarks today. We also appreciate the contributions made by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. In my country, the gender perspective is a coherent, cross-cutting State policy that does not depend on a single or sole agenda. The promotion of gender equality and equity and empowerment is a vehicle contributing to progress. My country attaches great importance to the work of the Conference and sees it as the sole multilateral body for negotiations on disarmament and an integral and vital part of the disarmament machinery that must be preserved and strengthened. To that end, we wish to highlight the importance of focusing on and circumscribing our efforts to the items on the Conference agenda.

In recent weeks, we, the member States, have shown that it is possible to hold a constructive and inclusive dialogue free of destructive politicization, despite all the existing bilateral geopolitical tensions and despite the existence of global and regional security doctrines that are naturally in considerable conflict with one another. We are advocates for the construction of a multipolar international system geared towards peace, justice and development, founded on unbounded respect for the rules and principles of international law. The Conference must play a role in these matters and find its path again in order to take its rightful place on the international scene. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for her statement and give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President. I am sorry to take the floor again. I took the floor to exercise my right of reply.

Mr. President, as a matter of fact, gender equality has been an important issue for my Government and for our country. For your information, around 60 per cent of our

university students are women. This is not just lip service – we have to show our respect for this issue in actions. Too many words without actions definitely serve no purpose.

I should remind the delegation that previously took the floor to say we should listen to understand that if you had been listening to understand, you would have not left the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or tried to erode multilateralism. If you had been listening to understand, you would have heeded the international community's call not to leave the Paris Agreement and the climate change agreements. And, most importantly, since we are dealing with COVID-19, if you had been listening to understand the global appeal, you would have definitely lifted those sanctions that it is your policy to use in a malicious attempt to drain the Iranian resources needed in the fight against this virus. This is a global threat and a global pandemic, not a Wuhan virus, as an unseasoned Secretary of State described it. I thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its statement. I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Ms. Mohammad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. I wish to express my appreciation for the valuable ideas presented by the women and men who have spoken before me on this very important topic: gender equality in the field of disarmament. The participation of Syrian women alongside men in the political, economic and social fields has always stood out. I am honoured to refer to Ms. Alice Kandalaft, who, in the 1940s, was the first Arab woman to represent her country as Ambassador to the United Nations and made valuable contributions at the second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. There are many, many examples of women holding important senior positions in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. President, I have the honour to take the floor for the first time in the historic Council Chamber at the United Nations Office at Geneva, a room that has witnessed great achievements in the recent history of disarmament. When I started my diplomatic career, I was hopeful that I would witness the Conference on Disarmament's emergence from the prolonged deadlock of more than two decades, but, unfortunately, we have not yet succeeded. However, I am still very hopeful, Mr. President, that the upcoming discussions will lead us to our desired goal, without any politicization. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for her statement. I believe we have finished with the statements on the substantive discussion, so we will now move on to other issues. Before that, as a way to close this part of our meeting, I would like to thank all the delegations that took the floor for their valuable contributions and urge them to continue working to prevent violence and discrimination and promote equal opportunities, because I believe that the essence of what we have heard today is that, if we address the issue of gender, we will have a better world, and that will obviously also be reflected in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Mansfield of Australia on other matters.

Ms. Mansfield (Australia): Thank you very much indeed, Mr. President. And can I say once again a huge thank you to the Argentine team and, of course, your Ambassador, who left late last week, for their hard work and persistence during your presidency? We really appreciated your efforts and the way you built on the sterling work that was undertaken by the Algerian presidency on behalf of the six Presidents of the 2020 session, the last President of the 2019 session and the first of the 2021 session (P6 plus 2). We saw that commitment up close, and it has been very much a privilege to travel this far with you. We are conscious that we will shortly move into your position and we wanted to take this opportunity to talk a little bit about the proposals Australia and the five other Presidents of the 2020 session have for the rest of the year.

But before I move on to that specifically, can I just follow on from the secretariat's comments with regard to COVID-19? And thank you very much for setting out the secretariat's position. Clearly, it is a fluid situation, but I want to say that for the P6 States and for Australia, as we go into the presidency, the safety, the security and the well-being of everyone is a priority. We will thus continue to monitor the situation and work with the secretariat and assess whether or not there are additional modifications or mitigations that we could put in place. You will have seen, I hope, the guidelines issued by the United

Nations Office at Geneva on 3 March, which provided a lot of practical information, some of which was reiterated this morning by the secretariat.

I would urge you again to make sure that you take it seriously while, at the same time, we assess the risk and try to get on with business as best as we can, because the responsibility for meetings rests not so much with the United Nations Office at Geneva, which facilitates them, as with the organizers. It is, again, something that we will continue to take seriously.

We will need to double-check this with the secretariat, but I understand that the decision was made by the Human Rights Council this morning to move the rest of its meetings from room XX in building E to the Assembly Hall in building A, which, as I understand it, the secretariat thought could then mean it would be possible for our Conference on Disarmament plenary meetings to be moved into the Human Rights Council room, which would again give us a little bit more room at a time when being cosy is probably not the ideal situation. We wanted to mention that that is an option, and now I need to double-check with the secretariat that that is indeed the case.

Another option would, of course, also be to postpone the coming two weeks of plenary meetings under the Australian presidency and try to catch that time up. But I might just stop here and ask the secretariat whether or not there are any clarifications it could provide on this and then perhaps seek views. I might then step through in a little more detail the proposals that Australia and the remaining presidencies have for our work in the rest of 2020.

Ms. Day (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament): I thank the Ambassador of Australia for the questions which have been put to our United Nations Office at Geneva colleagues and the Division of Conference Management in particular. There are larger rooms than this one. We are checking availability. Depending on the plans and programme of the next and future presidencies, there might be a need for flexibility on the days and times at which the Conference on Disarmament might want to gather. We will have an answer shortly, as we start liaising with the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Ms. Mansfield (Australia): Thank you very much for those clarifications. It does sound as though using the Human Rights Council room, room XX, could be an option for the meeting. But perhaps if I could see whether or not there are any comments from delegates and, obviously, as I said at the beginning, this is something that we would consider on a regular basis. A decision now, then, does not necessarily mean that we cannot revisit it at a future point. We are also most happy to consult by email and so on. If anyone has comments or questions right now, I would be very happy to see whether between us and the secretariat, we can answer them. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the delegation of Cuba.

Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I thank the Ambassador of Australia for her comments as well as the secretariat. I am taking the floor because it is not clear to me what the purpose is of the discussion we are now having. Is the Conference on Disarmament now deciding whether we will postpone the meeting for two weeks, as other bodies have done? Are we deciding whether we will change rooms? In either case, we obviously have a very strong tradition of public health and we support any efforts in that respect, but we also do not like to fall in line behind policies that do not have any real scientific basis.

In other words, I do not know to what extent changing rooms will actually help or not help or whether there has been input from a World Health Organization expert or a recommendation from the United Nations to the United Nations Office at Geneva. If there has been, I would like to hear it, because what concerns me most out of everything that has been said is the Ambassador's final comment that, if we take a decision now, we cannot change it later. What is unclear to me is what decision we are taking now.

I do not know if I have expressed myself clearly, but that is why I have taken the floor. Please excuse this statement. Perhaps I misunderstood what was said.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Ambassador of Australia has the floor.

Ms. Mansfield (Australia): Thank you, Mr. President, and thanks to Cuba for seeking clarification.

In essence, what we as the group of the session's six Presidents looked at and spoke about with the secretariat was whether or not the situation had changed, in terms of the health risk. For us, in the Conference on Disarmament, we have relatively few people coming in from capitals – it is basically the same group of people that has been meeting for ten days. Because within the population, the numbers are going up, we think it is worth seeking delegations' comments and thoughts on whether or not the risk assessment that was conducted – and whereby we continue – has shifted slightly.

We have thought about it in terms of the guidance that has come from the World Health Organization and then been assessed by the United Nations Office at Geneva. One of those bits of advice is to try to have greater space between delegations, so that is the specific area where moving into a larger room could help a little bit. That said, we are not as jammed in here in this room as in some of the smaller rooms. Perhaps people are perfectly comfortable remaining in this room, but because there can be a difference of opinion as situations change, the group of six Presidents thought that it was worth at least seeing whether any colleagues did have concerns. I would say specifically the only difference in moving from this room to room XX would be for more space. Essentially, it is the same group of people who would be coming together, so that factor is very little changed. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Australia for the clarification. We will keep the members of the Conference on Disarmament informed. As I understand that there are no further requests to speak, today's meeting is closed – excuse me, the Ambassador of Australia has requested the floor.

Ms. Mansfield (Australia): Thank you very much, Mr. President. You are hearing a bit from me today. But what I was keen to do is to talk a bit more about the planning that we have done with our colleagues in the group of the session's six Presidents and about what our agenda might look like across the rest of the year, assuming indeed that we are able to continue the plenary meetings at the usual rate.

When we take on the role next week, we do feel a strong sense of responsibility and a duty of care for the Conference on Disarmament. We recognize that we were not able to achieve consensus on the programme of work; nonetheless, we would like to try to bring issues of substance before this Conference.

The six Presidents of the 2020 session (P6) put forward three options for a package for our work in 2020. We have now come up with a coordinated schedule for plenary meetings for the rest of the year and we propose to provide that to all delegations through the secretariat in due course. What we are suggesting is that the plenary meetings should cover all Conference agenda items equally, as well as the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. We would also propose to continue consultations on a programme of work. We want Conference members and observers to know what we will discuss well in advance, so you have time to prepare and engage actively during the sessions. We would also encourage you to consider submitting working papers and relevant documents to help us frame those discussions.

Mr. President, as part of the coordinated P6 schedule, Australia proposes to hold at least four thematic plenary meetings. These will focus on agenda items 1 to 3 and on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. Our first plenary meeting, on 17 March next week, assuming all goes well, will focus on nuclear disarmament verification, including the report of the relevant United Nations Group of Government Experts. We encourage delegates to consider the Group's report and its various working papers and the ways the Conference could work on nuclear disarmament verification. Future multilateral negotiation on nuclear disarmament will need to include verification, so it is critical that this body has thought deeply about how to do it.

Our second plenary meeting will focus on nuclear risk reduction, with a panel followed by interactive discussion. In 2018, delegations agreed in subsidiary body 2 that further discussions on nuclear risk reduction would be welcome and so we are taking that up. We encourage delegates to consider what role the Conference could usefully play in understanding and in reducing nuclear risks.

After the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we will host our third plenary discussion, which would be on reducing

security risks in outer space. This will be an opportunity to share national approaches to managing security risks in outer space. We want to work with all nations to build an international consensus on responsible space behaviour and hope that we can explore this theme.

Our fourth and final plenary meeting will then focus on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. This is not a new topic for the Conference, and in the light of challenges in fulfilling the Conference's negotiating mandate, it is important to examine critically whether there are ways we could be more effective. Some ideas may be modest but could make a difference to the way we work – for example, what you have seen so far this year in terms of the enhanced coordination by the six Presidents of the 2020 session, the last President of the 2019 session and the first of the 2021 session, which we think has made a difference, and we hope will continue to be a factor in driving issues forward.

Colleagues, you have heard earlier the importance that we assign to gender, to diversity and to including all voices. Including those voices will lead us to better decisions. But in close examination of the Conference's rules of procedure, I was quite surprised to see that they are not in fact gender-neutral, so they do not seem to reflect gender equality. During our presidency, we will propose a technical amendment to the Conference's rules of procedure to make them gender-neutral. We know that we have to be cautious when opening up the rules of procedure; this is not what we would be seeking to do. This is very different from anything else that has been under discussion so far. It would purely and simply be asking delegations to support a technical amendment to introduce gender equality and neutrality in the language of the rules of procedure, and we will come back to that in the course of our presidency.

Finally, Mr. President, we said a couple of weeks ago that two presidencies was enough time to spend on this year's package proposal for a programme of work in the plenary meetings, so we will not propose to continue discussing it in this format. But we are extremely proud of the package, the work that was put into it at the beginning of the year under our Algerian colleagues and indeed the work that you have then continued. And we very much feel that it is worthy of further consideration and that it remains on the table. We would thus be available to any delegations that wish to meet us to discuss furthering the programme of work for this body. With those comments, I will close. Thanks very much, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador. Now I can say that we have concluded the business of the day – but I see the delegation of Brazil. I give the floor to the Ambassador.

Mr. De Barros Carvalho e Mello Mourão (Brazil): Thank you, Mr. President. I am sorry for taking the floor late this morning, but I will be brief.

Mr. President, since we have been here from the end of January talking a lot about everything but disarmament and non-proliferation, I ask your indulgence for a two-minute speech in honour of a man of peace who died last week in his hometown, Lima in Peru, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ambassador Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. Ambassador Pérez de Cuéllar was first Ambassador here to Switzerland. After that, he became Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Relations of his country and then Ambassador to the former Soviet Union. He had also been the Permanent Representative of his country to the United Nations and, as such, President of the Security Council. He was appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and just two months after his retirement from the diplomatic service of Peru, he was elected Secretary-General of the United Nations and, afterwards, re-elected for a second mandate that ended in 1992.

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, even before his designation as Assistant Secretary-General, acted as an envoy to Cyprus to obtain a truce between Greek and Turkish communities to begin peace negotiations. During his two mandates as Secretary-General, he had to face and help resolve – which he did with diplomatic acumen – several delicate world situations, including the peace negotiations on the Malvinas War, the liberation of hostages in Lebanon, the peace between the Government and the guerrillas in El Salvador, the peace arrangements for the end of the war between Iran and Iraq, besides being constant in condemning the apartheid regime in South Africa.

But why am I bringing his name up today, here before the Conference on Disarmament? Because he was a man of peace and disarmament. And I believe we have a lesson to learn from him, these days in particular. What we can learn from him, Mr. President, I believe, is his message that disarmament is not just a matter of discussing whether we are going to dismantle nuclear devices, whether we are going to do so transparently or not, whether we are obeying the proper rules in our discussions here or whether there are new technical aspects for some weapons that have to be dealt with. Of course, all these are very important matters, but the lesson we have from the diplomatic life of Ambassador Pérez de Cuéllar is that disarmament can really only be achieved through the disarmament of our minds and hearts and through an effective and consensual use of diplomacy. If we are not able to start from there, we will never be able to effectively achieve disarmament or non-proliferation. So, long live the memory of this great Latin American Ambassador Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador, for those well-deserved words of remembrance for the late Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. I will give the floor to the delegation of Cuba and then to the delegation of Peru.

Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I sincerely apologize for taking the floor again, but I do so in response to the comments of the Ambassador of Australia. Cuba very much appreciates the effort that the Presidents of this session have been making. At the last meeting, when the possibility of addressing issues in future plenary meetings was discussed, we said to the Ambassador of Australia that it would be good to have a complete picture because having such a picture would help us make plans and take stock of the issues.

My concern, which I would like to raise now rather than waiting until the next meeting, is about the document that is going to be presented, because there was talk of a document. Our delegation supports and welcomes the transparency of the plan of the presidencies of the 2020 session to give us an overview of what we will be doing during the entire year. We also see it as very positive that this is a collective effort. However, we would like to caution that the document that will be presented – and I hope that what I am saying is mistaken and that I do not actually need to say it – should not in any way supplant the programme of work, as that is not the responsibility of the Presidents of the session.

Accordingly, although I have not seen the document, I am convinced that the document I receive will be something very simple that says, “this is the agenda item and this is the date”, without any other type of comment, because comments as to the format of the meeting, what will be discussed at the meeting, the mandate for that meeting, and so on would already bring us close – dangerously close, I believe – to a programme of work rather than a proposal from the Presidents. We have full and absolute confidence in the presidency, in the six Presidents of this session and, in particular, in the presidency of Australia, which will start next week, but I wanted to share this word of caution to avoid being presented by the secretariat with a document whose purpose is unclear – if we are given such a document, we will start the next meeting talking about the document in which we will talk about the issues instead of talking about the substantive issue themselves – to avoid to a certain extent being what this Conference, sadly, has become and to really concentrate on substantive matters, with respect to which you and all the other Presidents will have the full support of Cuba.

I wanted to make only this comment, and, as I said, I hope I am mistaken. I don't mind making a mistake in these cases. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Australia to clarify this point.

Ms. Mansfield (Australia): Thank you very much, Mr. President. I think you will find that the document we proposed to provide will reassure our colleagues with regard to the point raised by the delegate of Cuba. It is very simple – it has the agenda items that you know well and just a date and which country might take them forward. We have been very careful to discuss this with the five other Presidents of the 2020 session and to make sure that it is a balanced approach in terms of the amount of time. There is no judgment about the content – it is absolutely up to each individual President to see it through. You will thus find that it is a very simple document that we hope will just give each delegation an

opportunity to think about the plenary topics for those days. I think you will have no trouble with it. We put it to the assembled community in good faith as a way of organizing the work that each plenary meeting will cover. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I understand that the point has been clarified and I give the floor to the delegation of Peru.

Mr. Aréstegui Bravo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, and excuse me for asking for the floor again this morning. I wish, briefly, to express my delegation's appreciation and gratitude to the Ambassador of Brazil for his words of tribute to Ambassador Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. My delegation deeply appreciates this gesture of friendship and sympathy for this civil servant and illustrious Peruvian diplomat who devoted his life to serving Peru and the international community, carried out his highest duties as the fifth Secretary-General of the United Nations with exemplary integrity and commitment and, from the time he took on that position, contributed to international peace and security in different regions of the world. I would again like to thank the President for this opportunity and the Ambassador of Brazil for his words of sympathy and tribute to Ambassador Pérez de Cuéllar.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Peru for his statement. So as to be sure, I would like to ask whether any other delegation would like to take the floor. As none wish to, we will end the meeting with some final remarks.

First, I would like to again express my thanks for the assistance my delegation has received and all the support that the delegations have given to the Argentine presidency and to the efforts of the six Presidents of this session. We are finishing our presidency, but we remain committed to the group of six Presidents and will continue to work with the other Presidents of this session as well as the last President of the previous session and the first one of the next session.

I would also like to thank all the official members of the Conference on Disarmament and the interpreters for their support and to announce that the next plenary meeting will take place on Tuesday, 17 March, at 10 a.m. under the presidency of Australia. Thank you very much. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.