

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 2 March 2015, at 3.35 p.m.

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

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**The President:** I call to order the 1343rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me to suspend the meeting so that I may go to the Salon Français to welcome our distinguished guest, His Excellency Gebran Bassil, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest today, His Excellency Gebran Bassil, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon. I thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the honour and pleasure to invite you to take the floor.

**Mr. Bassil (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*):** I would like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, and the other Presidents of the 2015 session of the Conference on Disarmament, reiterating my confidence in your wisdom and expertise as you guide the work of the Conference towards its objectives. One of those objectives, as stated in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, is the pledge to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in a single generation brought untold sorrow to humankind. Since then, the Member States of that organization have made concerted efforts to limit and monitor militarization and to promote disarmament. By way of example, I will mention the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, which engendered this Conference on Disarmament as the sole international multilateral disarmament forum. Since its inception the Conference has, in fact, seen some notable successes as member States have shouldered their responsibilities and, acting in concert, have managed to make notable achievements which have spared humankind the scourges of war it had previously experienced. I am thinking, for example, of the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which we hope will come into force soon.

What arouses the wonder of a peace-loving and pro-disarmament nation such as Lebanon is that the member States of this august body should apparently be unable to agree to negotiate on matters which affect the future of us all, the very survival of humankind, when in the past, in international circumstances no less difficult and complex than those we are experiencing today, they were able to make important progress in that field. I therefore call upon all parties to demonstrate collective responsibility and I hope that this year will mark a starting point for the Conference to negotiate questions which affect our security as human beings. Agreement on a programme of work for the year is the foremost priority, but the Conference must also examine the issue of reforming its own procedures, consolidate a climate of trust and relaunch its activities. Allow me also to add, in all good will, that the stalemate which has been affecting the Conference for the past 18 years is having negative consequences on the credibility and image of this important institution. This is an incentive to us all to redouble our efforts and to show greater flexibility in order to expedite multilateral negotiations in the future. At this point, and speaking of reforms, it has to be said that Lebanon is among those States which are looking with particular interest and openness at the question of expanding the membership of the Conference so as to make it more authentically representative of the desires and interests of all sides, on a par with other major international forums. We do not believe it is acceptable for the Conference, which addresses an issue of such significance for the safety of humankind and of international security, to remain closed to most of the nations of the world. I call for the appointment of a special coordinator on this question so that it receives the consideration and attention it deserves.

Lebanon is proud to have acceded to all treaties concerning weapons of mass destruction and it works actively in various international forums to promote respect for the principles of those treaties, in the belief that security and peace can only be achieved through justice and equality before international law and respect for its rulings. During its aggression against Lebanon in 2006, Israel deliberately targeted civilians with cluster munitions — which are inhumane weapons — as documented at the time by various international organizations. However, rather than choosing to seek possession of such weapons for itself, Lebanon worked with friendly States and partners in the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society organizations to promote the principles of international humanitarian law. Lebanon chose to move forward along the path of banning such munitions and, in fact, had the honour to host and chair the Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in September 2011. I am in a position to say that my country is currently completing procedures at the national level preparatory to acceding to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

The Review Conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is due to take place in New York in April and May of this year, and I am sure that all States continue to adhere to that Treaty, which remains a cornerstone in the global system to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is, then, unfortunate that we are reaching a point in which the Treaty is losing its lustre and its credibility due to the fact that certain States are failing to uphold their obligations under previous Review Conferences. This will have a negative effect on the forthcoming Review Conference which currently already faces enormous challenges. Those challenges, and we do not know how they will be addressed, concern not just the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East but also progress — should there be any — on the implementation of article 6 of the Treaty, regarding complete nuclear disarmament. To this I would add the issue of negative security assurances and the fact that the nuclear-weapon States are failing to respond to requests to begin negotiations on nuclear disarmament or even to examine the possibility of making stockpiles of fissile material part of any future treaty that may be negotiated to ban the production of such material, as a step towards achieving the ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament.

As a peace-loving nation, Lebanon had placed great hopes in the action plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference, especially regarding the adoption, after a long wait, of a clear mechanism to implement the 1995 resolution concerning the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. On that basis, Lebanon was an enthusiastic participant in all the informal consultations organized by the Finnish facilitator, Mr. Jaakko Laajava, to prepare the deferred 2012 conference to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. However, neither the form nor the outcome of those consultations adequately responded to the action plan or the mandate that emerged from the 2010 Review Conference, nor did they fulfil relevant resolutions, particularly that of the 1995 Conference. In our view, the main reason for the failure of the informal consultations lies in the obstinacy of Israel, the only State in the Middle East which still refuses to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or to make its nuclear installations subject to the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This is a matter of extreme concern to regional States and raises tension because Israel possesses lethal nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, Israel has been able to take advantage of the absence of international pressure upon it and of the indifference of major States in order to hinder the informal consultations by inundating them with demands which lie outside the 2010 mandate and effectively make the delayed 2012 conference devoid of content. We are looking forward to this year's Review Conference which will give us the opportunity to meet with States parties to the Nuclear

Non-Proliferation Treaty so we can each open our hearts to one another in that regard. I am happy to take this opportunity to announce that Lebanon, which participated in the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in October 2014, adheres to the pledge issued by the Austrian Government at the close of that Conference, known as the Austrian Pledge. Lebanon believes efforts to extract explicit international recognition that nuclear weapons are at odds with international humanitarian law are important and it supports them. Such efforts must not, of course, distract us from the central demand which is the full implementation without delay of article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; indeed, if the efforts are successful they will bolster that demand.

Our world is beset by serious crises which feed off one another. Faced with them, most of the time we are unable to find effective solutions or even to mitigate their harmful effects, perhaps because that would require non-traditional remedies and would mean that we would have to redouble our efforts to find comprehensive approaches and attempt to address the root causes of the challenges. And, of course, ongoing militarization and the allocation of funds to modernize nuclear weapons only serve to fuel those crises, alongside other important factors such as the illicit trade in weapons and its consequences on human security and development, cyberwars and new and lethal automatic weapons systems. This clearly raises a lot of legitimate issues under international law, just as it contradicts the most elemental principles of international humanitarian law, such as the distinction between civilians and combatants and the standards of proportionality and caution. What worries us first and foremost is terrorism, which strikes mercilessly in many parts of the world, especially the Middle East where we see terrorism practised by occupying States and terrorism practised by extremist groups — far removed from any religion — in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and the rest of the world. Unfortunately, terrorism is a factor in most of the serious crises facing the world. It has a remarkable capacity to change depending on the features of each particular situation and becomes increasingly capable of claiming greater numbers of victims, spreading terror and rejecting others. Sadly, many examples can be cited and our States must bear them in mind as we now review the post-2015 development agenda. How, indeed, can we put into practice the words of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan: “We will not enjoy development without security we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.” For all these reasons, disarmament, which helps to build trust and reduce tension, can play an effective role in smoothing the way to resolve those crises. The steps that need to be taken are well known but do we have the courage or the political will to take them?

I extend my thanks to everyone present, and I look forward to meeting you again soon when this Conference is actively engaged in negotiating the questions which will bring security and peace of mind to future generations.

**The President:** I thank His Excellency Mr. Bassil 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 to escort His Excellency Mr. Bassil from the Council chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** I would like now to welcome our distinguished guest, Her Excellency Ms. Mbarka Bouaida, Minister Delegate of Morocco. I thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament and I have the pleasure and honour to invite you to take the floor.

**Ms. Bouaida (Morocco) (*spoke in French*):** The Kingdom of Morocco considers the issue of disarmament and arms control to be one of the chief concerns of the international

community. The issue is more than ever at the heart of any effort to achieve a safer, better and more prosperous world.

At a time when international peace and security are under severe strain and terrorism is reaching unprecedented levels, strengthening international cooperation is no longer a mere wish but a most pressing need. The fact that vast expanses of territory in North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East have come under the control of terrorist groups, with all this entails in terms of material resources, arsenals and arms depots, demonstrates the magnitude of the threat against these regions and, by extension, against international peace and security. Moreover, the stated objective of these groups to wage a global war and their ambition — which, unfortunately, can no longer be guessed at — of possessing weapons of mass destruction force us to rethink our doctrine.

The current situation and the real threats against our collective security reinforce our conviction that only cooperative, coordinated and combined action by the international community can provide appropriate solutions for this universal challenge. Indeed, there can be no security without arms control, and this control has one name only: disarmament. This point is even more timely in the light of the risk that weapons of mass destruction might be acquired by lawless non-State actors.

All of us here in this room share these concerns, but we cannot merely take note of and regret the deadlock and inertia of the Conference on Disarmament, a situation that is paradoxical in more than one way. For example, how can we commend and express our commitment to this sole multilateral body for disarmament negotiations and claim to be concerned by imminent threats, all the while sanctioning and fatalistically accepting the lethargy that has befallen the process?

In the opinion of Morocco, which reflects a sentiment and belief shared by most of the Conference, it is imperative for the Conference, as one of the pillars of the United Nations system, to build on its past successes, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. In order to overcome the current deadlock, we must show imagination and adopt dynamic and innovative approaches. The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit are enlightening examples that could guide our endeavours.

Morocco, which has acceded to all the multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction and remains committed to general and complete disarmament, especially with regard to nuclear weapons, is of the opinion that our collective security depends on renouncing proliferation and disengaging from armament. Morocco is convinced that the possession of nuclear weapons and all types of weapons of mass destruction is not a guarantee of security or effective stability at the regional or international level and that, on the contrary, the real danger is of these weapons falling into the hands of uncontrollable non-State actors. It is with this in mind that we should approach the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in May 2015, which ought to be the opportunity for us to achieve tangible progress in disarmament and to go beyond boilerplate statements and praise for achievements, principles and commitments that have already been agreed.

The current deadlock and the lack of a binding legal framework promote proliferation and, by extension, constitute a real threat to our collective security, hence the need to act firmly and with determination to achieve the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that connection, Morocco stresses the importance of all States acceding to the Treaty and concluding agreements on comprehensive safeguards with the International Atomic Energy Agency. It is both urgent and crucial to hold the Helsinki Conference, which has been postponed repeatedly, on the

establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, pursuant to the action plan for the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The Helsinki Conference constitutes a historic opportunity to launch a process to rid the region of weapons of mass destruction and strengthen regional peace and security, as has been done in other regions of the world.

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996 and the declaration of a moratorium on nuclear tests reflect the realization of the international community of the need to stop such tests and pave the way for general and complete disarmament by putting an end to the qualitative development of nuclear weapons. The achievement of this objective and of an irreversible, transparent and verifiable ban remains nonetheless contingent on the entry into force of the Treaty and, by extension, its universality. Morocco cannot but welcome the momentum created by new ratifications and hopes that this enthusiasm will spur the other countries listed in the Treaty's annex 2 to follow suit and finally ratify the Treaty.

As I have often said, the adaptability and diffuse nature of terrorism constitute a major challenge for international peace and security. The openly hostile intention of some terrorist groups to use weapons of mass destruction is a real threat to which we must respond in a collective and united manner. This threat is made even more real by the breakdown, and even failure, of some States, whose suspected unrecorded stockpiles of weapons or materials that could be used to build weapons of mass destruction are now readily accessible.

This is a stark reminder to us all of the pressing need to comply with the obligations established by the international institutions responsible for non-proliferation efforts and security standards and with recommended nuclear security measures. In that connection, Morocco is taking part in several international initiatives, including the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit process, whose positive outcomes we welcome, in particular the action plans for strengthening the nuclear security system.

Being fully engaged in this process, Morocco hosted a meeting of the working group on the evaluation and implementation of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism from 17 to 19 February 2015, which was co-chaired by the United States of America and the Russian Federation. Some 200 representatives of 85 countries took part in the meeting, as well as experts in the prevention, detection and response to radiological and nuclear incidents and international organizations acting as observers.

The sharing of expertise and experiences as part of these international initiatives strengthens multilateral action in the area of non-proliferation and nuclear security. Morocco has held several activities, such as an international exercise on the response to malicious acts involving radioactive material and the ConvEx-3 exercise, which combines aspects of nuclear safety and security, in collaboration with international partners, including the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In addition, since 2011, Morocco has been home to a centre of excellence for African countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean, which is run in cooperation with the United Nations and the European Union and whose objective is to build regional capacity to respond to and mitigate the risks posed by nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical agents.

However, I would like to emphasize that, while Morocco supports the efforts to adapt to new global challenges and raise nuclear safety and security standards, it is of the view that the right to the development and peaceful use of nuclear energy for the purpose of economic and social development should not be infringed, especially in developing countries.

Trafficking in small arms and light weapons and the human tragedies that result from it constitute a tangible threat to peace, stability and national development, in particular in Africa. The situation has been all the more alarming in the Sahel-Sahara region since the downfall of the former Libyan regime and the seizure of its arsenal by uncontrolled groups. The porousness of borders and the weakness, and sometimes lack, of border controls, combined with the proven links between drug and arms traffickers and terrorist groups, make the region a lawless area that threatens the stability of all the countries in the region and beyond.

Morocco believes that regional and subregional cooperation are the only means of effectively combating small arms smuggling. It was with this in mind that Morocco held the second regional ministerial conference on border security, in which the countries of North Africa and the Sahel-Sahara region together with regional and international partners took part, thereby illustrating its firm commitment to thwarting all attempts to destabilize the region.

Morocco remains convinced that security in border areas can be guaranteed only by renewing ties between neighbouring countries and international partners as part of an inclusive, regular and constructive dialogue. Accordingly, Morocco is a firm supporter of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and of the related international tracing instrument.

We applaud the success and outcomes of the fifth biennial meeting of the Programme of Action, held in June of last year, reiterate our satisfaction with the adoption of Security Council resolution 2017 (2011) on light weapons and reaffirm our support of the international processes and instruments for the prevention and eradication of light weapons smuggling. The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty is a new step in the regulation of the arms trade and the fight against arms smuggling. Morocco stresses the need for the Treaty to be enforced fairly and transparently, in full respect of States' legitimate right to purchase the means of defending their unity and territorial integrity.

Before concluding, I would once again like to offer you my congratulations, Mr. President, and assure you of my country's and delegation's support in your efforts to revitalize the Conference. When Morocco takes over the presidency, it intends to rely on the virtues of dialogue and consultation. We will work together in the spirit of compromise and unity as the only way of effectively and efficiently tackling the challenge of international peace and security.

**The President:** I thank Her Excellency Ms. Bouaida for her statement and also for her kind words addressed to the President.

Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment to escort Her Excellency Ms. Bouaida from the Council chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** I would like now to welcome our distinguished guest, His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Minister's Assistant for International Cooperation Affairs of Qatar. I thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the pleasure and honour to invite His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani to take the floor.

**Sheikh Al Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to be able to address you today in the name of my country's delegation to the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me to begin by congratulating Mr. Vaanchig Purevdorj for his presidency of the Conference and by praising the efforts of Mr. Michael Møller, Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, for his ongoing support to help the Conference move towards

the goals for which it was created, the most important of which is achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

In order to fulfil its responsibility to ensure international peace and security, Qatar has adopted a firm national policy and has taken up clear positions on the question of disarmament, convinced as it is of the importance of supporting all efforts aimed at global disarmament. For that reason, Qatar has acceded to a number of important international disarmament treaties including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It has also signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement and a small quantities protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency and acceded to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, and it recently ratified the amendments to the latter. All this serves to support international efforts to promote oversight of nuclear materials. Since it was formed in 2004, the National Arms Prohibition Committee has been fulfilling its role by advising government departments in matters related to the prohibition of arms of all kinds, working to achieve the objectives of the relevant international treaties to which Qatar has acceded, and drafting and implementing awareness-raising and educational programmes for the general public on various aspects of disarmament, including its humanitarian, economic and environmental effects. Qatar has hosted a number of conferences and seminars on the subject of disarmament, the most recent being the Seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and Chemical Safety and Security Management for Member States of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the Asia Region held in February 2015. Doha was hosting that gathering for the fourth year, thanks to cooperation between the National Arms Prohibition Committee and OPCW, under the auspices of the Doha regional centre for training on treaties concerning weapons of mass destruction. The centre, which opened in December 2012, is the first of its kind in the Middle East and Asia.

The Conference on Disarmament is traversing a critical stage, one which coincides with a time of increasingly complex regional crises in which the threat of terrorism and the aggravated risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction menace international stability and security, and even more so in the light of the stalemate affecting the Conference. Qatar, therefore, invites the members of the Conference to make greater efforts and to show a genuine political will and flexibility to overcome differences and agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work which takes account of the security concerns of all States and is consistent with the Conference's own rules of procedure. We also invite members to continue their substantive work, constructively and effectively, on the core issues of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. This will raise the Conference to the level of the expectations of the international community and restore faith in its credibility and its ability to support and promote international peace and security as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

With regard to the convening of an informal Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum on 19 March 2015, we would like to underline the important role played by civil society in raising awareness and educating people about the immense danger that nuclear weapons pose to humankind and in mobilizing international efforts to achieve the shared goal of creating a world free of nuclear weapons. Civil society can also help by presenting new ideas and proposals which may contribute to ending the paralysis affecting the Conference on Disarmament. We also believe that the time has come for the Conference to consider enlarging its membership in order to become more representative and democratic. This would be consistent with the rules of procedure of the Conference which state that the membership is to be reviewed at regular intervals. In that regard Qatar — which believes that the Conference on Disarmament continues to be an important and valuable institution for concluding disarmament treaties as it has successfully done in the past — has expressed the desire to become a member State of the Conference and sent a



request to that effect to the Conference secretariat in June 2012. We urge all member States to overcome their political differences and appoint a special rapporteur for the expansion of the membership of the Conference. At this point, I cannot fail to praise the work done by the Permanent Delegation of the Czech Republic as coordinator of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament and to welcome the Permanent Delegation of Latvia as the new coordinator of the group in cooperation with the Permanent Delegation of Portugal. We fully support and back the role they will play.

One of the principal reasons for the lack of political stability and security in the Middle East is the refusal of Israel to join efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region or to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; in addition to that is the fact that it does not apply comprehensive safeguards to its installations and it adduces unacceptable pretexts as a precondition for participating in such efforts. In that context, we reaffirm the need to implement the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review Conference concerning the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The failure of international efforts to convene the 2012 Helsinki conference on the Middle East is tantamount to an evasion of the obligations set forth in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference, and this will certainly have negative repercussions on the nuclear non-proliferation system overall. The credibility of the Treaty is at stake and many States are looking to the 2015 Review Conference as a watershed for the Treaty. The time has therefore come for States, and especially those which sponsored the 1995 resolution, to fulfil their responsibilities and obligations vis-à-vis implementing the resolutions of the 2010 Conference and other relevant resolutions.

Qatar believes that all States have an inalienable right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially developing countries striving to achieve economic advancement. That right is to be exercised under legal pledges, the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and in full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, with a focus on ensuring the safety and security of nuclear facilities, promoting confidence and responding to concerns raised by the international community about the peaceful nature of nuclear programmes.

In closing, Qatar reaffirms its commitment to and support for disarmament negotiations, its fulfilment of all obligations in that regard and its tireless efforts and ongoing calls to preserve international peace and security and to protect humankind from the destructive effects of lethal weapons.

**The President:** I thank His Excellency Sheikh Al Thani for his statement and also for the kind words addressed to the President.

Allow me now to suspend the meeting to escort His Excellency Sheikh Al Thani from the Council chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** I would like now to welcome our distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Naci Koru, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. I thank you, Excellency, for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the pleasure and honour to invite you to take the floor.

**Mr. Koru (Turkey):** It is a pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament today. I am particularly pleased to address you during the presidency of Mongolia, a brotherly country with which we share deep historic and cultural ties.

Turkey is resolutely committed to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Our security policies exclude the production and use of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Their proliferation is a matter of serious concern to us. Turkey is therefore party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes.

We support their universalization as well as effective implementation in good faith and consistency.

In order to address today's challenges and enhance our security in a volatile environment, multilateral efforts towards disarmament are indispensable. Our ability to respond effectively to the pressing challenges to international peace and security depends heavily on how we make the best use of international forums, including the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference has a special responsibility regarding the disarmament agenda. There is a considerable heritage. You have successfully negotiated treaties in the past that contributed to a safer and more peaceful world.

The stark truth is that the Conference has been unable to fulfil its mandate for too long. Unfortunately, today I join a line of Ministers who have expressed their disappointment over the stalemate that has prevented it from playing its role. We should all strive to maintain the relevance of the Conference by ensuring that it fulfil its fundamental task, that is, to undertake disarmament negotiations. We would not like to see the Conference's role shifted away. In this regard, we hope that the Conference will resume substantive work as early as possible.

An essential step in this respect will be the commencement of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and universally and effectively verifiable treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This will serve both disarmament and non-proliferation purposes. It will further pave the way for parallel advances on the other core agenda items. We welcome, in this respect, the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts on this issue and look forward to its report. We hope that the report will help to provide a better understanding of this technically complex and multifaceted issue.

The 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will take place in a few months. We shall take stock of progress in the implementation of the 2010 action plan in detail. There might be shortcomings, however the Treaty remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The good and healthy functioning of the Treaty is a fundamental goal for us. The NPT regime should therefore be safeguarded and further strengthened. It is also our common duty to strive for the universalization of the Treaty.

The three pillars of the Treaty, namely nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, should be addressed in a balanced manner. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing objectives of the Treaty that require parallel advances. As a country seeking to integrate nuclear power into its energy supply mix, Turkey also supports the greatest possible enjoyment of the benefits of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes by all States that are in full compliance with their international obligations.

An overall reduction of the global stockpiles of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner and the elimination of these weapons from military doctrines are of key importance if we wish to realize the common aspiration of "Global Zero".

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the regions concerned is an important non-proliferation and disarmament measure. A pending critical commitment of the 2010 action plan is the convening of an international conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. I would like to underscore our disappointment at not being able to make that happen. Speaking very frankly, we all have missed a crucial confidence-building measure and a significant stimulus to the Treaty review process.

On a positive note, we acknowledge with satisfaction the extension of the period of implementation of the joint action plan between the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany (P5+1) and Iran. We hope that the ongoing negotiations will lead to a final and comprehensive resolution of the nuclear issue with Iran.

In closing, let me come back to the state of affairs in the Conference on Disarmament. Turkey is convinced that those challenges are not created by its procedures, membership or internal dynamics. We have to study carefully the state of affairs at the international and regional levels. But we also have to assess whether a stalemate in the Conference or its healthy functioning serves us better. We should not allow past failures to deter us. There are challenges, but we need to strive to overcome the current stalemate.

Mr. President, you can count on the active support of Turkey across the board.

**The President:** I thank His Excellency Deputy Minister Koru for his statement and also for his kind words addressed to the President.

Allow me to suspend the meeting to escort His Excellency Deputy Minister Koru from the Council chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** Before we finish our business for today, I would like to ask if any delegation wishes to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

That concludes our business for this afternoon. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held tomorrow morning, Tuesday, at 10.15 a.m., when we will hear addresses from dignitaries of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Germany, Austria, Spain, the United Kingdom, Cuba and Japan.

*The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.*