

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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## Final record of the one thousand three hundred and seventieth plenary meeting


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 18 September 2015, at 3.05 p.m.

*President:* Ms. Dell Higgie .....(New Zealand)

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**The President:** I call to order the 1370th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

This is the final plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament for 2015 and the final meeting of the Conference under the presidency of New Zealand. Our main item of business for today is the formal adoption of the annual report of the Conference to the United Nations General Assembly, the full text of which we have provisionally adopted in informal meetings over the last three weeks. You all received in your inboxes yesterday the full and final draft of the Conference's report, which was issued as document CD/WP.591/Rev.1 in English only. It reflects the text as amended in documents CD/WP.591, CD/WP.591/Amend.1, CD/WP.591/Amend.2 and CD/WP.591/Amend.3, and as orally amended before the provisional adoption of various paragraphs. I trust that you all have had sufficient time to read the report through in its entirety. Although I would like to make some fuller comments at the end of the meeting to mark the conclusion of the New Zealand presidency of the Conference, I would like to take the opportunity now to thank all delegations once again for the constructive spirit and the flexibility you have all shown in the preparation of the report. So that you are all aware of the process for this afternoon, I will shortly open the floor for any delegations so wishing to make a statement on the occasion of the last plenary in the 2015 session of the Conference. I already have on my list of speakers the Ambassador of Korea, who wishes to deliver a farewell statement, and the Ambassador of Iran, speaking on behalf of the Group of 21. If any delegation wishes to make formally recorded comments, for instance on the reports prepared in a personal capacity under the schedule of activities, I would invite you to add your names to the list now. After I have exhausted the list of speakers, I would then move to formally adopt the Conference report. I will do this pursuant to our usual practice of going through the report paragraph by paragraph until all have been formally adopted. I turn now to my list of speakers for this afternoon and I give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Ahn Young-jip.

**Mr. Ahn Young-jip** (Republic of Korea): I would like first of all to commend you, Madam President, on your exceptional leadership in finalizing the annual report of the Conference, which will be adopted at this plenary. We believe that the way in which you have conducted the consultations sets an example for the presidency.

As today is my last day with the Conference on Disarmament, I have requested the floor to make some farewell remarks. I recently received instructions from my Government to assume new responsibilities in another mission, and I will be leaving Geneva next week. I began my work here at the beginning of March last year, so the time that I have been working in the Conference has been very brief. While this has been a short assignment, I have truly enjoyed my tasks. In particular, I have been especially blessed to work with many outstanding colleagues. While we may at times have had our share of disagreements, I believe that that never undermined our professional relationship or the sense that we are companions striving to achieve the same goal. I leave with only fond memories of working with you and will cherish my time here.

Looking back, however, I have to confess that I often felt a sense of frustration at the current state of affairs. Over the past two years, the Conference has hardly seen progress on a programme of work: although serious efforts were made to conduct substantive discussions in various informal settings, we unfortunately failed to achieve a tangible result. In fact, it is striking to note that this stalemate has continued for almost two decades. I believe that now is the time to foster a new atmosphere in the Conference and to bring a renewed sense of vitality to it. It has been a while since we have felt a sense of accomplishment, and the memories of success are now faint. There is a need for fresh impetus. In particular, it is crucial that we make progress in areas where conditions are ripe for starting negotiations. For me, a fissile material cut-off treaty is one of the issues where

real progress is possible. It is also the next logical step in the multilateral nuclear disarmament process. I am confident that some of the differences concerning the treaty can be fully addressed through negotiations, as has been the case with other treaties in the past. As we are aware, the Conference does not have a monopoly on impasses. Other organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), also have experienced frustration for lengthy periods of time, be it on account of entrenched positions of key players, a culture of business as usual or, simply, pessimism. However, we have seen WTO at times rise to the occasion to reach meaningful agreements, which, in turn, has served to infuse its community with renewed commitment to reach other goals. There is no reason why the Conference on Disarmament cannot do the same. Even though my work in the Conference is coming to a close, I pledge to continue my support for your noble endeavours in this body in any way I can. I will be keenly hoping for — and will take particular delight in — any news of progress emerging from the Conference. I hope that our paths will cross again and, in the meantime, I wish you health, happiness and every success.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I wish you, Ambassador Ahn, all the very best in your future endeavours and for your posting now in Athens.

Given that Ambassador Ahn is leaving, it would seem to be his successor as Ambassador here, who will, according to our alphabetic rotation system, assume the role that New Zealand has played this year as the final president of the Conference in 2016. I can only assure Ambassador Ahn's successor and the Republic of Korea of our full support in this challenging role.

At this point, is there any other speaker who wishes to take the floor, before we proceed to the adoption of the report? I recognize the delegation of India.

**Mr. Varma (India):** Madam President, let me begin by conveying our compliments for the manner in which you and the New Zealand delegation have taken forward the work of the Conference. I requested the floor to bid farewell to Ambassador Ahn of the Republic of Korea as he leaves us, the Conference and Geneva to take up other responsibilities. We wish to thank him for his cooperation and the excellent rapport that we have enjoyed with him — both official and personal, between us and the two missions — and we wish all the very best to him and his family as he proceeds to take up his new responsibilities.

**The President:** I thank the representative of India. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of China. Ambassador, you have the floor.

**Mr. Fu Cong (China):** Madam President, I would also like to express my sadness at bidding farewell to Ambassador Ahn. We have always felt a special sense of closeness with the delegation of the Republic of Korea and Ambassador Ahn himself. We are particularly impressed by Ambassador Ahn's professionalism and also, may I add on a personal note, his sense of tolerance for some of the straightforwardness that I personally have expressed in our mutual endeavours. I also wish to take this opportunity to wish Ambassador Ahn all the best in his future endeavours.

**The President:** I thank the representative of China. The next speaker on the list is the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Van der Kwast. You have the floor.

**Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands):** Like others, I wish to thank Ambassador Ahn for his often very soft-spoken but clear contributions in this room. I also wish to thank you for your cooperation and wish you all the best in the future. Since you are staying in Europe, the chance that our paths will cross is quite real and I truly look forward to that.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Netherlands. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Iran.

**Mr. Naziri Asl** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Madam President, at the outset we wish to say that we appreciate all your substantive efforts to bring the 2015 annual session of the Conference on Disarmament to a successful conclusion through your very skilful and effective stewardship of the negotiations on the Conference's report this year. We respect you for that.

At this final stage of our work, we would like to reiterate that the Conference is still the sole multilateral negotiating forum for negotiating legally binding disarmament treaties to preserve international security. Because of this unique status, it does not have any viable substitute. So, any attempt or false perception that is conceived to bypass the Conference because of its current deadlock is in our view doomed to go wrong. This unique distinction should not be downgraded by declarations such as "the Conference is in simulation status", which result in diminishing the Conference's credibility and ultimately its integrity. We are of the firm belief that the Conference on Disarmament — with its fundamental principle of consensus and its membership — should not be substituted by any other forum for addressing the complex issues on its agenda. The Conference, as an autonomous independent body for negotiating disarmament instruments, is not subordinate to any other United Nations disarmament machinery. Any such discourse should not be allowed to gain currency in Conference practice.

We commend this year's activity in the Conference and all the efforts of its Presidents for 2015 to reach consensus on a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation. The current stalemate is not for reasons of the methods of work and it should not misdirect our discourse towards changing the rules of procedure. In our view, changing the methodology because of a consequence — rather than the real cause — would bring new, unwarranted dimensions for this sole negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament, to fulfil its mandate as recognized by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Hence, we are of the firm belief that our efforts should be focused towards substantive work with tangible, legally binding and non-discriminatory outputs, which corresponds to the high expectations of the international community. Therefore, we urge all Conference members to strengthen their collective wisdom to prevail over the current impasse for the Conference to produce a consensual programme of work for next year.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Iran for this statement. The next speaker on this afternoon's list is Algeria. You have the floor, Algeria.

**Mr. Habchi** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I am asking to take the floor, Madam President, following the statement just made by the Ambassador of Iran. My delegation wishes to express its reservations about a part of the statement, namely the use of the phrase "under the presidency of Indonesia". We would like to ask that these reservations be reflected in the report of the meeting.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Algeria. Is there anyone else who would wish to take the floor at this point of this afternoon's meeting before the formal adoption of the report? That seems not to be the case.

Let us now turn to the formal adoption of the Conference's report, the entire text of which has already been provisionally adopted. I would like to note that, since the circulation of the final draft that you have before you in document CD/WP.591/Rev.1, at least one delegation has submitted a working paper to be issued as a document of the Conference. The secretariat has advised that documents submitted until the adoption of the report, i.e., until as expected shortly, will be processed and reflected in the report sent to the General Assembly.

Let us now proceed to formally adopt the report, paragraph by paragraph. It is not my intention to read each paragraph — to your great relief, no doubt; rather, I will

announce each paragraph and provide an opportunity for comment before its adoption. As all the text has been provisionally adopted, and given that I have not been advised since then of any issues arising in the text, it is my expectation that any comments will be limited to the correction of typographical errors or other similar edits. I will, of course, provide an opportunity at the end — after adoption — for any delegation that might so wish to make comments on the report as a whole, but I would be grateful if delegations could facilitate the formal adoption of the report now in as efficient a manner as possible.

Let me now turn to paragraph 1. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 2. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 3. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 4. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 5. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 6. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 7. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 8. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 9. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 10. Are there any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 11. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 12. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 13. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 14. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 15. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 16. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 17. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 18. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 19. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 20. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 21. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 22. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 23. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 24. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 25. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 26. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 27. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 28. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 29. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 30. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 31. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 32. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 33. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 34. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 35. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 36. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 37. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 38. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 39. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 40. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 41. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 42. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 43. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 44. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 45. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 46. Any comments? I see none. Adopted.

Paragraph 47. Any comments? I see one. India, you have the floor.

**Mr. Varma** (India): Madam Chair, I did not want to interrupt your flow, but on paragraph 47 we have a comment. We are not opposing the adoption, but we have a comment. It is with reference to paragraph 47, subparagraph (t). We do not know whether this is still the actual title; maybe there is a typo. We would recommend the secretariat to have another look at the repetition in the title of the working paper. If it is a typo, it can be corrected; if it is not a typo, it can stand. But we are not opposing the adoption.

**The President:** Thank you for your comments, India, and for making it clear that it is not a comment opposing the confirmed adoption. It is indeed a typo; thank you very much for picking it up. We have said the same thing exactly twice, so it would be deleted in order to be there just once. Thus, it would not say "Working Paper. Pakistan. Working Paper. Pakistan." twice: it would just say it once. Is everyone happy to adopt that entire paragraph, drawing attention to subparagraph (t) with the oral amendment usefully put forward by India? Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 48. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 49. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 50. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 51. Drawing attention to the same typographical error picked up with regard to subparagraph (t) in the earlier paragraph, as pointed out by the delegation of India, that typographical error in subparagraph (t) here will be corrected similarly as in the earlier paragraph 47. With that oral amendment, is everyone happy to adopt paragraph 51? I see no comments. Adopted.

Paragraph 52. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 53. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 54. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 55. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 56. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 57. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 58. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 59. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 60. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 61. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 62. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 63. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 64. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 65. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 66. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 67. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 68. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 69. Any comments? Adopted.

Paragraph 70. Any comments? Adopted.

*The report was adopted.*

**The President:** Congratulations, colleagues: the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly of the United Nations is now formally adopted. Would any delegation like to take the floor at this stage to make any comments? I recognize the representative of Iran.

**Mr. Naziri Asl** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the honour to deliver, on behalf of the Group of 21, the following statement on negative security assurances.

The Group of 21 reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Group remains convinced that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use and proliferation persists. Therefore, as reflected in the Group's statement delivered by Egypt on 10 March 2015, the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as mandated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 68/32, leading to agreement on the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time.

Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need to reach an early agreement on a universal, unconditional, irrevocable and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances as a high priority. Such an instrument should be clear, credible, without any ambiguity, non-discriminatory and should respond to the concerns of all the parties.

The Group reaffirms the right of non-nuclear-weapon States not to be attacked by or threatened by the nuclear-weapon States with the use of nuclear weapons, and strongly calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from any such action or threat, whether implicit or explicit.

The Group underlines the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

The Group recalls the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013, which demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority, and supports and calls for the full implementation of its related resolutions 68/32 and 69/58 to follow up on that meeting. The Group also highlights the importance of the commemoration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, devoted to furthering this objective, and welcomes the decision to convene, not later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament.

The Group highlights the objectives laid down in resolution 69/54 of the General Assembly, entitled “Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation”, which, among other things, reaffirms multilateralism as the core principle in resolving disarmament and non-proliferation concerns.

The Group underscores the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic defence doctrines, security policies and military strategies, which not only set out rationales for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons but also maintain unjustifiable concepts of international security based on promoting and developing military alliances’ nuclear deterrence policies.

The Group believes that, pending the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned and taking into account provisions of the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament, is a positive step and an important measure towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, the Group welcomes the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Semipalatinsk and the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia. The Group of 21 welcomes General Assembly resolution 69/66, in which the Assembly decided to convene the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia as a one-day conference in New York in 2015 under the designated presidency of Indonesia, and notes with appreciation the various efforts deployed in this regard to produce concrete results.

The Group reiterates that, in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it is essential that nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of the zones. In this context, the Group urges nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all reservations and interpretative declarations to the protocols of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

The Group welcomes the formal proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace on the occasion of the second summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28 and 29 January 2014. The 33 member countries of CELAC declare to promote nuclear disarmament as a priority goal as part of the process towards general and complete disarmament, in order to promote the strengthening of trust among nations. CELAC once again reiterates its standing commitment to continue working for Latin America and the Caribbean to remain and be strengthened as a zone of peace, thereby contributing to regional and international security.

The Group reiterates its strong support for the early establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all nuclear weapons. To this end, the Group reaffirms the need for the expeditious establishment of such a zone in response to Security Council resolution 487



(1981) and paragraph 14 of Council resolution 687 (1991) and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

The States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that are members of the Group of 21 express their disappointment and deep concern that three States parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositary and co-sponsor States of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference, including the process to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as contained in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole. The States parties to the NPT that are members of the Group of 21 reaffirm that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The States parties to the NPT that are members of the Group of 21 also express their serious concern over the lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution; and, in accordance with paragraph 6 of that resolution, call upon all States parties to the NPT, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction; and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay. The States parties to the NPT that are members of the Group of 21 express their utmost concern that the persistent lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT Review Conferences, erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, taking into account that the indefinite extension of the Treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the States parties to the NPT that are members of the Group of 21 reaffirm the urgency of accession to the Treaty by Israel without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

While the Group believes that the nuclear-weapon-free zones are positive steps towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it does not subscribe to the arguments that declarations that have been made by the nuclear-weapon States are sufficient, or that security assurances should only be granted in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In addition, given their geographical limitations, security assurances guaranteed to States members of nuclear-weapon-free zones cannot substitute for universal legally binding security assurances.

The Group recalls that the demand for security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapon States in the 1960s and it crystallized in 1968 during the concluding phase of the negotiations for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The response of the nuclear-weapon States, however, as reflected in resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) of the Security Council, was incomplete, partial and conditional. The demand for assurances therefore persists.

The Group accepts that, while various approaches exist, efforts to conclude a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be vigorously pursued. The Group considers that the conclusion of such an instrument would be an important step towards achieving the objectives of arms control, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects.

The Group takes note of the substantive and interactive informal discussions on negative security assurances held in the Conference on Disarmament from 18 to 20 June 2014 pursuant to the schedule of activities of the 2014 session contained in document CD/1978.

Madam President, I hope that with this statement, which we have requested be circulated as an official document of the Conference, we could adopt the whole report. Our assumption is that, as this statement will receive a CD symbol, there would be space under certain sections where it could be reflected in the Conference's report.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Iran for his statement and I note that the statement has already been submitted to the secretariat. Is there any other speaker who would like to take the floor at this point? I recognize the Ambassador of Mexico.

**Mr. Lomónaco (Mexico):** Madam President, let me first congratulate you for the skilful way in which you navigated the troubled waters of your presidency. It is very telling that some of the most controversial discussions of this year took place during the negotiation of the annual report, as some delegations tried to rewrite history to make the Conference on Disarmament look slightly less bad — a classic sign of an ill patient.

Our obligation according to rule 45 of the Conference's rules of procedure is to elaborate a factual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations. A factual report does not mean it has to be balanced in terms of positive or negative aspects. Our obligation is not to deliver a balanced report, but a factual one.

My delegation engaged in our discussions in order to get a factual report. Our intention during the negotiations was to elaborate a report which provides the General Assembly with enough elements to visualize the real situation of the Conference during 2015.

We regret the fact that some delegations used the negotiations of the annual report to express their opinions on different topics, such as the presidency of Mexico. It was unusual to witness their need to repeat their already expressed criticism. This, together with the verbal attacks that my delegation endured during the past weeks for simply disagreeing, might be an illustration of the impact of the Mexican presidency. These disrespectful verbal attacks came from some of the same delegations that argue that consensus is an essential tool to protect the abuse and interests of the minority. I guess consensus is appreciated by some only when it works for them and not against them.

As already stated informally, it would be an honour for me to engage in a session, formal or informal, within or outside the Conference on Disarmament, to discuss the Mexican presidency of earlier this year. The question is whether we could better use our time to discuss how to commemorate 20 years of paralysis, or whether or not we have betrayed the trust that two thirds of the membership of the United Nations have placed in this exclusive club to negotiate on their behalf.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Mexico. I now recognize the representative of the United States, Ambassador Wood.

**Mr. Wood (United States of America):** Madam President, let me first thank you and "Team Kiwi" for your hard work and sustained efforts to help Conference on Disarmament member States reach consensus on the Conference's 2015 report. This was not an easy exercise, but the New Zealand presidency showed the necessary determination to help us get across the finish line.

Reaching consensus on this year's report can be attributed to the sense of purpose and flexibility of the vast majority of representatives in this august body, who are willing to put the best interests of the Conference at the forefront of their engagement. National interests, of course, remain paramount, but I was struck by the willingness of so many in this chamber to search for common ground in order to adopt a consensus report. Today is truly a good day for the Conference on Disarmament.

While we were able to reach consensus today, we frankly cannot overlook that, during the extended efforts to find consensus on the text, we witnessed an attempt to impose divisive views and provocative language on the report drafting process. The relentless promotion of unbalanced text was truly unfortunate, and my delegation appreciates the efforts of the New Zealand presidency and other Conference members to push back against what were clearly unreasonable demands. Going forward, the lessons learned should be that strategies designed to undermine the Conference as a disarmament mechanism should be shunned, and that dialogue and the willingness to compromise are the keys to making real progress.

With all its flaws, the Conference on Disarmament remains our shared and valued institution, and I look forward to working with member States in pursuit of a constructive path to getting the Conference back to negotiations.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the United States for his comments. I recognize now the delegation of India.

**Mr. Varma** (India): Madam President, we would like to congratulate you and your delegation for the successful adoption of the report of the Conference on Disarmament by consensus, as it should be. We have requested the floor, once again, to refer to some of the comments made today. In our statement in the plenary last week, we set forth our views on the report as a whole as well as on the reports of the four coordinators and the report of the Co-Chair of the intergovernmental working group.

We believe that, though the discussions on the report of the Conference were important, they were ultimately — as it should be — a sideshow in the work of the Conference this year. Though we share the disappointment that the Conference was unable to adopt a programme of work, we do believe that important work was done as part of the discussions of the intergovernmental working group, which produced a report that was adopted by consensus and that would have considerable value for the work of the Conference next year, as well as the very substantive, in-depth, comprehensive discussions that took place under the four agenda items which are of importance to the Conference. We believe that the work of the intergovernmental working group and the structured, informal discussions were the main highlight this year. They were important contributions by delegations; we participated in these discussions. So, to give the impression that the only point of discussion this year was the end of the year in terms of this report, I think, is a characterization that we do not share. We have come to this conclusion because we were part of the discussions at every stage of the Conference. That cannot be said for everyone else, but we will speak for ourselves. Given the limitations, the Conference did well, and we hope that the Conference can do better and that, next year, we can move towards forward movement which would allow the Conference to fulfil its mandate as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

We wish to thank you and your delegation, once again, for your support. We may not have been exactly the most diplomatic in the negotiation of the report, but that was all intended to ensure that we got a final and balanced report at the end, which we did.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement and his kind words addressed to the presidency. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of China. You have the floor, China.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Madam President, under your able guidance, we are about to successfully bring to a close the work of the Conference on Disarmament for this year. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on the successful adoption of our report today. Ever since New Zealand took up the presidency of the Conference, you and your team have worked very hard to draft our report. It should be mentioned in particular that, over the course of the consultations on the report, with your

rich experience and diplomatic skill, in a spirit of objectivity and fairness, and with the utmost professionalism, you have played a vital role in bridging the differences among the various delegations. For this, we would like to express our sincere appreciation and admiration.

In order to see the report adopted successfully, my delegation has also demonstrated the utmost flexibility and goodwill. We must point out, however, that, like many other delegations, we are not entirely satisfied with the content of the report. We believe that the Conference's rules of procedure, especially the principle of consensus, must be respected. This should be a common understanding among all delegations to the Conference.

We hope that, in the future, all delegations will bear in mind the importance of upholding the unity of the Conference and its long-term interests and will refrain from taking any action that might undermine the Conference's authority or violate its rules of procedure. The practices followed in this year's report, such as adding footnotes and giving excessive prominence to positions held by just a few delegations, should not be regarded as precedents.

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

**Mr. Riquet** (France) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, as previous speakers have said, our discussions have been difficult but, thanks to two elements, they have led to the result we were seeking, namely, the adoption by consensus of the 2015 report. The first of those elements is the collective intelligence which is indispensable for any multilateral structure to function properly, and the second is your leadership and that of your team, which I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank you for. We commend the agreement reached on the adoption of the report.

However, I feel that we should avoid, as was unfortunately the case during these sometimes laborious discussions, focusing on what divides us rather than what brings us together. This is not in line with the practice that has been the norm so far in drafting this report, nor is it in line with the spirit that should guide our debates. It was somewhat half-hearted, but at the same time wishing to show flexibility and a constructive approach, that we accepted the emphasis sometimes placed on the differences in views concerning certain decisions that were nevertheless adopted by consensus. I am thinking here of the decisions on the informal working group on the programme of work and on the schedule of activities.

We want to ensure that the significance of the discussions held under the schedule of activities is not underestimated, especially as the discussions were open to all. We, of course, respect the point of view of certain delegations and understand the legitimate frustration, which we share, regarding the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. But I think that it would be good to mention a few aspects that we deem especially important.

Firstly, the consensus rule is not open to interpretation. Consensus is a crucial element of the effective multilateralism that we aspire to engage in. The consensus rule is also a guarantee that the agreements we reach will be implemented by all those who adopted them. It is, I must say, somewhat paradoxical for someone to participate in a consensus at the time of adoption of a decision and to then disassociate themselves from that decision when it comes to implementation. In our view, there are not different degrees or levels of consensus.

I also find it paradoxical that one should lament the deadlock in the Conference because of difficulties in agreeing on a programme of work, while simultaneously calling into question the relevance of a working group specifically intended to facilitate the adoption of a programme of work. The discussions we have had in the informal working

group have been useful and enabled us to make progress, to explore new avenues leading in the right direction and to come closer, we hope, to agreement on a programme of work.

Lastly, Madam President, I would like to point out the highly substantive nature of the discussions that took place under the schedule of activities, both this year and last year, and in particular the discussions on a fissile material cut-off treaty led by Ambassador Michael Biontino of Germany. I fully endorse the comments made by the Ambassador of India, who rightly said that this was one of the most significant elements of this year. The discussions, in which each delegation took part, some very actively, enabled all participants to see that the conversations were of remarkable depth and were very detailed and technical. We had never before had such in-depth discussions: they were general in nature and focused on comparing and contrasting points of view based on political considerations.

It was only last year that we began to delve into the substantive aspects and details of the issues at hand, something which we have done even more so this year. These questions and discussions have allowed us to overcome some of the differences and to focus the discussion, enabling us to better understand everyone's concerns and to adopt a better approach to the difficulties before us. We all agree that these are not yet real negotiations, but they have enabled us to make progress. In a setting where the line between negotiation and discussions is especially tenuous, I believe that these exchanges have been unquestionably useful.

**The President:** I thank the representative of France. The next speaker on the list is the representative of the Russian Federation. Russia, you have the floor.

**Mr. Deyneko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would first of all like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Dell Higgie and the entire delegation of New Zealand. Their contribution to the process of securing agreement on the report of the Conference on Disarmament deserves the very highest praise.

We are grateful to each and every delegation that actively took part in the discussion of the draft and spared no effort to seek out and, much more importantly, identify mutually acceptable outcomes on the controversial points. As you know, we encountered quite a few such points this year.

The report is a balanced reflection of the interests of Conference members. No delegation, including our own, can be entirely satisfied with a definitive text because of our different national perspectives. But that is the essence of compromise, which is our shared heritage, and therein lies its important value.

The adoption of the final report by consensus shows once again that the Conference continues to have great potential, and its members are capable of finding ways out of the most complex situations. We trust that this constructive spirit of cooperation will be preserved and will allow us to find mutually acceptable solutions to issues of substance during the 2016 session as well.

We would like to conclude by sincerely wishing the Ambassador of South Korea success in his new role.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his comments and for the kind remarks addressed to the Chair. That exhausts the list of speakers for this afternoon. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize the delegation of Kenya.

**Mr. Kihurani** (Kenya): Madam President, let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and for your efforts in the completion of the 2015 report of the Conference.

Kenya attaches great importance to matters of international peace and security, and particularly strengthening peace and security through nuclear disarmament, which is the core objective of this body. It is therefore a matter of great concern and disappointment to my delegation that 2015 has been another year where the Conference has made no headway towards fulfilling its mandate.

Despite the best efforts of the session's six Presidents and facilitators during this session, the Conference has been unable to agree on the agenda and other substantive matters mainly due to many of us clinging to our hard-line positions and being unable to consider alternative proposals. It is incumbent on this membership to reinvigorate efforts and accommodate the views of others, if we are to remain relevant in the fast-moving pace of the international arena. This is a matter of great concern, as we have seen that States are willing to take issues of disarmament outside the Conference, as is illustrated by the conferences held on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons that have garnered considerable support from members and non-members of the Conference.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that, in order to achieve our goals in nuclear disarmament and international security, we require genuine commitment to build on our shared interests and accommodate the views of other parties. My delegation looks forward to working with you and others during the First Committee sessions at the General Assembly and towards a more fruitful year in 2016.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Kenya. Is there any other delegation wishing to take the floor? I recognize the Ambassador of the United States.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I just wanted to say a fond farewell to my good friend, Ambassador Ahn. I have greatly appreciated your wisdom and your support and guidance on a number of issues. You will be greatly missed here, and I do plan to take you up on your invitation to come to Athens. Thank you very much, and good luck to you and your family.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the United States. Is there any other delegation that would wish to speak before I make a few concluding remarks? I recognize the delegation of Iran.

**Mr. Naziri Asl** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor again just to establish where the statement delivered by the Group of 21, as already distributed today, is going to appear in the report. I assume there would be a section under section (d), paragraph 59. The working paper should appear there. Am I right on that?

**The President:** Thank you, Ambassador Naziri. You are indeed right. That will appear under paragraph (d) as 59 (a), given that you had indeed submitted it before adoption of the report. I trust that is satisfactory.

Is there anybody else who would wish to speak? That does not seem to be the case. Therefore, this concludes our business for today and, indeed, concludes the 2015 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have a few very brief concluding comments that I would like to make as outgoing President. I would like to put on record the appreciation of the New Zealand delegation for the support and cooperation that has been extended to us throughout the duration of our presidency. As you will all appreciate, and a number of you have specifically referenced this today, the preparation of the draft report to the United Nations General Assembly has not exactly been an easy task, but we have indeed benefited from the collective knowledge and experience of all delegations here in our endeavours. I have been particularly grateful for the flexibility that has been demonstrated by delegations.

Colleagues, the end of the Conference on Disarmament session, for any year and indeed for 2015, is a time for reflection. Next year, after all, will mark the twentieth anniversary since this Conference last had the opportunity to work towards fulfilling its mandate as a negotiating body through the adoption of a programme of work. Although great efforts have been exerted since then and many worthwhile activities undertaken, I know that none of you will have lost sight during this period of the real purpose of the Conference on Disarmament and of the urgency with which we must pursue the realization of its mandate to negotiate international agreements.

I note that during the term of the New Zealand presidency, two important events took place elsewhere, both of which I was fortunate enough to take part in. One was the first Conference of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which took place in Cancun, Mexico, and the other, in Dubrovnik, Croatia, was the convening of the first Review Conference of the Cluster Munitions Convention. Both are reminders to us here of what has been able to be achieved in other forums. Some of you, I know, do not agree with the choice of such forums, or with the respective rules of procedure used for those negotiations. But I would hope that some of you, at least, would agree with me that if the choice is between not doing any negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament and doing a worthwhile negotiation somewhere else under less constraining rules of procedure, then doing something, somewhere, especially when that negotiation produces something as valuable, for example, as the Arms Trade Treaty, is the better choice. Of course, in saying that, I do not at all foreclose the prospect that the Conference on Disarmament may one day again prove itself able to conduct a negotiation, and in that regard, I do wish next year's six Presidents all the very best for being able to bring this about. I certainly hope they may uncover the necessary creative juices for this.

Of course, the task of New Zealand is not quite over yet, despite the closure of our formal session here today. We will again be calling on all your support, this time for the finalization of the annual Conference on Disarmament resolution. A first draft of that text will be sent out to you all this coming Monday, with the first and formal meeting on it to take place in the Conference chamber here at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 24 September. Alongside the incoming President of the Conference, which, as you all know, is Nigeria — and we do offer Nigeria our complete support and solidarity — New Zealand will certainly remain available over the intersessional period to any delegation truly inspired to return the Conference to substantive work early in 2016.

Finally, please allow me to express heartfelt thanks to the secretariat, the conference officers and the interpreters for their work. Marco, we have greatly appreciated your guidance and the calm manner in which you have responded to the numerous requests we and other delegations here have made of you and your team. We are also grateful to Norma, Silvia, Rendt and Charlotte for their kind assistance, historical insights and good humour. Our thanks, of course, go also to the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Møller, and very much as well to all our fellow Presidents for this year, whose help we have indeed greatly appreciated.

With that, dear colleagues, the 2015 session of the Conference on Disarmament has come to an end and the meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.*