

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and thirty-second plenary meeting

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President: Mr. Julio Herráiz España..... (Spain)

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The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call to order the 1432nd meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Excellencies, dear colleagues, Mr. Møller, Ms. Kaspersen, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin this morning by extending a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

I would like to propose that the schedule for this morning's plenary meeting be as follows. First, I will invite Mr. Soini and Ms. Nakamitsu to address our Conference. I understand that Mr. Soini will have to leave the Conference just before 10.30 a.m. to attend to other engagements and that Ms. Nakamitsu will be available after her statement to answer any questions that delegations see fit to pose.

Afterwards, I will invite delegations to address the plenary according to the list of speakers, on which I currently have two delegations.

I would like to inform you that yesterday the secretariat circulated an advance copy of a list of amendments for delegations' consideration and that those amendments will be submitted for provisional adoption into our draft report to the General Assembly in due course. Now, without further ado, I would like to give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, whom I invite to address our Conference. You have the floor, Minister.

Mr. Soini (Finland): Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased to address the Conference on Disarmament today. Yesterday I had the honour to participate in the high-level segment of the Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

As you might know, Finland is celebrating her 100 years of independence this year. Seventy years ago, our society was a poor, agricultural society, heavily in debt after two devastating wars. Progress has required tough decisions, painful sacrifices and a lot of diplomacy and creative thinking. Today, we are lucky to live in an open, stable and prosperous society.

The success of Finland was made possible by our veterans of war. Today, their message is clear: we must find ways to avoid war.

Arms control and disarmament has returned to the core of foreign and security policy. The international community has to stand up to defend the international security architecture. It is the result of many years of hard negotiations. At the same time, new kinds of threats are evolving and need to be addressed. Your work at this Conference is extremely important. Much depends on the political will and activity of the member States.

Constructive ideas and concrete actions are needed. My own country is ready to consider possible ways forward with an open mind. We also need to pay constant attention to the implementation of existing treaties. At the same time, we should ensure compliance and stay responsive to possible needs for improvement.

Mr. President, let me mention some of the most pressing issues. The nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitute a major threat to international peace and security. The use of chemical weapons in Syria, a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, has shocked the world. The illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia and the situation in eastern Ukraine remains a major concern. Respecting international law and commitments is of the utmost importance.

In this security environment, we need dialogue, risk reduction and confidence-building mechanisms more than ever. We also need to increase transparency and predictability in order to enhance stability and security. Arms control plays a key role. Also, export controls are increasingly important in preventing the proliferation of arms – smaller and bigger.

Conventional arms and explosives kill over half a million people every year. We need to pay more attention to small arms and other conventional weapons in order to reduce the tragic consequences of their use.

In recent years, one of the bright spots has been the Arms Trade Treaty. The Treaty will step up regulation of international flows of conventional arms. As the current President of the Treaty, Finland has done its best to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. It is the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty. For half a century, the NPT has contributed to international peace, security and stability.

Finland stresses all three pillars of the NPT. Our approach to nuclear disarmament is pragmatic.

A world free of nuclear weapons must be our objective. In order to achieve that, we have to proceed in a unified and inclusive way. All the countries possessing nuclear weapons have to be on board. We reiterate our call on all nuclear-weapon States and countries possessing these weapons to promptly take concrete actions in nuclear disarmament and confidence-building.

One more point: our efforts concerning non-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons should be increased. Today, these weapons are completely uncovered by any binding, verifiable agreement. This gap has to be fixed. There should also be a clear division between these and conventional weapons – in military doctrines and if ever exercising their use. And finally, we need practical confidence-building measures in this field as well.

Non-State actors and terrorist groups getting hold of biological, chemical, nuclear or radiological weapons constitutes a real threat to society. As a consequence, the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) has become increasingly relevant.

In order to prevent terrorism, it is also important to build prevention capacity on a global level. Finnish experts have been training chemists from over 130 developing countries in building bio- and health security capacity as well as in enhancing nuclear security and safety worldwide. Currently, we are investing in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which is a practical cooperation initiative chaired by the Russian Federation and the United States, with over 80 countries participating.

Mr. President, Excellencies, I would like to conclude with a reminder of how new technology is changing the global political environment. We need to look seriously into how science and technology, the Internet, social media, space and cybertechnology, and artificial intelligence affect this field. The development of lethal autonomous weapons opens up a totally new perspective on warfare. This poses difficult questions about ethics, regulation and international rules.

We also need to be sufficiently prepared for a new kind of hybrid threats. Legislation, regulation and rules of the game are urgently needed. We have to engage not only Governments and the political leadership but also the private sector and academia. It is crucial to create a safe and secure environment where we can profit from advancing technology – without putting ourselves or our societies at risk. The Conference on Disarmament has a crucial role to fill also in this field.

I wish you all the best in your important work.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Minister, Mr. Soini, for his statement and for honouring us with his presence at the Conference on Disarmament today. I am going to suspend the meeting for a few minutes so that I may escort the Minister from the room. The meeting is suspended.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The meeting is resumed. I am now pleased to invite Her Excellency Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to address our Conference. Madam the High Representative, you have the floor.

Ms. Nakamitsu (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): Mr. President, distinguished delegates, Mr. Møller, ladies and gentlemen, it is my great privilege to

address this body for the first time in my capacity as the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Some of you I have already had the pleasure to meet. I look forward to engaging with and getting to know all of you in the months to come.

The closing of the annual session of the Conference on Disarmament is in fact occurring at a very troubling time for the cause of disarmament. Less than 10 days ago, the norm reflected in the last multilateral instrument negotiated by this body, namely, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, was violated for the sixth time this century.

The United Nations Secretary-General has strongly condemned the underground nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 3 September. This act was yet another serious breach of the international obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and undermines international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. It was also profoundly destabilizing for regional security.

It is both notable and vital that the Security Council remains united on this matter, as again confirmed last night at the adoption of resolution 2375 (2017). The Secretary-General has observed that this unity also creates an opportunity to engage diplomatically to decrease tensions, increase confidence and prevent escalation – all aimed at the previously agreed denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The Secretary-General will always stand for a peaceful solution of this situation and he remains ready to support efforts towards this end.

It is often at times of heightened international tension and conflict that some resort to a few common fallacies. One such fallacy is centred on the argument that security can be found only through the strength of arms and not through the wisdom of cooperation. Yet, this perspective is not only deeply dangerous, it is also fundamentally ahistorical.

Measures for disarmament and arms control have played a crucial role in conflict prevention, risk mitigation and reduction, de-escalation and reducing tensions. The Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty came into force in 1963, only a year after the Cuban Missile Crisis; and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons opened for signature in 1968. Judging from history, it should never be the case that a poor international security situation obviates the pursuit of disarmament. Rather, growing tensions, simmering conflicts and the unchecked proliferation of destabilizing arms must compel us to act with new urgency.

Another common fallacy is that norms for disarmament and arms control only have value if they can be perfectly verified and perfectly complied with. Strangely, this argument is only used as justification not to pursue new measures. This argument is also belied by how we value norms and measure their merits, which is on the basis of what they have accomplished and not solely on the fact we might still need more work to ensure universal adherence.

This is why we consider the nuclear non-proliferation regime to be successful despite a few difficult cases, why the norm against nuclear tests remains strong despite the actions of one country, and why the taboo against chemical weapons continues to be effective despite violations by a State and non-State actors. We must continue to redouble our collective efforts to uphold and further strengthen those norms.

Let me be very clear. I see disarmament and arms control as the other side of the same coin called “security”. The United Nations was created to maintain international peace and security, and was given the mandate for disarmament for that purpose.

There have been many attempts to diagnose the challenges faced by this body for more than two decades. As a relative newcomer to this field, may I offer some general observations from the perspective of my own experience.

First, the norms I have described were conceived as partial measures and urgent stopgaps meant to lead us in imperfect circumstances towards our ultimate objective of peace and security with the least diversion of resources to arms. Yet, many of these measures have come to represent stopping points, where the status quo can safely thrive – whether that is the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons, year-on-year growth in military expenditure or the deepening profit-driven global arms trade.

International circumstances have dramatically changed in recent decades. Yet, this Conference remains stuck on only the initial stages of a step-by-step approach dating back

to 1957 and General Assembly resolution 1148 (XII). Perhaps the time has come to seriously examine how well our immediate priorities, including the core items and the “decatalogue” remain aligned with an effective programme leading to our ultimate objective.

Second, the organs of the United Nations disarmament machinery do not seem to function as a key part of what should be an integrated system geared towards constructing and revitalizing the necessary components of the international peace and security architecture. There was a period when disarmament negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament were central to international peace and security discussions and, indeed, made critical contributions, as we can see from the Chemical Weapons Convention or the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. This has not been the case for a long time.

Perhaps by necessity, the General Assembly has recently had to take on many roles – initiating studies on new issues, convening expert groups to deliberate and elaborate measures on specific issues and conducting negotiations on treaties in both the areas of conventional and nuclear weapons.

Of course, to the extent that these innovations are effective, I have no doubt that Member States will continue to make use of them. In fact, I continue to see room to explore opportunities for even greater dynamism in the working methods of the New York-based organs. For instance, an expanded establishment of working groups by the First Committee might better facilitate, in a more cost-effective way, the type of mandates increasingly assigned to governmental expert groups.

Even the Disarmament Commission has recently been able to turn around its long-standing stalemate with the adoption of a substantive outcome earlier this year. It also held a very positive informal exchange on the proposal for a new item on implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, for the purpose of preventing an arms race in outer space. The ability of the Commission to effectively carry forward work initiated in the First Committee would be yet another positive innovation in the methodology of the disarmament machinery.

But where are these trends leaving the Conference on Disarmament? I welcome the continued engagement by all delegations, which have continued to make proposals, participate in informal discussions and seek common ground in the working group on the way ahead, so ably chaired by Ambassador Lynn of Myanmar. I regret that the working group was not able to reach agreement on recommendations. Regardless of the ability of the Conference on Disarmament to break its stalemate, it seems clear that the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament will and must go on, through all prudent but effective pathways available.

So, after 21 years of stalemate, I put to you the question: do you wish to protect this part of the machinery called the Conference on Disarmament, by finding ways to compromise and return to substantive work? Do you want to protect the decision-making process called “consensus”, which will by definition require a genuine spirit of compromise and a strong political will to make progress? Or do you wish to follow the current path of increasing innovation and the use of other types of mechanisms and processes to tackle priority disarmament issues? For any path you may choose, you will need to have a strong commitment to international cooperation and a vision for strengthening multilateralism in today’s complex, multipolar world.

Resolving this fundamental question has become an urgent matter. Even as we continue to debate how to achieve decades-old priorities, our peace and security architecture is struggling to keep up with the implications posed by emerging military capabilities and new technologies. Other parts of the United Nations machinery are currently stepping up to address many of what Secretary-General Guterres calls “frontier issues”, which include lethal autonomous weapon systems, cyberwarfare, developments in biotechnology and outer space activities. Yet, in light of the rate of technological development and innovation, we must judge the situation in the Conference on Disarmament not only against its ability to overcome its present stalemate, but rather also against its ability to respond to new challenges.

This brings me to my third and final point. Effective leadership seems more vital than ever in making consensus-based multilateralism work in a multipolar world. We are well past the days where agreement between super-Powers and the consent of the non-aligned was sufficient to conclude an international treaty.

Leadership in a multipolar world requires a more substantive effort, bigger ideas and vision, creativity and innovation, trust and confidence, and a stronger commitment. Effective and irreversible progress towards our collective disarmament goals can only be made when those who possess, manufacture, use and transfer are engaged and are present at the table.

At the same time, norms belong to the entire community and their creation can be initiated by anyone. The critical mass necessary to bring new norms into life can be built from coalitions of all sizes and natures. The movements towards some of our strongest disarmament norms, including those reflected in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, were sparked by those without nuclear weapons.

Following on from the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we need now new cooperation among States, building new coalitions, as well as new partnerships between States and civil society for disarmament. We must also collectively ensure that the new treaty will not further divide the international community, but rather will create new momentum and new motivations towards nuclear disarmament. This will require a new vision and new understanding of what benefits disarmament can bring, and a renewed engagement from the bottom up and also from the top down.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, in his message to the opening of your session this year, Secretary-General Guterres stressed that “global tensions are rising and dangerous words spoken about the use of nuclear weapons”. Now, at the end of your session, it is unfortunate that these words ring even more true today.

I hope that this sombre state of affairs will lend new urgency to your work and create the impetus needed for this body to resume its proper place at the vanguard of the United Nations disarmament machinery. After several weeks of particularly difficult times and divergent views within the Conference on Disarmament, I now sense that all of you here, regardless of what positions you might have held, are indeed coming to a clear “consensus” that something serious has to be done with this body. This is an important point of convergence – that you want to devote some serious work to bring the Conference on Disarmament back to where it should be. And you have the power to do so.

As a long-time member of the United Nations Secretariat, I am a strong believer in the United Nations Secretary-General’s moral authority and thought leadership. We are committed to further sharpen these roles of the Secretary-General in the disarmament field, in support of Member States’ efforts. I look forward to our continued strong and close partnership in this regard.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the High Representative, Ms. Nakamitsu, for her statement and I now move on to the list of speakers for today’s meeting. I understand that the High Representative is prepared to answer any questions that delegations may wish to put to her. Our list of speakers currently comprises the Syrian Arab Republic, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the United States and the United Kingdom. I therefore give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. You have the floor.

Mr. Aala (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, the statement that I am about to deliver is not related to the topic that has just been discussed; rather, I wish to present some clarifications regarding certain comments made about the Syrian Arab Republic at the previous meeting of the Conference, on 5 September 2017, in the presence of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

I wish to respond to the statements made by the representatives of certain States, who took advantage of Mr. Üzümcü’s presence to attack the Syrian Arab Republic and to repeat false allegations that the Syrian Government has used chemical weapons. The intention of those States was to distort the facts and cover up their involvement in the war

against the Syrian Arab Republic, both as leaders and as participants in an illicit military alliance responsible for the deaths of hundreds of civilians in Al-Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr, through the deliberate bombing of schools and shelters for displaced persons, the intentional destruction of national infrastructure, the illicit deployment of troops in Syrian territory and the support lent to armed terrorist groups, in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions.

The military aggression of the United States of America was clearly demonstrated by the attack carried out against Al-Shayrat airfield on 7 April 2017 in response to the incident at Khan Shaykhun. Moreover, despite the requests of the Syrian Government, the United States, supported by its French and British allies, refuses to allow investigation and inquiry teams to visit the site of the incident at Khan Shaykhun or the airbase which it claims was involved in the incident. These actions illustrate the extent of the hypocrisy of the Government of the United States and the steps that it is willing to take to hide the fact that there is no evidence to support its claims. My Government denies categorically the repeated allegations that it has used chemical weapons as put forth by the representatives of the United States, France and Great Britain at the previous meeting. The efforts made by these States to raise such allegations during the discussions of the Conference on Disarmament represents a blatant attempt to justify the hostile policies that they have adopted towards the Syrian Arab Republic.

Furthermore, these allegations are at complete odds with the facts. The Syrian Arab Republic does not possess any chemical weapons and has repeatedly denounced the use of chemical weapons at any place or time, under any circumstances, as morally unacceptable and a crime worthy of punishment. The Syrian Arab Republic has fully disposed of its chemical programme; all production facilities and equipment were destroyed and all chemical materials were rapidly removed from the country, despite the highly complex conditions, and destroyed under the supervision of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The success of these efforts was one of the reasons for which the Organisation was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013, as Mr. Üzümcü said.

The Syrian Arab Republic submitted its observations on the report of the fact-finding mission concerning the incident at Khan Shaykhun at the meeting of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons held on 5 July 2017. While I will not go into detail on those observations, as they fall outside the mandate of this Conference, I wish to reiterate the concern expressed by our delegation at The Hague that the mission had failed to take samples at the site of the incident itself and had failed to meet the requirements for sampling set out in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction at every stage of the process.

Furthermore, the findings set out in the report were based on information provided by groups that are suspected of working with terrorists and that operate under the guise of humanitarian organizations, such as the White Helmets. The report also relied on open sources and on non-neutral testimonies and accounts. These facts cast doubt on the integrity of those sources and the credibility of the conclusions drawn, in particular given that other open sources were disregarded, such as the important investigation published by American journalist Seymour Hersh, who recently won an award for integrity, and a key scientific assessment, produced by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which calls into question the supposed facts surrounding the incident.

It is worth reiterating that, even though the United States and its allies, France and Great Britain, were the ones who raised the allegations within the forum of the United Nations, at the same time they have opposed and continue to oppose, under spurious pretexts, the request made by the Syrian Government that a fact-finding mission and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism visit the sites of the incidents at Khan Shaykhun and Al-Shayrat airfield.

With regard to the comments made concerning the initial Syrian declaration, my delegation reiterates that the Syrian Arab Republic has fulfilled all its commitments and is communicating with the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in order to clarify issues arising from the declaration in a forum free

from politicization and the pressure exerted by certain States. In his report of 4 July 2017, the Director General of the Organisation confirmed that the Syrian Arab Republic had submitted information in relation to the remaining unresolved issues and was continuing to respond to letters, provide documents and information and participate in dialogue with the Technical Secretariat in that regard.

The growing risk that terrorist groups will manage to obtain chemical weapons or poisonous substances and use them in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq is a serious cause for concern. The way in which some States have sought to manipulate these dangers only adds to this concern; they have gone as far as denying that terrorist groups have used chemical weapons on certain occasions and of ignoring or failing to answer questions as to how terrorist groups managed to obtain the toxic substances that were discovered in their warehouses in areas across the Syrian Arab Republic that had recently been freed from their control.

The Syrian Arab Republic has continued to provide the Security Council and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with information on the efforts of terrorists from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front and other associated groups to acquire toxic chemical weapons. We hope that such information will continue to be handled with the appropriate level of seriousness and that the response will be unaffected by the attempts by some States to politicize the issue, such as those witnessed by the Conference last Tuesday.

The Syrian Arab Republic accords special importance to the universalization of the Convention and advocates the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction through the accession, without delay, of all States in the region to the relevant international conventions. Israel is the only State in the region that possesses nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, it refuses to allow its weapons programmes to be subjected to inspections or placed under international oversight. Israel therefore represents the main threat to the security of States in the region, and its actions have violated various United Nations resolutions.

The attempts by the Israeli delegation to justify why their country has not acceded to the Convention and to divert attention instead to attacking the Syrian Arab Republic are an affront to the intellect of all present and make a mockery of the Conference. Such games are the logical outcome of the political protection that the United States of America provides to Israel. It was this protection that prevented the Security Council from adopting the draft resolution on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic in 2003, back when it was a member of the Security Council. Resolutions proposed at the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons were also rejected at Israel's request.

What is more, the Israeli delegation has the audacity to attempt to lecture us on the importance on complying with our obligations under the international conventions, despite the fact that United Nations records show that Israel had committed an unprecedented number of infractions, earning it the record for the most violations of international law and United Nations resolutions.

The Israeli delegation has also gone as far as to blame the Syrian Arab Republic for the spread of terrorism in the region, when the whole world knows that Israel is responsible for bringing terrorism to the Middle East through Haganah and the Stern Gang and that it is bullying the Syrian Arab Republic by carrying out repeated attacks designed to lend support to terrorists throughout the country whenever they look set to be defeated.

Lastly, allow me to ask those colleagues who used inappropriate language when referring to the Syrian Arab Republic in their statements to refrain from such behaviour and to refer to Member States by their official names, as this will help maintain a constructive and professional working atmosphere.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. You have the floor.

Mr. Han Tae-song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, the sanctions and pressure campaign by the Washington regime to completely obliterate the sovereignty and the right to existence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is reaching an extremely reckless level. Yesterday, the Washington regime fabricated the most-vicious-ever sanctions resolution by manipulating the United Nations Security Council concerning the intercontinental ballistic missile-ready hydrogen bomb test conducted by my country, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As already clarified on several occasions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has developed and perfected powerful nuclear deterrence in order to deter the ever-increasing and never-ending hostile acts and nuclear threat by the Washington regime and to defuse the danger of nuclear war looming over the Korean Peninsula and the region.

In spite of this, the adoption of sanctions resolutions against my country is an extreme manifestation of the United States intention to eliminate, at any cost, the ideology and social system of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its people. Such acts constitute a blatant infringement of the sovereignty of my country and a grave challenge to international peace and justice.

My delegation condemns in the strongest terms and categorically rejects the latest illegal and unlawful United Nations Security Council resolution.

Mr. President, instead of making the right choice with a rational analysis of the overall situation, the Washington regime finally opted for political, economic and military confrontation, obsessed with the wild dream of reversing the development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of nuclear force, which has already reached the completion phase. Since the Washington regime has revealed its evil intention to completely strangle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by fabricating a fresh sanctions resolution in defiance of our repeated stern warnings, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will no longer be an onlooker and make sure that the United States pays a due price.

As the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Foreign Ministry mentioned in its statement of 11 September, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is ready to use any form of ultimate means. The forthcoming measures by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will make the United States suffer the greatest pain it has ever experienced in its history.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States. You have the floor.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, let me start with a response to the remarks just made by the representative of the Pyongyang regime. Yesterday's United Nations Security Council resolution frankly sent a very clear and unambiguous message to the regime that the international community is tired, is no longer willing to put up with the provocative behaviour from this regime, and the international community is now prepared to take action. This resolution gives us, I believe, a much better chance to prevent the regime from fuelling and financing its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. We call on all countries to vigorously implement these new sanctions and all other existing sanctions.

Mr. President, the international community will never accept North Korea as a nuclear-weapon State and the United States will do its utmost to defend its allies from the threats posed by this regime. We have heard, week in and week out, these ridiculous statements coming from the representative of that regime, and it never ceases to amaze me the willingness to ignore the voice and demands coming from the international community. My hope is that the regime will take a lesson from what happened yesterday: 15 to 0, some of the strongest sanctions placed on any country, frankly, through the United Nations Security Council – sanctions that are international law. My hope is that the regime will hear the message loud and clear, and it will choose a different path.

As to the remarks made by the representative of the Syrian regime, Syrian propaganda, as we just saw on display here, is old, tired, worn and absent of facts. Through its continued use of chemical weapons and its failure to destroy its chemical weapons

programme in its entirety, Syria continues to fail to comply with its legal obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). As we have said many times before, the regime must immediately cease the use of chemical weapons and completely and irreversibly eliminate its chemical weapons programme in compliance with its obligations, as I said, under the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Mr. President, we are aware of reports of a delegation from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism is scheduled to arrive in Syria in the coming days. We will watch to see if the regime follows through on its stated commitment to facilitate the team's timely and unhindered access.

The Assad regime's unconscionable and indiscriminate attacks on 4 April 2017, and numerous other occasions since 2013, use cruel weaponry that has long been internationally condemned, further exposing the regime's total disregard for human life. The United States will continue to support our partners and United Nations colleagues to stop the use of chemical weapons in Syria and to hold accountable those, including the Assad regime, who engage in such barbaric behaviour.

We have made it clear that the Assad regime must fully address the omissions and discrepancies in the Syrian chemical weapons declaration to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The regime must immediately cease the use of chemical weapons against its own citizens and fully comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and, as I said, Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) to destroy its chemical weapons programme in its entirety. All these concerns must be fully resolved.

We have long expressed our strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons. Use by any party in Syria violates international standards and norms against such use. Syria is a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and any use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime clearly violates the Convention as well as Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). More generally, all parties must abide by commitments under international law, including the moratorium on targeting civilians and civilian facilities.

The United States strongly supports the Joint Investigative Mechanism's efforts to carry out its mandate to investigate chemical weapons use in Syria and we look forward to the Mechanism reporting its findings with regard to the 4 April 2017 attack.

Mr. President, finally, just to respond specifically to some of the bombast we just heard from the Assad regime representative, it is no secret in this body that this regime has carried out unconscionable acts against its own civilians. The use of chemical weapons against its own people is just unimaginable, but the regime continues to deny, continues to lie about it. But let us be clear: the international community will hold this regime accountable for what it has done in the past.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, just over a week ago, North Korea sent a brazen message of provocation, a message of belligerence: a sixth nuclear test carried out once again in clear contempt for the Security Council, the region and the international community.

Through yesterday's unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 2375 (2017), we have sent a message of our own in response. We have made clear that we will not stand idly by in the face of such aggression, that we will not be intimidated or cowed, that we will match North Korean provocations with clear, targeted consequences.

The resolution enacts strategic measures that, together with existing obligations, add up to the most stringent United Nations sanctions regime placed on any nation in the twenty-first century. The resolution does three big things: first, it will curtail gas, petrol and oil imports; second, it will ban all textile exports, taking hundreds of millions of dollars from revenues that the North Korean regime uses to fund its nuclear missile programmes; third, it will end future work authorizations of North Korean overseas labourers, stopping a sickening industry built on modern slavery and used to divert funds to the regime.

So, make no mistake, we are tightening the screw and we stand ready to tighten it further. Until the regime sees that diplomacy, not duplicity, is the way forward, we must all use our diplomatic tools to bring pressure to bear on Pyongyang. Some observers doubted that the Security Council would be willing or able to react speedily or in unison or even at all to this provocation. With this resolution, we are showing that we are united in condemning this illegal and reckless act and that we are determined that the North Korean regime change course. We now call on all States to redouble their sanctions implementation, taking note of the decisions that we have made yesterday under international law.

Mr. President, North Korea is engaged in a dangerous policy of provocation. Our role as an international community is to constrain them so that they change course. Sanctions are a vital part of this effort. It is a regime that bears full responsibility for the new measures. It is their continued illegal and aggressive actions that have brought us here. Such actions are in no way a proportionate response to the legitimate defensive military exercises of South Korea and the United States.

There is a way out. Diplomacy can end this crisis. First, North Korea must change its reckless course. There must be an end to the tests, an end to the provocations. Until North Korea changes course, we must maintain the maximum pressure possible. The onus now falls on Pyongyang to do the right thing: to step back from confrontation and to step towards de-escalation.

I would say a few words in response to the intervention by the Syrian representative. The Joint Investigative Mechanism was established by the United Nations Security Council as independent investigative mechanism for allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We stand by the findings of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and expect those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria to be held accountable, including those in the Syrian regime.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his statement. The floor is now with the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first of all, I thank Minister Soini and High Representative Nakamitsu for addressing the Conference today. In particular, I thank the High Representative for bringing home very clearly, once again, the true gravity and nature of the nuclear pursuits of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in flagrant violation of international norms and obligations.

Today, the High Representative might have witnessed first-hand the vitriolic and bellicose verbiage of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea representative, including his unacceptable affront to the 15 members of the Security Council in total disregard of the United Nations Charter, to which they themselves willingly subscribed and because of which they can be present here and be allowed to speak.

The Government of the Republic of Korea welcomes and fully supports the United Nations Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2375 (2017) in response to the sixth nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Through the resolution, the Security Council reaffirmed the strong resolve of the international community, the unwavering united commitment and the sense of urgency of us all not to tolerate the reckless and irresponsible pursuit by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its nuclear programme, which poses a grave challenge to international peace and security.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should take the international community's stern warning that its continued provocation will only deepen diplomatic isolation and increase economic pressure. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should realize that a decision to denuclearize is the only way to guarantee its security and economic viability and, therefore, should immediately take the path towards denuclearization and peace.

The Government of the Republic of Korea will continue to step up cooperation with the international community to ensure the full and thorough implementation of Security Council resolutions. The Government of the Republic of Korea will continue with its

efforts for denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and for lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement and I give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Ms. Masana García (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I wish to congratulate and thank you for your excellent work in this final period of 2017. I also wish to express my appreciation for the commendable work carried out by Ambassador Lin.

Ms. Nakamitsu, it is a pleasure to have you among us today at this unique forum for the discussion of disarmament affairs. I would like to respond to your questions. We support and believe in the Conference on Disarmament, which is why I am sat among you today, representing Peru.

We are a non-nuclear, peace-loving country that respects international security. In recent weeks, we have consistently spoken out in condemnation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and it is in that same vein that I am going to read out communiqué No. 010-17, released yesterday by my Government.

Today, the Government of Peru has decided to declare the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Kim Hak-chol, persona non grata, demanding that he leaves Peruvian territory within five days. This decision has been made in view of the fact that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has repeatedly and flagrantly violated United Nations Security Council resolutions and has continued to ignore the international community's constant appeals to fulfil its international obligations, to respect international law and to put an irreversible and verifiable end to its nuclear programme. That policy constitutes a serious and unacceptable threat to international peace and security, as well as to the stability of North-East Asia and the world.

This measure is supported by numerous official communiqués released by the Government of Peru condemning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear activity and ballistic tests and calling for immediate compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council, as well as Note Verbale RE (DAO) No. 6-91/2, dated 30 March 2017, through which it was established that the number of diplomatic officials at the Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Lima would be reduced from six to three, for the reasons set out above. The Government of Peru once again reiterates its commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to strict compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and remains ready to undertake all diplomatic efforts towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. President, we fully support the provisions of Security Council resolution 2375 (2017). We call on all parties concerned to find agreed formulas that will allow for negotiations to be held as soon as possible in order to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, as expressed in the communiqué. I reiterate: Peru will undertake all diplomatic efforts to make that possible.

Lastly, Mr. President, I believe that we owe each other respect. We come to this forum to negotiate, not to be witnesses to threats between members. We must negotiate, rather than seek confrontation; we are diplomats and, as such, must seek to establish and maintain peace.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Peru for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the President and I give the floor to the Ambassador of China. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Thank you, Mr. President. I should first like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Ms. Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for their thought-provoking statements.

On 3 September, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again carried out a nuclear test in disregard of the universal opposition of the international community. On 11 September, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2375 (2017), expressing the unified position of its members in favour of maintaining the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and the region, as well as promoting the Korean Peninsula denuclearization process and supporting the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The resolution also reaffirms the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia, calls for settling the issue through diplomatic and political means, supports the resumption of the Six-Party Talks, and emphasizes the need for all parties concerned to take measures to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula. China hopes that the contents of resolution 2375 (2017) will be implemented fully and comprehensively. As a near neighbour of the Korean Peninsula, China pays close attention to the development of the situation there; its consistent stand, including in the deliberations of the Security Council, is to deal with the Korean nuclear issue by firmly upholding Korean Peninsula denuclearization, maintaining the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula, and insisting that the issue should be settled through dialogue and consultation.

To settle the Korean Peninsula issue, all parties concerned should shoulder their requisite responsibilities and play their requisite roles, conscientiously taking measures to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula and resume the negotiation dialogue. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should abide by the resolutions of the Security Council, and heed the universal call of the international community to cease nuclear and ballistic-missile development. The United States and the Republic of Korea should also refrain from actions that further complicate the situation. The Korean Peninsula issue must be settled peacefully; a military solution offers no way out, and China will never tolerate the outbreak of war and chaos on the Korean Peninsula. The "suspension-for-suspension" initiative and the "dual-track approach" line of thinking put forward by China are currently feasible concepts for settling the issue. We call on all parties concerned to seriously consider and respond positively to them, and join China in firmly promoting dialogue and consultation, in an effort to support the Korean Peninsula denuclearization process and to achieve peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

China resolutely opposes the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in the Republic of Korea by the United States. This move seriously undermines the strategic security of China and other countries in the region, and has also impacted trust and cooperation among all sides regarding the Korean Peninsula issue; it serves neither to promote the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula nor to contribute to the long-term stability of the Korean Peninsula.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and I give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Ms. Yaron (Israel): Mr. President, we are briefly taking the floor in reply to the statement made by Syria. We will not delve too deeply into those absurdities, as they do not warrant serious consideration. We should not expect to hear the truth from a State which has repeatedly violated its international obligations and has shown that it sees no merit in sticking to truths and facts.

This country has violated its commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and is cooperating in committing war crimes against the Syrian people, including through the use of chemical weapons. While the Syrian regime is using chemical weapons against its own people, its declarations to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons are full of gaps, discrepancies and inconsistencies.

It is essential that the international community continue to insist that Syria be held fully accountable for its use of chemical weapons and its non-compliance with its international legal undertakings. Any other message will neither benefit the Syrian people nor verify that the absolute ban on chemical weapons is upheld.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Israel for her statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Aala (Syrian Arab Republic): I apologize for taking the floor once again at this session. However, allow me first to apologize to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for omitting to welcome her at today's session. Second, I should like to add my voice to the comments by my colleague from Peru concerning the importance of maintaining a spirit of constructive cooperation and fruitful dialogue in this chamber and refraining from levelling accusations in a manner that is inappropriate for career diplomats.

I am taking the floor essentially to respond to the statement of the United States representative. I will not use the terms that he used in addressing us, because I am committed to keeping the dialogue at a certain level.

The American representative accused us of denying facts without any justification. We did not hear any evidence from him; all we heard was unproven political accusations. The legal principle is that the burden of proof is on the person who makes the accusation. The Trump administration has clearly failed to provide evidence to support the baseless claims and accusations that it continues to level in its persistent waging of military aggression against Syrian territory, using the Khan Shaykhun incident as a pretext. It continues to prevent an impartial, transparent and credible investigation from being conducted at the location of the incident and into Al-Qaida, which claimed that it was involved in the incident. This is well known at The Hague. We are not saying anything new, but this American conduct of appropriating to itself the role of speaking on behalf of the international community and the right to hand out certificates of good conduct to Member States, is incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations, which is based on equal sovereignty among Member States. We are not surprised, however. History reminds us which State it was that first used weapons of mass destruction in the world, nuclear, chemical and other types of weapons. This behaviour comes as no surprise: we should like to remind the American representative that his country and its allies were the first to impede and delay the despatch of a fact-finding and investigation team to look into the first incident involving the use of chemical weapons in Syria, when the Nusra Front, a terrorist organization linked to Al-Qaida in Syria, used chemical weapons against a Syrian military base in Khan al-Asal in Aleppo on 19 March 2013. These obstacles erected by the United States and its allies at the time meant that the despatch of the investigation was delayed by five months. So, this conduct is nothing new for us in terms of how the Americans deal with the accusations that we are hearing.

I am surprised to see the United States representative showing crocodile tears while it is the US-led coalition that launches attacks that are illegal according to international law against Syria in Raqaa, destroying shelters and schools and the whole infrastructure.

I will not respond to the intervention by the representative of Israel. The truth is that I find it risible to hear her talk about international obligations and war crimes and accountability for such crimes. I invite her to look in the mirror before talking about such things.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): Mr. President, having heard the very interesting and, as the Ambassador of China said, thought-provoking speech by Madam Nakamitsu, Japan welcomes the swift and unanimous 15-to-0 adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 2375 (2017) in the wake of the sixth nuclear test by North Korea conducted on 3 September. This resolution includes extensively stringent and new sanction measures against North Korea.

Japan strongly urges North Korea to heed the call from the united international community to end provocations, abandon all its nuclear and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and fully implement relevant Security Council resolutions, including this new one.

Japan will further strengthen cooperation with the international community, including the Republic of Korea, the United States, China and Russia. We believe that it is high time to ensure the effectiveness of the relevant Security Council resolutions through

every country making additional efforts to implement these resolutions in a thorough and complete manner.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement and I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Kroll (Hungary): Mr. President, I would like to add my voice to the 35 member States who condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea last week. Let me refer to the statement published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which the Government of Hungary condemned in the strongest possible terms the sixth nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on 3 September, in blatant violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. These resolutions reflect the will of not only the United States but the whole international community.

We believe that the newly and unanimously adopted resolution was the right answer to increase diplomatic and economic pressure on the North Korean leadership to abandon their plans to threaten regional and global peace.

Let me also thank the High Representative for her very informative statement. I think the questions formulated are very justified. I think also that the answer was there: that something serious has to be done in this body. But, for that, we need strong political will from all of us, from all the member States of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Hungary for her statement and I give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Davison (Canada): Mr. President, I would also like to thank the Finnish Foreign Minister for his statement and the High Representative.

I would like to begin just by noting that Canada welcomes the United Nations Security Council resolution of yesterday. We support it in its entirety. We believe it is completely justified given the repeated provocations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Our hope, nonetheless, remains that common sense will prevail and that a peaceful resolution to this situation will be found.

I would like to echo the comments of my colleague from Hungary with regard to the statement of the High Representative. It was thoughtful, it was thought-provoking. Doubtless it made some of us uncomfortable, but it is a necessary thing to do. You referred to the importance of moral authority and leadership. That is an appropriate role for the United Nations and its representatives, so thank you very much for that.

And to make the session a little bit more interactive for you, I would like to ask a question. I think twice before you have met with some of us to talk about issues related to funding and the challenges faced by a number of different conventions. I am wondering, since this spring and the last time we spoke, whether you have had the chance to delve further into the troubles and have some ideas or some suggestions as to how you might see us through this situation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement. I believe that the High Representative will perhaps be able to answer all of the delegations' questions together after we have heard the remaining delegations' statements. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Ms. Kuznetsova (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, on behalf of the Russian delegation, allow me to welcome the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and thank her for her statement.

Russia does not recognize the nuclear status of North Korea. Pyongyang's nuclear missile programme flagrantly violates Security Council resolutions, undermines the disarmament regime and threatens security in North-East Asia. It was for these reasons that Russia supported the statement made by the President of the Security Council on 29 August strongly condemning the latest ballistic missile launches.

At the emergency meeting of the Security Council held on 4 September, we also strongly condemned the North Korean test of a nuclear explosive device. Yesterday, we supported the adoption of Security Council resolution 2375 (2017). Russia generally

supports all Security Council resolutions demanding an end to the nuclear programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the interests of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula.

However, it is clear that the problems in the Korean peninsula cannot be solved through sanctions and pressure alone. Now more than ever, we must remain calm and refrain from taking steps that could escalate tension. Without political and diplomatic tools, it will be extremely difficult – or, more accurately, entirely impossible – to find a way out of the current situation.

Our specific suggestions are set out in the Russian-Chinese “road map”. We call on all interested parties to study this initiative closely. In our view, it offers a realistic means of diffusing tension and ensuring a gradual resolution.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for her statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor again, but I need to respond to the comments from the Syrian representative.

The Syrian regime needs to understand one thing: the international community will hold the regime accountable. Those responsible for carrying out vicious chemical weapons attacks against the Syrian people will be brought to justice. Again, I call on the Assad regime to end the chemical weapons attacks, comply with its obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions and to cooperate fully and unambiguously with the Joint Investigative Mechanism. If the regime, as the representative said, is interested in the facts, it should cooperate with the Joint Investigative Mechanism, instead of trying to obstruct its work.

Finally, Mr. President, just to respond to the comments made by the Chinese Ambassador, if China wants to see peace on the Korean Peninsula, it needs to use the unique leverage that it has to convince the regime in Pyongyang to change course.

With regard to the joint Russian-Chinese so-called “freeze-for-freeze” proposal, we have spoken very much often against that. We reject it. With regard to the remarks on the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, let me just say very simply that the THAAD system is a reality.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Han Tae-song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I am sorry for taking the floor a second time.

The latest nuclear test is the normal process that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has to go through in its efforts to carry out its plan of building a strategic nuclear force. No one can question this. Everybody expected the nuclear test by us. That is because they knew that is the only way we have for defending my country. Sanctions and pressure will not frighten or intimidate the will of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to move forward along the path it has chosen. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will never step back – even an inch – from the road of bolstering self-defensive nuclear deterrence for the purpose of defending our sovereignty and the people from United States nuclear threats.

The United States is seeking the physical breakdown of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea while failing to judge for whom the current situation is more unfavourable. It is the miscalculations and reckless rhetoric of the United States that cause escalation of tension on the Korean Peninsula, which is frequently out of control. The United States should not forget the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a fully fledged nuclear Power, regardless if they try to deny it.

On this occasion, I would like to ask everyone in this hall: do you really not know the root cause of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula? Or are you blindly or on purpose or deliberately not trying to understand? If the self-defensive measures of my

country are a threat to peace and security in the world, then what should we call the joint military exercises and constant nuclear threats against my country by the United States? If you really want to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, you should first ask the Washington regime to abandon its long-standing and never-ending hostile policy and nuclear threats against my country, instead of saying something about my country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement and I give the floor to the Ambassador of Mexico.

Mr. Heredia Acosta (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Good day, Mr. President. I would like to express my appreciation for the presence and reflections, the message, of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mr. Soini, and, of course, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Nakamitsu. With regard to the former, I would also like to recognize Finland's leadership regarding the Arms Trade Treaty and in pointing out to us, reminding us, how important it is that the Treaty continues to contribute to a more responsible arms trade. Ms. Nakamitsu, I would like thank you for your reflections on the need for all of us in this forum to contribute to overcoming the impasse in which we find ourselves and to resume the forum's mandate to carry out multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Mr. President, I would like to share a communiqué released by the Government of Mexico on 7 September. It reads as follows:

In recent months, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has committed flagrant violations of international law and of the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council through its nuclear tests and long-range ballistic missile launches. It did so again as recently as 3 September, carrying out its sixth nuclear detonation, the strongest yet. The nuclear activity by North Korea is a serious risk to international peace and security and constitutes a growing threat for nations in the region, including close allies of Mexico, such as Japan and Korea. In view of this activity, the Security Council of the United Nations has passed resolutions prohibiting North Korea from developing nuclear arms and ballistic missiles and sanctioning persons or entities associated with those programmes. According to the Charter of the United Nations, compliance with those resolutions is mandatory for all Member States, including, of course, Mexico. The President of the Republic has therefore passed a decree today, 7 September, in the Official Gazette, instructing all government agencies to fully comply with the resolutions of the Security Council regarding North Korea. Through this decree, the Government's subsidiary bodies have been informed of the Security Council's lists of persons and entities subject to the sanctions regime imposed on North Korea since 2006.

Furthermore, today, 7 September, the Government of Mexico has declared the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea persona non grata and has given him 72 hours to leave the country. Through this diplomatic act, Mexico sends a message to the Government of North Korea expressing its absolute rejection of that country's nuclear activity, which constitutes a clear and increasingly serious violation of international law and represents a serious threat to the Asian region and the world. Lastly, Mexico reiterates its full support for the United Nations Security Council's work towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the maintenance of international peace and security and urges the Council to act in a united manner to resolve the current crisis peacefully.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Mexico for his statement and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Mr. President, I would like to thank in particular the presence this morning of the Foreign Minister of Finland and his words and leadership and support of the Arms Trade Treaty, its development and implementation.

I would like to particularly welcome the High Representative, Izumi Nakamitsu, for her presence and her statement, which we found particularly inspiring. I would like to point

out that Brazil – in our traditional views and positions here in the Conference on Disarmament and in other disarmament and arms control forums – would be in a position to practically fully subscribe to your statement. We think it is not just thought-provoking, it is really hitting the nail on the head as to what we must consider in terms of priorities for making the Conference a serious and productive body again.

I would like, in particular, to single out her words regarding security and as historically flawed the notion that security is brought up or is strengthened by stronger arms. I would also like to underline what the High Representative mentioned with respect to norms for disarmament and arms control only being considered effective or efficient if perfectly verifiable. That is also a critical aspect. I do not think any norms or any convention or any treaty for arms control or disarmament is in fact perfectly verifiable. So, we have to live with the notion that perfect verifiability is unachievable, but the norms are necessary and effective as they fill legal gaps and as they reflect commitments that are obligatory and taken up by all the members who have decided to abide by them. We are here in the business of building internationally applicable norms and binding norms.

Also interesting is her notion of United Nations disarmament bodies working more as a system. This is an issue that is being brought up with respect to almost all United Nations issues and discussions. The thrust of the sustainable development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals is to encourage all United Nations bodies and entities to work in a relationship with each other towards an integrated agenda, because all issues are interrelated. So, that is the acknowledgement that the new sustainable development agenda has brought to us. We have today, in the context of the Arms Trade Treaty, a side event and discussions on the relationship between arms control and sustainable development, so the link is being raised in different venues and forums. It is a welcome discussion: we should work as a system.

That being the case, and given the fact that we have been stuck for over 20 years in this body without being in a position to adopt a programme of work and to have effective agreement that would allow us to pursue negotiations on disarmament in accordance with the issues of the Conference, I think it is interesting also to look at the United Nations as a system and to explore different avenues for making progress. The High Representative has recognized that this is perhaps a way forward as well. I think many countries – a majority of them, in fact – have decided to test different avenues for making progress. Of course, this requires innovation; it requires testing the First Committee, the General Assembly and other initiatives that might release us also from the straitjacket of consensus-based discussions in this Conference. Not that my Government is against the consensus rule of the Conference on Disarmament, but we think that the way its application has evolved is leading to complete paralysis and the absence of substantive discussions. In that respect, we do consider that perhaps an in-depth reflection needs to be pursued with respect to how the consensus rule should be actually applied, possibly finding ways to use it in a more flexible, less rigid manner.

The remark made by the representative of Peru also rings as very interesting with respect to this body, actually focusing on overcoming the deadlock with respect to an effective programme of work and taking up fully its role as a negotiating body on disarmament for the United Nations, and avoiding its increased use as a sounding board for other issues that are not directly related to the Conference on Disarmament. We are bringing issues from the outside into this body and using it as a political echo chamber. I do not wish to express any position with respect to the substance of these discussions, but it is in some respects a sort of misuse of this body, which was not meant to be a sounding board of this kind. We have other bodies; we have the United Nations Security Council actually taking up action on these very pressing issues of our times. We need to get back to focusing on what should be the mission and the core and original functions of the Conference on Disarmament.

The High Representative mentioned the fact that we had a working group on the way ahead. That was the most recent attempt to find a way through. My delegation was particularly encouraged by the depth and the breadth of discussions in the informal working group chaired by the Ambassador of Myanmar. We, too, regret the fact that, at the end of such a useful and rich discussion – again, because of the way in which we use the

consensus rule and how we interpret – it was not possible to capture any aspect of the several recommendations the Chair thought could have come out from that working group. That was yet another missed opportunity. Of course, everybody recognizes the usefulness of discussions, but the problem is that that particular working group operated under an informal format, meaning that none of it was taken up in the minutes of the meeting. We therefore have no compilation or reflection of the discussions that were held in the working group. If we continue to work on that manner – where the substance is discussed informally without any records and then, when we meet formally, we only have discussions that, technically, do not belong formally in the agenda of the Conference – I think in the medium to long term perhaps we might be doing ourselves less good than we think. It is something that will not lead us to responding to the international circumstances that we have heard described here by several important and distinguished Ambassadors and representatives. I think that the Conference on Disarmament needs to wake up, and we would be fully on board with the High Representative to contribute to any initiative.

A final word on moral leadership by the Secretary-General of the United Nations: his message is most welcome and, if he wishes to make it louder and stronger, we would be fully supportive. We hope also to see him on 20 September in New York at the opening for signature of the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. His presence and leadership there would be a very important sign of his engagement.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement and for his reflections on the statement of the High Representative, who I believe will be able to comment on the points raised after the delegations' statements. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Atta (Egypt): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to welcome the statement delivered by Mr. Timo Soini, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, as well as the statement delivered by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. Indeed, her statement was comprehensive, thought-provoking and – to quote the Ambassador of Brazil – inspiring.

Mr. President, I am taking the floor to respond to the statement of the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on 5 September 2017, in which he called for Egypt to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Obviously, the Director General speaks from a narrow angle, the basis of which is his position as OPCW Director General. This is an institutional interest and we take this into account.

The approach of Egypt, however, to the universalization of all legally binding instruments related to weapons of mass destruction is a comprehensive approach. In this respect, we would like to highlight that the key to the universalization of all weapons-of-mass-destruction-related legally binding instruments is the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In the Middle East, we have an imbalance in the membership of such kind of instruments, and this imbalance should be rectified by putting under full-scope safeguards all unsafeguarded nuclear activities in our region. We stand ready to work with all countries ready to submit constructive and practical proposals to establish a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

One further point related to this issue, Mr. President. We have noticed a trend in the statements delivered by representatives here relating to the violation of norms of the nuclear non-proliferation disarmament regime that, willingly or unwillingly, I am not really aware of which it is, drop the reference to universalization of the NPT. If it is unwillingly done, or it is for the sake of brevity, we ask these countries to put this element back into its prominent position in their statements. The universalization of the NPT is one of the key issues that the international community should endeavour to achieve.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, very briefly, and I said this last week, it is very deplorable that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea representative is repeatedly using the Conference on Disarmament as a medium to

broadcast their repetitive propaganda. There is nothing new there. I will simply say that to make the Democratic People's Republic of Korea waken from its professed delusion, the international community has to – and I am certain that it will – fully and thoroughly implement all relevant Security Council resolutions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of South Africa.

Ms. Mancotywa-Kumsha (South Africa): Mr. President, let me begin by apologizing for being late and by acknowledging the presence of the Minister of Finland and thanking them for their leadership of the Arms Trade Treaty, and by thanking the High Representative for making time to come and address us. I thank her for the provocative points that she raises, precisely because – for smaller delegations like us that cherish the Conference on Disarmament – it is important that it works.

We cannot be running around from one circle to the other, one session to the other; and when we come here, we come to this shabby state of affairs that you have witnessed. In fact, we feel beholden to apologize to you for what you are witnessing here, which is really the staple of the Conference on Disarmament. We do nothing but this: a slanging match, toing and froing, that is unproductive. So, the question is: how do we justify continuing to allocate resources, to maintaining the status quo? Why do we have to allocate resources to even keep the secretariat that backs it up, when these resources could be used elsewhere?

It is a strain on small delegations that believe absolutely in the original mandate of the Conference on Disarmament and the promise that it holds to come and sit here – countries that are compliant, that comply with every requirement that has been put on the table to advance disarmament in all its facets. We come here and we repeat this farce day in and day out. It would not be a problem, if money was not allocated to maintaining this farce. But it is a problem.

How do we, then, address the critical questions that you have raised: the manner in which we make decisions, the programme of work, the interpretation of consensus, the exclusion of States that may perhaps enrich the workings of the Conference – I am referring here to expansion; we cannot even have a discussion on expansion.

It is in this context that, for us, the uncomfortable avenue external to the Conference of advancing disarmament is attractive. But the more we pursue avenues outside the Conference to generate progress, the more we render the Conference redundant, as it were. How do we hold the Conference accountable? I am aware of the stress on results-based monitoring and evaluation within the context of the United Nations system. We have nothing to show for that, yet we continue to allocate resources. A troubling element of this is the exclusion of civil society that serves to perpetuate this farce. Maybe if we were doing this in the full glare of civil society, we might be jogged to be productive.

I am not sure if I make any sense. I came running, I picked up on the very important points that you made, I look forward to reading your speech. We concur with the substance of what you say. We believe in the leadership of the Secretary-General; like Brazil, we hope to see him at the signing ceremony of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Again, my most profound apology to you and the Minister of Finland that you came to this atmosphere that does not speak well to what this Conference should stand for.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of South Africa for her statement. Next on my list of speakers is the Ambassador of India. You have the floor.

Mr. Gill (India): Mr. President, I want to briefly join colleagues in thanking the honourable Foreign Minister of Finland for coming to the Conference on Disarmament and addressing us and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her thought-provoking remarks.

Many colleagues have addressed the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. My delegation has already spoken on it last week and I do not need to repeat myself.

I think our Brazilian colleague struck a note of caution, but there are certain issues, such as the chemical weapons-related issues that we have sometimes discussed here, that belong to other forums. But at the end of the day, the Conference on Disarmament does not

exist in a vacuum. There are broader developments in international security, in nuclear proliferation and disarmament matters that impact on the way we approach our work; and, naturally, there would be some reflection of that in our discussions. This is, of course, not to have this Council Chamber turn into an echo chamber for other issues.

Now, the High Representative outlined some issues of structure and process with regard to the disarmament machinery. She mentioned some issues of substance that are of priority to the international community – old issues in a sense – and she also referred to some new issues, emerging issues or frontier issues.

Very briefly on this issue of whether the Conference on Disarmament and the structure that it is part of is outdated, I think the current year is a good example of how we should be careful in assigning blame to the tools that we have at our disposal. The working group on the way ahead was a good initiative that, just as our Brazilian colleague said, saw some in-depth discussions on important issues; but, as part of the decision setting it up, we were supposed to have a dynamic between that group and the Conference on Disarmament President's efforts for a programme of work. Unfortunately, in the last few weeks of the group's working, that dynamic broke down. We did not have the kind of result with some clear recommendations; as our Brazilian colleague recalled, we did not have that kind of result. So, we have to think whether it was the Conference's fault or whether it was our own commitment to the work of this forum that was not up to the mark.

Likewise, on this issue of a long-standing stalemate of 20 years or 25 years, we did adopt a programme of work in 2009 – that was less than 8 years ago – but we were not able to push through on the implementation. Again, that does not point to a fundamental flaw in the Conference's structure and rules of procedure. The issue is perhaps more to do with lack of political will or lack of follow-up, as our Hungarian colleague reminded us.

On the old and new issues, the Conference's agenda – the “decatalogue” – is wide and flexible enough to allow us to take up any of those issues. Our Belarusian colleagues gave us a good example this year of how new issues can be discussed in the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, we were not able to have a long-enough discussion and an interactive-enough discussion on those issues in the Conference; it is for colleagues to think whether in the coming year we can step up the level of interactivity in our discussions, especially when it comes to new issues, where the pressure to decide whether negotiations should take place or not is not there.

I want to end, Mr. President, by referring to the rule of consensus. We have had bodies and forums in New York tackle issues on the disarmament agenda, on the non-proliferation agenda, without recourse to the rule of consensus for some time now; and that has not made the problems disappear from the international agenda. So, the participation of those militarily significant States on which the obligations under the disarmament and non-proliferation instruments that we wish to adopt would flow is essential, and the rule of consensus allows that participation to take place in the assurance that their concerns and their interests would be respected. In that sense, the Conference on Disarmament is unique: whether big or small, whether militarily significant or not, every member State has a right to be heard and has a right to have its interest accounted for in the Conference's work. So, while we are willing to consider ways in which the mechanical use of the rule of consensus for stopping discussions or, as we have seen in the discussion on the Conference report, for minor issues which are procedural or clarificatory in nature, while we are willing to consider ways how that kind of use of the rule of consensus can be minimized through self-restraint or some kind of an understanding among the member States, I think taking away the rule of consensus is not the solution for the problems that we face today.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement. That leaves the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. You have the floor.

Mr. Ju Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, what was just said by South Korea does not deserve a response, but I will just make clear one comment.

I think it is time for South Korea to wake up from its wild dream of blocking the advance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea towards further strengthening of its nuclear deterrence through pressure and sanctions. Its sycophancy towards and full dependence on the United States in resolving any issue and its fanatic confrontational behaviour against my country in the international arena only reveal its weakness and are seen as a sign of a last-ditch attempt.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement. I believe that the list of speakers has now been exhausted, so I will give the floor to the High Representative, Ms. Nakamitsu, so that she can respond to your questions and remarks and make any further general comments she may have. You have the floor.

Ms. Nakamitsu (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): Mr. President, I would like to thank you and also all those delegations who have made comments and shared reflections on some of the issues that I have provocatively raised today.

If I sounded very provocative, it is because I wanted this body, in fact, to reassume its original and intended place. I would like to start with a positive note, which I mentioned towards the end of my remarks, and that is that, because of those difficulties that you have had for many months and years, I think you are now coming to a point of convergence – that is the word that I used – and also a very clear consensus, regardless of the positions that you might have on, for example, issues such as the decision-making mechanism, consensus, or the kinds of issues that you have been looking at, whether they are part of the original disarmament agenda or are issues that appear in discussions because of the crisis that the international community is facing. Regardless of whatever the positions you might have, I think you are indeed coming to a point where this body really needs to start functioning and return to its substantive work. To me, that is a positive state of mind that you are in fact arriving at.

I also said that you have the power to go back to your substantive work. So, what I would like to suggest is for you to perhaps start seriously searching for an entry point as to how you might be able to exercise the power that you have in your hands. And we from the United Nations Secretariat, all the way from the United Nations Secretary-General down, myself included, we would like to support you and we are fully ready and we are fully committed to work with you in support of your endeavour.

That was the main message that I wanted to give to you today. We will have opportunities to start discussing those matters very soon, including in the context of the First Committee which is less than one month away from now. So, why not take those opportunities and start having some reflections of a serious nature? I think they are already quite a good basis for you to start because of the work done in the context of the working group on the way forward.

To me, all the elements are there. What we need now is the political will and the desire on your part to make progress. With that political will and the leadership that you can exercise on your part, I am optimistic that we will be able to create enough energy and momentum and then start having some serious reflections potentially leading to an achievement on your part to get back to substantive work.

I would like to stop there. If I may call upon you to perhaps start reflecting in different parts of the United Nations, including in the forthcoming First Committee deliberations, I will welcome and I will definitely work very closely with you.

I had a very concrete question from the delegate of Canada on the funding issue. Yes, I have been looking into this and I think I have now a full understanding of the serious nature of this challenge that we all face. I have come to the conclusion that this is a structural issue, which is probably not able to be resolved just through minor cost-cutting exercises. Structural problems of this nature require political will to resolve and a structural resolution, which again will require cooperation and a political commitment on the part of all of you to discuss. I think we also need to, therefore, raise the political profile of this issue and we will be, therefore, quite happy to work with some of you or all of you to that end.

We are now faced with a very serious structural issue. We would not be able to continue funding the capacities and resources that we have on the Secretariat side with simple, mechanical cost-saving measures. So, we will have to – very unfortunately – decide on some serious cutting of those capacities, simply because we are no longer able to fund those by cost-cutting measures. So, we will be looking into that, very unfortunately.

We will be strengthening political efforts to resolve this and I appeal again to countries that have arrears still outstanding to pay those debts. We have in fact been doing this in New York. I have discussed with the representatives of those countries, one in particular; and I appeal to the officials of that country to again take a look at this priority agenda, because it is about the structure of disarmament, which we all want to protect and preserve; and, for that, we need to have a healthy funding environment. So, this is the response to the funding issue which I received from the Canadian delegation.

I look forward to working with you, continuing to work with you and indeed intensify our efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the High Representative for her reflections. I want to make sure that we have come to the end of the list of speakers and that no further delegations wish to take the floor. That seems to be the case, so there is nothing more for me to do than to thank the High Representative on my own behalf, and again on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, for being with us today and to inform you all that the next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be announced in due course by the secretariat. Let us hope that it takes place as soon as possible. Until then, we will continue our informal consultations on the paragraphs of our report to the General Assembly that remain to be provisionally approved. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.