

Conference on Disarmament

English

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President: Mr. Jorge Lomónaco(Mexico)

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The President: I call to order the 1337th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

You will recall that yesterday I informed you of a request received by the secretariat to allow Ambassador István Gyarmati, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), to address the Conference on Disarmament today. With your permission, I would like now to give the floor to Ambassador Gyarmati.

Mr. Gyarmati (Chair of the Board of Trustees, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research): If I may start with a personal remark, allow me to say that it is a very good feeling to be back in this room. I have been here many times as the representative of Hungary and have some very good memories. I am old enough to remember that we worked very hard here 20 years ago and I am happy to see that this is continuing.

Now I am here in another capacity: as the Chair of the Advisory Board of the Secretary-General on Disarmament Matters and, in particular, as the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). I asked the President to give me this opportunity to acquaint you with the very difficult situation that UNIDIR is currently facing, but also to offer to help find a way out of this situation in order to preserve UNIDIR for the next 35 years.

UNIDIR needs no introduction to the disarmament community in this chamber. When the member States created UNIDIR, they decided that it would be based in Geneva in order to support the predecessor of the Conference on Disarmament. UNIDIR convenes meetings, expert panels and workshops on items on the Conference's agenda. It offers advice and support to the Conference's Presidents, groups and member States looking to take forward initiatives within this body. It has contributed an enormous amount of insight about breaking the Conference deadlock, including on its blog "Disarmament Insight", as well as in books and papers on specific agenda items, such as fissile material. Its annual Space Conference helps to keep the conversation on the prevention of an arms race in outer space active and ongoing. Judging from the feedback we have received, there is no doubt — absolutely no doubt — that member States value the contribution of UNIDIR to the disarmament community through its relevant, practical and fact-based policy work. However, I am very sad to have to inform you that UNIDIR today is in the midst of a serious crisis. If you are not able to find solutions to the most important questions, we might lose UNIDIR forever.

You will recall that UNIDIR has been in difficult situations before, actually for decades now. You may, of course, ask: Why now? Why do we think that UNIDIR is in a more difficult crisis — in an existential crisis — today, as opposed to the crises of previous years that UNIDIR, with its very able staff and directors, was able to overcome? Why are we in crisis now?

There are two very important issues that point to why this crisis is different from previous ones. It is not about the work that UNIDIR is doing. UNIDIR is doing good work and that it is recognized by member States both in words and — when I come in a minute to the financial situation of UNIDIR — you will see that over the years there has not been a single year when UNIDIR was not able to collect sufficient financial contributions, mainly from member States, in order to keep up its excellent work on different projects. However, there is one thing that is a positive change in my view, in general, but which affects UNIDIR in such a way that it might not be able to survive. This new development is called Umoja. You have all heard the word; it is a very nice word. It is a very good system in my view to handle the United Nations institutions, but it is geared to handle finances, human resources and administrative issues of entities that are funded from the regular budget and UNIDIR is not funded, basically, from the regular budget. So, UNIDIR will not be able to

handle the challenges posed by Umoja. This does not mean to imply that Umoja is not good, it is just not good for UNIDIR, because UNIDIR is different.

The second issue is a detail, but a very important detail: it is the way UNIDIR employs research staff. As you know, research staff are different from institutional staff. Researchers are hired using project money and are hired for the duration of the project. Until now, they were hired on the basis of so-called letters of appointment that were issued by the Director of UNIDIR. That used to be a very widespread way of employing temporary staff but it is out of fashion these days. To my knowledge, it is not used by anyone but UNIDIR within the United Nations system. Even more importantly, it creates an ambiguous situation in relation to the taxation situation of the researchers which needs to be addressed.

Now, what are the issues? You might expect that I would start with financial issues, but I will start with staff: for two reasons. The first reason is that all that UNIDIR has is staff. The staff has made sure that the money UNIDIR receives has been used in the best way possible. Staff are very able and very loyal, and I think we need to make every effort to maintain staff at this level. UNIDIR staff is composed of two parts. It has institutional staff, which is needed to run the Institute: the Director, the Secretary and the Financial Officer, the Deputy Director and an Administrative Officer; and it has research staff. Now, the institutional staff has to be on United Nations regularized contracts. That does not mean that they all have to be paid from the regular budget, but they have to be United Nations employees from the regular budget and from voluntary contributions. Project staff have to be, and have been, contracted on the basis of the projects that UNIDIR runs. The projects and activities budget is no problem. As I said, we have been able, with the help of many of you sitting in this room and our Governments, to collect sufficient funds. Of course, UNIDIR could use more money to run more projects, but that depends on demand and demand has been high. If it becomes higher in the near future, money will come in. So, we do not see specific problems, except for the administrative and legal situation of the researchers as I mentioned before.

The real problem is the institutional or operational budget. Staff who are not directly participating in research are not directly paid by the money coming in from projects. They have to be paid from other resources. There are three ways or resources for doing this. One would be an increased subvention from the United Nations budget — and I understand, of course, the financial situation of the United Nations — but just as an illustration, I must tell you that when UNIDIR was created, the subvention covered the cost of three institutional staff. Today, it does not even cover the cost of the Director; that is a dramatic decrease.

The second way is from project overhead. This is, of course, a less reliable and less predictable source, most importantly because donors are increasingly less ready to pay for overhead. It is understandable, from their side, that donors want to pay for projects, but I think we donors need to understand that institutional costs have to be covered. You cannot run a project if you cannot pay the electricity bill or the Director.

The third way is voluntary contributions. UNIDIR is getting voluntary contributions — so-called unearmarked contributions that it can spend on salaries of institutional staff — but not enough.

Those are the three sources. We will have to find a balanced solution between the three subventions and earmark contributions and overhead to cover the cost of the four or five institutional staff that I have mentioned.

Otherwise, we have a lot to lose. If UNIDIR ceases to exist — and I must underline that this is a real danger come 1 November, with the introduction of Umoja — if you do not find solutions to these outstanding issues, UNIDIR will not be able to function.

What shall we lose? Objective policy research and analysis: expertise on your doorstep here in this Palais, if you need it. We would lose the only United Nations analytical body following Conference on Disarmament discussions and producing policy-relevant analysis and support which cannot be replaced by any of the civil society organizations; and support in the form of standing expertise for the Conference on Disarmament, when it comes to substantive discussions and negotiations. In the end, I think it is the Conference on Disarmament that will lose, but also the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Arms Trade Treaty and the First Committee will lose. Ultimately, I think Member States will lose — they will lose this opportunity that is offered by UNIDIR.

I therefore would like to issue a plea that you make sure your Governments know about the problems and that they understand them. We will need support in two respects. First of all, of course the most obvious way of support is increased funding, especially for institutional funding through one of the three ways: unearmarked contributions, increased overhead of projects, and support in the First Committee — and most importantly the Fifth Committee — to increase the subvention for UNIDIR. I know this is a very delicate issue but I think we have to address it; otherwise, we will have to face a huge challenge on 1 November as to the continued existence of UNIDIR.

As you may remember, the year before last Member States rallied during the change management initiative to protect UNIDIR as an autonomous part of the United Nations system. That was because you recognized that the valuable contribution of UNIDIR to your work would not be possible were it not autonomous, nor would it possible through a body outside the United Nations. We now face a similar challenge, or maybe an even more serious challenge. It is only the Member States who can help to solve it, with, of course, the support of the UNIDIR Board of Trustees, its Director, his staff, and also the Secretary-General, who assured me when I spoke with him that he would do everything in his power to help solve these issues. Ultimately, however, even the Secretary-General depends on the Member States. The matter lies in your hands and I would like to ask you to help UNIDIR, because in helping UNIDIR we help ourselves.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador Gyarmati, for this very useful information and for the pledge that you have put before us. Does any delegation wish to take the floor on this issue? I give the floor to the Ambassador of France.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would just like to take the floor to thank Ambassador Gyarmati for coming here to inform the Conference on Disarmament about the situation at UNIDIR.

I believe that all of us here are very committed to UNIDIR continuing its work in the service of the disarmament community in Geneva and of the Conference on Disarmament. By an accident of the alphabet, France sits next to Finland and I should like to recall that, three years ago, Finland, which then held the Conference presidency, received enormous assistance from UNIDIR in leading the work of the Conference. The presidencies that followed Finland, including my own, continued with this tradition and I would like, once again, to thank UNIDIR for its extremely important, extremely substantial contribution, which was most valuable at that time.

I should also like to emphasize that my country will continue to support UNIDIR, including financially, of course. Lastly, I should like to remind members of the Conference that we are in 2015 and that this is a year in which, by tradition, the draft resolution on UNIDIR is submitted to the First Committee of the General Assembly. This year marks the thirty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of UNIDIR.

The draft resolution is traditionally submitted by France and this will be the occasion for all Member States of the United Nations, not only of the Conference on

Disarmament, to back up their support for UNIDIR, including financially, and provide political and financial support, either through voluntary contributions or through the contribution of the United Nations regular budget, to the funding of UNIDIR.

This will be an important event, in my view. If States are in agreement, it will be a means of helping to find a solution to the financial problems facing UNIDIR, which are modest compared with the multilateral budgets for which we are responsible, and to support an institution whose role is, I believe, irreplaceable in promoting the progress of disarmament and facilitating our work.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of France for his statement and also for his country's support to UNIDIR. Now I give the floor to the Ambassador of Finland.

Ms. Kairamo (Finland): On my behalf and on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our thanks and gratitude to you, Ambassador Gyarmati, for your personal commitment to the work of UNIDIR and your tireless advocacy of the work that UNIDIR is doing. That is very important. I was going to refer to the Conference on Disarmament presidency that my Government held in 2012, but I will refrain from doing so because my colleague from France has already done so. However, I would like to similarly underline that kind of cooperation, which we found extremely useful. Finally, and this is the most obvious thing, we find the research work that UNIDIR provides to disarmament extremely helpful given that we cannot carry out that kind of research ourselves. We are very dependent on the independent work that UNIDIR is doing, and we hope that a good solution will be found for the financing situation of UNIDIR.

The President: Thank you for your remarks, Ambassador. I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Grinevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Gyarmati for his presentation. I fully support the previous speakers in their assessment of the role and the usefulness of UNIDIR in the field of disarmament.

I have a practical question for Ambassador Gyarmati: perhaps he could tell us precisely which committees and commissions of the Fifth Committee will be considering the question of allocating additional funds from the regular budget of the United Nations and precisely what amounts we are talking about. All delegations have a stake in this, I think, because they need to provide guidance for their permanent missions in New York on how to deal with this issue, but it would be useful to have specific information about when, precisely, the question of additional funds for UNIDIR from the budget will be considered and which bodies of the Fifth Committee will be considering it. In that case, I think that at least some measure of support will be forthcoming, including from our delegation.

The President: I thank the representative of Belarus. With your permission, I will now continue with the list of the speakers and then I will give the floor to the Ambassador for final conclusions and responses to any questions.

I recognize the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Verstedden (Netherlands): I would like to add my voice to the speaker before me to thank Ambassador Gyarmati for his briefing this morning to the Conference on Disarmament. We agree with you when you say that, if we lose UNIDIR, we will lose a lot. We have been and continue to be a strong supporter of UNIDIR and are involved in many projects — law, cybersecurity, to name a few — which strongly help us in formulating our own policies. Our plan is to continue to support UNIDIR and we hope we can find a solution soon to the current problems.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Turkey.

Mr. Çarıkçı (Turkey): I also wish to thank Ambassador Gyarmati, Chair of the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, for his very timely update. We regret the fact that UNIDIR, which provides such broad benefits, is in dire straits. Although Turkey has made voluntary contributions to UNIDIR in a regular fashion, we are fully aware of the difficulties faced by UNIDIR and we are looking for ways to enhance our support. Clearly, there is an institutional crisis and a sustainable solution should be sought. We are of the opinion that briefings such as today's are crucial in order to draw the attention of non-members and the disarmament community to the situation.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Austria.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): I, too, would like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Gyarmati for his excellent presentation. It is truly a concern for us. UNIDIR is a very important partner in disarmament: its research results are excellent and we can build on them in whatever we do in the field of disarmament. My Government has just made a financial contribution to UNIDIR, even though it is very hard for us these days to make financial contributions. What I take away from the presentation by my good friend István is that the real problem seems to be that this research institution is being treated like any other unit in the United Nations system, but, with Umoja, research institutions face a major challenge because they are not comparable to other units. We therefore have to inform our colleagues in New York, as it is for the Fifth Committee to take decisions. Of course, much will depend on the United Nations Secretariat as to whether a kind of waiver could be granted because, in substance, it is clearly not the same as other United Nations units. Perhaps we could try to follow this track in our contacts with the United Nations Secretariat, with all of us making a convincing appeal to find a way to make an exception for UNIDIR under Umoja.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador, for your remarks. I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Masmеjeаn (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the Chair of the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR for his statement this morning and for his work, and that of the Board, in guiding UNIDIR at a time when it is faced with particularly serious challenges, both institutional and financial. We also wish to commend the commitment of the Director and staff of UNIDIR during this process.

As we have already had occasion to point out, UNIDIR is an essential component of the disarmament mechanism put in place by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. UNIDIR has, over the years, contributed significantly to work in the area of disarmament, including the work of the Conference on Disarmament. This contribution has been made in conditions that were often precarious, and the situation has got even worse over the past few years. To transform UNIDIR and strengthen its foundations so that it can fully meet the expectations placed on it will be a sizeable challenge. This challenge will be crucial both to the Conference and to the cause of disarmament itself. It is a challenge that concerns all the Member States of the United Nations that jointly established the Institute.

I therefore wish once more to assure the Chair of the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR of the full support of my delegation for the efforts he has made, with the Director, to move the Institute forward. A significant commitment will be required from all of us, financially but, above all, politically, as you emphasized, to ensure the sustainability of the Institute.

Lastly, I must thank the Ambassador of France for drawing our attention to the fact that the resolution on UNIDIR to be submitted to the First Committee this year will be a very important tool in tackling the challenges with which the Institute is faced. In that context, I should also like to echo the opinion of our colleague from Belarus as to the need

to mobilize our colleagues in New York, not only within the First Committee of the General Assembly but also within the Fifth Committee.

The President: I thank the representative of Switzerland. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Böhm (Germany): I thank you, Ambassador Gyarmati, for the concise information you gave us about the situation that UNIDIR is now facing. I also thank you, from the standpoint of Germany, for the close cooperation we have enjoyed over the past years. UNIDIR has a vision, and that vision is in context with disarmament and peacebuilding around the world. Let me point out that our close cooperation and support, for instance in the field of cybertechnology, is important from our point of view and we hope to continue this. You have opened a door there and I think it is the cyberproblems that we are facing and defining that must be taken care of. Germany hopes very much that the financial and structural problems you described can be solved soon and we will watch developments in this context very closely.

The President: I thank the representative of Germany. I now give the floor to Ambassador Gyarmati to respond to the questions that were raised and to make some concluding remarks.

Mr. Gyarmati (Chair of the Board of Trustees, UNIDIR): I thank all those who spoke out in support of UNIDIR as well as those who did not, because I think silence means agreement. I take it that the distinguished representatives in this room are in agreement as to the need to save UNIDIR and to engage in efforts to make it work even better.

It is very important to note what the representative of Switzerland said. I cannot thank everyone separately because it is very difficult to single out countries, but Switzerland would probably be the first I would thank for its continuous support, including in the past few weeks. I just wish to emphasize what the representative of Switzerland said: it is not enough to mobilize colleagues in the First Committee — it has to be in the Fifth Committee, too, which will have to reflect on decisions of the First Committee. We have seen numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the First Committee calling for increased support for UNIDIR, but they never passed the Fifth Committee and, therefore, the financial situation did not improve. I just want to underline what you said and how important it is. Since I spend all my time with Governments, I understand that sometimes different ministers do not talk to each other; or if they do, they disagree. I think in this case we should strive to create some harmony between ministers of foreign affairs and of finance as some countries have already done.

What my good and old friend Thomas Hajnoczi, the Ambassador of Austria, said about the United Nations Secretariat is also important. As I said, I have discussed this with the Secretary-General and his staff, the High Representative, the Chief of Staff and the Director of UNIDIR and the Director-General in Geneva, and I could go on and on. We found there was extremely good understanding and support for the administrative and legal issues, including some sort of waiver from Umoja, which we need.

We have not yet heard from the financial people in the United Nations, so we will have to continue working on that. How it will work is as follows, and I want to react also to the questions of the representative of Belarus.

The procedure is that it will go to the Fifth Committee, where a discussion will take place within the discussion of the regular budget for 2016 and 2017. I hope very much that the budget to be presented by the Secretary-General will already include some improvements for UNIDIR for this period. Here, I would very much like to ask for your support to convey the message to the Secretary-General that Member States suggest such a

change, even in the absence of a resolution of any of the relevant United Nations bodies so far. That will come in the fall, hopefully in the First Committee, but then it will be too late — actually not too late, but it will be a much more difficult procedure then.

I can tell you the amount, and you will see that it is miniscule compared with the budget. The subvention that UNIDIR receives from the regular budget today is about US\$ 280,000 per year. What UNIDIR would need for the five posts that I have mentioned, Director, Deputy Director, Head of Programmes, Financial Officer and Administrative Officer, would amount to roughly US\$ 1.5 million, give or take 5 to 10 per cent, depending on how many children the employees have and other considerations. We are thus talking about an increase of US\$ 1.2 million, and that is the maximum increase. It will of course be very difficult to find the money, but it is not a huge amount. That is what we are talking about and I hope that it will not be too difficult.

When will it be discussed? There will be a first round of discussions within the Secretariat, which is happening as we speak, about the inclusion of an increased subvention in the 2016-2017 budget. Then, the draft resolutions will be discussed in the fall when the General Assembly takes the matter up and the Committees start working.

I wish to make reference to the five-yearly resolution that the Ambassador of France mentioned. If I were to thank another Government in addition to the Swiss Government, it should be the French Government, which has been very supportive of UNIDIR. I hope that the political support that we have received from the French Government in past years will also amount to financial support, as the French Government used to offer a few years ago. Even at this point, the support of the French Government, and personally of the French Ambassador here, is invaluable to UNIDIR not only in preparing the five-yearly resolution but also in convening meetings of the friends of UNIDIR and making a significant effort to help UNIDIR to overcome this situation.

In closing, and having spent all my diplomatic life in multilateral bodies, I know that it is customary to conclude by thanking you for your support. However, this time I do it not because it is customary: I do it because I feel — not only from this discussion but from numerous meetings that I have had with many of you, many Ambassadors here and many Ambassadors in New York as well as many Governments — that there is support for UNIDIR. The challenge is not so much to gather political support but to translate political support into supporting administrative changes and financial support. That is what we have to do before the 1 November deadline. We have a deadline and I am very confident that with your help and support we will be able to make it.

The President: I truly thank Ambassador Gyarmati for coming to the Conference on Disarmament and sharing with us this very useful information and for making this urgent call to all of us. May I take this opportunity to place on record that the contribution of Mexico to UNIDIR will continue; however modest it is, it will continue.

I will now turn to the issue of expansion of the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me to give a little bit of background so that we can put today's dialogue in perspective. As you know, there have been two expansions in the membership of the Conference: one in 1996 and one in 1999, some 16 years ago. Geographical representation was taken into account on both occasions. In both cases, special coordinators were appointed to identify a list of States that could be agreed upon by the Conference. After the last expansion in 1999, special coordinators were again appointed for the issue of expansion of the membership: in 2001, it was Mr. Kolarov of Bulgaria; and in 2002, it was Ambassador Tzantchev, also of Bulgaria. However, the efforts undertaken by the delegation of Bulgaria did not result in a new round of expansions as member States were not yet unanimous about the modalities of such an expansion. Since 2002, 13 years ago, no further review of the Conference membership has taken place, as is stipulated by rule 2 of

the rules of procedure. Please be mindful that rule 2 calls for a review of membership on a regular basis.

In paragraph 8 of its resolution 69/76, on the report of the Conference on Disarmament, the General Assembly last year recognized “the importance of continuing consultations in 2015 on the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament”. With this background information, I would like to open the floor for an interactive discussion on this most important issue.

I recognize the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Mancotywa-Kumsha (South Africa): Prior to taking the floor on the matter of expansion, South Africa wishes to register our concern with the manner in which the female members of society were addressed in yesterday’s discussion. Such characterizations are an affront to all women and serve to undermine the important role that women play in advancing peace and security, irrespective of whether they hail from States or civil society. This is a matter of principle not only for South Africa but for the international community as a whole. In this regard, we wish to draw this body’s attention to the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on women in disarmament, championed by Trinidad and Tobago. As seasoned diplomats, we need to be cognizant of the importance of this platform.

Mr. President, as we indicated in our statement last week, South Africa would like to commend you for all your endeavours in bringing up the discussion on expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. South Africa has always argued in favour of inclusive — as opposed to exclusive — solutions to address global challenges. The advancement of international peace and security requires the participation of the international community, and multilateral engagement is essential if we are to address these challenges in a sustainable manner.

Mr. President, it is therefore our hope that the Conference will take a decision and appoint a special coordinator on this issue.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for her comments. I would also like to thank you personally for the statement you made at the outset of your remarks on the question of respect for women and children, but particularly for women in this case.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the informal group of observer States.

Mr. Mič (Czech Republic): Mr. President, I have the honour of addressing you on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament. The observer States appreciate your forthright approach towards observer States and convey to you their thanks for your transparency and inclusiveness. Since 2002 there has not been a single discussion devoted to the expansion of the Conference, so today is indeed the first time in a decade that we are going to hear the views of the membership on such an important issue.

The members of the informal group of observer States remain convinced of the indispensable role of this Conference as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the international community. However, we are deeply concerned over the continuing inability of the Conference to resume negotiations on disarmament issues after nearly 20 years of impasse. While the security environment around us is evolving rapidly, this body has come under increasing criticism for its inability to reflect and act upon the changing realities of the contemporary world. We believe that if this Conference is to play a leading role in universal disarmament processes, we need to undertake steps to increase its efficiency, transparency, inclusiveness and, above all else, its universal representativeness. In the light of the increasing cost of moving disarmament negotiations to alternative venues, we believe that this body, if it is to retain its relevance and legitimacy, needs to exhaust all

options available to ensure greater representativeness. As of this moment, we have been waiting for nearly 14 years, despite the fact that the rules of procedure clearly provide that the membership of the Conference is to be reviewed at regular intervals to discuss this important matter.

We are of the view that observer States prove their interest in joining the Conference as they regularly contribute to work to restart disarmament, proliferation and arms control efforts in the Conference. We think that the membership of the Conference should be open to all States wishing to join in order to ensure the universality and transparency of the forum. We look forward to discussing a variety of modalities and tailor-made scenarios for the Conference on the question of expansion. We believe that such discussion could only help to foster convergent aspects and seek a common basis for future endeavours.

We wish to reiterate our call for concrete action on expansion to be taken by the President.

The President: I thank the representative of the Czech Republic speaking on behalf of the informal group of observer States. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Bulgaria.

Mr. Piperkov (Bulgaria): Mr. President, allow me to express my appreciation for your efforts to move the Conference on Disarmament out of its long-standing stalemate and to galvanize the deliberations in this chamber. As you indicated in your opening remarks, the issue under discussion today — the expansion of the Conference and admission of new members — is one to which my country accords serious attention. The commitment of observer States willing to join the Conference deserves to be duly recognized. I would like in this context to thank the current coordinator of the informal group of observer States, the Czech Republic, for its consistent efforts and express our hope that the issue of enlargement will be given serious consideration during this year's session, starting with today's debate.

For us, enlargement of the Conference would mean bringing to the membership of this forum a relevance that is in line with twenty-first century realities. That is the understanding that underpins our firm support for this matter. Moreover, the political will of States at the founding of the Conference was not to create an exclusive club: expanding the Conference membership was envisaged when creating the forum. The rules of procedure, namely rule 2, call for reviewing the membership at regular intervals. It has happened several times and it must continue.

The last decision on enlargement was taken in 1999. I remember the efforts that were needed for that expansion to be implemented. It is now time to review again the membership and take a step towards adapting it to the current international challenges and realities. New members would bring new energy and new ideas. In our view, enlargement is one of the ways to revitalize the work of this forum. Our support for expansion of the Conference stems from our firm belief that finding solutions to the security problems can best be done through expanded cooperation and sharing of responsibility.

This issue is undeniably linked to disarmament and arms control. History has taught us that an inclusive approach is far more effective and productive than an exclusive one. We should also not forget that the Conference is mandated to negotiate instruments that are expected to have universal effect. The Conference should prove its legitimacy also through its membership. The appointment last year of a Friend of the Chair on enlargement was a step in the right direction. We hope the right forum will be found to follow up on this step and help to keep the Conference seized of this issue.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Austria.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): At the outset, I would like to register the full support of Austria for the position expressed by South Africa and by yourself, Mr. President, with regard to the issue of respect for the dignity of women in our interventions.

On the substance, Austria has been on record for a long time as favouring universality of membership here in the Conference on Disarmament. We are convinced that the forum that is tasked with multilateral negotiations to tackle issues of collective security and disarmament — which, by definition, have an impact on all States — should also provide the possibility for all States to be represented in the negotiations. Austria joined in the statement made by 60 countries on the issue of expansion at the last session of the General Assembly, and it fully shares all the views expressed by the Czech Republic as the coordinator of the informal group of observer States. Indeed, the rules of procedure state that the Conference should review its membership at regular intervals: from 1996 to 1999, that was three years, and now it has been 16 years — that is not really regular in our view. This is especially important since there is a genuine wish on the part of the observer States for us to look into issues in a very concrete and thorough way. We therefore think it is time for the Conference to address the issue of expansion again. It is high time that we did so, and we should do this in a structured and in-depth way.

We think, and I wish again to refer to the statement made by South Africa, that the appointment of a special coordinator on the question of enlargement would be a natural step for us. We would favour that, because we need some way to deal with the issue. This is not a short-term issue that can be dealt with during a single presidency in an in-depth and structured way.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Austria and now give the floor to the Ambassador of Ireland.

Ms. O'Brien (Ireland): Ireland welcomes this opportunity to address the issue of the expansion of the membership of this body. It is now almost 40 years since the General Assembly — in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament — spoke of the considerable and urgent work that remained to be accomplished in the field of disarmament and expressed its deep awareness of the continuing requirement for a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of limited size. Since the expanded Committee on Disarmament met in 1979, this body has, as many have rightly recognized, achieved much, though regrettably the list of achievements has not been added to in almost two decades.

It is also worth recalling that the General Assembly said that the membership of this body would be reviewed on a regular basis. So important was this principle of review of the Conference on Disarmament's membership that it appears as the second item in its rules of procedure.

Mr. President, you have mentioned on several occasions that you have engaged in what you have described as archaeology with regard to this Conference. Having conducted a similar exercise with regard to the issue of the Conference's membership, it was disappointing to see that for many years the Conference's annual report has contained the following message: "The question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference was addressed by delegations in plenary meetings. Their views on the issue are duly reflected in the plenary records." This might give the impression to the outside world that a review, as the term would usually be understood, had actually taken place. While an exchange of views has taken place on many occasions, this would not meet my delegation's expectations for what a review should encompass.

My delegation firmly believes that it is time to move beyond merely exchanging views on the expansion of this body's membership. It is time to carry out a substantive review. We would look at any proposal which would amount to a real and substantive

review. Delegations will be aware of our long-standing position which was admitted to this Conference on foot of a decision in August 1999, that an expansion of the membership is long overdue. There are United Nations Member States which applied over three decades ago for membership of this body, United Nations Member States which have played an important role in the field of disarmament. We firmly believe that it is time that this Conference should have the benefit of their experience and their expertise, not merely as observers but as full and equal members of the body.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador, and I want to thank you for that very nice piece of archaeological work that you did.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Verstedden (Netherlands): In our general statement, we underlined that enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament is an issue that deserves our serious consideration this year. We thank you therefore, Mr. President, for this opportunity to discuss enlargement today. The last round of enlargement of the Conference was, as you said, over 15 years ago. Rule 2 of our rules of procedure clearly stipulates that we are to review the Conference's membership at regular intervals: 15 years is not a regular interval. We think that a large group of serious countries deserve an answer to the question of enlargement. When the First Committee was adopting the annual Conference resolution last year, the Czech Republic, on behalf of the informal group of observer States, again made a plea for the enlargement of this forum.

There are different reasons why enlargement has not been possible over the past 15 years: some are political, some are of a more practical nature. We should better identify these reasons and see if possible solutions can be found. On the basis of this exercise, we should identify possible steps that could make future enlargement possible. We need to start consultations on this issue and we hope that today's discussion can form a base on which we can build further.

The Netherlands would be open as to how best to address this issue, for instance by naming a special coordinator, as advocated by some, but we are also open to other suggestions or ideas.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands and now give the floor to the representative of Ghana.

Mr. Ben-Acquaah (Ghana): Thank you, Mr. President, for tabling this very important subject of the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament for discussion today. Before I continue, allow me also to align myself with the statement delivered by the Czech Republic on behalf of the informal group of observer States.

Our goal, as representatives of the people of Ghana and as mandated by our national Constitution, is to pursue and obtain global peace and security in the multilateral sphere. The most important aspect of this mandate is to secure the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, Ghana has either signed or ratified all disarmament-related treaties and has actively engaged other countries in multilateral forums in pursuit of our goal of global peace and security.

Our application for membership of the Conference thus comes with a clear objective: to contribute even more actively to the work of the Conference. Realizing the desire of Ghana to become a member State would enhance our national institutional structures to sustain our contribution to disarmament negotiations.

As our topic today suggests, one of the main challenges that the Conference must overcome is a decision on the expansion of its membership, which is essential if the Conference is to advance its work. The Conference has taken prior decisions to expand its

membership, which currently stands at 65, and Ghana would wish to see a repetition of this exercise as soon as possible.

Ghana seeks the indulgence of the members of the Conference to perceive the question of Conference expansion more positively, along with the potential opportunities that broader membership could offer to its agenda. A much more representative Conference is long overdue, in view of the ever-increasing interest in an all-inclusive multilateral forum to negotiate nuclear disarmament, as expressed at various disarmament forums, which lately includes the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Vienna.

We acknowledge that the Conference on Disarmament is the only mandated forum to negotiate this treaty. To obtain its goals, it must take into consideration its operating environment, which is a more democratized world vis-à-vis the situation in the past. The Conference membership needs to be reviewed regularly to reflect as wide an interest and participation as possible. It is unfortunate that the Conference has been stalled for the past 18 years. While we appreciate the complexities involved in this deadlock, especially where national security is at stake for some member States, we believe that the solution may not lie much beyond the political will. Where there is a will, there is always a way. With a concerted effort to address the deadlock by searching for a political solution, there will no doubt be a way out of this deadlock. Recalling the history of the Conference and its successful negotiation of other treaties on weapons of mass destruction, Ghana believes in the potential of this body to resolve the deadlock. It is worth mentioning that, as a body, we take into consideration the changing global environment in which the Conference operates. One of the most influential developments in our contemporary world has been the rapid advancements in the field of information technology, which has equally had an enormous impact on the potential dangers that lurk in our nuclear-weapon world. Knowledge for both good and bad ends spreads across the globe at unprecedented speeds. For example, Internet hacking has become very common, including among very dangerous and potentially harmful people. Such developments make resolution of the deadlock even more urgent and nuclear disarmament more imperative, and Ghana wishes to be a part of the way forward.

To conclude, Mr. President, permit me to commend the past leadership of the informal group of observer States, particularly the Czech delegation, which in spite of the daunting challenge that confronts the observer States, took up the responsibility to lead our group. They may not have attained the original objective, but they no doubt brought the need for expansion much closer to the fore of the Conference agenda, and for that we are very grateful.

The President: I thank the representative of Ghana. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Finland.

Ms. Kairamo (Finland): I will be very brief on this issue, Mr. President, because our position is well known. My Government is in favour of enlarging the Conference on Disarmament and its membership. In this respect, I can only refer back to my colleagues from Ireland, Austria and the Netherlands.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador. I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania.

Ms. Abraitienė (Lithuania): Mr. President, the Lithuanian delegation welcomes and expresses its deep appreciation for your efforts to get the Conference on Disarmament back on track. One of the outstanding issues — expansion of the Conference, which has been delayed for decades — needs to be addressed. This call is in line with rule 2 of the Conference's rules of procedure, which provides for a review of the membership at regular intervals. As an active member of the informal group of observer States, Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the group's coordinator, the Czech Republic.

In addition, Lithuania calls for practical steps to be taken on expansion of the Conference's membership. The Lithuanian delegation firmly believes that fresh input from new full members could facilitate the discussion on substantive matters and break the long-standing deadlock. Expansion could also help the Conference to regain credibility by transforming it into a universally representative body. It has been more than a decade since this body considered this question and more than 15 years since action was last taken on the issue of enlargement. The universal goal of international stability and security, with particular regard to disarmament, must by definition be addressed by a universally representative body, reflecting developments in the global security environment. All United Nations Member States share the common responsibility of concluding disarmament treaties and achieving disarmament goals.

In closing, allow me to reaffirm that Lithuania is prepared to contribute to the relaunching of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts in the Conference, working closely with Conference members and observer States throughout the 2015 session.

The President: I thank you for your statement and now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Masmajan (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, thank you for giving us the opportunity of addressing the question of enlarging the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to thank the speakers before me for the various aspects of the question that they have highlighted.

First, as regards the need to have a discussion about enlargement this year, there are a number of reasons why it would be sensible to do so: from the outset, it was envisaged that membership would be reviewed at regular intervals, so that the Conference could evolve and address any challenges that might arise. As you yourself mentioned, this provision was written into the rules of procedures of the Conference — and not only there. It can also be found in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in paragraph 120. Yet, as you said, the Conference has not really gone into the question since 2002. I should also add that, as you pointed out, the General Assembly specifically invited the Conference to deal with the matter in 2015, in the context of its latest annual resolution on the Conference. As for whether we are able to enlarge the Conference, the answer is clear. The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament set the parameters when it indicated that membership of the Conference should be limited — in other words, not universal — and a decision to make it universal would need to be adopted by the General Assembly. At the same time, it gave the Conference the responsibility to set the limits itself.

The Conference on Disarmament has enlarged its membership on two occasions, largely to take account of an international system that had, from the security point of view, evolved following the end of the cold war. This international system has continued to develop ever since and the same question arises today. Another factor to consider is what response should be made to States that wish to join the Conference. There are 27 of them, according to the latest annual report of the Conference. My own research indicated that some States had been knocking at the door of the Conference for more than 20 years, but Ireland has pointed out that it is actually 30 years and more. These States see the importance of our work and are interested in contributing to it. We should be encouraged by this interest, rather than seeing it as a problem or a challenge. The question is, what reasons do we have for turning down the requests of these States? My delegation has not heard any convincing arguments so far. The question before us is therefore not whether enlargement should take place. The Conference has a global role and responsibility: it deals with subjects that concern far more stakeholders than just its membership and enlargement would reinforce its legitimacy. The question is rather what criteria, what parameters and what time scale should be envisaged for enlargement. In our view, this would mean

entering into consultations and taking coordinated action. We would therefore support the proposals by Ireland and Austria in that regard.

The President: I thank you. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Turkey.

Mr. Çarıkçı (Turkey): Mr. President, we thank you for submitting a programme of work: its adoption is still a priority for my delegation. This does not undermine the importance of other topics in bringing the Conference on Disarmament back to its negotiating mandate, which is the most important of all.

In our statement at the opening of this year's session, on 20 January, we underlined the Conference's special responsibility for the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We also emphasized that we should all strive to maintain the Conference's relevance by having it fulfil its fundamental task.

We have yet to have an interactive debate on enlargement of the Conference. My delegation would like to take advantage of this opportunity to again express our views on this issue and also listen to our colleagues' views. As we do now, or as happened with the appointment of the Friend of the Chair last year, we constantly review membership on many occasions. Rule 2 is only about review: it does not foresee automatic enlargement.

Let me be very clear at the outset: we are not against expansion. We joined the Conference in 1996 as the result of one. To refresh the memory of our colleagues, I would like to recall the constructive role that Turkey played during the last expansion. Along with other delegations, Turkey advocated for a more representative group of countries in the membership. Having said that, we have concerns about the timing of the enlargement and, as you know, we have adopted a frank and open approach in this regard. We have never shied away from expressing this view. The question is, by doing so, are we working against the security interests of any States? Are we adding more to the core problem? The answer is no. The Conference is unfortunately not negotiating any treaties. My guess is that none of us in this chamber would argue that this is due to the composition of the Conference.

Permit me to underline at this point that the rules of procedure allow non-member States to participate in Conference discussions in an open manner. We welcome the views of non-member States. We would also welcome hearing their views on matters other than expansion. It is often said that United Nations Member States should be granted an equal opportunity to participate in disarmament negotiations and share the common responsibility. Yes, but we are convinced that "negotiations" is the key word here.

The argument has also been made that the Conference should be open to universal membership. A simple calculation of adding up Conference members and non-members would yield food for thought as to whether there is universal interest in the work of the Conference.

The disarmament machinery has a clear division of tasks among various international forums. Naturally, different forums and bodies have different working methods and membership. The First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament Commission work with universal United Nations membership. Naturally, United Nations Members express their views there. Let me mention the Disarmament Commission, for instance, which has a discussion mandate and universal United Nations membership: we all know how its three-year cycle ended. The inevitable conclusion is that membership does not necessarily bring a recipe for success.

The Conference was created with a unique mandate and limited membership for a good reason. The Conference, which some almost lament now, produced successful treaties in the past. It is well known that we are convinced that the problems faced by the Conference are not the result of its procedures, membership or internal dynamics. So, perhaps we should stop pretending and do our real work. In the absence of political will, we

are not sure how addressing the rules of procedure or membership will bring us closer to negotiations.

We have listened very carefully, Mr. President, to the statements and to your remarks at the beginning. However, other than expectations, we have not heard concrete thoughts on how this will play out. We clearly do not see the expansion issue as a subject to be turned to when we cannot proceed with the substantive matters at hand.

Let me repeat for the record that there is no consensus to appoint a special coordinator on the question of expansion.

Finally, the Conference should continue with its efforts to overcome the current stalemate. Our first and foremost priority is moving the Conference forward by having it reassume its fundamental task, that is, to negotiate legally binding international treaties. Only following the adoption of a programme of work and the start of real negotiations should we embark on expansion on a case-by-case basis. It is our sincere hope that this will happen sooner rather than later.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Turkey. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Lindell (Sweden): I wish to begin by agreeing with the initial remarks made by South Africa regarding respect for women. I also agree with the speakers who said that enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament is an issue that we believe ought to be pursued more actively.

Sweden joined the statement on this issue made by the informal group of observer States at the General Assembly last autumn. As to exactly how this is pursued, we would, as we heard from the Netherlands, be open to different avenues.

The President: I thank the representative of Sweden. I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and all the colleagues who have expressed their views. I will depart from my prepared statement on this matter in deference to the nature of this interactive dialogue, which I hope can be as interactive and as much of a dialogue as possible.

My fundamental points have been made, and much better, in the statement of the informal group of observer States read on behalf of all of us by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic. I also heard very encouraging statements made by several members of this body. For the sake of brevity, I would like to share with you the response I have to the question: Why join? Why make this effort to join a body that so many accuse of being stalemated, whose work is so often challenged in a crippling way?

Portugal believes that this body can continue to play a very meaningful role in the United Nations system. At this time of proliferation of alternative — and sometimes contradictory — paths and choices, the Conference on Disarmament would stand to gain very much, in our opinion, from a serious and successful discussion on expansion. On this matter, Mr. President, your work will certainly be very fondly and very vividly remembered by all of us who are concerned about the work of the Conference.

The President: I thank the representative of Portugal, in particular for his kind words to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

Mr. Mallikourtis (Greece): First of all, I would like to express our great appreciation to you personally, Mr. President, and to Mexico for your leadership on the issue of enlargement and for all the contact and coordination you have engaged in with us in the informal group of observer States. It is unprecedented and much appreciated.

Rule 2 of the Conference on Disarmament's rules of procedure stipulates that membership of the Conference is to be reviewed at regular intervals, so we welcome today's discussion — all the more so since we are the longest-standing observer to the Conference. Someone mentioned 20 years, but it has actually been almost 40 years since 1982 — in any event, more than 30, to be precise.

We are of the view that there is no reason or moral justification for excluding United Nations Member States from disarmament discussions, especially in view of the universal nature of the United Nations. At a time when global challenges require collective solutions through global partnerships, it is indeed an anachronism to restrict participation in negotiations on disarmament issues to only 65 countries. It is equally outdated to hold enlargement hostage to bilateral issues which have absolutely no relevance to the subject matter of the Conference. In this respect, we reiterate our call for the members of the Conference to appoint a special coordinator on enlargement without prejudice to the final outcome.

Last year's drafting or negotiation of the First Committee resolution on the Conference on Disarmament report demonstrated that it is high time to address the issue of expansion and that continuous and adamant rejection — by a very small minority, I must say, of Conference member States — exacerbates the indignation of observer States. It also does not, in our view, help in enhancing the legitimacy and credibility of this body.

Finally, we would like to thank all those Conference members who took the floor to support our cause and our gratitude is also extended to the Czech Republic for its leading role in coordinating the informal group of observer States.

The President: I thank the representative of Greece, in particular for his kind remarks to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's full support for the statement put forth by the representative of South Africa with regard to the treatment of women. Any comments that degrade or appear to degrade the role of women are not acceptable.

On the issue of enlargement, let me just say that, should a proposal on expansion be put forward — and without any prejudice to a final decision by my country — the United States remains willing to discuss an appropriate but limited expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the United States Ambassador for his remarks. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. Motta Pinto Coelho (Brazil): I would like just to add my voice to the very large number of members here who have pointed out the importance and the necessity of considering the question of enlargement, or expansion, of the Conference on Disarmament. This is an important issue. For the sake of coherence with the purposes and objectives of this body, we should not avoid engaging in a broad, in-depth discussion on the question of enlargement. Statements have been made here by the informal group of observer States and by a number of delegations on this issue, and we add our voice to say that it is coherent for the Conference to examine thoroughly, and somewhat urgently, the question of expansion of the Conference. So, we very much welcome this opportunity to have this exchange of views and would insist that this question should not be removed from our main line of discussions and considerations here.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Brazil. We have exhausted the list of speakers. I see the Russian Federation. For the time being, you have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are discussing a very important question about the composition of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. But let us take a closer look at this. What would be the ideal composition of the Conference? Some speakers have said: let us expand our membership to include the whole membership of the United Nations. That is one way forward. There have also been proposals that the membership of the Conference should be enlarged gradually and determined on a case-by-case basis. And many speakers have emphasized the need for a serious consideration of this issue. I fully support that position. Many speakers have drawn attention to paragraph 2 of the rules of procedure, which states that the membership will be reviewed at regular intervals. But, distinguished colleagues, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that a review of the membership does not, in fact, automatically mean expansion. When colleagues maintain that expanding the membership and bringing in new members could lead the Conference out of its current difficult situation, that is just an assumption, which can only be proved empirically. However, I would put the argument rather differently. Oddly enough, the two waves of expansion of the membership in 1996 and 1999 coincided with the fact that the substantive activities of the Conference fell into a profound crisis that we have not been able to resolve to this day. I repeat, perhaps this was just a strange coincidence, because I see disagreement in the hall, but the fact remains and cannot be denied.

We are ready to enter into a constructive discussion about this, on the understanding that it will be a serious dialogue, which will include every factor, without exception, that might have an impact on any possible decision in this regard. And, of course, we must not forget that the priority of the Conference on Disarmament is still negotiations; on that point I am in full agreement with the current President of the Conference, the Ambassador of Mexico, Mr. Lomónaco. And I think we should certainly not devote more attention to this issue than to our primary task of addressing the current complex situation.

I shall allow myself one more small comment. Yesterday, the Mexican presidency introduced a draft decision on the establishment of a working group on methods of work. But, once we had made our initial assessment, we found ourselves asking how far methods of work are really relevant to our proceedings. You see, when new decisions or initiatives are submitted, they are usually preceded by a wide-ranging consideration of the parameters or modalities of our discussions on the topic in question. Generally, they contain some food for thought, with, so to speak, a menu and choices, and so on. Why am I saying this? I am saying it because should we not consider the question of membership of the Conference as part of a whole range of other questions relating to methods of work? I have no definite answer to this question, but it seems pretty logical, I think; we have discussed it informally with a number of other delegations. Why not? It would be quite possible for us to do it.

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

Mr. Bathily (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I wanted to take the floor this morning simply to make an observation about the question of enlarging the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. A number of speakers have emphasized the provisions of rule 2 of the rules of procedure, which refers to the periodic review of the membership, but, as my colleague from the Russian Federation said, that does not necessarily mean enlargement: it could also mean cutting back. Personally, I would like to speak of enlargement in the context of rule 1. Why rule 1? Because it states: "The Conference on Disarmament ... is a disarmament negotiating forum open to the nuclear-weapons States and 60 other States." The restriction affects the 60 other States far more than the nuclear-weapon States. What I mean by that is that any State not a member of the Conference that in future possesses nuclear arms will automatically become a member of the Conference. So, there will be enlargement in that way. But that is not the point that I am

making. What concerns me much more is the fact that, when a principle is discussed by the Conference, States often declare themselves to be in favour of that principle. The difficulties arise when it comes to implementation and that was the case yesterday, when it was agreed to include civil society in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. So, that is why the Senegalese delegation hopes that this situation will not keep arising, particularly on this question of the opening up, or enlargement, of the Conference. Senegal therefore supports the proposal by South Africa that a special coordinator on enlargement should be appointed as soon as possible, so that the Conference can decide quickly on the matter and give it all the necessary attention.

The President: I thank the representative of Senegal and now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Ms. Dela Cruz (Philippines): Mr. President, allow me to express the appreciation of this delegation for your energy and creativity in seeking to advance the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We also thank those groups and members of the Conference who have expressed their support for the examination of membership expansion. The members of the informal group of observer States have appealed continuously for the appointment of a special coordinator on the question of membership expansion, which was last done in 2001. The Philippines underscores that we simply wish to begin the discussion on expansion and not prejudice or pressure for a particular outcome. The Philippines thanks the Mexican presidency for its efforts to advance the cause of the observer States.

The President: I thank the representative of the Philippines. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Algerian delegation did not request the floor in order to take a position on this subject, as our general position is in favour of a democratization of the international system overall and not just of the Conference on Disarmament. I would simply like to raise a question, because many voices are calling for the appointment of a special coordinator or facilitator to oversee the Conference's discussions on the enlargement of its membership and I have a comment to make in that regard: the appointment of such a coordinator would be possible if there is an implicit consensus among members of the Conference in favour of the principle of enlargement. In such a case, the appointment of a facilitator or coordinator on this question could benefit discussions about which States may become members of the Conference in the future. If that consensus, that basic position, is lacking, then the appointment of a facilitator would not bring any great benefits. The discussions would effectively take place but we would not know whether or not their outcome would bear fruit.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his comments. I do not necessarily share the view that we should prejudge any outcome before the start of any process. Processes are to produce outcomes and, if there is a process, the outcome should be whatever the process leads us to, rather than trying to guess ahead of time what the outcome would be. However, that refers more to general practice.

Are there any more requests for the floor? I see none.

Before I sum up, let me briefly share with you my delegation's view on the issue, and I will be very brief. I will then try to sum up today's discussion.

We believe that weapons of mass destruction and their impact on humanity are the concern of the whole international community because of their very nature: mass destruction. Therefore, the whole international community should have a say in how to deal with weapons of mass destruction.

As I move to sum up today's discussion, I want first and foremost to thank all of you who took the floor and participated in this debate and all those present who have listened to

the debate. Today, this chamber spoke — not unanimously, but overwhelmingly — in favour of the Conference addressing in 2015 the question of enlargement. It was considered by most of you to be high time for us to fulfil the provisions contained in rule 2 of the rules of procedure. I also heard many calls for me to take urgent action and see to the appointment of a special coordinator for expansion of the Conference. I believe it is my duty to respond to those calls and make a final push, a final effort, to see if we can appoint a special coordinator for expansion of the Conference.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Friday, 13 February 2015, at 10 a.m. As mentioned yesterday, it is my intention to continue efforts towards the adoption of decisions on civil society participation and the establishment of a working group to review the Conference's methods of work and, as a result of today's debate, to see whether we can proceed with the appointment of a special coordinator on expansion of the Conference. Considering that it will be the last meeting under the presidency of Mexico, I will take the opportunity to wrap up the efforts made by the Conference during this period.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.