

Conference on Disarmament

English

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


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 2 March 2015, at 10.10 a.m.

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

GE.16-08389 (E) 300916 300916



* 1 6 0 8 3 8 9 *

Please recycle 



The President: I call to order the 1342nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before proceeding, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Fu Cong, the Ambassador of China, who has assumed responsibilities as the representative of his Government to the Conference. On behalf of the Conference and on behalf of my Government, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you, Mr. Ambassador, of our full cooperation and support in your new assignment.

As I announced to you at the last plenary meeting, we are beginning this morning the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me at this stage to suspend the meeting so that I may go to the Salon Français to welcome our first guest, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like to extend a warm welcome to our guest today, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the pleasure and honour to invite Mr. Lavrov to take the floor.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, distinguished colleagues, let me first of all thank you for your invitation, which has given me the opportunity to address your forum once again. I last spoke here four years ago, in March 2011. The intervening period has seen the emergence of a succession of threats to international security and deep crises affecting not only individual countries but also entire regions. I say this not to cause alarm but merely to stress that, at such critical times, what is needed more than ever is constructive and fair multilateral interaction aimed at devising universally acceptable approaches that are based on the balance of interests and not on the ambitions of those who see the whole world exclusively through the prism of their own exceptionalism.

The difficulty and complexity of the problems facing the global community have ramifications for arms control, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the determination shown by the majority of States to find compromises that would allow us to work reliably towards the objective of global and regional security and stability.

We can all agree on the need for a more effective use of the mechanisms available to us, namely the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee) of the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, a triad whose expertise and accumulated experience on disarmament are unique. We are convinced that, in the present circumstances, we have no alternative to this triad. Its components are interconnected, complement one another and rest on carefully formulated mandates and rules of procedure.

The Conference occupies a special place as the forum in which the fundamental international agreements on arms control and non-proliferation were forged. Of course, this negotiating body has hardly exhausted its potential. While we, too, have concerns regarding the current deadlock at the Conference, we call for its functions to be fully restored through the agreement of a universally acceptable programme of work. To this end, we must all show flexibility to find the balance of interests without, of course, prejudicing the basic principles of the Conference's work.

In less than two months, the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will begin. We call upon all States to accord utmost attention to that text, which is rightfully considered the cornerstone of global strategic stability and international security.

One of the principal tasks of the upcoming Review Conference is to reaffirm our commitment to the objectives of the Treaty, the obligations deriving from it and its consolidation in the form of the action plan agreed by consensus at the 2010 Review Conference, which remains entirely relevant today. We believe that all the provisions contained in the action plan must be implemented.

In this respect, we are especially concerned by the uncertainty surrounding the implementation of the decision on the convening of a conference to discuss the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery. The efforts of many countries, including Russia, had seemed to give hope of finding a reasonable “package” for the agenda and procedures of the conference, but it was not possible to convene this very important event within the established time frame. Nevertheless, the launching of negotiations on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East remains a priority on the international agenda, and we consider it important to continue the dialogue with the participation of all the countries in the region with a view to convening the conference as soon as possible.

We welcome an increase in the number of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which brings us closer to the noble goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia by the five permanent members of the Security Council last year was an important contribution to this process. Russia is also prepared to sign the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty).

Constructive negotiations have been conducted on the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme, providing an encouraging example of how the NPT regime is being strengthened. We are doing whatever we can to promote the successful and timely completion of these negotiations by striving to reach agreements firmly based on the principles of the NPT and the best practices of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Last summer, an unparalleled chemical demilitarization operation was successfully brought to completion. The removal of all chemical weapons components and precursors from Syria — a task which was carried out with significant political and financial support from Russia — was made possible through the coordinated efforts of the United Nations, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and many States, chief among them Syria itself, a country whose Government has, in circumstances of unprecedented difficulty, fulfilled all its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and cooperated with international partners in good faith.

Moscow is committed to nuclear disarmament. Its commitment has been underscored by its strict compliance with the Russian-American Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. It is a priority objective to reduce to the level specified under the Treaty the number of delivery systems and warheads by 2018.

As the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, has said, we are ready for a serious and substantive discussion on nuclear disarmament, but it must be serious and without double standards.

It is clear that any further reductions and limitations of nuclear arsenals can take place only if the principle of fair and indivisible security for all States is respected without exception. This was the approach to nuclear disarmament enshrined in the action plan agreed by consensus at the 2010 Review Conference. In their joint statement, which was recently presented to you, the five permanent members of the Security Council reaffirmed the need for the nuclear disarmament process to take into account all factors that could affect global strategic stability.

Many factors affect strategic parity today. They include the unilateral actions by the United States and its allies to create a global missile defence system, which have already had a destructive impact on strategic stability, effectively undermining our chances of reaching so-called “nuclear zero”: an objective that, as far as I understand it, many of us in this room share.

We must also recognize that many types of precision-guided munition now possess capabilities similar to those of weapons of mass destruction. If a State were to reject nuclear weapons or sharply reduce the size of its nuclear arsenal, it would be at a significant military disadvantage vis-à-vis States that are leaders in the creation and production of precision-guided munition systems, with the resulting impact on parity and stability.

We are seriously concerned by the uncertainty regarding the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Unilateral moratoriums are of course important, but they are not the same as treaty obligations. The Treaty must be ratified by all nuclear-weapon States without exception. Russia ratified it in 2000.

Turning to non-strategic nuclear weapons, allow me to recall that, under the so-called Presidential nuclear initiatives of 1991 and 1992, Russia reduced its arsenal of such weapons by three quarters, reclassified them as non-deployed weapons and concentrated them in central storage sites within the limits of its national territory. This was an unprecedented measure and was carried out despite the continued presence in Europe — and within range of Russian territory — of operationally deployed nuclear weapons of the United States. Furthermore, the United States is modernizing its weapons of this kind, and some European non-nuclear-weapon States that are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) actively participate in so-called “joint nuclear missions”. The organization of joint military exercises involving nuclear weapons with the participation of non-nuclear NATO member States — which is set to continue, according to the declaration issued at the NATO summit held in Wales last year — represents a violation of the first two fundamental articles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The prospects for equal and indivisible security for all are directly dependent on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We are pleased to note the international community’s consolidated position on the matter, as reflected in relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions, which are traditionally adopted virtually unanimously. These efforts have been reinforced at the present session of the General Assembly through the submission and adoption by an overwhelming majority of States of a resolution entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space”. It was co-sponsored by 34 States.

When I spoke in this chamber seven years ago, I had the honour, on behalf of the Russian Federation and China, of presenting for consideration at the Conference the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects. We are pleased to note that this text has received wide international support and we are convinced that the recently updated version will create the necessary foundation for negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament. We encourage all the participants in the Conference to make a decision regarding the negotiations of the Russian-Chinese draft as soon as possible and wish you every success in this and other aspects of your work, including, of course, the prompt agreement of the agenda.

The President: I thank Mr. Lavrov for his statement and also for his kind words addressed to the Conference on Disarmament and the President. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Mr. Lavrov from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like now to welcome our guest, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the honour and pleasure to invite Mr. Lamamra to take the floor.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Please allow me to begin, Mr. President, by expressing my sincere congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, as well as my appreciation for the efforts that you and your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Mexico, have exerted to create the right conditions for the adoption of the programme of work of the Conference, in pursuit of which goal you may count on the complete support of my country's delegation. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and to his team, for their valuable support. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the personal commitment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to the cause of disarmament and to echo the call he made to the Conference on Disarmament on 20 January 2015 urging members to redouble their efforts to move towards the goal of multilateral disarmament for the sake of the international community as a whole. This, in fact, is vital, especially in 2015 which marks the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, the forty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and 20 years since the indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995. I am pleased to be able to address you in such a strongly symbolic context to reconfirm my country's commitment to participating in any initiative to establish firm and lasting foundations for our shared ambition of peace, security and stability in the world.

Today, no one can deny that global peace and security are under serious threat from the multiple and wide-ranging dangers which face the international community. The number and variety of conflicts, the re-emergence of numerous flashpoints, the growth of terrorism and of racial and religious intolerance are all, in one way or another, obstacles to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In an inclusive, open and unpredictable world, the security and stability of each State has become intimately linked to the security and stability of every other State. What emerges as a natural consequence of that general truth is the inevitability of multilateral cooperation to ensure collective security, in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Algeria has acceded to all international instruments concerning disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; my country is also a party to most treaties on conventional weapons, human rights and humanitarian law. In that regard, I am pleased to inform you that Algeria has acceded to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and to its Protocols Nos. 1, 3 and 4. Algeria is also a party to all multilateral counter-terrorism initiatives and is an active participant in the process of promoting standards of nuclear peace, safety and security. Crucially, Algeria provides substantive support to prevent, manage and resolve international conflicts. Currently, it is successfully leading an international team mediating between the Government of Mali and the political and military movement in the north of that country to achieve a peaceful resolution which serves both the national interests of Mali and those of the countries of the Sahel and Sahara region.

The adoption and signing of a road map to promote trust and consolidate a ceasefire between the factions on the ground enabled the parties to reach a framework national peace and reconciliation agreement, which was initialled yesterday, 1 March, in Algiers. In the same context, Algeria is working closely with other actors inspired by goodwill to silence weapons, promote comprehensive dialogue and find a political solution in the Libyan crisis, laying the foundations for lasting security which will guarantee the peace, unity and national sovereignty of that fraternal State.

In 2010, the international community was able to reach an important agreement on an action plan at the eighth NPT Review Conference. Five years later, it is, most unfortunately, clear that what was achieved then was, in fact, very little. And despite encouraging unilateral and bilateral initiatives to reduce nuclear weapons, it will have escaped no one's attention that the impact of those measures, however important, has been limited against the immensity of the threats and challenges that such weapons still pose to the present and future of us all. Our concerns are increased by the fact that many of the measures contained in the 2010 Review Conference action plan have not been translated into reality. Among the important commitments which have not been met, we are particularly disappointed by the failure to convene in 2012 the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, despite the efforts made by the facilitator, Mr. Jaakko Laajava, and other organizers; in that context, we must not forget to commend the flexibility and willingness shown by the Arab States in that regard.

The ideology of nuclear deterrence and nuclear weapons modernization programmes are fraught with dangers which threaten the whole of humankind. The three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons have clearly showed the enormity of the destruction the world could face from such weapons. In that context, I would like to draw attention to the Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Algiers last May, and its closing call for the launch of negotiations for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons through a phased programme, in accordance with a set timetable and leading to a universally binding treaty in that regard. Thus, nuclear-weapon States, in the light of the particular responsibility they have, are invited to work towards the tangible implementation of article VI of the NPT, regarding complete nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the sovereign commitments they have taken on in that connection, especially vis-à-vis the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Only by taking such steps and by renouncing doctrines of mutual destruction will nuclear States demonstrate their will to lay the foundations for mutual security and for a world free from assured self-destruction. A treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices will be fully significant if it contains appropriate provisions addressing the issue of stockpiles of fissile material.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is very slowly becoming universal. By coming into force it would certainly contribute to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Algeria therefore urges States which have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so as soon as possible.

My country believes that achieving tangible progress on negative security assurances through the conclusion of a legally binding international instrument is vital to protect non-nuclear-weapon States from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Another concern is outer space, which represents a particular challenge for international security. It is in all our interests to create the conditions necessary to ensure that outer space is used for safe and peaceful purposes. While underscoring the importance and validity of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, we believe that the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects proposed by the Russian Federation and China and the draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities proposed by the European Union could both help us to make positive progress in that sensitive area.

I am pleased also to be able to pay tribute to the initiative of the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament to arrange the informal forum with representatives from civil society, thereby enabling them to contribute to achieving the Conference's objectives.

Algeria believes that the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, is a matter of vital importance. In view of the mandate it has been given, it is, in fact, the most appropriate framework within which to address the challenges I have referred to in my statement. For this reason, we are worried about the stalemate besetting the Conference, which could adversely affect its credibility and relevance, the expected outcome of its activities and thereby the entire multilateral framework in an area so vital for humankind. As you all know, an interesting proposal for a programme of work was presented at the beginning of the current session of the Conference, while efforts are being made to set a calendar of activities for the session. We encourage you all to take advantage of these initiatives to lay the foundations for an agreement on consensual work which will allow the Conference to recover its dynamism and indeed its vital nature. Such a development would send out a strong positive signal on the eve of the ninth NPT Review Conference which, in a few weeks' time, Algeria will have the honour of presiding in the person of my colleague Ambassador Taous Feroukhi. I would also like to express my hope that this important conference will be able to achieve tangible results to promote the complementarity of the three pillars of the NPT, namely disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

I wish you every success in your work and I reiterate the readiness of the Algerian delegation to help the Conference on Disarmament realize its objectives.

The President: I thank Mr. Lamamra for his statement and also for his kind words addressed to the President and the Conference. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Mr. Lamamra from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like now to welcome our guest, Ms. Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the pleasure and honour to invite you to take the floor.

Ms. Wallström (Sweden): I am very glad to be here in Geneva today to address the Conference on Disarmament on issues of top priority to Sweden.

Setsuko Thurlow, one of the survivors of the Hiroshima bombing, visited the Swedish Parliament a few months ago. She gave voice to the great concern that she and other hibakusha feel: that the bomb, also today, affects her children and grandchildren and will affect her great-grandchildren and also their children.

Compared to the nuclear bombs of today, the bombs that were dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki were simple and crude. Still, they killed 200,000 people outright or in the aftermath, maimed many more, and brought complete devastation on two cities.

Today, more than 16,000 nuclear weapons remain. This is unacceptable. The call from the men and women of Hiroshima and Nagasaki rings clear: we need to move further and faster on nuclear disarmament. All nuclear weapons must be abolished.

There are positive developments. Three international conferences have been held highlighting the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons for men, women and children. Human beings have once again been put at the heart of our discussions.

A humanitarian perspective on nuclear weapons helps us bring disarmament forward. Sweden will work actively with all stakeholders, at the upcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and beyond, to pursue effective measures to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

Today I am pleased to announce that Sweden is returning to the De-alerting Group. There is widespread agreement that hair-trigger alert multiplies the risks associated with nuclear weapons. De-alerting is an important risk reduction measure on which real progress

can be achieved in the short term. We look forward to working with our partners Chile, Malaysia, Nigeria, New Zealand and Switzerland on advancing this issue.

Important work is done here in Geneva in the wider field of disarmament. Questions of life and death must never be delegated to machines. We welcome the continued discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; we are actively preparing for these discussions and we have asked the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute to study possible ways forward on central issues, such as definitions and transparency.

The Ottawa Convention that bans anti-personnel landmines is one of the most successful conventions in disarmament. Mine clearance and assistance to survivors have brought relief to affected people, countries and regions everywhere. But much remains to be done. Sweden will do its share and continue its long-standing and active engagement in mine action worldwide.

I am glad to announce that Sweden will soon have decommissioned all its cluster munitions, in accordance with our obligations under the Convention that bans this inhumane weapon. For the ban to become effective, it is important that the world's largest manufacturers and users of cluster munitions also join the Convention.

We are deeply concerned about reports of the use of cluster munitions against civilian populations in South Sudan and in Syria. The use of cluster munitions is unacceptable and Sweden calls on all actors to strictly observe international humanitarian law.

Contagious disease used as a weapon continues to be a major global security threat. To understand the potential dangers, we need only to look at the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Sweden is a major contributor to the fight against Ebola and will continue to help strengthen States' capacity to prevent, detect and respond to epidemic outbreaks in Africa and elsewhere.

Sweden will do its part in promoting a constructive and tangible outcome at next year's Review Conference for the Biological Weapons Convention. Universal adherence to the Convention is of particular importance, as well as the strengthening of confidence-building measures.

The peaceful uses of outer space have contributed immensely to the welfare of people around the globe. This has to be safeguarded and strengthened so that more countries, and people, can benefit from space services. Sweden welcomes that discussions are moving forward on how to update the international rules on outer space. I would especially like to highlight the International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, which will provide voluntary rules of the road to counter the pressing issue of space debris and help prevent conflicts in outer space. The Code will also be a complement to and help achieve a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space.

I warmly welcome the initiative to hold a civil society forum. Civil society organizations represent our people and contribute expert knowledge and should be allowed to participate in all non-negotiating sessions.

I regret that no new negotiations have been undertaken by the Conference on Disarmament despite many vigorous efforts. A fissile material cut-off treaty should have been concluded many years ago. We call on countries to remedy the blockages and stop linking items. If the Conference remains unable to fulfil its mandate, we will need to consider other possible avenues for bringing disarmament work forward, including the United Nations General Assembly. The keyword is progress, not process.

This year, it is 70 years since nuclear weapons were used in armed conflict for the first and, I very much hope, the last time. In the light of the worsening security situation in Europe, the abolition of nuclear weapons is more important than ever. It is only through their total elimination that we will have a real guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again. We owe it to Setsuko Thurlow, to all hibakusha, to their and our children and grandchildren to pursue and conclude this work with vigilance.

The President: I thank Ms. Wallström for her statement and also for the kind words addressed to the President. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Minister Wallström.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like now to welcome our guest, Mr. Bert Koenders, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference. I have the pleasure and honour to invite you to take the floor and address the Conference.

Mr. Koenders (Netherlands): Let me first say on a personal note that I am extremely grateful to be with you this morning. In my past life as a member of Parliament for many years, I was very much involved in the work of this important Conference in different roles, and I know that there has been a long-standing tradition with regard to the Conference on Disarmament. There have been so many different initiatives, there has been so much interest also in public opinion in what is happening here. I think it is a particularly important time again to talk with you about where we are on disarmament today, because I really feel that this Conference is now more important than ever. We are at a difficult time. I was just speaking in the Human Rights Council. We were talking about the low point where we are in the world right now with regard to human rights violations and protection of civilians. The world is characterized by new forms of conflict and by hybrid warfare, propaganda and thinking in terms of spheres of influence and “old power politics”, with the line between war conflict and crime becoming thinner. I have had the privilege to work for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon just recently in Mali and Côte d’Ivoire and I could feel every day the consequences of this type of war that we are faced with.

Talk about nuclear weapons in the context of strategy is gaining traction for some parties. That is also something that I am worried about, and therefore I think we have no room for complacency. We need a reset and we also need to take action in this important Conference.

I think disarmament has always been one of the *raison d’être* of the United Nations. Achieving global nuclear disarmament was the subject of the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1946; at that time, of course, the memories of the horrific events of the Second World War were still fresh in people’s minds. The world had seen the images of nuclear devastation in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which we will commemorate again this year, and no one wanted those horrors ever to be repeated.

So we started building global institutions to avoid new conflicts, and we made new arrangements for international cooperation, justice and disarmament. But in spite of the ideals that inspired us and the international institutions we established — and they should be cherished, they are important, of course — we know that we ended up in a cold war, in an arms race with enormous stockpiles of nuclear weapons and with horrifying concepts, such as mutual assured destruction.

Fortunately, I think the changes in the international climate following the end of the cold war made progress on disarmament again thinkable, possible and feasible. Since that time, we have concluded the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention; that was a long campaign before that actually materialized and

almost everybody agreed. The indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1995 was a major achievement, I think. And the 2010 NPT Review Conference was an unqualified success. All parties agreed an ambitious action plan for the years ahead. I remember being at that same Conference in 2005 and that was not an unqualified success. So we are making progress.

Since 1989, nuclear weapons arsenals have been slashed. Most recently, the New START Treaty in 2011 led to a substantial reduction in both United States and Russian warheads. Compared to the situation in the 1980s, stockpiles have been cut by 80 per cent.

So these are, I think, all very important positive achievements, and this Conference and many of you personally can claim some of the credit for this success. However — there is always a “however” — measured by the benchmark of the first General Assembly resolution in 1946, we are still performing unsuccessfully to a large extent. This is a cause of grave concern for many, and also for my country. The Netherlands is fully committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, and while we should recognize that much has been achieved, more can and should be done.

To be fair, the current geopolitical situation is not the most conducive to disarmament. We should not be naive and pretend that the work of disarmament occurs in a political vacuum. There are complications. But there are always complications.

It reminds me of the story of the traveller who got lost in a busy and chaotic city. With map in hand he asked a local for directions. If I were you, the local man answered, I would not start from here.

However, we cannot choose our starting point, and complications cannot justify inaction or giving up, especially when it is difficult and there are more risks, we have to act. The current difficulties in the international arena are no reason to abandon, in my view, nuclear disarmament. Even during the cold war, we kept talking and managed to conclude some key disarmament treaties. Especially in troubling times we need to keep channels of communication open, press onwards with disarmament negotiations and step up our efforts to find common ground and make progress.

To achieve this, we need a well-functioning disarmament mechanism. The Conference on Disarmament is an essential part of that; and first and foremost, this Conference could and should have started the year by adopting a programme of work.

The current stalemate is obviously of great concern to us. To be frank, it is not acceptable. My country will continue to press to revitalize the Conference, focusing on areas where progress is possible: the programme of work on the four core issues, as well as enlargement, working methods and civil society participation. We will do our utmost, particularly during our upcoming presidency in July and August.

One of our key priorities in the programme of work is an immediate start to negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for explosive devices (FMCT). We are part of the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT. We think the Group is doing important crucial groundwork and I would like very much to commend Ambassador Elissa Golberg for her excellent work as the Chair. We hope the Group’s efforts will soon lead to the commencement of negotiation of an FMCT.

Allow me to turn now to the NPT Review Conference which will start in less than two months in New York. It will be the most important conference of its kind this year. The NPT is the cornerstone of our disarmament and non-proliferation policy, and a successful outcome of the Review Conference is in all our interests. Over the last several years we have tried to do our share in implementing the 2010 action plan. Let me give you a few examples. We have contributed to the technical cooperation programme and Peaceful Uses Initiative of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We helped strengthen the safeguards

system by supporting the Agency and promoting the Additional Protocol. We worked to enhance nuclear security by organizing the Nuclear Security Summit last year in The Hague. And together with our partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), we presented a draft reporting form to the nuclear-weapon States that they can use to provide more transparency about their arsenals and doctrines. I think that is an absolutely essential point.

Let me add here that while we welcome these States' reporting, there is still room for improvement. In fact, we would like to make reporting mandatory in the future NPT review process.

We are strongly committed to working constructively towards a positive outcome for this year's Conference. In the NPDI outreach paper, which I highly recommend, we set out our main objectives for the final document of the 2015 Review Conference. In brief, a successful Conference requires taking stock, honestly and fairly, of the progress made, and using that evaluation as a basis for tangible follow-up steps, particularly on those actions that have still been only partly implemented. A successful Conference also means addressing, in my view, all three pillars of the NPT: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use.

During the Conference, the Netherlands will hold a scholarly symposium in close cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and several academic partners. It will take place on 28 April at United Nations Headquarters. Its main purpose is to give an overview of worldwide research related to the NPT and to learn about current and future challenges and opportunities. Academic experts can contribute to the review process by coming up with new ideas and concepts. You are all officially invited to attend.

We need to acknowledge the frustration in the NPT community at the slow pace of disarmament. There is a widening gap between many parties' ambitions and aspirations and the prospects for progress. The growing attention paid at the conferences held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna to the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons reflects, I think, those ambitions and aspirations. The Netherlands participated in all three conferences. For us, the humanitarian consequences underlie everything we do in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, we have to take full account of security and stability considerations. Although some downplay them, these factors cannot be ignored. But they must not become an excuse for inaction.

There are different views on how best to achieve nuclear disarmament. Some believe that immediately starting negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or a nuclear weapons ban is the best way forward. While we understand the desire to make progress, we believe also that a step-by-step approach could be effective. We should in any case concentrate on concrete practical and feasible measures that build the trust needed to eliminate these weapons completely. While we may have different ideas about the best way forward, we have to move towards each other. Our shared goal — a world free of nuclear weapons — gives me hope. The guiding principle of the Netherlands is that whatever we do is aimed at strengthening the NPT regime and supporting the full implementation of the NPT, which provides the legal framework for disarmament as well as non-proliferation. We will spare no effort to achieve these ends.

It is only right that we pay so much attention to nuclear disarmament. But we should not forget the progress that has been made on conventional disarmament in the broader sense. I am delighted that the Arms Trade Treaty entered into force last Christmas. We should now focus on implementing this landmark treaty, which sets the standard for the regulation of the conventional arms trade. We are looking forward to the first meeting of the States parties in Mexico. We hope we will be able to deal swiftly with the technical parts of the Treaty, so we can soon turn our attention to its actual implementation.

Another recent success is the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and we look forward to its first Review Conference in Dubrovnik this September. In the space of five years a clear norm has been established on the non-use of cluster munitions. Many countries have destroyed their stockpiles, and most countries' clearance of cluster munitions is either well under way or complete. Granted, more needs to be done. In the run-up to Dubrovnik, we need to think in particular about how to further strengthen the norm of non-use of cluster munitions.

Unfortunately, several instances of the use of cluster munitions have been reported in the last few years. Most recently, on 3 February the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission reported the apparent use of cluster munitions in Luhansk, Ukraine. We are deeply concerned about this report and we call on everyone, including all Governments, to refrain from using cluster munitions and to take all necessary measures to protect civilians from them.

With 162 States parties, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is an unqualified success. At last year's successful conference in Maputo, the States parties agreed to clear all anti-personnel mines before 2025, thereby effectively ending the threat from those horrible weapons. They also agreed on an action plan for moving forward on the outstanding issues. As the fifth largest donor of mine-related assistance, the Netherlands is prepared to do its share. We are already funding programmes in Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Mozambique, the Palestinian territories, Somalia and South Sudan, and we will continue to do so.

Looking at new issues, we support the ongoing discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems. The legal, ethical and policy questions surrounding these weapons need to be tackled head-on. A critical aspect of this discussion is the notion of meaningful human control. My country recently started a research programme to help clarify the issue, which in my view warrants much further international debate.

Our accomplishments should help us look beyond our failures and beyond the complications that hinder progress. We cannot take refuge in the notion that our current situation is not the ideal point of departure for reaching our goal. We need to take action.

From this room, from the NPT Review Conference, from the First Committee, and, last but not least, from the United Nations Security Council: disarmament is crucial to promote international peace and security. The Kingdom of the Netherlands wants to be your partner for peace, justice and development. For this reason, we are a candidate for a non-permanent seat in the Council for the 2017-2018 term.

To remind us of what is possible in spite of the difficulties, I am pleased to present you with the first copies of a publication that assembles in one work all the international agreements to date on disarmament and non-proliferation. This is yet another product of the close partnership between the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Netherlands. I have it here, so I can promote it a bit. I hope it will be a good tool for experts, diplomats and researchers as well as non-parties. I also hope it will inspire you to make sure that a new edition will be needed in the near future because another landmark treaty has to be added.

After all, disarmament is, and should be, a work in progress. When I think of the community that is working on this issue every day, with all its technical expertise, all its complications, also the sense that it is not the easiest time politically, progress has been made and I am hopeful about progress to be made. You are the actors who make sure that we keep making progress, and I wish you much inspiration and wisdom in carrying out the important tasks that rest upon your shoulders.

The President: I thank Minister Koenders for his statement and also for the kind words addressed to the President and the Conference. I also would like to thank him for the launch of the book on disarmament treaties and for graciously making copies available to all delegations of the Conference. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short time to escort Minister Koenders from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like now to welcome our guest, Mr. Eduardo Antonio Zuain, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference. It is my pleasure and honour to invite you to take the floor.

Mr. Zuain (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by congratulating you on your assumption of the leadership of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you every success in your work over the coming weeks.

Argentina has traditionally favoured taking a broad approach to action and initiatives in the spheres of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms regulation. It has been an active player in these spheres, at both the regional and global levels, supporting the role of multilateralism in general and of the United Nations in particular. My country thus supports the efforts of the Mexican presidency during the first part of the 2015 session to propose initiatives to revive the Conference. We believe that those initiatives opened up a dialogue that will enable us to continue working during this session and to strive to achieve results.

It is essential that we overcome the impasse in the Conference: it has been almost 20 years since negotiations were conducted and that has only served to sideline the Conference. That also makes it hard to show that the Conference is relevant as a tool for working within the framework of international instruments to come up with concrete solutions to create a safer world that is free of nuclear weapons. Several years have passed since we first began reflecting on the cause of this impasse and on possible ways to overcome it, but there are still no solutions. It is clear, however, that the problems preventing the Conference from resuming negotiations lie mainly outside this forum, meaning that there is a specific political dynamic that necessitates additional effort in order to reach long-term agreements.

Reviving the Conference on Disarmament and attaining the long-desired goal of global disarmament will only be achieved with the political will and determination of the States. Argentina will welcome any and all innovative proposals that lead to an open discussion and creative, consensus-based solutions reflecting the different positions in order to overcome the impasse in the Conference.

We therefore support the continuation of the informal working group to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in its implementation. Argentina welcomes the additional efforts carried out under this initiative by member States, including the convening of a group of government experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, mandated to formulate recommendations on different aspects which could feed into the treaty.

Argentina has been an active participant in this group, which will finalize its work in the coming weeks, and takes this opportunity to reiterate its hope that the treaty will be an important step towards creating a world free of nuclear weapons.

My country also supports the effort to raise awareness about the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, including the fact that there is no ethical way to legitimately possess such weapons. At the same time, and notwithstanding the importance we attach to such contributions, Argentina continues to give priority to negotiation within existing forums in order not to disrupt the balance and integrity of the current system in the long term.

Argentina has traditionally prioritized the issue of nuclear disarmament, and its stance in various forums has reflected its clear and continued commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Within this view, my country maintains a robust nuclear programme for exclusively peaceful purposes in strict compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and standards under other initiatives in this area. Argentina accordingly develops, uses and exports nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

My country notes with concern the fact that the significant advances in non-proliferation over the last four decades have not been matched by similar progress in nuclear disarmament, 45 years after the NPT entered into force. It is difficult to underscore the benefits of non-proliferation when ever more sophisticated nuclear weapons are being developed, the destruction of existing arsenals is put off and no progress is made on bringing into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that connection, Argentina considers that existing nuclear arsenals continue to be excessive, represent a threat to global stability and collective security and undermine the efforts we are all pursuing towards the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

My country reiterates its support for all measures which promote the total elimination of nuclear weapons in accordance with the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability of measures for nuclear disarmament. It has been 48 years since the Treaty of Tlatelolco was signed, banning entirely the presence of nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean; this might suggest that the issue of negative security assurances is no longer a concern. We are, however, still at a very precarious stage in terms of implementing this treaty, given the interpretative declarations to Additional Protocol II, which requires signatories to refrain from introducing nuclear weapons into the territory covered by the Treaty.

This fragile stage of implementation is also threatened by the illegitimate, disproportionate and unjustified military presence of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, including the use of submarines in the South Atlantic with the capacity to carry nuclear weapons in the denuclearized zone established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. This zone covers a large part of the national territory of Argentina that is unlawfully occupied by the United Kingdom and therefore the subject of a sovereignty dispute, recognized by the United Nations. We believe that the silence of the United Kingdom on this issue is simply because they are unable to explain their military and nuclear presence in the South Atlantic.

Mr. President, I would like to express our hope that this year's session will be full of creative action and to renew the commitment of Argentina to your work, to the work of your successors in this year's session and to this forum, which we consider to be the sole forum for negotiations on disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament.

The President: I thank Minister Zuain for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the President. Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment to escort Minister Zuain from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like now to welcome our guest, Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference. I have the pleasure and honour to give you the floor.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): It is an honour to be here today addressing the Conference on Disarmament in the famous Council Chamber.

At the moment, much attention continues to be focused on the situation in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine and occupied Crimea, which has contributed a lot to the issue of disarmament.

On the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the world order based upon the noble purposes and comprehensive principles of the Charter of the United Nations is under major attack. A hybrid war on Ukraine has been unleashed by a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, which bears special responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Ukraine, for its part, respects peace, needs peace and strives for peace.

Therefore, Ukraine is fully committed to the implementation of both the Minsk agreements of September 2014 and February 2015, supported by the declaration of Heads of State and Government. We consider their implementation as the only way to arrive at a peaceful settlement of the situation in Donbas.

Last Thursday, 26 February, Ukraine started withdrawal of its heavy weapons from the line of contact under Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) monitoring and verification.

Endorsing the declaration made by the leaders of Ukraine, France, Germany and the Russian Federation and the package of measures, Ukraine promptly fulfils its obligations. We expect that the Russian side will also execute these obligations in full, without any delays, reservations, ambiguous interpretations, additional demands or ultimatums.

Unfortunately, the fragile ceasefire is in danger because of constant attacks and provocations by Russian-backed terrorists. In this regard, we have started consultations with the United Nations with a view to deploying a peacekeeping operation in Ukraine. It could be an indispensable instrument in ultimately helping to implement the Minsk agreements and bringing back peace.

Undertaking tireless efforts in this dimension, Ukraine appreciates global solidarity and relies on further manifestations of support to ensure our nation's peace, stability and prosperity.

Taking into consideration the current security challenges, including those our country confronts today, arms control and disarmament are as important as ever.

Allow me to address several issues on the Conference on Disarmament agenda that our State considers to be of practical and particular importance. Having taken the unprecedented step of voluntarily renouncing our nuclear arsenal, we strongly believe that complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament is the only guarantee of the protection of humanity from the deadly consequences of the possible use of nuclear weapons.

However, this goal cannot be achieved in a short period of time. It therefore requires a long-term approach with practical steps and effective disarmament measures to be taken by the international community. This process should be transparent, non-discriminatory, verifiable and irreversible. Finally, we must build a system of mutually reinforcing instruments for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

Ukraine has consistently supported the discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons held in Oslo in 2013 and in Nayarit and Vienna in 2014, which once again demonstrated the need to exert all efforts for these weapons never to be used again.

The position of the Russian Federation on the eventual deployment of nuclear weapons on the territory of temporarily occupied Crimea is very irresponsible and destructive. Moreover, the Russian side seized nuclear facilities, installations and materials

of Ukraine located in Crimea, which contradicts the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The actions of the Russian Federation as a nuclear State pose a direct threat to the international regime established by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which Ukraine adhered to as a State that does not possess nuclear weapons.

The current aggressive behaviour by the Russian Federation vis-à-vis Ukraine and other peace-loving States significantly undermines international security and provokes the arms race globally.

Ukraine underlines the vital importance of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which would tangibly help to realize the noble objective of a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons.

Another crucial issue attracting wide attention from the international community and which is a priority for Ukraine in the Conference on Disarmament is the provision of effective legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

We must admit that confidence in politically binding agreements — such as the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances in connection with Ukraine joining the NPT — was compromised, if not destroyed, last year. The twentieth anniversary of the date when Ukraine joined the NPT and signed the Memorandum was marked by aggression from the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the occupation and annexation of Crimea, and destabilization of the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine.

On the eve of the 2015 NPT Review Conference it is worth considering the situation as regards the violation of the Budapest Memorandum, which is an important element of the non-proliferation regime. The provision of legally binding security assurances would send a strong global message dissuading States from acquiring nuclear weapons. It would improve mutual confidence and trust, strengthening the non-proliferation regime and fostering a new level of regional and global security.

We encourage the nuclear-weapon States to reconfirm and legally reinforce their commitments laid out in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Growing concern over the rising risks of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction requires an adequate and prompt reaction. In this context, a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) remains a top priority and a game-changer in the Conference on Disarmament's work. Although the vast majority of the member States are ready to start negotiations on an FMCT in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, the core differences regarding the scope of such a treaty still stand unresolved and put the Conference in deadlock. In our view, negotiating an FMCT and security assurances in parallel processes will contribute to confidence-building and mutually reinforce each other, providing pertinent support to the complex process of disarmament.

Ukraine consistently advocates the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Ukraine supports the efforts of the European Union aimed at improving safety and transparency in outer space. In particular, we strongly believe in the necessity of implementing a multilateral initiative on an international code of conduct for outer space activities.

The revitalization of the multilateral disarmament institutions and negotiations are among the ultimate tasks for the international community. The much-debated rule of consensus has been abused to the point that the Conference on Disarmament is deadlocked. We strongly believe that the negotiated rule of veto should not be an instrument for blocking discussions capable of producing essential compromises. We are convinced that, despite the protracted delay, the Conference's potential has not yet been exhausted.

Our State has always been supportive of initiatives aimed at enhancing the Conference's functionality and procedural efficiency.

Ukraine has strong faith in the Conference's ability to solve all persisting problems on its own. I hope that the 2015 session will offer convincing proof of it.

The President: I thank Deputy Minister Kyslytsya for his statement. Allow me to suspend the meeting for a short moment to escort Minister Kyslytsya from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: We have exhausted the list of high-level speakers. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I would like to take the floor to exercise my right of reply in order to respond to some comments that were made earlier by the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation.

First, to the question of ballistic missile defence that was raised by the Minister. Over multiple administrations, the United States has put forward a number of proposals for cooperation on missile defence. Unfortunately, Russia has declined to pursue any of these proposals. As I mentioned in the plenary last week, the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) missile defences are not directed at Russia. These efforts do not and will not undermine the strategic deterrent of Russia. We have made clear to Russia that we cannot, and will not, accept any obligations or constraints that limit our ability to defend ourselves, our allies and our partners. As I mentioned also in my statement before the plenary last week, we need to have the flexibility to respond to new emerging threats.

My second and last point has to do with the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As I think a number of you know, in 2010 the United States announced a national space policy that made very clear that we would engage and would be willing to have discussions on initiatives with regard to outer space that are equitable, effectively verifiable and in the strategic national interests of the United States and its allies.

The Russian and Chinese proposal on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space is not equitable, not effectively verifiable and not in our national security interests. This proposal, as I have mentioned before, does not address the question of terrestrial-based anti-satellite weapons. However, we have said that we are willing to work with other spacefaring nations to pursue pragmatic, bilateral and multilateral transparency and confidence-building measures to mitigate risks, and I will be speaking more about this issue next week in my remarks before the plenary.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I would like to exercise my right of reply to the statement made by the Republic of Argentina.

We understand the importance which non-nuclear-weapon States attach to receiving assurances that they will not be attacked or threatened with attack by nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom has committed not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to and in compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The United Kingdom ratified the protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free zone covering Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — in 1969, and it fully respects these obligations. The United Kingdom position on its deterrent is

unambiguous. The United Kingdom will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to and in compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

It is regrettable that the Republic of Argentina has again made unfounded claims about the military presence of the United Kingdom in the South Atlantic, despite the many clarifications that the United Kingdom Government has provided and our repeated request that the Republic of Argentina desist from making such false allegations.

The United Kingdom has made every effort to be transparent about the nature of its defensive posture on the Falklands. The United Kingdom Ministry of Defence briefed London-based defence attachés about the purpose and nature of its military assets on the islands in December 2013 and issued an invitation to the attachés to visit the islands. That invitation still stands.

Finally, Mr. President, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has no doubts about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. The United Kingdom Government attaches great importance to the principle and right of self-determination as set out in Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations, and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. That principle underlies our position on the Falkland Islands. There can be no negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as the islanders so wish.

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

Mr. Malov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like very briefly to exercise our right of reply to the statement made by the representative of Ukraine.

We have repeatedly explained the situation that has arisen in the Donbas region and stated that the Russian Federation is not a party to the conflict. There are therefore no grounds on which to speak of any kind of hybrid warfare on this territory. That is my first point.

Secondly, as to the Minsk agreements, we also welcome the agreements reached at the Minsk II meeting and we call on all parties to comply with these arrangements rigorously. For our part, we will participate in the coordination group to do everything possible to ensure the total withdrawal of troops from the line of contact under the monitoring of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. On this point as well, our position is absolutely clear. We completely reject the claim that Russia supports terrorists. These are not terrorists, but Ukrainian citizens with whom the Kyiv authorities refuse to speak, choosing rather to speak the language of force and cluster munitions.

Lastly, with regard to deployed nuclear weapons in Crimea, I would like to stress that the allegations made about nuclear facilities and nuclear weapons in Crimea are completely unfounded, and to claim otherwise is shameful.

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

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor one more time. I did want to respond to one other comment that was made earlier by the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation.

The United States categorically rejects the assertion that the United States is somehow in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty with regard to the so-called issue of nuclear sharing. This issue was dealt with and we responded to many questions at the negotiation of the Treaty, so I think our policy with regard to this is well known, but I

just want to get that on the record in response to other remarks made earlier by the Russian Foreign Minister.

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

This concludes our business for this morning. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held this afternoon at 3.30 p.m., when we will hear addresses by dignitaries from Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar and Turkey.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.