

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and forty-first plenary meeting

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President: Mr. Vaanchig Purevdorj.....(Mongolia)

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The President: I call to order the 1341st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished colleagues, please allow me to start with a housekeeping matter. It concerns cell phones. If they are not switched off, kindly activate the mute or silent button and place them away from the microphones, especially when you are speaking.

As you know, I would like to devote our meeting today to general statements on agenda items 1 and 2, with a special focus on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

With regard to the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty, last year the Conference held informal discussions under the coordination of the Permanent Representative of Germany, Ambassador Biontino. In the conclusions of his report on the informal meetings, Ambassador Biontino noted that, in the light of the insightful informal discussions, the need to continue in-depth discussions seemed even more urgent.

Therefore, I believe that today's debate will contribute to the continuation of in-depth discussions and deliberations on this issue. Moreover, I hope that the Conference will be able to come up with suggestions on how to proceed with the work of the Group of Governmental Experts established in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/53 when the work of the Group concludes.

For today's plenary, I have several speakers on my list. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): I think the position of the United Kingdom on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is well known, but I would like to reiterate a few points, not least on the important contribution an FMCT could make to global security.

An FMCT would introduce a worldwide legally binding and verifiable ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. This would represent a considerable advance on the present situation in which only some States have declared voluntary moratoriums on such production and these are mostly unverified. In addition, an FMCT would make other measures to address stocks of fissile material more meaningful, because the benefit of such measures will always be questionable so long as there is no ban on future production.

Last, but not least, an FMCT would also put in place an essential requirement for nuclear disarmament, which will never be achieved without verification arrangements on fissile material production facilities.

We should acknowledge and learn from the activities already under way to increase and build trust in the area of fissile material controls. It has become politically convenient to paint this picture in black and white, with those safeguarding States being considered transparent and those without an INFCIRC/153-type safeguards agreement being considered opaque. But there are of course many shades of grey and we would welcome a more detailed discussion on this point.

With regard to transparency, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the United Kingdom has made public reports accounting for the historic production of both highly enriched uranium and plutonium for defence purposes. This is in the interest of building confidence at figures declared for defence stockpiles of fissile material consistent with past acquisition and use. We are not the only country to have done this.

The reports produced in 2000 and 2006 — so, after we ceased the production of fissile material in 1995 — considered the sites where fissile material was produced or handled, how it was used and the material balance of production versus consumption. In producing the report we had to ensure we did not release information that was proliferation-

sensitive, a fact that we should have in mind as we continue our discussions on this issue. This is particularly true of the technical information relating to the early years of the programmes, which was deemed to be valuable to an aspiring proliferator seeking to build a low-level, unsophisticated nuclear capability. Information was also withheld because it was considered necessary to protect defence-sensitive information on the design of the weapons stockpile of the United Kingdom and the performance of the nuclear submarine fleet: two issues on which the security of the United Kingdom ultimately depends.

Observing such security concerns in those States with a nuclear weapons capability will be critical to the success of any negotiations.

One particular area in which the United Kingdom has been working with others to build trust, and which is very relevant to discussions on an FMCT, is that of verification. A fissile material cut-off treaty will need a verification system that is fit for purpose. We should be prepared to pay the cost of having an effective verification system, but it should be efficient, too. We would want verification to be concerned with all weapons-useable fissile material. That is a narrower range of material than would be covered by article XX of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Statute. We do not want to interfere in any way with the production or use of fissile material that cannot be used for weapons purposes.

Central to the verification approach that we envisage would be a focus on production and downstream use of unirradiated fissile material. It would have three basic elements: declarations of production and downstream facilities with relevant material; verification of declared facilities and material; and arrangements to detect undeclared production facilities.

The FMCT verification regime would involve measures very similar to, if not identical to, safeguard measures applied by IAEA. We certainly envisage that where they are applied, such measures should in general involve the same standards and criteria as IAEA safeguards. It therefore follows that IAEA seems to us to be the most appropriate organization to apply FMCT verification arrangements. It has the required expertise and experience and setting up a new and separate organization specifically to verify an FMCT would seem to be unnecessary. That said, the impact on IAEA of taking on the role of FMCT verification should not be underestimated.

We see no technical barrier to the negotiation of an FMCT, though there is clearly a need to work between States to explain why this is the case. We hope that this will be one of the follow-up actions to the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT, where the discussions have been comprehensive and detailed. A continuation of last year's informal discussions under a schedule of activities this year will also provide an opportunity to do this, and it is my sincere hope that we will be able to agree on such a schedule of activities before long.

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

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by reiterating that Pakistan welcomes the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on all items on the Conference's agenda. In the absence of consensus to commence any negotiations in the Conference, the discussions that we undertake in the Conference are of great value in better understanding the different perspectives and finding a way forward.

Turning to the topic under discussion today, that is, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, I would like to outline the views of Pakistan on a fissile material treaty that would contribute to the objectives on non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as promote regional and global security.

First and foremost, the treaty should provide equal and undiminished security for all States. As recognized by the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to nuclear disarmament, in 1978, in the adoption of disarmament measures, the right of each State to security should be kept in mind and at each stage of the disarmament process the objective should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces. A treaty which overlooks or circumscribes the security of any State would simply not work.

Second, the treaty should make a genuine contribution towards the goal of nuclear disarmament and not be merely a non-proliferation instrument.

Third, the treaty must cover the past production or existing stockpiles of fissile materials, in order to address the asymmetries in fissile material holdings at the regional and global levels.

Fourth, the treaty should neither discriminate between the different nuclear-weapon States, nor discriminate between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. All States parties should assume equal obligations without any preferential treatment for any category of States.

Fifth, in order to be effective, the treaty should be free of any loopholes by encompassing all types and sources of fissile materials.

Sixth, in order to be credible, the treaty should provide for a robust verification mechanism overseen by a representative and independent treaty body.

Seventh, the treaty should promote both regional and global stability and enhance confidence among States parties.

Eighth, the treaty should not affect the inalienable right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, it should include effective measures to safeguard against any misuse or diversion of peaceful-use technology and nuclear materials to prohibited uses.

Lastly, the treaty should be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. The Conference strictly operates under the consensus rule to allow each member State to safeguard its vital security interests. A treaty that is negotiated outside this body will lack legitimacy and ownership. The same would be the case for any pseudo-progress that might be achieved through General Assembly-led divisive processes that do not involve all stakeholders, such as the Group of Governmental Experts or any variant thereof.

My delegation stands ready to elaborate on all of the elements that I have just outlined. Last June, during the informal discussions held under the schedule of activities, we had provided substantive views on all aspects of the treaty, including definitions, scope, verification, entry into force and other institutional arrangements. We took part in an interactive debate on the technical details and put forward ideas to effectively deal with the central issue of existing fissile material stocks. We also benefited from the views shared by the other delegations and found those discussions very useful.

The lack of consensus on negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) based on the Shannon mandate should not prevent us from commencing negotiations on the other core issues on the Conference's agenda, including nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and prevention of an arms race in outer space. And if consensus eludes us on negotiating any of the four core issues, as is the case presently, we should turn to the next best alternative of adopting a balanced and comprehensive schedule of activities that provides for substantive discussions on all agenda items. These discussions could evolve

into formal negotiations when the circumstances permit, as was the case with the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

As things stand, we see that the Conference has been held hostage by the issue of FMCT. The main proponents of an FMCT are neither willing to negotiate any other issue on the Conference's agenda, nor are they ready to broaden the scope of the treaty to explicitly include the existing stockpiles of fissile materials. It is no surprise that the most ardent supporters of such an approach are those States that have stockpiled thousands of tons of weapons-grade fissile material, far in excess of their needs, and already declared unilateral moratoriums on further production. For these States, an FMCT that conveniently excludes the existing stockpiles of fissile material would be cost-free. Of course, these States also find strident support from their allies that benefit from the extended deterrence of their nuclear umbrella.

For Pakistan, on the other hand, the question of stockpiles is a direct national security concern. The asymmetry of fissile material stockpiles in our region is being compounded by discriminatory waivers and exceptions and by bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements. It leaves us with no room for flexibility or ambiguity, and forces our hand to oppose the commencement of FMCT negotiations based on the Shannon mandate.

Mr. President, several other States besides Pakistan are also questioning the so-called "constructive ambiguity" of the Shannon mandate in favour of the inclusion of stocks. The Shannon mandate clearly is no longer valid nor acceptable as the negotiating mandate. The sooner we accept this reality, the greater are the chances of making progress on this issue on the basis of a new negotiating mandate that is consistent with the interests of all Conference members.

Pakistan is ready to join efforts to find a commonly acceptable basis for commencing negotiations on a fissile material treaty that would address the issue of asymmetry of stocks and also constitute a genuine disarmament measure. At the same time, Pakistan also stands ready to join negotiations in the Conference on nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances, as well as on items 5, 6 and 7 of the Conference's agenda.

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

Mr. Sano (Japan): Japan has for many decades been firm in its call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This requires a cumulative process of practical and concrete measures applied in a progressive manner. In this context, after the quality-capping of nuclear weapons by banning nuclear testing through the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we believe a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) which aims at quantity-capping by banning the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons is the next building block towards the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons.

As there are many different aspects that make up an FMCT, I would like to point out several issues often raised regarding an FMCT from the perspective of Japan.

Firstly, what are the objectives and desired effects of an FMCT? The most important ones are:

- (a) Above all, to ensure no increase in the quantity of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons;
- (b) To lay a firm legal basis for an irreversible disarmament process;
- (c) To enforce non-proliferation efforts and enhance nuclear security as well as reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism;

(d) To reduce the discriminatory nature of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime as much as possible by obliging nuclear-weapon States to ban production of such materials in a verifiable manner;

(e) To provide an opportunity for States not parties to the NPT to participate in a broader international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

We are fully convinced that these objectives and desired effects are widely shared.

Secondly, how should we deal with existing stocks?

We strongly believe that resolution of the contentious issue of stocks should not be made a precondition for starting negotiations. A time-consuming political discussion of whether or not to increase stocks would be counterproductive. Rather, in the course of future negotiations, consideration should be given to which category of stocks should be covered by the treaty. Japan recognizes that an FMCT should at least ban:

- (a) The transfer of stocks for nuclear weapons to a third country;
- (b) The diversion of stocks for civilian and conventional military use to nuclear-weapons purposes;
- (c) The reversion of stocks declared as excess back to nuclear-weapons purposes.

An FMCT thus has both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. We intend to pursue these ideas in the FMCT negotiations once they begin. Furthermore, we consider that reopening the Shannon mandate as a precondition for commencement of the negotiations is unproductive, since the Shannon mandate does not exclude the possibility of including existing stocks in the scope of the treaty. We should rather start negotiations based on the mandate as it stands.

Thirdly, what should be the modality of FMCT negotiations?

The Conference on Disarmament is the most desirable forum for negotiations to take place since all relevant States possessing nuclear weapons are in this body. Unfortunately, however, the Conference has failed to start negotiations on an FMCT for many years despite wide support for this. If the Conference continues to be unsuccessful in responding to the voice of the international community, the *raison d'être* of this body as the single multilateral disarmament forum will be called further into question. From this perspective, Japan looks forward to the work by the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT. Japan will continue to support the Group's efforts in formulating a final report this spring. We are confident that the Group will identify crucial signposts for future negotiators. In addition, interaction with the Group can be considered to enrich our work in the Conference.

Finally, while an FMCT remains our highest priority, we must not stop pursuing steps and effective building blocks towards nuclear disarmament, such as a reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons in any future disarmament negotiations or process, reduction of the role and significance of nuclear weapons, de-alerting nuclear weapons, increasing transparency of information regarding nuclear weapons, as well as multilateralization of nuclear disarmament negotiations. Also, further work on nuclear-weapon-free zones, negative security assurances, verification, as well as an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will surely make significant contributions to nuclear disarmament. We also place emphasis on the importance of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education. These practical building blocks are laid out in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) working paper which will be submitted to the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

Before concluding, allow me to say that we look forward to the French draft text of an FMCT which President Hollande referred to last week.

Mr. President, I assure you of the continued full cooperation and support of my delegation in pursuit of these measures.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement and now I give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Mancotywa-Kumsha (South Africa): My delegation would like to commend you, Mr. President, for convening a debate on the issue related to a treaty that would ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, that is, a fissile material treaty. As one of the members of the Group of Governmental Experts, South Africa welcomes the establishment of the Group by the United Nations Secretary-General with the mandate to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The international community's effort to achieve a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is not new. It dates back to 1993 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 48/75 recommending the negotiation of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Mr. President, while we support the negotiation of a fissile material treaty, South Africa does not subscribe to the view promoted by some that this is the only issue ripe for negotiation. Given the nature of the Conference on Disarmament as a negotiating forum, we believe that this Conference is able to negotiate on any issue on its agenda, even though we recognize that the finalization of a legally binding arrangement in the near future may be more likely on some issues than on others. While we may not all agree on the issues that are more or less ripe for the conclusion of an agreement, this should not prevent us from dealing substantively with all the issues on our agenda.

South Africa remains supportive of the commencement and conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on a treaty that will ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices: a fissile material treaty. We believe that such a treaty should be non-discriminatory and verifiable, and fulfil both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. However, differences on a range of issues, including the scope of the future treaty and whether or not to include past production and stockpiles, as well as doubts about its verifiability, continue to make progress on negotiation a difficult process. Although we are cognizant of the difficulties associated with the past production of fissile material, South Africa believes that stocks should be included in a verifiable future treaty in order for it to be truly credible and to have a true nuclear disarmament character. For South Africa, a fissile material treaty that fulfils nuclear disarmament objectives will necessarily also have to give effect to the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability.

In conclusion, for my delegation, the finalization of a fissile material treaty would constitute an important element of any legally binding framework to underpin a future world without nuclear weapons.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for her statement. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Ahn Young-jip (Republic of Korea): Since this is my first time taking the floor during your presidency, let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

As I have made clear in previous statements, my delegation is of the view that we need to build on the progress made last year by continuously strengthening momentum over the course of the remaining portion of this session. In this regard, my delegation welcomes your intention to continue our efforts from last year that were centred on considering various options for the programme of work through the re-establishment of the informal working group as well as conducting substantive discussions on each agenda item according to a schedule of activities. We also see merit in establishing a working group to review the methods of work, as was discussed in previous meetings; we believe that such a working group could serve as a good opportunity to seek ways to improve our working methods and thus facilitate substantive work in the Conference. We look forward to your well-crafted proposal in this direction. It is our sincere hope that we can further advance our discussions and make real progress towards the start of substantive work in the Conference.

Mr. President, let me reiterate my delegation's attachment of the highest priority to the issue which today's plenary is devoted to. It is clear that putting an irreversible cap on the amount of fissile material available for nuclear weapons would not only limit vertical and horizontal non-proliferation, but it would also contribute to future disarmament efforts by enhancing confidence. The negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices has long been sought by the international community since the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 48/75 L in 1993. Indeed, the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is the next logical step towards our shared goal of creating a world without nuclear weapons, following the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996.

From our perspective, an FMCT is the issue most ripe and urgent for negotiation for the following reasons.

First, the Conference has previously agreed on a programme of work that included negotiation of an FMCT on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We believe that this mandate allows for all concerns to be duly addressed in the process of negotiation. Last year, the Conference had very interactive and in-depth discussions on an FMCT under a schedule of activities, which helped us to deepen mutual understandings of the positions of Conference members and identify possible areas of convergence.

Second, the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT has been working through almost all of the elements to be incorporated in a future treaty. This Group is the first of its kind which envisions a concrete, legally binding disarmament instrument. Even though the Group is not directly negotiating a treaty, its recommendations can serve as signposts for treaty negotiations. With the adoption of the Group's report, I hope we can channel our momentum this year into substantive progress in the Conference on Disarmament.

Third, most nuclear-weapon States have declared a unilateral political moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapons use pending the conclusion of an FMCT, and they have disabled or dismantled their fissile material production facilities. However, some Conference members have not done so. The later the negotiation of an FMCT is pushed back, the more fissile material will be produced, which will, in the end, have an undermining effect on global security. As a practical and preventive nuclear disarmament measure, a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is indeed most urgent.

The key issues surrounding an FMCT, including the scope, definitions and verification mechanisms, are without a doubt directly interlinked. With regard to the scope, the issue of existing stockpiles has long been a hurdle for the start of negotiations. The Republic of Korea believes that this issue should be addressed at some point. However,

given the inherent differences between existing stockpiles and future production, we believe each could be handled separately and in a different manner.

With regard to how to define fissile material, my delegation believes that unirradiated direct-use material, as defined in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards Glossary, is the most suitable for the purpose of an FMCT, considering its practicality, feasibility and cost-efficiency. Effective verifiability is a *sine qua non* for an FMCT. With the definition of moderate but significant extent in mind, we must accordingly seek a focused verification system.

We look forward to a more detailed deliberation and exchange of views in the Conference this year, building on the outcome of the Group of Governmental Experts.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of France.

Mr. Riquet (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, allow me first to thank you for giving us the opportunity today to discuss a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT). We welcome the opportunity to address this substantive and fundamental issue, which has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament for many years. Any discussion that helps us move forward on this issue, and closer to beginning negotiations, is to be welcomed.

The negotiation of an FMCT is a matter of the utmost priority for France, as recalled by the President of France, Mr. François Hollande, on 19 February last. Beginning negotiations is also a priority for many other delegations. This is a long-standing commitment of the international community, set forth in the Final Document of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It was reaffirmed in resolution 1887 (2009) of the United Nations Security Council and action 15 of the action plan adopted by consensus at the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. The immediate commencement of these negotiations on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein is a priority we should all be working towards. We need to follow through on the commitments we made at the 2010 Review Conference.

The negotiation of an FMCT is a crucial part of the effort to build a safer world for all and create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons by fostering international stability and respect for the principle of undiminished and increased security for all. France is of the view that this work should form part of a realistic approach based on specific and progressive actions; it also falls within the scope of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In prohibiting all nuclear weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty aims to constrain the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and end the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons. An FMCT is the next logical step in that it will allow for a quantitative approach to nuclear arsenals, which is indispensable to international disarmament efforts.

In his address on 19 February, President Hollande stated that in the coming weeks France would propose an “ambitious, realistic and verifiable draft treaty” on the permanent cessation of production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. It will be ambitious because, like the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the FMCT is intended to be a universal treaty. Because the objective of the FMCT is to contribute to nuclear disarmament and arms control, our ambition will also be to see all countries that today possess nuclear weapons accede to the future treaty and participate fully in its implementation.

It will be ambitious because France considers that the main obligation under the FMCT should be the permanent cessation of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. The purpose of a legally binding treaty for States currently possessing nuclear weapons is to stop, as of a fixed date, the production of fissile materials for the manufacture of nuclear weapons and other explosive nuclear devices.

It will be ambitious because France is of the view that the concept of irreversibility is key to the FMCT. In order to be effective and credible, these measures must involve the irreversible dismantling or conversion of production facilities. France has not waited until negotiations on an FMCT have started in order to embark on this path. It is the only State to have already irreversibly closed and dismantled all of its facilities for the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. This involved a significant financial investment of 6 billion euros and challenges in terms of implementation and know-how.

The treaty must also be realistic, because we believe that the issues covered by a future FMCT must be in line with its objectives. The treaty should therefore cover only unirradiated fissile material that can be used directly in the production of nuclear weapons, in accordance with the definitions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), that is, primarily: uranium enriched up to 20 per cent or more in isotope U-235 or U-233; and separated plutonium containing less than 80 per cent of isotope Pu-238. This realistic approach to the scope of the treaty is also a prerequisite of reasonable and sustainable verification for the community of future States parties.

It will be realistic because it goes without saying that the treaty should not prohibit the production of fissile material for civilian uses of any kind or for non-explosive military uses such as nuclear propulsion or space applications.

It will be realistic because the treaty should focus on the question of future production of fissile materials. In our view, the production of fissile materials should be defined in such a way as to cover the processes by which these materials can be created. The production facilities concerned would consequently be all facilities for the reprocessing of irradiated nuclear materials and uranium enrichment facilities with significant production capacities in respect of the objective of the FMCT.

This treaty should also be verifiable, because only by establishing a robust verification regime will it be possible to provide sufficient guarantees with regard to compliance with treaty obligations while adhering to two fundamental principles: protecting national security interests and prohibiting the transfer of confidential information on nuclear weapons arising from the obligations of States that possess such weapons under article 1 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

It must be verifiable because the credibility of the future treaty depends on it. In order to be credible, a verification system must enable three main objectives to be met: first, confirm that dedicated production facilities have been shut down pending dismantling or conversion to civilian use; secondly, prevent the diversion of fissile material from civilian activities; thirdly, deal with cases of suspected activities prohibited under the treaty. On the basis of its undeniable expertise, IAEA will have a role to play in the area of verification.

Along with 166 other States, France supported resolution 67/53 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. Under this resolution, a group of 25 experts was requested to make recommendations. This group of experts is making a vital contribution to the discussions to prepare for the forthcoming negotiation of an FMCT. The group concluded its third session in January and will begin its fourth and final session on 23 March next. Many participants have agreed that more has been said about the FMCT over these three sessions than in the past 30 years. The group has accomplished a great deal. We have made more progress than ever before in developing a

shared understanding of the challenges — which are often technically complex — of a treaty and in presenting the positions of all involved.

Furthermore, at the Conference on Disarmament itself, as you recalled earlier, Mr. President, we had very fruitful discussions in 2014, in the context of the schedule of activities, under the leadership of Ambassador Biontino. Despite the informal nature of these exchanges, they were of a very high quality. All of this work and these discussions, both in the Group of Governmental Experts and the Conference on Disarmament, have shown that the issue of the draft treaty has reached an unprecedented level of maturity. In fact, to date, it is very likely to be the only point on which concrete progress might be made.

For these reasons, and because France is convinced that the negotiation of an FMCT is within reach, the President of the Republic has decided that France should take the initiative on this issue. As he recalled, this topic has been discussed for years, but negotiations have not yet got off the ground. France believes that after this necessary period of reflection and discussion, it is time to take action. In the coming weeks, we will therefore propose to the disarmament community a draft text in order to build on the momentum and dialogue and begin negotiations on a treaty on the permanent cessation of production of fissile materials for the manufacture of nuclear weapons without delay.

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

Mr. Wood (United States of America): During the 28 January plenary meeting, I outlined the views of the United States on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) in some detail. Against that backdrop, I intend to limit my remarks during today's session.

While the United States supports and stands prepared to continue to contribute to meaningful dialogue on all issues on the Conference on Disarmament agenda, negotiation of an FMCT consistent with the Shannon report (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein remains our priority in the Conference.

An FMCT remains a central component of our nuclear disarmament agenda and is the goal overwhelmingly endorsed by the international community. In our tireless quest to advance this objective and the objectives of this Conference, the United States is actively participating in the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts exploring possible elements of an FMCT. I would emphasize, however, that this effort is aimed not at bypassing the Conference on Disarmament, but at illuminating a path forward on an FMCT — a path for the Conference itself to follow.

In 2009, this Conference reached consensus on document CD/1864 to commence FMCT negotiations as part of a balanced programme of work. And yet, sadly, now six years later, the Conference has yet to begin such negotiations. All those who share the priority goal of nuclear disarmament should also acknowledge that we cannot achieve that priority goal without taking the step of capping fissile material production for use in nuclear weapons. We regret that this sole standing forum for disarmament negotiations still has not undertaken this long overdue step. The United States will continue to urge negotiation of an FMCT in this body on the basis of document CD/1299, convinced that FMCT negotiations at the Conference will provide each member State the ability not only to protect but also to enhance its national security.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of Italy. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me join the previous speakers in congratulating you on the assumption of this important responsibility. I wish you a successful outcome to your presidency and assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Italian delegation.

We believe in the need to preserve the role of effective multilateralism in the field of disarmament and the contribution of the United Nations disarmament machinery. Therefore, it is for us of the utmost importance that the Conference on Disarmament resume its role and overcome its current deadlock. In this respect, we regret that no consensus was achieved on a programme of work, and we welcome your intention to continue our engagement in this direction during the current session of the Conference.

At the same time, we welcome your decision to carry out substantive discussions on the core items of the agenda, building on the encouraging developments that emerged from the 2014 session.

As to the first two items on our agenda, we want to reaffirm our commitment to creating conditions for a safer world for all without nuclear weapons in accordance with article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In this vein, we welcome the recent conference of the five NPT nuclear-weapon States (P5) held in London and the ongoing P5 process that is increasing transparency and building confidence among the nuclear-weapon States. We appreciated the common statement delivered on behalf of the P5 at the last meeting of the Conference.

We recognize the concerns expressed over the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any detonation of a nuclear weapon, which underscores the importance of concerted efforts towards non-proliferation, disarmament and nuclear security in order to prevent any use of nuclear weapons from ever occurring again. But there are no shortcuts to a world free of nuclear weapons. We consider incremental steps towards nuclear disarmament as the only realistic way of reaching the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains, in our view, the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the achievement of nuclear disarmament. We need, therefore, to focus our collective efforts on ensuring a successful outcome to the upcoming Review Conference in order to make progress based on a view of the three pillars of the Treaty as being mutually reinforcing. In this respect, we reaffirm our full support for the implementation of the 2010 action plan, which includes concrete steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is essential to participate constructively and substantively in all relevant discussions on nuclear disarmament, including within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, with a clear focus on practical and effective measures and to avoid creating shortcuts that will not contribute to mutually reinforce the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation.

We are convinced that we have to pursue the security of a world without nuclear weapons as the ultimate goal of the NPT and not as an alternative to it. That is why we attach priority to the immediate entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, in the context of the Conference on Disarmament, to the commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material. We share the view of those who feel that the FMCT discussions under the schedule of activities in 2014 confirmed the level of maturity of this topic.

In this regard, we welcome the substantive and fruitful discussions held by the Group of Governmental Experts, to which Italy has actively contributed. We look forward to the conclusion of this exercise and to the report of the Group's Chair in order to further advance the Conference's work on this issue, also with a view to the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, countries will continue to rely on nuclear deterrence to help prevent a nuclear attack or coercion. Therefore, banning nuclear weapons by itself will not guarantee their elimination. Progress towards "global zero" will require

that States focus on a common ground and work together to prevent the use of nuclear weapons and their proliferation, thus promoting effective nuclear disarmament.

In this respect, Italy will continue to contribute to our collective endeavour.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of Germany. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): Since this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of your high office and assure you of the full support of our delegation.

We believe that a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is a priority issue that merits further in-depth discussion in the Conference on Disarmament. Therefore, I would like to limit myself to some matters of procedure.

We have a clear task for the Conference: commencing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty is an important step towards nuclear proliferation and — I would like to underline this — disarmament. But this task, like all other core issues on the Conference's agenda, has been stalled for over 18 years. Many appeals have been made to the Conference, with clear commitments by the vast majority of Member States of the United Nations, yet still we are stuck.

The various attempts to at least prevent the dialogue from stopping, such as the open-ended working group with broad NGO participation and the informal dialogue last spring, have shown that there is enough to discuss and that there are many partners willing to engage. Groups such as the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT are another take at driving the discussions forward. In our view, the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts have been very constructive and have tackled the whole range of issues which would be important for future negotiators of an FMCT. Thus, this Group should be a contribution to facilitating the work of future negotiators if it can cut the Gordian knot of the blocked Conference on Disarmament. We seem to be on the right track.

In 2014, we had, within the framework of the schedule of activities, a constructive exchange of views on particular topics regarding fissile material in parallel with the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts. Divergent positions regarding definitions, scope and verification concerning fissile material were quite visible. However, we see great merit in continuing these intense discussions. This should be a cumulative endeavour that builds on last year's discussions. We see considerable scope for overcoming differences in the course of actual negotiations on an FMCT.

We are all aware that FMCT negotiations will not be easy. However, in the course of these negotiations it will be necessary to address the issue of stocks. Any treaty provisions on transparency and verification measures will not be realistic without addressing stocks. We often complain that the Conference stalemate must be overcome. Approaching substantive talks about an FMCT would be an important step in this direction. We, therefore, urge the Conference to address all four core items in another round of discussions in the framework of a renewed and enhanced schedule of activities. We believe that the Conference should not lose its relevance. This is a point that the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Steinmeier, will underline in his address before the Conference next Tuesday, 4 March.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic.

Ms. Homolková (Czech Republic): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of your duties as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of the fullest cooperation and support of the delegation of the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic is a supporter of the long-standing objective of complete elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as of general and complete disarmament in accordance with article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. At the same time, the Czech Republic continuously supports the efforts of the international community to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Czech Republic has been advocating for a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices for a long time. We regret that the substantive negotiations have been pending for more than a decade within the Conference. Therefore, we welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts under United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/53 and the fact that the Group has already held three sessions, in which we took an active part. We believe that the constructive and overall positive discussions in the Group will help it to meet its mandate and that the Secretary-General will be presented with a comprehensive and balanced final report containing useful recommendations for advancing FMCT negotiations. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Golberg of Canada, the Chair of the Group, for her professionalism and expertise in leading the Group. I also thank her team for their tremendous work.

We are convinced that a fissile material cut-off treaty prohibiting production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices will constitute a significant achievement towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts in accordance with articles I, II and VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Logically, an FMCT should be the next multilateral instrument to be negotiated in the Conference. We are of the view that such a treaty will complement the set of legal provisions indispensable to the enforcement of global security and strengthening of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

It is crucial to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable treaty with emphasis on an appropriate balance between definitions, scope and verification and with a transparent and independent governing and decision-making body. Therefore, we welcome every effort which will enable us to move forward. In conclusion, we reiterate our plea for the Conference to overcome the current stalemate and to start negotiations on the treaty in order to help create the conditions for implementing the goals of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The President: I thank the representative of the Czech Republic for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Ms. Anderson (Canada): As this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on taking up this important role and assure you of my delegation's support.

Canada welcomes the opportunity for a further plenary discussion on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. However, ultimately, further plenary debate is not what is needed on this issue. What we need, rather, is a focused substantive discussion on the technical issues related to a treaty, ideally as part of negotiation in the context of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that addresses all issues on our agenda.

Canada remains convinced that a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is a practical and realistic option to address both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is not by any means the only or

the last step to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, but it is difficult to envision how this shared goal could be achieved if the production of the material necessary to create these weapons is not halted.

In 2012, 166 United Nations Member States voted to adopt General Assembly resolution 67/53, which was sponsored by Canada. This demonstrated a broad international desire to advance the work towards the eventual negotiation of a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. This resolution created the Group of Governmental Experts which will be completing its work in a month's time. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Chair of the Group, Elissa Golberg, to thank the many delegations that have offered positive remarks on the work of the Group thus far, either today or in previous sessions.

That the Group of Governmental Experts has been able to engage in robust interactive discussion, the breadth and depth of which has not taken place in over 20 years, is, however, due primarily to the spirit of cooperation and flexibility that has characterized the work of all 25 experts.

We remain committed to working towards a consensus report from the Group of Governmental Experts that will provide useful signposts to those who must negotiate a treaty. It is our hope that this body will undertake a serious review of the report once conveyed to it by the United Nations Secretary-General.

Arguments that a treaty would be only a non-proliferation step, and of interest to only a few, do not reflect the objective reality and unnecessarily set conditions for and prejudge the outcome of negotiations. The vast majority of States in this room recognize that the Shannon mandate, and importantly the report that accompanied it, are the starting point, not the end point, of the negotiations. They recognize that the initial negotiating positions stated in this room are just that, and that negotiations require compromise on many sides to reach consensus on what would be a valuable final treaty.

Indeed, an important number of Conference on Disarmament member States, including my own, support addressing at least some components of past production of fissile material within a treaty. As such, it is regrettable that there remain States who assume that these perspectives would not be accounted for in negotiation, and that only a few States would dictate the outcome. As my delegation has noted before, this is disheartening and implies a loss of genuine negotiating culture in the Conference. A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is not an end unto itself, but a concrete and practical step in an ongoing process. It is, therefore, imperative that the international community places the highest priority on the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty. Such negotiations have been delayed for far too long, and we must re-establish the urgency and commitment to pursue them. It is time for members of this Conference to determine if they wish to continue to endlessly debate the final outcome of the treaty — what the final outcome of the treaty would be — or get down to the real and difficult task of negotiating it. The work of the Group of Governmental Experts has demonstrated that negotiations would be complex and likely lengthy. But these negotiations and an effective treaty are a realizable goal and would make a valuable contribution to international security and stability.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of Indonesia. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Wibowo (Indonesia): With your permission, Mr. President, I would like to present my delegation's views regarding the fissile material treaty. As one of the countries represented in the Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, created under

General Assembly resolution 67/53, Indonesia is highly committed to advancing a balanced fissile material treaty which addresses the concerns of nuclear-weapon States as well as non-nuclear-weapon States.

There is wide agreement that the treaty should be based on document CD/1299. That document, however, should not be misunderstood as confining the scope of the treaty only to future production of fissile materials. Indonesia views document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein as allowing future negotiations to address all aspects of the treaty, including its eventual scope.

Document CD/1299 mandates that the future treaty should be non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable. I would like to offer my country's conception of these three important principles. On the non-discriminatory principle, we should not construe the non-discrimination principle narrowly. It must be placed within the broader political context. A non-discriminatory fissile material treaty would need to take into consideration the obligations of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, specifically the obligations of nuclear-weapon States under article VI of the Treaty.

A multilateral treaty addresses the concerns of the States parties to the treaty. It should not address only regional concerns or the concerns of a particular group of States. The only way for a fissile material treaty to move forward from its current stage is for the treaty to advance both non-proliferation and disarmament objectives concurrently. In order to achieve these two goals, the objective of the treaty should go beyond preventing any increase in fissile material for nuclear-weapons purposes: it should also lay a firm foundation for a gradual reduction in fissile materials for nuclear-weapon purposes.

Document CD/1299 also requires the future treaty to be effectively verifiable. In order to meet this criterion, the verification of a fissile material treaty should be able to deter and detect any non-compliance with the future treaty's provisions in a timely manner. It should also be able to provide credible assurance that States parties are abiding by their treaty obligations. Indonesia believes that, to provide such assurances, the treaty should be based on a comprehensive verification approach. This approach would provide credible assurances as it is the most effective approach for verifying undeclared production.

I also would like to emphasize the importance of initial mandatory declaration. Effective verification would only be possible if States parties make mandatory initial declarations which provide information regarding, among other things, numbers, locations and status of production facilities, as well as the currently existing stock of fissile materials designated for the civilian and military domains.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Indonesia for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. McConville (Australia): An effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices has the potential to deliver substantial benefits for the security of all States, furthering the twin goals of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. This remains a priority for the Australian Government as we work collectively towards an eventual "global zero" in relation to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Australia welcomes the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament last year as part of the schedule of activities, as well as our involvement in the current Group of Experts process, very competently chaired by Elissa Golberg of Canada. This is a valuable opportunity to make progress.

We also look to further discussions in the Conference this year in the framework of a strengthened and, hopefully, innovative rerun of last year's schedule of activities, if we can

agree to move forward on this sensible approach. We also note with interest and appreciation the initiative announced by the French President, François Hollande, on 19 February, as expounded eloquently by Mr. Riquet, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the French delegation to the Conference. We look forward to seeing a draft of the French text in due course.

While these discussions in both the Conference and the Group of Governmental Experts process will inevitably brush up against broader political issues, we believe we must work together transparently and with common purpose within the existing disarmament architecture to launch into negotiations. As we have said before, a treaty should be practical and effective and retain its focus on the objective of capping the availability of fissile material for nuclear weapons. But also it needs to ensure that fissile material is not diverted for use in such weapons and, given it is a key building block towards a world without nuclear weapons, we need to find common ground on challenging issues such as dealing with fissile material stocks. Our emphasis will therefore be on a treaty that is focused, effective and cost-effective.

Can I now come to the Shannon mandate, as this has been mentioned by several delegations today? It is essential we all recognize that the Shannon mandate and its report are the starting point, not the end point, of negotiations. If we can recognize that the initial negotiating positions stated in this room are just that, and noting that negotiations would require compromise on many sides to reach consensus, we believe we have a real chance of progressing an FMCT within the Conference.

In the meantime, and until we commence negotiations, we remain committed to working towards a consensus report from the Group of Governmental Experts that will provide a useful signpost for when we negotiate a treaty. Already, we have seen the discussion in the Group as the most significant and productive on this issue in the past 20 years. It is our hope that this body will undertake a serious review of the report once conveyed by the United Nations Secretary-General to us.

In conclusion, we note that the progress we have achieved in the Group of Governmental Experts, with such a diverse group of experts, has demonstrated that, while negotiations will be complex, agreement is possible. If we can share the understanding that these negotiations and an effective treaty are a realizable goal, then we have a real chance of making a valuable contribution to international security and stability.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Turkey. Madam, you have the floor.

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Mr. President, let me first congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We wish you success in your endeavours to advance the work of the Conference. You can count on my delegation's support.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to give a brief summary of the views of Turkey with respect to a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) will be a significant and sensible step in the process towards nuclear disarmament and a world without nuclear weapons. It will further pave the way for parallel advances in the Conference's other core agenda items.

An FMCT will contribute to disarmament not only by enhancing transparency with regard to nuclear-related materials but also through the development of a verification regime that in the future may provide a basis for verification of nuclear disarmament.

Turkey also considers that an FMCT would strengthen the existing disarmament and non-proliferation framework, in particular the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

To ensure a good start to the negotiations, all nuclear-weapon States should declare and uphold a moratorium on production. Eventually, a successfully negotiated FMCT would introduce a quantitative limit on the fissile material that is designed for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Nevertheless, Turkey is of the opinion that FMCT negotiations should be comprehensive and non-discriminatory. Therefore, a future treaty should include the issue of stockpiles and effective verification. It goes without saying that all national concerns regarding a possible treaty can, and should, be brought to the table during negotiations.

A flexible approach could allow us to move ahead without spending too much time on the modalities of a mandate. Such an approach would not prejudice the outcome of negotiations and could also facilitate our target of reaching consensus.

The issue of an FMCT is technically a very complex one. The definition of fissile material included in a future FMCT is key to the treaty as this is directly related to the scope and verification aspects. In this regard, a number of structural elements would need to be addressed in connection with further progress on this topic. We found the discussion that took place last year within the framework of the schedule of activities useful. Such discussions help us to better understand not only the issue but also the national positions of member States.

Finally, Turkey, like the majority of States, supported General Assembly resolution 67/53, entitled "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices". In this vein, we welcome the continuing work of the Group of Governmental Experts. We are looking forward to the Group's report to further the issue.

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Shen Jian (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that the Chinese delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties.

A fissile material cut-off treaty is an important topic both for the international arms control process and for the Conference on Disarmament. The negotiation and conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices will help to promote nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and will bring us closer to our ultimate goal, which is the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

China is in favour of the Conference adopting a comprehensive and balanced programme of work on the basis of consensus, as this will make it possible to advance discussions on all the items on its agenda, including the prevention of an arms race in outer space, nuclear disarmament, security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/75 L and the mandate set out in document CD/1299.

Member States should pay heed to and accommodate each other's concerns and they should properly address external factors that affect the work of the Conference in order to create favourable conditions for the start of treaty negotiations.

The member States of the Conference comprise all the countries that would have a significant bearing on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Only by negotiating and concluding a treaty within the Conference will we be able to ensure universal participation and the

universality and effectiveness of a future treaty and truly achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

China is participating in the work of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/53, the work of the Group constitutes neither negotiations nor pre-negotiations and it should not replace substantive work by the Conference on an FMCT. We have always maintained that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole appropriate forum for the negotiation of an FMCT. We hope that the work of the Group can play a constructive role in future negotiations within the Conference.

With regard to the treaty itself, we are of the view that an FMCT involves various factors in the political, military, legal and technical domains. Future negotiations should respect the principles of not undermining States' security interests, not undermining their right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and the promotion of their economic development. The key elements of the treaty, such as its objectives, scope, definitions and verification, should be determined from a realistic viewpoint, guaranteeing that a future treaty will be reasonable, effective and economically viable.

The President: I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Argentina. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. D'Alotto (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentinian delegation welcomes the opportunity to continue our discussions in plenary on the substantive items on the disarmament agenda. Although the Conference on Disarmament has not yet been able to find a way to break the deadlock, we still believe in the value of ongoing dialogue as the path to consensus.

Allow me to briefly state the main points of the Argentinian position:

1. Argentina believes that a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) should be a tool to prevent nuclear proliferation, as well as an instrument that contributes to general and complete nuclear disarmament;
2. With regard to definitions, our delegation agrees with the position that a definition of fissile material should take into account the one used by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in safeguards agreements, i.e., direct-use materials, such as highly enriched uranium and plutonium. Some type of special provisions could be considered for other materials that, while not qualifying as direct-use, could be used to manufacture nuclear weapons;
3. We consider it essential that the definition should clearly and unequivocally exclude nuclear fuel cycle activities and materials for peaceful use; that is to say, it should preserve the inalienable right of countries to the peaceful development of nuclear energy;
4. The FMCT should ban future production. However, the treaty's potential should not be limited a priori by excluding materials, facilities or processes that might be subject to the treaty under different obligations and with different objectives and levels of verification;
5. We recognize the political sensitivity of the issue of stocks, but we believe that it should be acknowledged that the existence of direct-use material in unknown quantities and locations that are not subject to verification introduces an element of uncertainty in the future of the treaty. In this respect, Argentina continues to maintain that any disarmament or non-proliferation instrument requires a credible verification mechanism in order to be effective. This mechanism must be established on the basis of the principles

of non-discrimination and irreversibility. The challenge thus is to design a verification system that strikes a proper balance between this limitation and what States consider to be credible. My delegation continues to believe that a focused approach seems logical in the search for a balance between an acceptable level of verification and unnecessarily costly mechanisms that place excessive burdens on States;

6. Although it has been recognized as an indispensable aspect of any future treaty, it is worth restating our position that any verification mechanism adopted should not impose new obligations on the non-nuclear-weapon States.

Lastly, we would like to highlight the work being carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT, of which Argentina is a member and whose final report will undoubtedly be an important contribution to this topic.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of India. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Varma (India): Mr. President, we are happy to be participating in this plenary devoted to a discussion on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Without prejudice to the priority that India attaches to nuclear disarmament, we support the negotiation in this forum of a universal, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable FMCT that meets our country's national security interests. India is a nuclear-weapon State and a responsible member of the international community, and we will approach FMCT negotiations as such.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/75 L, adopted by consensus in 1993, envisaged this treaty as a significant contribution to non-proliferation in all its aspects. India co-sponsored that resolution and has supported all subsequent FMCT resolutions in the General Assembly. India supported the establishment of an ad hoc committee on an FMCT in the Conference in 1995 and in 1998 and did not stand in the way of consensus in 2009 on document CD/1864, which provided inter alia for the establishment of a working group to negotiate an FMCT. India was prepared to support the proposal contained in document CD/2014 tabled by Ambassador Lomónaco of Mexico as President of the Conference last month. It is unfortunate that this Conference has been prevented from commencing substantive work on an FMCT again this year.

India joined the international consensus on an FMCT in 1993 as it reflected with clarity the common understanding of the basic objective of the treaty. The mandate for the proposed treaty was explicitly reflected in General Assembly resolution 48/75 L and reconfirmed by the Shannon report (CD/1299), which is, and I quote, to "negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices". This mandate was also reaffirmed by the Conference in 1998 and 2009 in its consensus decisions and reiterated in resolutions on an FMCT in the General Assembly. We do not favour reopening this mandate, as it provides a clear and feasible basis for taking negotiations forward on this very complex subject.

Proposals to change the fundamental parameters of the proposed treaty, which enjoys broad international support, are, in our view, only creating new obstacles to the early commencement of negotiations. Our support for FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament is consistent with the interest of India in strengthening the global non-proliferation regime so as to provide a measure of strategic predictability and a baseline for future global nuclear disarmament efforts. Given this objective, and given the Conference's vocation, it is essential that all relevant countries participate in these negotiations in the Conference and contribute to its successful outcome. As such, India participated actively during the structured informal discussions chaired by Ambassador Biontino of Germany on this subject last year and which served a useful purpose.

India is participating in the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to resolution 67/53. In our view, the work of the Group amounts to neither pre-negotiations nor negotiations on an FMCT, which should take place in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the agreed mandate. We hope that the work of the Group of Governmental Experts will strengthen international resolve for the early commencement of negotiations in the Conference.

India supports the Conference on Disarmament as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and we hope that its member States will redouble efforts to enable the Conference to commence substantive work at an early date. This Conference should be allowed to fulfil its mandate as a negotiating forum by commencing negotiations on the basis of an early decision on its programme of work.

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

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to discuss once again the issue of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. The Algerian delegation is taking the floor to underline a number of points in the light of what has been said by other speakers.

Firstly, several delegations have emphasized the concept of “undiminished security for all”. This principle, which was put forward in the Final Document of the General Assembly's special session on disarmament in 1978, was primarily intended to guarantee the security of all States and groups of States in the disarmament process against an international backdrop marked by unequal distribution of power and vulnerability. A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices should therefore be understood in that context.

Secondly, with regard to the objectives of a treaty banning the production of fissile material, we wish to point out that, for non-nuclear-weapon States, such a treaty would not impose any rules other than those that exist under the general safeguards agreements between States and the International Atomic Energy Agency in the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The object and purpose of such a treaty would therefore, in our view, be to pave the way for nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, the objective of the treaty — and I stress these terms — is “the prohibition of production of fissile material”. It is not the cessation of production but the prohibition of production; in the view of Algeria, this concept of production should also encompass the prohibition or assuming control over existing stockpiles of fissile material intended for the production of nuclear weapons. This is necessary if we truly want the treaty to contribute to international peace and stability. Indeed, a provision that sought only to put a limit on existing stockpiles, which are considerable, would have limited scope for the peace and stability we are striving for.

The third and last element we wish to underline is that we want the negotiations to take place in the Conference on Disarmament. After all, the Conference has 65 member States in different circumstances: some possess nuclear weapons while others do not, some are parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty while others are not, and some practise nuclear deterrence as part of alliances. In this regard, the treaty should not establish any legal situation that would call into question the integrity of the Non-Proliferation Treaty or hinder universality.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): For many years, Russia has been taking practical steps to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Back in 1989, our country ceased its development of high-enriched uranium for nuclear weapons and in 1994, we did so for plutonium. The last remaining reactor producing weapons-grade plutonium was shut down in mid-2010. At the same time, stockpiles of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium were reprocessed into fuel for nuclear power plants. Therefore, in Russia the issue of banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is closed, and has been for some time. However, the introduction of a universal, international legal prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons remains a pertinent issue for us. We support the initiation of a substantive discussion on that topic but, in order for it to be constructive and results-oriented, it is important to focus on the specific objective that we wish to achieve together. That will directly define the scope, which we consider to be the most important element of a future treaty.

In our opinion, the Shannon mandate contained in document CD/1299 should remain the point of departure. As has already been mentioned, that mandate provides for the negotiation of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. That wording clearly sets out the purpose and framework of a possible treaty.

In that regard, I wish to draw the attention of those delegations whose countries are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to action 15 of the 2010 action plan — which was adopted by consensus — and to ask them to firmly commit to the obligations thereunder, including compliance with the Shannon mandate. I should like to point out to those who have not acceded to the NPT, and so justifiably do not consider themselves bound by the action plan, that there is simply no basis other than the Shannon mandate for launching negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Any attempt to revise the mandate has the potential to exacerbate existing differences. In that case, key elements of such a treaty would be open for discussion, including its conceptual basis.

Owing to the absence of an internationally agreed definition of weapons-grade fissile material, the positions of States relating to this issue vary significantly. There are also divergent views relating to the production capacities that are subject to the ban. Needless to say, the treaty should not impede the use of fissile material in peaceful nuclear activities, and we should therefore focus exclusively on halting the production of fissile material for a specific purpose, i.e. the creation of nuclear explosive devices, as provided for under the Shannon mandate. Therefore, we must think about how nuclear fuel for research reactors and for marine and space propulsion systems can be excluded from the scope of the treaty. In view of the above, the verification system under the FMCT must be established in the appropriate manner.

We consider it equally important to ensure the global scope of the future treaty. Only then will it be possible to ensure compliance with the principle of equal security for all. Therefore, the entry into force of the treaty will depend on the engagement of States that have the capacity to manufacture nuclear devices and have sensitive nuclear facilities, primarily for the enrichment of uranium and the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, and of all States, without exception, that have nuclear weapons. That would allow us to ensure the effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature of the future treaty, as also provided for under the Shannon mandate.

Lastly, as has been expressed in many of the statements made today, we know that a number of delegations have designated the FMCT as a priority. We respect their positions,

but suggest that when considering the issue of the ban on the production of nuclear fissile material, the opinions of those who have different points of view should also be taken into account. It is our view that, in order to maintain strategic stability, it would be much more pertinent to introduce a legally binding prohibition on the placement of weapons in outer space. Why am I referring to this now? Well, it should be noted that in 2009, upon the adoption of the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, the Russian delegation demonstrated the necessary political will and agreed to the negotiating mandate on an FMCT and to a simple discussion mandate for the outer space issue, which was a priority for us and for many other delegations. That was done in a spirit of compromise. To date, we have not changed our position, but progress has still not been achieved in relation to the launch of negotiations on the draft treaty.

Russia is also opposed to taking key issues from the Conference agenda to parallel multilateral forums. We believe that, following the completion of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT, future work — and not just the negotiations — should be dealt with exclusively by the Conference.

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

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, I apologize for asking for the floor once again. I wanted to explain my country's position on an issue that has been raised by several delegations and that is the issue of the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

Several delegations have raised this issue and, as if by magic, referred to its work as providing a signpost for future negotiations on an FMCT. This orchestrated description deserves to be put in perspective. Pakistan was invited to be a part of the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT but we decided not to do so in view of our consistent position of opposing an FMCT that is based on the Shannon mandate. We also took this decision because we strongly believed that the creation of the Group of Governmental Experts would undermine the work of the Conference on Disarmament, especially since the Group's mandate, which is to discuss and not negotiate an FMCT, is no different from what is possible and, indeed, what has already been done here in the Conference. In our view, watching the same movie in a different theatre is pointless.

Thirdly, Mr. President, two nuclear-weapon States are not part of the Group of Governmental Experts process, which makes any outcome decided by the Group absolutely meaningless. Moreover, several members of the Conference on Disarmament are also not members of this Group. Therefore, what relevance will the Group's work have for the Conference? That is the question that we need to ask ourselves today. Even if there is agreement — although we, as we have heard today, find it difficult to believe that there would be agreement on some of the substantive issues, including on the issue of stockpiles — but even if there was an agreement on the so-called signposts for the future, at least for my delegation sitting in the Conference, these signposts are irrelevant and unacceptable. So, if we have to make progress through discussions, then the forum for that is the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

At this stage, allow me to give the floor to the Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Fung, so that he may give us an update concerning the plan of business for next week.

Mr. Fung (Secretary of the Conference): Before I get to that point, Mr. President, I would like to make an announcement in the form of a plea to all delegations delivering

statements that they kindly provide the secretariat with a copy of the statement before delivery. This would help also our colleagues, the interpreters, and ease their job.

Mr. President, for next week we so far have a total of 28 dignitaries who will address the Conference on Disarmament at its high-level segment. These 28 dignitaries would be addressing the Conference over eight meetings from Monday, 2 March, to Monday, 9 March. We have posted the tentative programme online. It is still tentative and subject to change, because many of you are still coming to us with modifications either of the names of the dignitaries who will be coming or the date and time preferences for speaking. This heavy schedule for next week has affected the meetings that were programmed for next week, starting with the plenary that was to take place on Tuesday, 3 March, at 10 a.m., and which was to be devoted to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. That discussion has now been moved to Tuesday afternoon at 4 p.m. In fact, the plenary will start with the high-level segment at 3 p.m. We have three dignitaries who will be addressing the Conference before the normal plenary meeting begins at 4 p.m.

Other meetings have also been affected. For the meeting of this session's Presidents and the regional group consultations with the President, we sent out a message yesterday indicating that the Presidents' meeting scheduled for Monday will instead be held tomorrow and the regional coordinators would also meet tomorrow: from 3 to 3.30 p.m. would be the Presidents, and from 3.30 p.m. onwards would be the presidential consultations.

The Group of 21 meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 4 March, and the Western European and Other States group meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 4 March, both at 10 a.m., would be affected by the schedule of the high-level segment. The coordinators of those groups may wish to take that into account and maybe reschedule those meetings accordingly.

The President: I thank the Secretary for providing that update. Would any delegation like to take the floor with regard to the schedule of business for next week? I recognize the Ambassador of India.

Mr. Varma (India): Mr. President, we are, of course, delighted that there is such extensive high-level interest in the Conference on Disarmament, as demonstrated by the large number of speakers who are scheduled to address us, which is very welcome. Of course, this would in a way invariably affect the regular schedule of the Conference in terms of the meetings of the various groups. I suggest, and it is not my intention to insist on it, that we also postpone the plenary discussion on outer space to a week later. We will all be busy next week in various commitments of different kinds. Since we have a very full schedule next week, could we use the plenary soon after the high-level segment is over, which I understand is on 9 March, to consider both outer space and negative security assurances, so that we would not lose time? Basically, what I am suggesting is that, subject to the agreement of yourself and the Conference, we reschedule the outer space discussion to the first plenary after the high-level segment is over.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of India and I have taken note of your proposals. Would any other delegation like to take the floor on this matter? That does not seem to be the case.

Before we adjourn this plenary meeting, I wish to inform the Conference that the session's six Presidents are continuing their consultations on the draft proposals on the three issues that I mentioned earlier. I hope that we will be able to conclude our consultations this afternoon. It is my intention tomorrow, Friday afternoon, to start consultations by reaching out to regional coordinators on the proposals.

That concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held next Monday at 10 a.m. and we will start with the high-level segment of the Conference.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.