

# Conference on Disarmament

English

---

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


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 3 March 2015, at 3.35 p.m.

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

GE.16-08392 (E) 270916 280916



\* 1 6 0 8 3 9 2 \*

Please recycle 

**The President:** I call to order the 1345th plenary meeting 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 for this afternoon, Ms. Tamar Beruchashvili, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is resumed. I would like now to extend a warm welcome to our guest today, Ms. Tamar Beruchashvili, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia, and thank her for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the pleasure and honour to invite Ms. Beruchashvili to take the floor.

**Ms. Beruchashvili (Georgia):** Mr. President, at the outset I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you success in your future endeavours. I also would like to express my gratitude to the Acting Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Møller, and his team for their continuous support to the work of the Conference and innovative ideas, including but not limited to the upcoming forum with civil society. We share the view that the Conference would only benefit from greater interaction with civil society organizations.

I believe that the major challenges affecting the modern security architecture are global in nature and undoubtedly require a coordinated and broader multinational response. Bearing this in mind, we are confident that the Conference on Disarmament should exercise significantly greater influence in the field of its competence, especially in the light of the extremely challenging international security situation.

Throughout recent years, there have been discussions questioning the relevance of existing security arrangements. We partially share this view. However, we are confident that the main problem is related to an unwillingness to strictly comply with obligations rather than to the imperfection of the system itself. Perhaps the disregard for obligations is a major challenge to common security. Regrettably we have to admit that the international community has failed to demonstrate enough resolve and unity to adequately respond to this dangerous tendency at an early stage.

Obviously, non-compliance can irreversibly erode the current security system and produce large-scale negative implications. This is exactly what we are witnessing today. Security assurances provided to Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum in connection with the latter's succession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have been ignored, and one of the guarantor States has itself openly challenged the territorial integrity and sovereignty of this country. This is an extremely dangerous development that threatens to have far-reaching negative implications, among others on the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The conflict in Ukraine is not an exclusive occurrence. The first alarm sounded in August 2008 when the Russian Federation launched large-scale military aggression against Georgia, which resulted in occupation of more than 20 per cent of my country.

There is no doubt that the occupation in its regions represents a fundamental threat to the security and stability of Georgia, but the damage transcends our borders. The lack of international control mechanisms in regions not controlled by the Government of Georgia creates fertile ground for all sorts of illegal activities, including proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons, the accumulation and illicit transfer of conventional arms etc. In this connection, I would like to remind the distinguished audience that there have been several recorded attempts at nuclear smuggling via the occupied regions of Georgia; the international community has been duly informed about all these cases.

In addition, large amounts of armaments are being accumulated in occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions in Georgia in grave violation of the fundamental principles of international law as well as the international commitments of the Russian Federation, including the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008.

Instead of withdrawing from occupied regions in Georgia as envisaged under the ceasefire agreement, Russia is introducing additional personnel, armaments and equipment, establishing new illegal military infrastructure and constructing different kinds of fortifications along the occupation line without the host country's consent. Such actions constitute a blatant violation of the principles and norms of international law. As a result, more than 10,000 occupying troops are illegally deployed in these two regions. There are no guarantees whatsoever that weaponry in their possession will not be transferred to various terrorist and criminal groups far beyond a particular region.

It is clear that nothing can be completely perfect, including security architecture. However, bearing in mind the universality of its fundamental principles we must admit that the existing system has not exhausted its potential to further strengthen security and stability. But this needs firm political will and readiness for constructive dialogue and compromise.

As a member of the informal group of observer States, Georgia views the enlargement of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament as a necessary process, which will provide for the principle of inclusiveness. We appeal to the Conference to act upon the understood notion that the universal goal of international security and stability by definition must be addressed by a universally representative body. Perhaps the momentum to break this and other deadlocks within the Conference lies here, and we believe we should seize it.

**The President:** I thank Minister Beruchashvili for her statement and also for her kind words addressed to the Chair. Allow me now to suspend the meeting in order to escort Minister Beruchashvili from the Council Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is resumed. I would like now to welcome our guest Mr. Thant Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, and thank him for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the pleasure and the honour to invite Minister Thant Kyaw to take the floor.

**Mr. Thant** (Myanmar): It is a great honour for me to participate in this high-level segment and address the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of office as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that, under your able leadership, the Conference will produce fruitful outcomes from its work, paving the way forward to our shared goals. You can rest assured of the strong support and cooperation of Myanmar for the success of your endeavours.

At the outset, please allow me to reiterate my country's long-standing commitment and support to the Conference on Disarmament. Myanmar, as one of the original members of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, continues to attach great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament created by the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The central role played by the Conference on Disarmament in producing several important multilateral disarmament treaties in the past was remarkable. However, we share the disappointment of many in this chamber over the state of continued stagnation in the

Conference during the past 18 years, failing to effectively respond to the calls of the international community to fulfil its mandate and resume substantive work. But we continue to believe that the Conference's existence and its unique composition are still an important asset in our quest for peace and security through disarmament.

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for Myanmar in the pursuit of the international arms control and disarmament agenda. Nuclear weapons impinge on the security of all nations. The continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use obviously constitutes a grave danger to the very existence of humankind and the survival of civilization. Catastrophic consequences in the scenario of the accidental or intentional use of nuclear weapons are terrifying. In our view, the only absolute guarantee to prevent this scenario is the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons. Therefore, we encourage all parties to continue to focus on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons in relevant forums.

Before we can reach the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, Myanmar, as a non-nuclear-weapon State under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), reasonably believes that necessary assurances should be given to the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The year 2015 is an important one for the NPT regime since the Review Conference will take place in New York in April and May. We will join hands to work together for the success of that conference. At this juncture, I would like to urge all nuclear-weapon States, particularly those with the largest nuclear arsenals, to fully and immediately comply with the 22-point action plan on nuclear disarmament contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Since Myanmar will be taking over the Conference on Disarmament presidency in June this year, right after the NPT Review Conference, we will be following its proceedings closely.

Let me now turn to the position of Myanmar with regard to other important issues on the disarmament agenda, such as a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that addresses past, present and future production, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances in the form of an international legally binding instrument. We would welcome negotiations or pre-negotiations on these issues within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. In this regard, we support the initiatives taken by the Conference's six Presidents last year, organizing informal meetings on the items on the Conference's agenda. In our view, they contributed to our better understanding of the positions of Conference member States on various issues, including the four core issues.

With regard to the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, Myanmar welcomes the call for the appointment of a special coordinator on this matter to examine modalities of review, without prejudice to the outcome. We saw merit in the efforts made this year by a previous President of the Conference towards establishing a working group to review the methods of work of the Conference. However, this initiative did not enjoy consensus. In our view, the political will of member States is equally important for moving the Conference forward.

In keeping with the nature of the Conference as a negotiating forum, we support the strengthening of the Conference's interaction with civil society in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. Despite the lack of consensus last month on the proposal for the participation of civil society in the Conference on Disarmament, we should continue to explore possibilities, such as setting criteria or modalities for such participation in the Conference.

I would like to touch briefly on my country's commitment to disarmament. The successive governments of Myanmar have actively participated in and contributed to the

work of the international community on non-proliferation and disarmament, including nuclear disarmament and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

Since the new government took office in 2011, Myanmar has been undergoing political, economic and social reforms. We have also been taking progressive steps to further enhance our status in connection with a number of disarmament-related conventions.

Myanmar has been a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) since December 1992. We signed a safeguards agreement and a small quantities protocol pursuant to the NPT with the International Atomic Energy Agency in April 1995. In September 2013, we signed a protocol additional to the agreement between Myanmar and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the application of safeguards in connection with the NPT.

In accordance with article 17 of the additional protocol, we are now in the process of completing domestic procedures, including the drafting of domestic laws. In this connection, a number of national workshops have been conducted.

On 1 December 2014, Myanmar deposited its instrument of ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention with the depositaries, namely the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, prior to the commencement of the 2014 meeting of the States parties to the Convention in Geneva.

Now that we have become a State party to the Convention, we will continue our efforts to set up appropriate legal frameworks, regulations and practices in line with the provisions of the Convention. We are looking forward to working together with our fellow member States to improve the biosafety and security system in Myanmar.

Myanmar signed the Chemical Weapons Convention on 14 January 1993. Earlier this year, in January 2015, the Union Parliament of Myanmar unanimously approved a proposal to ratify the Convention. Arrangements are now under way to deposit our instrument of ratification with the United Nations Secretary-General as the depositary of the Convention.

Among the major international disarmament instruments, we are also paying attention to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We signed the Treaty in 1996. We have been cooperating with the Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization for the use of data from the International Monitoring System in our national early warning system for tsunamis and natural disasters.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to call upon all member States of the Conference on Disarmament to show their utmost flexibility and political will in the deliberations of the Conference in order to move the Conference forward. Myanmar, as one of this year's Presidents, will be working closely and collectively with all member States, and particularly with our fellow Presidents. The Myanmar delegation is prepared to listen to all member States of the Conference on Disarmament and incorporate their constructive inputs in the work of our presidency.

**The President:** I thank Minister Thant Kyaw for his statement and also for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Allow me now to suspend the meeting in order to escort Mr. Thant Kyaw from the Council Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is resumed. I would like now to welcome our guest Mr. Juan Manuel Gómez Robledo, Deputy Minister for Multilateral Affairs of

Mexico, and thank him for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the pleasure and honour to invite Mr. Gómez Robledo to take the floor.

**Mr. Gómez Robledo** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, four years ago, the last time that I participated in the Conference on Disarmament, I lamented, as did everyone, the permanent impasse that prevailed, has prevailed and still prevails over the Conference. This impasse is entering its nineteenth year. Such inertia is inconceivable and runs contrary to the very spirit of multilateralism. Multilateral forums should provide a space in which States can resolve their differences and in which healthy decision-making processes can be formed.

Some claim that there is little incentive for decision-making at the Conference because, owing to international circumstances, political will is lacking. This is strange because, if nothing else has changed in 19 years, international circumstances have. It thus makes no sense to blame international circumstances for the inertia at the Conference. And here, every week, we all say that we have the political will to negotiate.

Mr. President, Mexico has just ended its most recent presidency of this Conference, a duty assumed by my colleague, Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco, with great seriousness, responsibility and the proven legitimacy of my country on the question of disarmament. Mexico has brought a great deal to this arena, which I hardly dare to call the Conference on Disarmament, ever since it began to participate in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament in 1962.

In accordance with the rules of procedure adopted by the Conference in 1978, Mexico submitted a draft programme of work aimed at preserving the nature of and implementing the mandate conferred on the Conference by the General Assembly at its first special session, held in 1978. This programme of work was based on the premise that States' positions had not changed during the years of paralysis and that they could and should be addressed at the negotiation stage — not beforehand, but only at the negotiation stage.

Not all negotiations are granted the privilege of reaching agreements. The Conference has a very clear mandate: to negotiate in order to reach agreements that translate into universally binding treaties on disarmament.

The Conference has made many contributions in this direction and we should be proud of them. However, the mandate seems to have lost its momentum. We do not negotiate, and Mexico does not understand why the differences that naturally exist between countries' positions are not raised during our negotiations, inasmuch as some think that those differences should be resolved before negotiations have begun. This premise is contradictory and ultimately causes a few States to fear that an agreement might be reached if we actually start negotiating, so they do not want an agreement of any kind.

It is a collective failure, and Mexico takes due responsibility for having passively tolerated this state of affairs for so many years. Each and every one of us is responsible for having encouraged a "Conference culture" — if it can be called a culture, since it does not amount to one — which grants all members the power to veto, even in ludicrous procedural decisions.

In short, we are dealing with a system in which consensus is considered to be an end in itself rather than a means of fulfilling a shared aspiration to reach an agreement after genuine negotiations and a decision-making process that resolves differences, something that has not happened here since 1996. This culture also undermines your authority, Mr. President, and that of all the Conference's Presidents, in a manner completely at odds with multilateral practice. In any multilateral forum, the president's prerogative to make proposals is recognized; the president is elected to do this, not to be a hostage to consensus.

It is ultimately a culture in which, rather than applying themselves to substantive work in a transparent manner, representatives prefer to meet in small informal groups in order to negotiate a pseudo-programme of work that cannot be implemented, beneath the scrutiny of civil society and unaccountable to those whom we represent.

Mr. President, we have tried everything to revitalize this dying forum. For Mexico, a reform of the Conference is possible only if its members recognize, first of all, that this situation is not natural, not normal, unacceptable, intolerable and unsustainable. We need to take time to reflect with a genuine sense of responsibility and absolute honesty.

What matters, Mr. President, is disarmament, not the Conference, and as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden said yesterday, we are confusing process with progress.

The Conference must be allowed to fulfil its mandate and realize substantive work on all its agenda items for various reasons. First, because we are not fulfilling the obligations that we assumed in 1978, in addition to the other obligations assumed by the great majority of the members of the Conference in the framework of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is evident to all that article VI of the Treaty has not been respected, since it obliges each of the parties to the Treaty to undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament, including a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The International Court of Justice was right to state in its historic advisory opinion of 1996 that it is not an obligation of conduct, but one of result. Despite all the pressure that some members brought to bear on the Court, it did at least state this.

Mr. President, the three conferences held on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, which took place in Norway, Mexico and Austria over a period of less than two years in 2013 and 2014, expanded the stock of irrefutable data, arguments and facts on the danger caused by nuclear weapons, from the perspective of contemporary society and its concerns, by addressing topics such as their impact on health and climate change, exposing once more the profound contradictions of the status quo.

Granted, some arsenals have been reduced, either unilaterally or by virtue of bilateral treaties signed by some nuclear-weapon States. However, there are still more than 16,000 nuclear weapons ready to be detonated in a high-alert situation, and the resources allocated to the maintenance, modernization and preservation of nuclear weapons contrast radically with and are detrimental to the resources that are or should be allocated to other purposes, including development.

At the same time, a minority of non-nuclear-weapon States continue to argue that nuclear weapons guarantee security in the modern world and that they are necessary for national security, thus justifying their possession by a still limited number of States, and reason that current circumstances substantiate the need for preserving a nuclear deterrent. We heard the same arguments throughout the cold war.

For Mexico, this is evidently an open invitation to horizontal nuclear proliferation, one that is contrary to the letter and spirit of the NPT, and the facts show us to be correct. We went from five nuclear-weapon States to nine and then eight, in addition to any States that are building them or are soon to join this privileged club.

In a few weeks, another NPT Review Conference will take place and Mexico will work, as it always has done, to achieve a substantive outcome, one to advance the implementation of each and every one of the provisions of the treaty. In general terms, we can say that a good level of compliance has been achieved on the dimensions of non-

proliferation, despite some troubling developments, and the protection of the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, at least from those that were parties to the NPT; it is another story for those that are not. Article VI, however, remains a dead letter.

Mr. President, it is in the best interests — I repeat, it is in the best interests — of nuclear-weapon States that the NPT Review Conference yields new agreements in all its provisions. We will not accept partial outcomes. And, in case there is any doubt, I would like to be on the record as saying that every one of my country's initiatives is amply documented and has been, is and will be subject to proper consultation and based on good faith. We should at the very least expect the same attitude from nuclear-weapon States. Everyone can draw their own conclusions from what happens in New York.

Mr. President, the history of multilateral disarmament shows that the weapons that have been eliminated are those that had been explicitly prohibited in advance by legally binding instruments. Considering the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the constant threat that they present, Mexico considers that the international community must make it a priority for all States — I insist, all — to negotiate in good faith a global instrument to prohibit the use, assembly, production, acquisition, storage, installation, placement or any other form of possession of a nuclear weapon, directly or indirectly, for themselves, for third parties or in any other form.

It remains to be seen, Mr. President, whether this Conference will live up to the assertions of political will made here every Tuesday. If it does not, as we had the misfortune of attesting at the end of the Mexican presidency, may those of us who are genuinely interested in creating a more secure world be granted greater certainty and peace. We cannot allow, or rather will not allow, this forum — which is a simulation par excellence — to continue being an obstacle to a world free of nuclear weapons.

**The President:** I thank Minister Gómez Robledo for his statement. Allow me now to suspend the meeting in order to escort Minister Gómez Robledo from the Council Chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The plenary meeting is resumed. We have exhausted the list of dignitaries speaking at the Conference this afternoon. I have on my list of speakers Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrughe, Chair of the Ottawa Convention. Ambassador, you have the floor.

**Mr. Kende** (Belgium): Mr. President, with your indulgence maybe we could pass on to the next speaker. Our Ambassador intended to intervene, but he is still on his way.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Speaking in exercise of the right of reply, I present the usual apologies in advance to all those here for once again having to touch on problems not directly related to the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament. In this case, my comment will be connected with some of the statements made by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Certain interventions, including the one made by the representative of Georgia, give the impression that people are living in the distant past, before August 2008 in this case. Why do representatives of Georgia so often mention this date alongside accusations of Russian aggression, occupation, and so forth? It is hardly original. These rebukes are all well known. The reason is that they thereby attempt to conceal their own unprovoked military aggression against South Ossetia, which, as it happened, also began one day — or, more accurately, night — in August. At 11.55 p.m., Georgian artillery, including cannon artillery, and multiple-launch rocket systems mounted a massive attack on the city of



Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia. Let me stress: it was late at night. People were at home or on the street and were easy prey for any artillery raid.

Furthermore, Russian peacekeepers, who were in South Ossetia in line with international agreements, came under attack in the Georgian Army's subsequent military operation. They unfortunately suffered casualties. Since all possible alternatives had been exhausted, the Russian leadership was left with no option other than to pacify the Georgian side and, I stress, to do so by force. That, as they say, is the story behind the story. South Ossetia and Abkhazia then broke away from Georgia and declared their independence and the creation of two sovereign States. I ask you: what has this got to do with Russia?

Subsequently, with the emergence of two sovereign States, which Russia recognized in August, the formation of a bilateral international legal framework began. It concerned the occupation. And the Russian military contingents are there in accordance with the bilateral agreements signed by these States.

The second point that I would like to make is that, unfortunately, many important international problems are transposed onto the plane of public diplomacy. The reason is not always clear. Why am I telling you this? There is a forum known as the Geneva discussions on security and stability in Transcaucasia, which are held here in Geneva, and the participants include all the sides in the conflict, that is, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Georgia, in addition to international mediators including Russia. During their many consultations — I believe that there have already been some 30 rounds — the fundamental question of concluding an instrument that legally binds all parties not to use force against one another remains unresolved. Not even a statement of intent to this effect has been agreed or signed. I would like to advise our Georgian colleagues — who are actually observers at the Conference — to devote greater attention to the matter, that is, to negotiations in the context of a well-established international format, which is supposed to solve all these problems, and less to public diplomacy, which is an inappropriate setting for such matters.

In the context of the work of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to draw to the attention of all those present the fact that the statement made by the representative of Georgia shed light on only one item on the agenda, and that was the expansion of the membership. I think that our concerns should be raised when representatives of a State — one that holds observer status — come and begin talking about whatever takes their fancy, about everything but the sensitive and pressing problems that the Conference must address.

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

**Mr. Jgenti (Georgia):** In response to the remarks of our Russian colleague, I will just repeat again. Russia committed military aggression against Georgia in 2008 and subsequently occupied two Georgian regions in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms and principles of international law, the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and all United Nations Security Council resolutions on Georgia. Moreover, the Russian Federation exercises effective control over the occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia. Thus, the Russian Federation is an occupying Power and is solely responsible for the situation in both occupied regions.

In his statement, the Minister focused on numerous violations occurring in both occupied regions. This includes, but it is not limited to, cases involving nuclear materials, smuggling and illegal arms transfers. Georgia has duly notified the international community of all these violations.

The Russian Federation continues to neglect its responsibilities as an occupying Power and also denies the international community the opportunity to monitor the situation

on the ground. The least that Russia could do as a supposedly responsible Conference on Disarmament member is to act responsibly and allow the international monitors to get into both occupied regions.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Georgia for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Belgium and President of the Ottawa Convention.

**Mr. De Crombrugghe de Picquendaele** (Belgium): It is an honour for me to address the Conference on Disarmament in my capacity as the President of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Belgium is, and has always been, a leading advocate of the Convention. We were one of the prime players in the negotiations that created the Convention. We were the first State to declare a complete ban on anti-personnel mines and to proceed with their destruction. We have since worked continuously for the further universalization of the Convention and on issues of transparency.

On 1 March, the international community celebrated the sixteenth anniversary of the entry into force of this landmark humanitarian and disarmament instrument.

Sixteen years is a significant amount of time. It is therefore timely to step back and to take stock of what has been achieved during this period and also to reflect on the challenges still ahead.

With the accession of Oman, there are now 162 States parties that have made a solemn commitment to end suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. Moreover, several non-signatory States to the Convention have either supported the yearly United Nations resolution on the Convention or directly signalled their clear aspiration to eventually accede to it. The anti-personnel landmine convention therefore moves gradually closer to its goal of universal membership. Of course, ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines means more than only achieving universal acceptance of the Convention.

More than 47 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines have been destroyed since the Convention entered into force. This in itself is remarkable. The same can be said about clearance of mines from the field. Yet it is too early to declare victory. Sizeable stocks still remain, and in too many places minefields still represent a danger for the civilian populations. More determination is needed from the Governments of members and non-members of the Convention to see destruction and clearance activities through to their full completion, if necessary with assistance from outside. The road is still long. It is the more intractable situations that remain to be resolved.

Allow me to cite a few examples.

At least four instances have been reported of the alleged use of landmines on territory currently or formerly controlled by States parties, despite the prohibition on the use of anti-personnel landmines contained in the Convention. Moreover, three States parties have not been in a position to destroy their anti-personnel landmines within the period mandated by the Convention. Furthermore, two other States parties currently face the challenging task of complying with 2015 mine clearance deadlines.

In the meantime, victims of landmines continue to suffer. In 2013 a global total of 3,308 casualties were reported. Although this is a technical decline of 24 per cent compared with the total of 4,325 victims in 2012, each casualty is a casualty too many.

During the Maputo Review Conference of June 2014, States parties agreed to the Maputo Declaration. This Declaration affirms the political goal of achieving a mine-free world by 2025.

The achievement of this goal should be based upon our shared, continued and active involvement to universalize the Convention further, to fund its activities, to implement its obligations and to promote its activities.

Our Convention is historic, and our progress has been tremendous. As success is begging for success, this should entice us to do more and to seek our goal even more assiduously.

During our presidency we pledge to reinforce the political commitment to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and its goals, to streamline its work programme, to raise the transparency of its proceedings and to improve its effectiveness further. We have planned activities to raise awareness, and we are working on reporting procedures that would be at the same time user-friendly and well targeted on the objective they are supposed to serve. In short, we propose to transform them into efficient management tools geared to realizing the Convention's objectives.

We owe it to ourselves, we owe it to the Convention, we owe it in particular to thousands of victims who carry for the rest of their lifetimes the scourge of the negative effect of anti-personnel landmines.

I thank you for this opportunity to address this august body.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Belgium, Mr. Bertrand de Crombrugghe, President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, for his address to the Conference. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Certain statements clearly reflect the democratic spirit that reigns at the Conference on Disarmament, a spirit allowing any delegation and representative, as we have just heard, to express any point of view about anything, even if it is not at all related to the mandate and work of the Conference. However, there is something that I wish to draw to the attention of those present, in particular the full members of the Conference and, above all, those who spoke in favour of expanding the membership.

We have just witnessed a serious attempt to politicize the work of the Conference, thereby hampering its effort to find compromises on the most urgent and sensitive questions, first and foremost with regard to the programme of work. I have not heard any constructive proposals, nothing at all, only matters of national interest. As we know, endless recitals of national positions, even if they are justified, which in this case they were not, cannot lead us to compromise. I would therefore ask you all to consider whether the membership should be expanded and, if so, how.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Russian Federation 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 afternoon. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held tomorrow morning at 10.45 a.m., when we will hear addresses from the dignitaries of Kazakhstan, Costa Rica, the Republic of Korea and Latvia.

*The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.*