

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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## Final record of the one thousand three hundred and fifty-fourth plenary meeting


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 5 June 2015, at 3.05 p.m.

*President:* Mr. Mohamed Auajjar.....(Morocco)

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**The President** (*spoke in French*): I declare open the 1354th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to share with you the main conclusions of my consultations on the “package”.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Marco Kalbusch. On behalf of the members of the Conference on Disarmament, may I congratulate you on your new post and wish you every success in your professional career.

Today is my last day as President of this august conference. During the period of my presidency, I held consultations with the majority of delegations. I would have liked to have consulted all members of this Conference but, for scheduling reasons, I was unable to do so. As you know, I convened an informal meeting on 24 March 2015 on the three draft decisions on the schedule of activities, the informal working group on the programme of work and the informal working group on working methods. After our fruitful discussions, I invited delegations to give me their comments and observations in writing. On this basis, I worked on the three draft decisions in the hope of garnering maximum support. This approach stems from our common desire to work together constructively and transparently so as to reap the fruits of our efforts.

I consider these drafts to be owned by all member States and not to be an exclusive product of the presidency. Motivated by this goodwill, I circulated a new amended version on 29 May to member States informally through the secretariat, which was intended to address everyone’s concerns. However, despite the effort and energy invested to reach a consensus on this “package”, and in spite of my last-minute intensive consultations to try to reach a compromise, I realized that the draft decision on the establishment of an informal working group on working methods was not yet sufficiently developed and requires further consultations.

Faced with this situation, I had two options: either to submit nothing, meaning that the Conference will remain in a state of hibernation until the end of this session; or to abandon the idea of a “package” and submit individual draft decisions to enable the Conference to continue with the structured informal discussions that it had begun last year on the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament and the programme of work, with a view to moving forward.

After much deliberation, I chose the second option, bearing in mind that the Conference is required to explore all possible avenues for reaching agreement on a programme of work to enable it to fulfil the mandate for which it was created. I therefore felt it would be appropriate to submit for your adoption the two draft decisions that were distributed to you yesterday via the secretariat and contained in documents CD/WP.587, on the schedule of activities, and CD/WP.588, on the re-establishment of an informal working group on the programme of work. As you can see, these two drafts are identical to those approved last year by this Conference.

Before proceeding to the adoption of these two drafts, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ambassadors of Egypt, Germany, the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka for agreeing to coordinate the thematic debates under the schedule of activities. My thanks also go to the Ambassador of Finland, who graciously agreed to co-chair the informal working group on the programme of work. I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the five other Presidents of the 2015 session for their guidance and invaluable support throughout my presidency.

Before submitting the draft decision to the plenary for adoption, I would like to give the floor to any delegations wishing to speak.

I see no requests for the floor. I therefore submit the draft decision on the schedule of activities, which is contained in document CD/WP.587, for adoption by the Conference on Disarmament. Are there any objections? I give the floor to Iran.

**Mr. Naziri Asl** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

In principle, we have no problem with the draft decisions that you have put forward, but we have a question that we would like to put to you. It is about the decision that we are taking on the schedule of activities, namely agenda items 1, 2, 3 and 4. I wonder why, in items 3 and 4, we are not specific, while we are very specific in agenda items 1 and 2: we are naming those items there, but they are not specified in agenda items 3 and 4. Is there any reason why we are not able to mention those agenda items as in paragraph 5 of the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.587?

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the secretariat.

**Mr. Kalbusch** (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament): From the way this paragraph is structured, items 1 and 2 have two specific focuses, whereas in items 3 and 4 we do not make that differentiation. Therefore, in the text you will not see that specification.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Are there any objections to the schedule of activities contained in document CD/WP.587? I see none. May I take it that the Conference agrees to adopt the schedule of activities?

*It was so decided.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank you for adopting this decision and for your flexibility and cooperation. It is an encouraging sign, particularly with the arrival of our new Secretary.

I now submit the draft decision on the re-establishment of an informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work, contained in document CD/WP.588. Are there any objections? I see none. May I take it that the Conference agrees to adopt this draft decision?

*It was so decided.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank you for adopting this decision and for your cooperation and flexibility. Are there any delegations who wish to take the floor? Mexico, you have the floor.

**Mr. Lomónaco** (Mexico): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by acknowledging on behalf of my delegation all your hard work.

Nineteen years of paralysis is a vivid reminder of the fact that the Conference on Disarmament is a product of the cold war. It is an organ that made major contributions to disarmament but was able to do so only when the two great Powers would agree to it. It was therefore effective during the cold war and a few honeymoon years that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall. The paralysis of the Conference is consequently a result not just of its own contradictions but also of the fact that it no longer represents an international community that demands inclusive participation in any debate or negotiations on ways to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, on disarmament in general and on collective security — an international community that is no longer willing to accept the security of a few at the expense of the security of the rest. The Conference is indeed a reflection of the post-war arrangements that grant to some the privilege to decide for all and where a few have for years enjoyed de facto veto power.

The updated versions of the decisions that were presented today for adoption in effect break up the package presented previously. They are the result of strong resistance on the part of some members to allowing the establishment of an informal working group to review the Conference's methods of work. This is a confirmation of the prevalence of the status quo, further paralysis, the imposition of a minority over the desires of the overwhelming majority and zero accountability to civil society.

As Mexico repeatedly stated during its recent presidency, our differences in this forum can only be bridged by changing the subculture of the Conference. In our view, one way to contribute to changing that subculture is to ensure that the Conference's methods of work do not hinder but rather promote its ability to fulfil its mandate, that is, to negotiate.

Regarding the decisions to establish an informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work and a schedule of activities for the 2015 session, allow me to state some facts that are evident to my delegation. Neither the informal working group nor the schedule of activities represents substantive work for the Conference as they do not fulfil its mandate. There are other forums in the disarmament machinery to hold and promote those discussions. The Conference is not one of them. The schedule of activities is thus a way to keep the diplomatic community in Geneva busy in informal discussions which will not leave any record to build upon. The only way in which the Conference will recover its relevance as a negotiating forum is by starting negotiations on disarmament, not by keeping itself busy. This is the third time that we have created an informal working group for a programme of work: the last two attempts were a failure and did not contribute in any way to the adoption of a programme of work. Nonetheless, the informal working group was presented in the reports and resolutions submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in 2013 and in 2014 as if it represented substantive work by the Conference. This confirms that the only utility of the informal working group is to pretend that the Conference is working. It was not possible to fill the position of Vice-Chair or Co-Chair for the informal working group. This is an obvious reflection of delegations' lack of interest in holding these positions and maybe also the lack of credibility that this work might command. But perhaps more importantly, the adoption of these decisions shows that we have learned very little from the two previous failed attempts and from the recent Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Can we really pretend that it is "business as usual"? Can we suspend our deliberations before the Review Conference and then continue them as if nothing had happened in New York? Is the Conference on Disarmament also suffering from autism? Is this a healthy way to address our differences in opinions, positions, views and philosophies? Is this a healthy way to overcome the crisis in which the Conference finds itself? The position of my delegation was well known before the adoption of these decisions. We do not support either of these two decisions, for the reasons already stated. However, as we understand consensus as the way to achieve a common aspiration to reach an agreement, our opposition to these decisions should not be considered as a veto.

Mr. President, re-establishing for the third time an informal working group to produce a programme of work for the 2015 session when the Conference has only 12 weeks to agree and implement such a programme can only be a simulation that the Conference is working when it is not. After all these years of paralysis, after the strenuous efforts of our Presidents to have a real outcome, Mexico — as a matter of principle — simply cannot play a part in such an exercise of simulation. Let the record of this plenary meeting show and the annual report of 2015 reflect that one delegation considers the two decisions adopted today an exercise in simulation of substantive work.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

**Mr. Khelif** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, the Algerian delegation would like to thank you for all your efforts since the beginning of your term as President of

the Conference. We also welcome the Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament and assure him of our readiness to work with him.

The Algerian delegation fully supports what the Ambassador of Mexico has just said about the current status of the Conference and the drafts submitted to us. The Algerian delegation had made comments and proposals during previous consultations to ensure that the drafts approved today would be a step forward compared to the decisions of previous years.

Unfortunately, and I stress unfortunately, we were yet again forced to adopt similar drafts to the ones we had adopted last year and, in this regard, we would like to express the hope that the exercise on which we are about to embark following these two decisions will not be a repeat of last year's efforts or — as the Ambassador of Mexico put it so aptly — a simulation of negotiations and discussions. We believe it should be a step forward in making headway in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. Otherwise, the Conference will forfeit its status as the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament.

The Algerian delegation is willing to work with all delegations in pursuance of these two decisions in order to launch a real process of reflection and consultation to break the deadlock that has prevailed in the Conference for over 16 years.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Switzerland.

**Mr. Schmid** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, allow me first of all to convey my gratitude to you for all your tireless efforts during your presidency of the Conference to ensure that it made progress in its work. We note the adoption of the two draft decisions that you submitted to this assembly for consideration. On this matter, I would like to emphasize that these two draft decisions are an extension of processes already implemented during previous sessions of the Conference on Disarmament and, in this context, we had no formal objection to their adoption.

However, we regret that your consultations have led you to abandon the idea of submitting the draft decision on establishing a working group on working methods at the same time. In this respect, we would like to highlight the following points: we have so far been working on the basis of the adoption of a package of three decisions. This package represented a balance between the stated priorities of the individual members of the Conference. It also allowed not only for the repetition of processes that have up to now not displayed a significant added value, but also for efforts to be stepped up.

The establishment of a working group on working methods would have been the only new element during this session of the Conference, and would have demonstrated the willingness of all members to explore the different possible ways to overcome the paralysis that has afflicted it for almost 20 years.

In this connection, I would recall that the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus, and therefore with the support of all members of this forum, resolution 66/66 on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament. This is a resolution calling in particular for the various options to be explored, studied and consolidated in order to revitalize the Conference.

Focusing on the working methods of the Conference would be unlikely to lead to it resolving all of its problems and overcoming the essentially political barriers affecting it. It is nonetheless a necessary step if the Conference is to have procedures that facilitate consensus-seeking rather than complicate the task further. It is also a necessary step if further marginalization of the Conference is to be avoided; in other words, preventing the

Conference from being overtaken by events, as the United Nations Secretary-General underlined in his message to the Conference last January.

We held discussions on increasing participation by civil society in our work at the 2015 opening session of the Conference on Disarmament. Members who were then opposed to the adoption of a decision on the matter argued that the working group was the appropriate place to explore the issue in more depth. The message now being relayed by those opposing the constitution of a working group on working methods is that it is unlikely to respond to the United Nations Secretary-General's call; in fact, the reverse is true.

Lastly, we note the willingness of members of the Conference to waive the practice of requiring all draft decisions to be circulated at least 48 hours before a decision can be taken on a matter. We also note that deep-seated practices are not necessarily set in stone and can be reviewed to enable the Conference to take action. This is a factor, or even a precedent, which we must all keep in mind.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Switzerland for his statement and for his kind words to the President. I give the floor to the Ambassador of France.

**Mr. Simon-Michel** (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would first like to congratulate you on the adoption of the schedule of activities and the decision to re-establish an informal working group on the programme of work. It is a success for you personally and for your delegation. It is also a success for the whole Conference on Disarmament. It is essential for our institution to resume the highly fruitful substantive work it had undertaken last year, particularly on the subject of my remarks today, namely a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

France submitted a draft fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) on 7 April 2015, that is to say at the start of the intersessional period and thus shortly before we suspended our work. This document has now been circulated by the secretariat as an official document of the Conference. It bears the symbol CD/2020. I would like to draw your attention to this document and provide you with some more details about this French initiative.

As you know, a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is a recognized long-standing priority of the disarmament community. The issue was the subject of a core resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, resolution 48/75, adopted by consensus at a time when we were at a pivotal moment in discussions that would lead to the successful negotiation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The urgent need to conclude an FMCT has since been underscored by the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. Action 15 of the 2010 NPT action plan, the last substantive document adopted by the NPT Review Conference and a document that remains our road map, imposes a clear obligation on all of us who are parties to the NPT. Action 15 clearly makes the FMCT the priority: the priority negotiation on nuclear disarmament to be undertaken by the Conference on Disarmament. This makes sense, since the ban on the production of fissile material is the next logical step in nuclear disarmament. With the comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, we introduced a restriction on the qualitative development of weapons. It is now time to set quantitative limits, and the FMCT is, in this respect, complementary to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The President of France, Mr. Hollande, announced in a speech on nuclear deterrence delivered at the Istres air base on 19 February 2015 that France would take the initiative on this issue and would submit a draft FMCT. It is this draft that you have before you and that I have the honour to present to you today.

Since then, the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT, which had been established by a resolution of the General Assembly in 1992 and chaired by the Ambassador of Canada, Ms. Golberg, has completed its work. The 25 members of the Group adopted an in-depth substantive report by consensus on 2 April. This is a major success story for disarmament, here in Geneva. The document provides us with an undisputable reference base. It will structure the discussions and negotiations on which we are pinning our hopes.

France therefore waited until 9 April, a few days after the Group completed its work, to submit to the Conference on Disarmament the draft that you have before you. We waited because we naturally wished to take into account all of the work of the Group of Experts. This draft treaty reflects not only the views that I had the honour to express in the Group of Experts; above all, it reflects what seems to us to be a balance in the light of the discussions held in the Group. I will, of course, have the opportunity to revisit each technical aspect of the draft when our Conference discusses the FMCT under the schedule of activities that has just been adopted. Nevertheless, without going into details, I should like to draw your attention to a few general points.

First, we wanted to create an ambitious draft, that is to say a draft that imposes a clear ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, a draft that leads to irreversible commitments, and a draft that has a realistic claim to be universal. Of course, we created a draft that is effectively verifiable, as verification is at the heart of such a treaty. It goes without saying that this verification should make use of the resources of the International Atomic Energy Agency made available under a special arrangement.

We also wanted to create a draft that was realistic from the technical and financial points of view, and also realistic in the way we were concerned to take into account the very different views and perceptions heard during the Group of Experts' work. I will not go into the details of definitions, which will obviously be a key part of our discussions under the schedule that has just been adopted, but it is again a question of realism and effectiveness. We have adopted an approach which, I believe, is appropriate and focused on these aspects of the treaty.

Once again, without going into the detail of each aspect of the treaty, I would like to draw your attention to a very important point. It relates to article 9 of the draft treaty. The draft treaty that we circulated is, of course, based on the mandate agreed at the Conference on Disarmament. This is document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein is often referred to as the Shannon mandate. You know how committed my country is to this mandate; you have heard me refer to it repeatedly. Moreover, we heard about the attention given by many governmental experts, within the Group of Experts, to the issue of civilian stocks accumulated before the entry into force of the treaty. These colleagues emphasized the value of having a reference base on existing civilian stocks.

We also heard the experts' statements on the issue of military materials produced before the treaty: materials that States parties might wish to declare on a voluntary basis as excess to their defence needs. It should be possible to transfer these excess materials irreversibly into the civilian cycle. This is the principle that we had labelled under the English term "one-way street" during the work of the Group of Experts. These two points, which we consider to be very important, are dealt with explicitly in article 9 of our draft treaty.

I will revisit all of these points in more detail, as I said, during our discussions under the schedule of activities that has just been adopted. The adoption of this schedule of activities is a success for which I would once more like to congratulate our President, Mr. Mohamed Auajjar, and the entire team of the Moroccan presidency. I am sure that this decision will ensure that our discussions will be as constructive as those we engaged in last

year. In the past, we limited ourselves to the broader issues, especially on the subject of the FMCT. Since last year, we have begun to broach the substantive issues, the detail of the issues at hand and the technical issues. Delving deeper into technical issues often helps in overcoming differences, curbing them and showing that they can be restricted, seeking bridges and reconciling points of view. Of course, these are still not proper, formal negotiations. However, as we are at the stage of just beginning the groundwork on the fundamentally practical aspects of this treaty and where the boundary between negotiations and discussions is somewhat tenuous, if not artificial, we think that this work will allow us to move ahead and that these discussions will enable us to make progress on disarmament, thereby ensuring that the Conference is fulfilling its mandate.

France therefore looks forward to seeing the Conference resume its substantive work, particularly on this topic, in the weeks to come. In this way and here, in the Conference on Disarmament, we will push nuclear disarmament forward.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador for his kind words addressed to the Chair, and for the comprehensive presentation on the key points of the French draft of the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

**Mr. Rastam** (Malaysia): Allow me to express our deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to your team for the efforts and consultations that you as well as the previous Presidents have undertaken so far. I wish also to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Marco Kalbusch on his appointment as Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, enough rhetoric has been spent on the urgent need for the Conference to start its substantive work. Again and again over the past 19 years, we have heard member States call for the Conference to deliver on its mandate, but our actions do not seem to respond to that call. We recognize the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, but we have had to resort to other platforms to discuss issues concerning the Conference. My delegation believes that the Conference must move forward; as others, we do not want the Conference to give the impression of doing work if its main mandate of negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties is not fulfilled.

My delegation is disappointed that the draft decision on the informal working group to review the methods of work was not able to be presented before the Conference today. As we were of the view that the tasks that would have been undertaken by this informal working group would have been important to advance and help unravel some of the deadlock in the Conference, we see this as a lost opportunity. Nonetheless, we accept the draft decisions just adopted with regard to the schedule of activities and the informal working group on the programme of work.

On the programme of work, we believe that the Conference should take the opportunity through the informal working group to also discuss the programme of work for 2016. We are halfway through 2015 and are already in the second part of the session. For the informal working group to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation, as stated in the decision, we need to look ahead.

Regarding the schedule of activities, the time ahead of us is short. We are confident, however, that with renewed commitment from all members to participate substantively, constructively and equally in the various agenda items, positive outcomes can be achieved.

Making the most of the decisions adopted is up to the members of this Conference ourselves. You have had a challenging task. We thank you, and let me assure you and the others of my delegation's readiness to work within this Conference to achieve a positive and successful outcome in the remainder of the Conference for this year.



**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Malaysia and give the floor to Ambassador Wood.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Let me express my delegation's sincere thanks to you, Mr. President, and to the Moroccan delegation for the tireless efforts that have been undertaken to produce draft decision texts that could garner consensus in this chamber. You and your team deserve great praise for this accomplishment. I also wish to welcome the new Secretary of the Conference.

Mr. President, although it has so far not been possible to reach consensus on the draft decision document on an informal working group on working methods, the United States delegation looks forward to supporting efforts going forward to try to produce a text that can gain consensus on this important issue.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

**Mr. Shindo** (Japan): On behalf of the delegation of Japan, I wish to say we are pleased that consensus has been reached today on the schedule of activities and the re-establishment of the informal working group on the programme of work. In this regard, Mr. President, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation and commend your efforts. We are ready to participate constructively in the discussions in the coming weeks.

The lack of progress in the Conference is not entirely attributable to its working methods, but it is worth examining the current methods based on our past experiences with a view to the better functioning of the Conference. Since we have heard many positive views from member States on establishing an informal working group to review the Conference's methods of work, I hope that we can explore possibilities in order to reach consensus on this proposal during the next presidency.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Japan and give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

**Ms. Donnelly** (New Zealand): At the outset, please allow me to thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for your tireless efforts to achieve agreement on how we might utilize the second half of the Conference's 2015 session. We appreciate this was not an easy task and we are grateful for the work you undertook intersessionally to encourage a decision.

We regret that it has not been possible to establish an informal working group on the Conference's methods of work. From the perspective of New Zealand, this was the only one of the three proposals put forward last week that carried with it any suggestion that the status quo in the Conference is not viable. It was also the only decision which appeared to respond in any way to the call from the international community that the Conference must become an inclusive and representative body.

New Zealand is also somewhat nervous that the schedule of activities just adopted has rather overloaded the final period of the Conference, requiring consultations on all the reports drafted by the chairs of discussions on the four core agenda items and on the annual report in just two weeks.

Nevertheless, we will do our utmost to make effective use of the short period of time made available during our presidency to agree the Conference report and to work in an inclusive and transparent manner to that end.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of New Zealand and give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First, allow me to express my appreciation to the Moroccan presidency for its competent preparation of today's meeting, which has allowed us to achieve our desired outcome. Thanks to the decisions reached, the Conference on Disarmament will continue to discuss key issues on the agenda and seek mutually acceptable solutions relating to the programme of work.

Let me assure you that the Russian delegation will play a very active part in the thematic debates and the activities of the informal working group on the programme of work. In that regard, we intend to cooperate constructively with future Presidents of the Conference and also with our German colleagues, the heads of the group and the debate coordinators. We are confident that our joint efforts will achieve positive results.

With regard to the draft decision on the establishment of a new working group on working methods, we are ready to pursue a substantive dialogue. However, like many other members of the Conference, we still have serious questions about the document as it stands. It appears that the draft is not fully in line with the interests of the Conference.

Let me remind you that we have repeatedly proposed that the exact definition of "working methods" should be clarified, and maintained that the Conference could not establish a group that did not have a clearly defined mandate. No one argued with our reasoning, but nothing was done about the matter.

In that regard, we highlighted the need to state in paragraph 1 of the operative part of the draft that the group's mandate is not based on the rule of consensus — one of the fundamental principles of the Conference on Disarmament. We consider that our proposal is valid and worthy of further discussion. In addition, the proposal of the Moroccan presidency for a new paragraph 2 could be explored.

We would have been willing to exercise flexibility if we had been able to remove the contradictions between paragraphs 5 and 6. As we understand it, upon reaching a consensus on the outcome of the group's activities, its Chair will present the agreed outcome to the Conference. Issues will therefore arise in the event that a consensus is not reached but the decision still requires the Chair to report back to the Conference. Therefore, we need to clarify what progress relating to the group's activities will be reported on, what the status of the report will be etc.

To avoid differing interpretations and inevitable differences that could exacerbate divisions within the Conference, it is important to clarify paragraph 6 to ensure that the Chair's report contains only elements that have been agreed upon, be they substantive or procedural. To that end, we simply need to replace the word "progress" with the words "agreed outcome". Any interested parties should look at the draft and draw their own conclusions. We are not ruling out the possibility that our colleagues may have other ideas on how to improve the text. We are willing to constructively consider alternatives.

With that in mind and in view of the fact that the original version of the draft on the establishment of a working group on working methods has been amended substantively, we are calling for a broad discussion of those amendments in order to finalize the draft. We are prepared to support any proposals that could really improve the effectiveness and quality of our joint efforts to ensure the early launch of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation and give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

**Mr. Varma** (India): I seek the indulgence of my neighbour and my good friend, the Ambassador of Indonesia, who had put up his flag first, but he has very kindly agreed that I can speak before him. I wish to thank him for that.

Mr. President, we wish to thank you for your efforts which have made this day possible where we adopted two decisions of the Conference to establish the informal working group and the structured informal schedule of activities for the rest of this annual session. We are pleased that we have been able to come to a decision on these two items. Of course, we must express our disappointment that these two decisions have become necessary because the Conference has, once again, been prevented from adopting a programme of work. We would like to recall that India was prepared to accept the draft programme of work suggested by the Ambassador of Mexico during the first presidency of the Conference. It remains our view that the primary mandate of the Conference is negotiating treaties that are of universal application. The absence of negotiations is still a gap in the Conference's activities as required by the General Assembly. This is an essential pillar of the triad of the disarmament machinery, which specifically assigned the role of treaty negotiation to the Conference on Disarmament.

Having said that, I think that we would hesitate to put the entire blame either on the working methods of the Conference or on the institution of the Conference. India, for one, attaches great importance to the disarmament machinery established by the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which — although it was established at the height of the cold war — was the most democratic machinery that was feasible and possible. Prior to the establishment of the Conference on Disarmament, we had the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament, which assigned, because of its origins and genesis, a primary role to two countries which came with their respective groups, and there was a small, non-aligned group in-between. The bloc structure was in-built to the Committee. The Committee did not meet on a regular permanent basis. Most negotiations were not done in a formal structure. There were treaties that were agreed upon outside and were then formalized with some modicum of negotiation within the Committee. All that changed. The General Assembly voted from year to year — sometimes infrequently, not every year — to provide the Committee with the task that it was supposed to fulfil. All that changed with the first special session of the Assembly on disarmament, when we were given this Conference which was designed to include all militarily significant States. If there are militarily significant States that are still outside the Conference, I think we should keep our mind open to include them. But the composition of the Conference, in our view, has not been the primary hindrance to successful initiation of the conclusion of negotiations.

Having said that, I think it is very true that we should not be bound by the legacies of the cold war. The most important legacies that we need to jettison are the legacies of cold war thinking and cold war approaches. That does not mean that we should jettison everything that has come from the cold war period. Do we, for instance, ask to jettison treaties that were negotiated in the cold war? We do not. Similarly, we do not automatically ask for jettisoning the institutional structures that were established.

As we progressed after the cold war, the two treaties that were negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament — the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty — were vast improvements in the manner in which treaties were negotiated during the cold war. So, I think the Conference has demonstrated that it has in itself the democratic ethic or openness. The first treaty negotiated in this century, whenever that is and whatever that is, will obviously be far more democratic than anything we have done in the past. That is to say, the old model which suited times past when treaties were agreed among smaller groups of countries in order to be automatically agreed upon in the Conference, those days are well and true past.

India has supported the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) and remains prepared to do so. We would be very happy to join in negotiations at the first opportunity that the Conference is able to bring that about. Having said that, we echo the sentiment expressed by the Ambassador of France that a lot of work

has been done with respect to such a treaty, including in the Group of Governmental Experts on the FMCT. Of course, what is agreed outside need not necessarily tie the hands of the Conference. However, substantive work anywhere, including within the four walls of this Conference, is valuable and the Group's report, we believe, will be such a valuable contribution.

With regard to the other agenda items, we have not necessarily made progress with regard to the substantive content of what we believe should belong under the various agenda items. For example, on nuclear disarmament, of course, we have a far more advanced view. India has joined the Group of 21 and the broader Non-Aligned Movement positions on the proposal for the commencement of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention in the Conference. Having said that, if we were to begin such negotiations in the Conference, it will require a lot of work. There is nothing to prevent us — in whatever manner possible, including using the mechanisms that we have been able to agree today — from building a better understanding of the various concepts involved. We have heard delegations outside making proposals on disarmament terms or on disarmament verification. There is no reason why this should not be discussed in the Conference. In short, Mr. President, our point is that we do not see value in calling the Conference names. What we make of the Conference is in our hands. Therefore, what little opportunity is offered by the structured and formal discussions should, in our view, be made full use of. We should be as detailed as possible in our presentations. We would like to be joined by as large a number of Conference delegations as possible, fully knowing that there is a lot of substantive work to be done on each of the agenda items. There is no other forum which has been mandated for disarmament preparations of this nature. Every other forum meets periodically; this is the only forum that meets throughout the year.

A lot of preparatory work is required on nuclear disarmament, on outer space, on negative security assurances: there is no reason why we should not engage in such preparatory work by making the best use of the time that is made available to us. Having said this, we of course know that the bottom line is that we will be judged — the international community will judge the Conference on Disarmament — by the treaties it negotiates and produces. That is an inescapable fact. Therefore, while we are pleased to have adopted these two decisions under your leadership, the larger goal is something that we should not lose sight of. In taking forward that larger goal, India will be happy to work with other delegations to make that possible.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Indonesia.

**Mr. Wibowo** (Indonesia): At the outset, my delegation would like to express our deep appreciation and to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the adoption of the two draft decisions you proposed.

Indonesia has always been supportive of any initiative which would bring the Conference on Disarmament closer to our mandated objective, that is, to negotiate legal instruments on disarmament. With the exception of 2009, complications surrounding the Conference have made it difficult for this forum to adopt a programme of work. Indonesia firmly believes that a balanced and comprehensive programme of work is only achievable through an inclusive process involving all Conference members.

The Conference is slowly losing its relevance. For the past decade, progress on disarmament has been achieved outside this chamber. Despite the impasse within the Conference, we still believe that it has a very pertinent role to play in multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms. Tireless efforts have been made to commence substantive work in the Conference, yet there has been no significant progress for the past 19 years. It is advisable therefore to look back and see whether the hurdle that

has been blocking progress in the Conference lies in our method of work. For this reason, my delegation can go along with the statement and the proposal made by Mexico during its presidency on the importance of reviewing the Conference's methods of work. I believe that we need to reconsider the importance of establishing an informal working group to review the Conference's method of work.

The 2015 NPT Review Conference was held just last month. The inability of the States parties to that treaty to reach consensus on a substantive outcome will have a significant impact on our work. We should take this opportunity to seriously discuss among ourselves the future of nuclear disarmament.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Netherlands.

**Mr. Van der Kwast** (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I wish to join the others in congratulating you and your team for all the work you put into these two decisions that were taken today.

(*spoke in English*)

We have now adopted two decisions, which are not big or new things — let us be very clear about that. With these two decisions on the informal working group and on the programme of work and schedule of activities, it is now up to us, as others have said, to make the best of this situation. That is our own responsibility. The most important thing is that we not simply repeat discussions we had last year, but that we build on them to see where we can move ahead towards the start of real negotiations on all of our core items, which is indeed the mandate of the Conference.

Concerning your proposal on an informal working group on the Conference's methods of work, we regret very much that it proved not possible to reach consensus, as some delegations had indicated that they did not support the establishment of such a working group. Frankly, Mr. President, I do not understand what is so scary about discussing our methods of work. We think that, in having such a discussion, we can see how we can improve our work and see where we can move further. We therefore very much hope that consultations on this working group will continue under the presidency of Myanmar in parallel with our other work, so that we can decide on the establishment of this important working group later this year.

Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Gabriele Kraatz for again providing temporary support for the work of the Office on Disarmament Affairs in Geneva, which is greatly appreciated. I would also like to welcome Mr. Marco Kalbusch as the new Secretary of this body; we look forward to working with him.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I give the floor to the representative of Canada.

**Ms. Anderson** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts during your presidency, especially your determination to move ahead with the decisions taken here today.

(*spoke in English*)

However, we wish to reinforce that agreement to a schedule of activities and the informal working group cannot and does not constitute a return to substantive work in this body. This Conference is mandated to negotiate and can only be considered to have returned to substantive work if it resumes this mandate. Despite the limited time left in this year's session, it is nevertheless our hope that the schedule of activities will lead to an intensified and deeper discussion of the topics addressed last year. To simply repeat the discussion that took place last year would be a waste of time and resources. With regard to

the informal working group, when it was first created Canada expressed its hope that delegations would make use of it to engage in open and interactive dialogue. Despite two attempts, we continue to hope that this will be the case and that, on its third try, the Conference will genuinely seek to use the informal working group as a tool to find a solution that returns the Conference to work.

Canada is very disappointed that the creation of a working group on working methods was not included in the set of decisions before us today. This working group offered a chance to do what any healthy organization does on a regular basis: review how it is functioning and consider means to improve its performance. But, then, we are well aware that the Conference is not healthy. We must admit, however, that we are puzzled as to why a simple review of working methods, with no set outcome, no guaranteed conclusions, proved unable to command consensus. We are told that the Conference has the right rules of procedure. If this is so, what harm is there in taking a look through the rules to confirm this is the case? What danger exists in simply discussing the rules governing this body and how they are applied? What risk exists in exploring if there are better ways to apply these rules or changes that could benefit the Conference?

Ultimately, reviewing the working methods of the Conference will not, in and of itself, return the Conference to substantive work. But we continue to believe that revitalization and reform of this Conference is an important piece in the overall puzzle. We also believe that all options must be seized and all paths explored to end the deadlock that is rapidly approaching 20 years. It is unfortunate that not all delegations appear to feel the same.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Canada, and I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

**Mr. Al Neiami** (Iraq): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the efforts that you and your team have made during your presidency and which led to the adoption of today's two decisions. I would like to assure you that my delegation will participate actively in the work and the meetings following today's decisions, hoping that these two decisions will help to bridge the gaps between member States in order to resume the substantive work of this multilateral forum.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to thank the secretariat of the Conference for its support in facilitating the task of the presidency and to welcome Mr. Marco Kalbusch as the new Secretary of the Conference, wishing him all the best in his new tasks.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Iraq. I now give the floor to the last speaker inscribed on the list, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Rowland** (United Kingdom): Mr. President, we too regret that the third decision that formed the original package could not have been agreed today. But, that said, let me thank you for your efforts on our behalf. It would have been easy to do nothing, but you did not take the easy option and for that we are grateful.

Whether we are engaged in negotiations, pre-negotiations, informed discussions or simply an exchange of views, the value of such interactions would depend on us all collectively. I believe that further informal discussions can have value if each makes an effort to move beyond the discussions last year. I did not reprise the role I had last year to have the opportunity to hear again the statements made last year. My delegation and I will work to ensure that we do not have to, by formulating a structure built on the discussions of last year. I hope every delegation will enter into the schedule of activities in that spirit and not take the easy option. The value of the exercise is very much in all of our hands.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I acknowledge the representative of Iran.

**Mr. Naziri Asl** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, first and foremost we appreciate all of your efforts and those of your team in bringing us to this stage. We have now adopted two decisions that will guide us in our work in the Conference on Disarmament. You have conducted your consultations in a very transparent manner and, as a result of your valuable guidance, we now have these two decisions. We appreciate all the efforts that you have made.

The two decisions we have now adopted might not be perfect in the sense that they do not contain a programme of work. However, the establishment of the informal working group in particular is a major step towards further real discussion on the programme of work based on the accumulated experience of the past year. We are of the view that these two decisions are a least common denominator which enabled us to discuss issues of particular interest to the international community. We hope that these decisions will lead us to adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

The 19-year deadlock imposed on the Conference is not the result of the Conference's procedures or methods of work but rather is rooted in the political atmosphere that predominates in this Conference. To overcome this persistent impasse, we should express responsibility — or, indeed, exercise responsibility — and show the necessary political way to allow the Conference to resume its substantive work.

We should not bypass the Conference merely because of our disappointment; rather, we should work hard towards its objectives. If we cannot move the Conference towards its objectives in a straightforward way because of the obstacles known to all of us, we should not immediately criticize the rules of procedure, as has been done from time to time by certain colleagues. We should not overlook the undeniable fact that the Conference has been able to contribute to the setting of norms in disarmament and non-proliferation. Therefore, we firmly believe that to address the Conference's impasse, we should change our approach and renew our commitments, rather than engage in unconstructive dialogue or change the rules of the game.

Last but not least, we are certain that these two decisions will facilitate the work of the Conference. Please be assured from our part, Mr. President, that Iran will engage constructively during deliberations on this schedule of activities.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): This concludes our business for this afternoon. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 9 June, at 10 a.m. under the chairmanship of Myanmar.

Before adjourning and closing this meeting, I would like to say that it has been a great pleasure and a real honour for me to have had the privilege of chairing the Conference on Disarmament. This presidency could not have been a success without your invaluable support. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to all members of the Conference for their vital cooperation throughout the period of the presidency of the Kingdom of Morocco. I have greatly appreciated the constructive spirit of compromise shown by all members of the Conference in supporting me during my presidency and facilitating my task of managing the work of this august Conference. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Møller, to all the secretariat staff and the interpreters for their valuable support and contribution to helping me perform my duties as President of the Conference. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the other five Presidents of the 2015 session for their support in fulfilling my mandate and for the quality of their cooperation during my presidency.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate my successor, Mr. Maung Wai, Ambassador of Myanmar, and to express my best wishes for his success in his new role as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to reiterate the best wishes of all members to our new Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Marco Kalbusch.

*The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.*