

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 20 January 2004, at 3.20 p.m.

President: Ms. Amina MOHAMED (Kenya)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 941st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset of this new session, I would like to bid a belated farewell to those colleagues who have left the Conference since we adjourned in September, namely: Ambassador Rakesh Sood of India, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia, Ambassador Pius Ikpefuan Ayewoh of Nigeria, Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Johan Molander of Sweden and Ambassador Mykhailo Skuratovskyi of Ukraine.

I am confident that you will join me in requesting their delegations to convey to them our deep appreciation for their many valuable contributions to our endeavours during their tenure, as well as our sincere wishes for their success and satisfaction in their new assignments.

Allow me also to extend a cordial welcome to the new colleagues who have assumed their responsibilities as representatives of their Governments to the Conference, namely: Ambassador Michel Adam of Belgium, Ambassador Mikhail Wehbe of the Syrian Arab Republic, Ambassador Elisabet Borsin Bonnier of Sweden, Ambassador Doru Romulus Costea of Romania, Ambassador Jackie Wolcott Sanders of the United States of America and Ambassador Sarala Manouri Fernando of Sri Lanka.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure them of our cooperation and support in their new assignments.

I would like, at the outset, to say that Kenya is honoured to be taking up its responsibility to preside over the Conference on Disarmament. I am indeed humbled to be assuming these functions at the beginning of this year's session. Every New Year, as we know, brings with it new hope as well as opportunity. It allows us not only to look back and take stock but also to assess the present and look ahead to the future. This year is no different. I am therefore looking forward to working with you on utilizing the opportunities that the year promises as well as meeting the challenges that it may throw our way.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, and Mr. Jerzy Zaleski, and the other members of the secretariat, for the support that they have accorded to me so far.

I would also like to thank my predecessors, namely, the Ambassadors of Ireland, Israel and Italy, as well as my immediate predecessor, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi, whose work, energy and commitment have been very inspiring to me. I am truly indebted to her for the encouraging achievements during her term that were aimed at facilitating the substantive work of the Conference.

As you are aware, a strong earthquake hit Bam, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, causing enormous loss of life and extensive damage. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I wish to convey condolences and deepest sympathy to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and to the victims of that disaster.

(The President)

The world has witnessed some enormous developments since the end of our last session on 9 September last year. We welcome Libya's decision to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). These decisions are important steps to strengthen global efforts to prevent the spread and use of weapons of mass destruction.

Furthermore, following negotiations on Monday, 19 January, it has been agreed that IAEA will verify the scope and content of Libya's nuclear programme, and United States and British experts will remove suspect materials from the country. There is also a growing momentum for the resumption of the six-party talks, thus advancing the Beijing process intended to resolve nuclear and related issues in the Korean peninsula. We are encouraged by the recent statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as the response to it by the countries concerned.

Finally, we welcome the recent decision by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to conclude the Additional Protocol, to act in accordance with its provisions until its entry into force, and to suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. These new developments will significantly improve the atmosphere for international peace and security. I also hope that they will contribute to our common desire to see the Conference begin its substantive work and will offer new opportunities for the disarmament process as a whole.

For my part, I wish to assure you that I will do my utmost during my presidency to facilitate the work of our Conference. It is my understanding that our biggest challenge is to start our substantive work within a meaningful time frame, and that requires a decision on a programme of work.

At the end of our last session, the Conference President was mandated, together with me, to conduct consultations during the intersessional period. The consultations carried out indicated the preference of a majority of the membership to use the A5 proposal as a basis for the Conference's programme of work. There were also discussions on the approach to take with respect to the programme of work. A number of delegations reserved their positions on that issue, and since we will have a report on these consultations later on today from Ambassador Inoguchi, I will refrain from delving into the details.

But allow me to say the following with a comfortable level of conviction. A great deal of work has gone into the search for compromises that would allow the Conference to begin its work. And yes, I recognize that there is a clear need to discuss what is possible and what indeed is not: to consider the different options available to us, to build on what has so painstakingly been done so far. I hope we shall be able, all of us together, to take the next step, however modest, to move from where we currently stand, in the midst of plenty, in terms of experience, consultations, ideas, proposals and yet at the same time appear to be deeply impoverished because of our inability to take advantage of that which is available.

The rule of consensus puts the onus on all of us to work together in a conscientious and focused manner to fulfil our mandate. We must all work hard at that. After all, as Vidal Sassoon said, "the only place where success comes before work is in a dictionary".

(The President)

I therefore see it as my duty to ensure that space is provided in a constructive and understanding atmosphere to delegations to clarify their positions with respect to the programme of work as well as with respect to other issues that we must grapple with.

It is the collective responsibility of the members of the Conference to agree on a programme of work. I have begun and will continue to hold consultations on this subject, and would like to hear your views and proposals on the way forward.

I believe that with the necessary political will it will be feasible, sooner rather than later, to have a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

I should now like to invite the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, to deliver a message addressed to the Conference by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan. Mr. Secretary-General, you have the floor.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The Secretary-General's message reads as follows:

"I am pleased to send greetings to all member States of the Conference on Disarmament as it opens its 2004 session. Disarmament remains a high priority in the international community. Recent events have inspired demands for new efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of arms control and disarmament agreements, and to revitalize the multilateral disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament. I have repeatedly voiced concerns about the continuing impasse in the Conference, and have called for prompt political action to break it. I remain hopeful that progress will be possible in the year ahead.

"In that regard, I commend the efforts in the Conference last year in support of the cross-group proposal on the programme of work, submitted by five former Presidents of the Conference, which have helped narrow differences on the programme of work. It is also encouraging that the Conference addressed a number of emerging threats and challenges, such as new forms of terrorism and their potential impact on proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, while also exploring ideas on how to strengthen compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements.

"Political will is essential in overcoming the current impasse and revitalizing the Conference. I am encouraged by the efforts of many member States to review their policies concerning the priorities on the Conference agenda, and I hope that the outcomes will facilitate bridging remaining divergences and resuming the substantive work of the Conference in 2004.

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

“In 2003, the world witnessed appreciable progress in addressing the disarmament goals of the Millennium Declaration. The States parties to the Mine Ban Convention celebrated the fourth anniversary of the entry into force of this landmark treaty, which has seen more than 30 million landmines destroyed. The States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons concluded negotiations on a new protocol on explosive remnants of war. And the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention initiated a new follow-up process aimed at strengthening the implementation of that vital Convention. There was also new cooperation against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as demonstrated at last year’s Biennial Meeting of States.

“These examples prove that progress in arms control and disarmament is possible. Indeed, in many cases, results were achieved by the same delegations that are representing their countries in the Conference on Disarmament.

“This Conference remains the world’s sole multilateral disarmament negotiation body. Nothing would better demonstrate its relevance than the resurgence of political will and momentum. I wish you every success in this endeavour.”

The PRESIDENT: I should like to thank Mr. Ordzhonikidze for delivering the message from Mr. Kofi Annan. I would ask Mr. Ordzhonikidze to convey to the Secretary-General of the United Nations our appreciation for his personal support to the Conference and the importance he attaches to our work. I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, to inform members of the Conference about the organizational aspects of the 2004 session, as well as the resources allocated to our Conference.

Mr. ROMAN-MOREY (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference): I would like to make a few remarks on organizational issues concerning the 2004 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

As in previous years, the Conference has at its disposal, during the entire session, 10 meetings per week. This means that the Conference can hold up to two meetings daily, with full services.

The Conference should do its best to make full use of these resources. It is particularly important that meetings start punctually and that they are not extended beyond the allocated time. Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that meetings with full services cannot be held in the evening or during the weekend.

With regard to meeting facilities, the Conference will have at its disposal the Council Chamber, room I, room C-108 and the secretariat conference room on the sixth floor. If required, an additional conference room may also be provided upon request. In such cases, reservations should be made in advance through the secretariat.

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference)

Delegations are kindly requested to strictly observe measures concerning the rational and economical issue and use of documentation. In particular, all documents, together with their electronic versions, should be submitted to the secretariat well in advance. Any duplication of documentation should be avoided. Furthermore, in order to avoid the translation of the same document twice, delegations are kindly requested to inform the secretariat if any document to be issued in the Conference on Disarmament has already been submitted for issue in any United Nations body, especially at Headquarters in New York. Last but not least, I would like to emphasize that United Nations regulations do not permit the publication of statements delivered by delegations at plenary meetings as separate documents of the Conference. Such statements are always reproduced in the verbatim records and are, ipso facto, part of the official documentation of the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that I can count on your full cooperation in this regard.

I would also like to recall that, as part of the secretariat's efforts to reduce operating costs, only documents containing draft proposals which require action will be circulated in meeting rooms. Pre-session and reference documents will continue to be supplied to the Permanent Missions of member States and observer States. Therefore, delegations are kindly requested to keep the copies they receive throughout the annual session and use them during the meetings. Nevertheless, a limited number of copies will be available from the documents distribution counter in room C-111, just opposite the Council Chamber.

Documents of the Conference on Disarmament are also available at the redesigned web site of the CD, the address of which is: <http://disarmament.un.org/cd/>.

Finally, I would like to remind delegations to send the secretariat of the Conference their letters of accreditation as soon as possible, in order to expedite the publication of the list of participants. For security reasons, delegations are kindly requested to carry with them their identification badges provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Román-Morey for the information on the organization of the current session of the Conference and express our gratitude for the number of meetings that he has indicated as open to us for our work.

I have the following speakers for today's plenary meeting. The first speaker is the Ambassador of Japan, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi. Ambassador Adam of Belgium is the second speaker on our list of speakers. The Ambassador of Italy, Ambassador Carlo Trezza, is the third speaker on our list of speakers. Mr. Paulsen of Norway is the fourth speaker. Ambassador Chiaradia of Argentina is the fifth. We have Ambassador Chung of the Republic of Korea and Ambassador François Rivasseau of France.

I should now like to give the floor to the first speaker on my list, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan, the last President of the 2003 session of the Conference on Disarmament, who will present a report on the consultations that she conducted during the intersessional period, in accordance with paragraph 38 of last year's report of the Conference.

Ms. INOBUCHI (Japan): Madam President, at the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and to express my full confidence in your diplomatic skills, wise guidance and active and sincere spirit. It is indeed my pleasure to hand over the torch of the presidency to such a nice colleague of mine and let me sincerely wish you good luck. Please be assured of the full support of my delegation for your effort to fulfil the task of President, leading the Conference to the breakthrough we have been expecting for the past seven years.

I have asked for the floor as the preceding President to present to the Conference the outcome of the consultations I held during the intersessional period. In accordance with the mandate stipulated in the CD report on its 2003 session, I conducted consultations with various delegations, keeping close contact with the incoming President, Ambassador Mohamed. The CD report also requested me to keep the membership of the Conference informed of the consultations. Thus, this statement is intended to fulfil the enhanced mandate given to me.

I began my consultations with the recognition that the A5 proposal had yet to achieve consensus, while it was widely supported, as described in the report. Supporting countries continued to express, throughout the intersessional period, their strong hope for consensus on a programme of work based on the proposal, and I realized that it would therefore be important to acknowledge the fact that this proposal represents a more or less acceptable reflection of the interests and priorities of those countries supporting or accepting it. In this context I focused my efforts on finding out the positions on the A5 proposal of those countries which had not yet expressed their views. My consultations, however, proved to be inconclusive because consideration by those remaining countries had not been completed by the end of last year.

It is inevitable that the Conference will face a critical moment in determining its direction for this year. The current situation has led some member States to seriously and energetically review their respective positions on the key issues in the A5 proposal. Since the first two weeks of the annual session are specifically devoted to the debate on the agenda and the programme of work, we all look forward to hearing these positions and to holding a substantial debate on this matter at an early stage.

In the meantime, I have also made a few observations following my consultations, which I presented as "Presidential suggestions" at the informal open-ended consultations held on 19 December last year. At that meeting I suggested, among other things, the necessity for the CD to comprehensively respond to the current international security situation while preventing linkage tactics from further complicating its work. In addition, I made suggestions with respect to the specific agenda items as to what would be necessary, feasible, realistic, or could be reconsidered. Those suggestions were not meant to be a formal proposal but an effort to pave the way towards agreement on a programme of work to be made later this year.

In conclusion, I was not able to bring the Conference to a tangible outcome. Nonetheless, it was a privilege for me to participate in the capacity of President in the multilateral decision-making process dealing with international peace and security. It was a

(Ms. Inoguchi, Japan)

unique experience to work for the benefit of all, building upon the cumulative efforts of my predecessors. I sincerely hope that you, Madam President, and your successors will finally be able to lead such consistent efforts by the successive cross-group Presidents to solid, meaningful progress in disarmament and arms control.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to thank Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi very much for her report, her extraordinary efforts and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I should like now to give the floor to the next speaker on our list, Ambassador Michel Adam of Belgium.

Mr. ADAM (Belgium) (translated from French): Thank you, Madam President, for your words of welcome. This is the first time I have the honour to speak before this august assembly, and, what is more, as one of the first speakers for this year. Allow me to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of this Conference, which my country holds in great esteem, and to assure you of our full confidence in your stewardship of our debates as well as the full cooperation of my delegation.

I must tell you that there are many things I don't know about the Conference on Disarmament, but that I am trying to learn. I would like to share with you some of my first observations and my first questions. My first contact with the Conference was the very interesting meeting in December chaired by our colleague Madam Ambassador Inoguchi. I wish to pay tribute to her skills and her unswerving commitment to the cause of disarmament. I have noted two main elements as a result of this meeting.

The first element is that this magnificent institution, which has given us some very important multilateral treaties, has been languishing in inactivity for almost seven years but now seems to be close to an agreement that may allow it to relaunch its work. Even better, according to the ex-President, it seems to be closer to agreement in 2003 than it was in 2002, and your words, Madam President, lead me to believe that in 2004 we are moving closer to the possibility of a new start. The message from the United Nations Secretary-General, which we have just heard, gives us further encouragement in this direction by showing us the way we should move ahead. Hence I believe that here there are new elements of progress.

The second element I noted is that one of the possible reasons for this positive movement lies in the existence of a proposal which is known as the A5 proposal. I have also learned that it was in July 2002 that my great and dear friend, Mohamed Salah Dembri, presented to this assembly an initiative on a work programme on behalf of five ambassadors, including my predecessor, Mr. Jean Lint. Six months later, in January 2003, this proposal was made official. Another six months later, it was revised.

I have also learned that very many delegations have expressed their position as far as this proposal is concerned, and Ms. Inoguchi has just given us a further report on the consultations on this issue. Most of the delegations have expressed their support for this proposal, or at least expressed their readiness to accept it. However, I also understand that not all delegations have yet reacted. My first decision and my first inclination in this assembly will therefore be to ask them to do so. The A5 proposal is a compromise proposal. Like any compromise proposal, it will never completely satisfy each one of us, and it can certainly be improved; it is not carved in



(Mr. Adam, Belgium)

stone, and its evolving nature has already been demonstrated several times, six months ago and at the time it was introduced. In the same spirit, it seems to me that this proposal in no way seeks to be exclusive. It is not a goal in itself. It is a means. Alternative approaches may be explored, as long as they lead us towards our joint objective, which is to lead the Conference out of deadlock.

Madam President, my dear colleagues, perhaps the in many ways unexpected success achieved in November in the context of the Convention on inhumane weapons is a sign showing us that new opportunities are opening up for multilateral negotiations on disarmament. A programme of work is within our reach. The determination and strength of conviction of my predecessor and friend, Ambassador Jean Lint, have contributed to such an extent to this that I owe it to him to continue his efforts in a spirit of continuity with my country's activities for the cause of disarmament. Let us try, all of us together, to overcome the remaining differences in order to allow our Conference to recover its calling, which is to work towards a more secure world.

Madam President, my dear colleagues, as I convey to you my best wishes for 2004, I wish to emphasize that I also wish for success in our work.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to thank Ambassador Adam for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker is Ambassador Carlo Trezza of Italy.

Mr. TREZZA (Italy): Madam President, let me first congratulate your country, Kenya, and you personally for the important and challenging task of chairing the Conference on Disarmament at this very delicate juncture. Your experience in multilateral affairs, your background and reputation, as well as your commitment to the resumption of negotiations in the CD make you the ideal person to give an impulse to this Conference. Let me also acknowledge the important work and consultations that you have undertaken in the past weeks - which I have personally witnessed - in preparation for this meeting and your presidency. This is also the moment to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Inoguchi of Japan, for her tireless efforts to give an impulse to the CD and for the constructive results of her presidency. I also wish to welcome the new colleagues who have recently been appointed to the Conference on Disarmament and wish them a successful mission in Geneva. Our resumed work takes place, as you have mentioned, at a time in which we register some significant and positive developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation: since we met the last time in the CD, Iran has signed the IAEA Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement; a few weeks later Libya ratified the CTBT and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Other meaningful events, mentioned both by you and by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, have taken place in the meantime.

I would like to take the opportunity of this first meeting of the CD in 2004 to bring to the attention of member States an issue which is of growing relevance in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and which is pertinent to our debates in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

The significant reductions of weapons of mass destruction that have taken place through multilateral, plurilateral, bilateral and unilateral disarmament and arms control treaties and processes in the past decades have brought to the attention of the international community the enormous technical and financial problems connected with the actual destruction of military arsenals. In some cases the cost of efforts to eliminate them have been higher than the costs of their production. These problems have come to the surface as a new cooperative approach to disarmament and non-proliferation, which currently goes under the name of “cooperative threat reduction”, was being developed. We believe that this issue deserves to be presented to the Conference on Disarmament since, in the opinion of the Italian Government, it is a relevant part of the disarmament process.

In the past decade, the United States, Russia, the European Union, Japan, Canada and other countries have worked together to secure and dismantle nuclear, biological and chemical weapons materials, carriers and infrastructure. The culminating moment of this initiative took place in Kananaskis, Canada, in June 2002, when the leaders of the Group of the eight most industrialized countries announced a “Global Partnership” against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Participants at the summit pledged to raise up to US\$ 20 billion over the following 10 years to address those WMD threats and, in particular, to “prevent terrorists, or those that harbour them, from acquiring or developing nuclear, chemical, radiological and biological weapons; missiles; and related materials, equipment and technologies”. In addition to these important financial pledges, the G8 leaders also agreed on a comprehensive set of non-proliferation principles as well as guidelines designed to remove obstacles that had hindered the realization of similar projects in the past. In the “Guidelines for new or expanded cooperation projects” it is stated that the G8 will work in partnership, bilaterally and multilaterally, to develop, coordinate, implement and finance, according to their respective means, new or expanded cooperation projects. The main purpose is to address non-proliferation, disarmament, counter-terrorism and nuclear safety (including environmental) issues, with a view to enhancing strategic stability, consonant with international security objectives and in support of the multilateral non-proliferation regimes. Each country has primary responsibility for implementing its non-proliferation, disarmament, counter-terrorism and nuclear safety obligations and requirements and commits its full cooperation within the partnership. The priority concerns are the destruction of chemical weapons, the dismantlement of decommissioned nuclear submarines, the disposition of fissile materials and the employment of former weapons scientists. Other countries that were prepared to adopt the principles and guidelines were invited to enter into discussions on participating in and contributing to this initiative. The G8 would be willing to enter into negotiations with any other recipient countries, including those of the former Soviet Union, prepared to adopt the guidelines, for inclusion in the partnership.

Much had already been done in the previous 10 years: Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus had joined the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States, and all nuclear weapons had been eliminated from their territories. According to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, by November 2002, the following reductions had taken place within the framework of United States/Russian

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

cooperation, just in the field of disarmament of nuclear weapons and delivery means: 6,020 warheads deactivated, 486 ICBMs destroyed, 438 ICBM silos eliminated, 1 ICBM mobile launcher destroyed, 97 bombers eliminated, 483 nuclear ASMs destroyed, 396 SLBM launchers eliminated, 347 SLBMs eliminated, 24 SSBNs destroyed, 194 nuclear test tunnels/holes sealed.

Although it is not Italy's intention to seek credit for other countries' remarkable achievements in this field, let me just mention that at an Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Global Partnership organized last November, during Italy's presidency of the European Union, by the European Commission at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, some additional figures were divulged. The United States stated that between 1992 and 2003 it provided over \$8 billion on chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and materials and is now spending \$1 billion per year. According to last year's French G8 presidency, a number of programmes had moved - after Kananaskis - into the implementation phase in the chemical area. Almost 190 nuclear submarines had been dismantled. Contracts under the G8 partnership had risen to \$700 million. Others were likely to be announced in the following months.

Cooperative threat reduction has become one of the important components of the new European strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As stated by the representative of the European Commission at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, the European Union (Community and member States) has committed around €600 million for WMD non-proliferation and disarmament over the last 10 years. In 1999 a joint action, which commits some €5 million yearly for focused projects, was launched to support cooperative WMD non-proliferation and disarmament programmes and has been extended until mid-2004. The total sum of €1 billion was committed by the European Community at Kananaskis. The newly appointed Personal Representative for WMD of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy highlighted at the Strasbourg Conference some of the elements of the European Union strategy in countering WMD proliferation. In the document on the European Union strategy subsequently adopted in Brussels on 13 December 2003 by the European Council of Heads of State and Government, it is stated that reinforcing the European Union cooperative threat reduction programmes with other countries, targeted at support for disarmament, control and security of sensitive materials, facilities and expertise, is one of the main instruments foreseen by the European Union to prevent, deter, halt and if possible eliminate proliferation programmes. Prolonging the European Union programme, increasing cooperative threat reduction funding beyond 2006 and setting up a programme of assistance are among the major instruments to promote a stable international and regional environment.

Italy became involved in cooperative threat reduction at an early stage. A first bilateral agreement to enhance nuclear safety and radiological protection in Russian nuclear destruction facilities was signed in 1993. A second agreement regarding the construction of a gas pipeline for a chemical weapons destruction facility in Russia was signed in 2000; a third agreement on the completion of the pipeline was signed in 2003. But the most conspicuous effort was the one made at Kananaskis, where an Italian pledge for projects amounting to up to €1 billion over 10 years was undertaken by the Italian Prime Minister. As a result of this pledge, Italy has become the second European Union contributor and fourth overall contributor to the Kananaskis Global Partnership. These engagements are already becoming operational.

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

On 5 November 2003, on the occasion of President Putin's State visit to Italy, two important agreements were signed. As a result of these agreements, Italy will take the lead in the construction of the chemical weapons destruction facility of Pochev and will cooperate in dismantling nuclear submarines. An overall sum of €720 million will be allocated by Italy for those two projects.

If Italy, together with other like-minded countries, has decided to allocate such great resources to the cooperative threat reduction initiative at a time of great budgetary difficulties, it is because they are convinced that this initiative will enhance international security and safety. At a time when the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of their delivery means is a growing threat to international peace and security, and when the risk that terrorists will acquire such weapons and delivery means adds a new critical dimension to this threat, cooperative threat reduction has become a concrete way to address the problems of proliferation of WMD through effective measures of disarmament.

It is the most comprehensive and ambitious multilateral effort to eliminate weapons of mass destruction ever devised. It has a strong conceptual and operational basis, represented by the principles and the guidelines which have been adopted. It also has unprecedented political backing since all the G8 countries, through their leaders, have adopted this programme and the European Union and other members of the international community have already joined this initiative. Cooperative threat reduction plays a key role in the fight against terrorism, since the weapons which it deals with - those which are waiting to be dismantled and which no longer play a strategic role - tend to be less well protected and are therefore more vulnerable to WMD terrorism.

Through the Global Partnership, disarmament becomes not only a question of arms reduction and verification but also a matter of multilateral cooperation. Global partnership has accelerated the arms reduction process and facilitated accession to the NPT by a number of countries, thus strengthening the non-proliferation regime. It has also enhanced the international confidence-building process and transparency. It deals with highly sensitive materials and equipment that have traditionally been held secretly by national administrations, which in the past have been confronting each other.

To conclude, while at the CD we are discussing our future programme of work and the best possible ways to enhance international disarmament, Italy wishes to draw the attention of the Conference to this reality, which is relevant to the current international security environment: cooperative threat reduction. Disarmament would be meaningless if States were not in the position of effectively eliminating - through cooperative threat reduction - the weapons of mass destruction they have decided to reduce. We believe that the time has come for this initiative to be better known, understood, endorsed and welcomed by the international community.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on our list of speakers is Mr. Kjetil Paulsen of Norway.

Mr. PAULSEN (Norway): Madam President, let me first congratulate you for assuming the function of President of the Conference on Disarmament. We wish you all the luck in the upcoming consultations on reaching agreement on a programme of work for the CD, which indeed will require all your outstanding diplomatic skills, and perhaps a little miracle in addition. Permit me also to thank the outgoing President, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi, for her tireless efforts to break the stalemate of the CD.

The current situation of the CD is a reflection of the sad state of affairs of multilateralism in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. The CD has not worked for almost eight years. The United Nations Disarmament Commission has become increasingly marginalized. Multilateral arms control treaties are under stress and are facing serious challenges. There is widespread recognition that there is considerable room for improvement in the functioning of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

Against this background, Norway has advocated taking specific steps in order to enhance the role and relevance of the First Committee. We are convinced that a revitalized First Committee could have a positive spin-off for other multilateral disarmament mechanism like the CD. During the fifty-eighth session of the First Committee a number of countries circulated position papers on reform, and there were constructive consultations. Norway was pleased that the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution without a vote on this matter. Reforms of the First Committee must be part of the broader process of revitalizing the General Assembly.

In order to uphold the momentum of the reform process, Norway organized an informal workshop in Oslo on 8 and 9 December last year to explore ways to revitalize the First Committee and make it more relevant. The workshop was also intended to be a contribution to the debate on the overall strengthening of the United Nations General Assembly. We had the opportunity for an informal exchange of views about the situation in the CD as well as the United Nations Disarmament Commission. There were participants from 19 countries from all regions, including the Chair of the fifty-eighth session of the First Committee, Ambassador Jarmo Sareva.

The discussions at the informal Oslo workshop were open-minded and very constructive. While the participants had different perspectives on a number of issues, they all expressed a strong commitment to multilateralism and the need to further improve the functioning of the First Committee.

The convener of the workshop observed convergence of views among the participants that there must be a balance between prevailing and new challenges to global security in the agenda of the First Committee. Reforms must serve the purpose of strengthening global security. They are not ends in themselves. The reform process must be open, transparent and conducted in a constructive and inclusive manner. It was felt that one should proceed in a gradual, realistic and pragmatic way. One should therefore make a distinction between procedural and substantive changes.

(Mr. Paulsen, Norway)

Based on best practices of the United Nations system, certain possible procedural changes were identified, for example: a rolling speakers list in the general debate of the First Committee; a shorter and more focused general debate; early selection of the Chair and the Bureau; consideration of a “troika system”; thematic clustering of the agenda; biannualization or triannualization of resolutions; and possible merging of resolutions that contain closely related topics.

At the same time it was felt that more discussions were needed on questions like the duration of the First Committee. How much effort should be put into reaching consensus resolutions? Should certain issues be accorded priority? What should the role of the United Nations Secretariat be in the follow-up of the many resolutions? What should the role of civil society be in the deliberations of the Committee? Is there a need for more interactive debates? Are sunset provisions appropriate?

While the focus of the Oslo workshop was the First Committee, time allowed for an informal discussion on the CD and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. There were different views, but we all shared the same frustration about the year-long impasse in the CD, even though the potential importance of the Conference and its legitimacy was underlined. It was suggested by the Norwegian side that pending a work programme for the CD, its plenary meetings could, once a month, be used for consultations on substantive issues to be determined by the rotating presidency. This would allow for discussions on a variety of substantive issues throughout the year.

There was widespread frustration over the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The Commission has in the past produced important results, but it was widely felt that the United Nations Disarmament Commission could not continue in its present unproductive format.

The Norwegian conveners have produced summaries from the Oslo workshop which have just been circulated. Let me emphasize that these reflect only our own observations and should in no way be regarded as negotiated documents. But we still hope that these summaries could be useful inputs in the coming consultations on reform.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Norway, Mr. Kjetil Paulsen, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair, and I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Alfredo Vicente Chiaradia.

Mr. CHIARADIA (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, we should like to begin by expressing our pleasure at seeing you in the Chair. Knowing your great experience and ability, you may count on the firm support of the Argentine delegation in your activities, particularly with respect to securing commencement of the substantive work of the Conference, and thus fulfilling its mandate to preserve and promote international peace and security through the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the reduction and control of armaments.

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

In this context, we favour the speedy adoption of the agenda and an immediate start on the programme of work for this year. Our delegation re-emphasizes once again its willingness to support any consensus that may emerge in favour of a programme of work formulated on the basis of the A5 proposal.

Allow me now to provide some specific information which we consider might be of interest to the Conference.

The Missile Technology Control Regime or MTCR held its eighteenth plenary meeting in Buenos Aires from 19 to 26 September 2003. The meeting marked the commencement of Argentina's presidency, running from September 2003 until September 2004. On that occasion, the MTCR members reaffirmed their commitment to monitor exports to avoid a proliferation of delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction, given their implications for security at both global and regional levels. The implementation of and strict compliance with export controls, as well as the strengthening and updating of such measures in order to keep pace with technological developments, were identified as priorities at the September meeting. At the same meeting, the presidency was urged to contact non-member countries in order to create greater awareness of the risks of missile proliferation as well as to encourage them to subscribe voluntarily to the MTCR guidelines. The activities of the Argentine presidency this year will include the organization of workshops and seminars focusing on issues related to export controls, related legislation, transfer and compliance.

The members observed with satisfaction the willingness of a number of non-member States to accept the MTCR guidelines as part of their national export control regimes. My delegation has requested the secretariat to distribute the press release issued at the Buenos Aires meeting as an official document of the Conference. It has been distributed in document CD/1720.

On 4 December 2003 the Argentine Republic completed the process of destroying anti-personnel landmines ahead of the deadline laid down in article 4 of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Landmines. In this context, the final ceremony under the destruction plan was held on that date, 4 December, and the last 20 of a total of 89,764 anti-personnel landmines were destroyed. On this occasion we reiterate our appreciation to the Organization of American States and the Government of Canada, since the destruction plan was implemented within the framework of the Agreement for Cooperation and Technical Assistance between the Ministry of Defence of the Argentine Republic and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States concerning the anti-personnel landmine stockpile destruction project, as we said, with financial assistance from the Canadian Government.

In conclusion, we are also pleased to announce that on 28 November 2003 the Congress of the Argentine Nation enacted the amendment to article 1 of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and its additional protocols. As a result of that procedure, for the Argentine Republic the scope of application has now been extended to non-international conflicts

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Before giving the floor to the next speaker on my list, Ambassador Eui-Yong Chung of the Republic of Korea, I should like, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to bid farewell to him, as he will soon leave Geneva, having been recalled by his Government to assume other important duties. Ambassador Chung joined the Conference on 22 February 2001. During his time here, he articulated and upheld the position of his Government with a distinctive authority, diplomatic talent and calm elegance. His strong commitment to the resolution of outstanding issues on the Conference's agenda and to the commencement of the substantive work of the Conference has been appreciated by all of us, and earned him a well-deserved appointment to the post of Special Coordinator on the review of the agenda of the Conference. His exemplary performance in this function has justly earned him respect from all of us. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I should like to wish Ambassador Chung, my friend, every success and happiness in the future. I now give him the floor.

Mr. CHUNG (Republic of Korea): Madam President, today I have asked for the floor to bid farewell to my colleagues here in this very prestigious chamber. But let me first congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Under your able leadership and with your diplomatic skill, I hope that we can find ways to overcome the current stalemate in the CD with regard to the establishment of a work programme. I assure you of my delegation's continued full support and cooperation towards that end.

We need to go the extra mile to begin substantive work in the CD. If we continue to fail to resume our work, we run the real risk that this body will become increasingly marginalized and indeed irrelevant. We cannot let this happen.

My delegation considers the proposal of the five Ambassadors, as amended by Ambassador Jean Lint of Belgium, to be a solid foundation for reaching agreement on a programme of work. Additionally, the comprehensive approach and the proposal by Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan may not be inconsistent with the logic of the A5 proposal, which pursues the comprehensive settlement of the four major issues. My delegation appreciates any and all efforts aimed at being able to resume substantive work.

As the FMCT is important to non-proliferation and serves as a precursor to disarmament, the Republic of Korea, alongside many other delegations, has been placing high priority on beginning negotiations on the FMCT in the CD as soon as possible. In this regard, it would be useful if nuclear-weapon States voluntarily declared a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, even before the negotiations on FMCT are to be concluded. In order to ensure the universality and effectiveness of the FMCT, we should likewise make our best efforts to ensure the broadest possible participation in the negotiations, in particular by



(Mr. Chung, Republic of Korea)

including non-parties to the NPT. What is missing now is not the creativity to improve upon the language of the work programme, but rather the political will to move forward in the evolving security situation. I hope that we will be able to pool our collective wisdom to reactivate the CD and thus bring all players on board.

I am leaving with fond memories of working together with all my colleagues, in particular, with you, Madam President, not only in the CD, but also in other international forums in Geneva. I am grateful for their cooperation and support and more importantly, for the friendship they have extended to me and my delegation. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Mr. Jerzy Zaleski, and all the others in the secretariat, who, with limited resources, have served the Conference so well.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to thank Ambassador Chung for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me and to members of the Conference. The next speaker on my list is the representative of France, Ambassador François Rivasseau.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Madam President, dear colleagues, allow me, at the beginning of the year, to wish you and Kenya the full measure of success justified by the resolute action that you are taking to put the Conference back to work in an effective manner. Allow me also to wish our Korean colleague every success and express our regret at his departure. The excellent relations that we have had with the Korean delegation will continue, I am sure, and we wish him luck. Allow me also to remember another dear colleague, Ambassador Sood of India, who has now left for high-level duties across the seas. It is in remembering him that I wish, in a way, to return to a subject that is of importance to my delegation.

During my presentation on 4 September last year, I expressed the wish for the Conference on Disarmament, while setting the past aside for a moment, to think about the threats facing the world today. How will we be able to respond to these expectations? I expressed the wish that a sense of being connected to current events would be introduced into this forum, that this Conference should be given a new vocation in keeping with the real needs of the world of today. Now we resume our work today with the ambition to work in a more applied manner than in the past.

As usual, the first step that is proposed for us is to agree on an agenda. This agenda, which is conventionally called the decalogue, stems from the priorities defined in 1978, more than 25 years ago. It is true that this agenda does not prevent us from dealing with all the issues that we might wish to take up. But it includes a formulation of the priorities of this Conference whose essence goes back 25 years. The essence, I say, because this agenda has already evolved on several occasions: in its substance, when we included the issue of radiological weapons, for example, or in its philosophy, when in 1998 we decided that we were not dealing with a closed agenda but an open-ended agenda that did not stand in the way of dealing with all types of subject.

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

I would like to make a methodological observation here. For the past eight years the Conference on Disarmament has been reaching agreement on its agenda right at the beginning, after which it is unfortunately completely deadlocked in the discussion of its programme of work. Maybe, in a year in which we hope to break out of this impasse, we should take the time - short, of course - to have a real debate, and a process of thinking about the adoption of this agenda. Madam President, in making this proposal, I hope, just as much as you, just as much as everyone, I think, that our Conference will flexibly and speedily embark on substantive work. And of course, when we talk about new issues that should appear on the agenda, it is not our intention to hamper or - I repeat - interfere with the ongoing efforts to break the deadlock on the programme of work. On the contrary, we believe that these approaches can only strengthen each other, and that they are mutually complementary. As everyone knows, the approval we give to the agenda is not a challenge in itself, but calls for reflection, as the work of the special coordinators bears out. What is needed, as has been recommended by all specialists in international organizations, and in keeping with the wishes of the First Committee, is to give special priority this year to the theme of reform - as Norway has reminded us - and to make the effort to think about our own practice. It is in a related context, and in order to follow up the thoughts expressed by Norway, that I would like to elaborate briefly on the following point.

For a year now, France, together with other countries, has been supporting the idea that some relevant topics related to the current international situation in the area of security, non-proliferation and disarmament should also be considered by this Conference. France supports two subjects in particular here: terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and compliance with treaties. But this list is not exhaustive, because through the notion of new issues, we wish not only to raise new substantive topics, but also to define a new approach which would enable the Conference on Disarmament to respond better than before to the existing expectations of the international community.

It is in this spirit that the delegation of France would like to have a discussion, as early as Thursday, if you agree, because many delegations would like to have our agenda adopted as quickly as possible; a formal or informal discussion - it is unimportant - to enable us to take stock in a spirit of openness and transparency on the content of our agenda and the idea of new issues. My delegation plans to make some more specific proposals on these new subjects on Thursday, and we invite interested delegations to participate in this exchange of views on a theme that has now been before the Conference for a year - a theme on which the Conference, in its final report last year, and the United Nations General Assembly, in the resolution devoted to our work here, have expressed an opinion in a consensual manner. In the light of the conclusions you will draw from these discussions, Madam President, my delegation has every confidence that, when our agenda is subsequently adopted, you will reflect the progress achieved in our thinking in this area.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to thank the representative of France for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Mohamed Salah Dembri.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) (translated from French): Madam President, I had in fact prepared for a statement at the next meeting, but I cannot resist the pleasure, as the head of the Algerian delegation, and as an African country too, of expressing all the congratulations which are due to you. Everyone here - and my colleagues who have already taken the floor have emphasized this - knows your drive, your diplomatic skill, and we all know how much zeal and energy you invest in the various multilateral forums. We therefore wish you every success in this task. We wish to assure you that we will be at your side, that we will give you our full cooperation and, in this connection, we would also like to commend all the efforts made by the President who preceded you, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan, whose skill we are also pleased to note, and to emphasize her devotion and commitment to the cause of disarmament.

Once again we gather together to endeavour both to set our agenda and to jointly consider the programme of work which should occupy us in the year 2004 and the years ahead. Of course, some solemn words have been expressed in this very room by a number of colleagues, notably the word "impasse". Are we really confronted by an impasse? I think it is obvious, if we look at the past. Yes indeed! We have had seven lean years, and though I am a Muslim, I would cite a Christian parable and speak of "seven lean cows". So we are now entitled to expect seven fat cows, and with you in the Chair perhaps we will have a programme of work which is acceptable to everyone and by everyone.

Basically, I do not believe that the previous sessions were unproductive years. Considerable imagination was displayed and those of us present here were able, in a way, to place stones on a road which was difficult and basically succeed in finding the best achievements in a series of difficulties. My colleague Michel Adam, who a moment ago did me the honour of referring to our friendship, discussed matters with me and we said to one another, citing what I believe is a Latin formula, that our work was a little like what was done in the past for the most senior priests, arriving *ad augusta per angusta*, arriving at the sublime via difficult paths, and I think that removing difficulties is the task of all of us here.

The Belgian Ambassador, of course, referred to the existence of this proposal made by the five Ambassadors - it is there on the table - and many colleagues have also referred to it. It is there on the table because it was the product of our collective thinking. It does not just belong to the five Ambassadors, but it was the very precise translation of all the concerns expressed here over exactly seven years now, and that is why this initiative, as we have frequently repeated, has a clear linear relationship with all the earlier initiatives. Hence there is no contradiction, but there is simply a dialectical evolution which took place as our collective thinking took on meaning and also lent significance to the work to be accomplished jointly.

Clearly, we have not yet arrived at the consensus which is a formidable stumbling-block - here once again - the consensus which we should not constantly be translating into a veto, but much more into an overall understanding of what we should be doing jointly, even if it means extending our dialogue in the context of a comprehensive programme of work which would furnish us with an opportunity to spread out over a period of months and years the mandates to be fulfilled. And that is why we place great hopes in your presidency, and I would like here to assure you of the readiness of my delegation and my colleagues who initiated the A5 proposal - Ambassador Michel Adam noted this earlier - and the contacts I had with my colleagues from

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

Sweden, Colombia and Chile. I think this readiness remains and we always meet one another in a context of cohesion, consistency and also a unanimous understanding of what we should be doing.

For that reason, at the moment when you are no doubt going to try to secure the adoption of an agenda, it would be helpful if the Conference on Disarmament were to remember once again that the 65 members present here are all, individually and collectively, representatives of the international community and that they are not here to defend national interests. I think that this has been the source of the first contradiction and the first difficulty, which has meant that our programme of work has not yet achieved official status. It exists unofficially, it does not exist officially. I would therefore launch an appeal to those who until now have taken the time to endeavour to convey to us a message of optimism, a message of hope, to say that they would very shortly be ready, after all this time for reflection, to join this collective need to actually emerge from stagnation. I would not talk of an impasse, but of stagnation. I think that is the reality. It is a task which is within our reach and I would of course like those countries, which are major countries mentioned in article VI of the NPT, to give us this sign and not delay their message too much - at all events that they will not take a further seven years for reflection, in which case, obviously, we would find ourselves deep in an impasse this time.

The international community has entrusted us here with a mission, which is important. It is to remove in a small way this fear of apocalypse and nuclear holocaust from all the differential psychology of human societies on this planet. And indeed this fear is reflected in what are known here as "new issues". The new issues yes, indeed, there are other determinisms today which can confront us with actions which could bring in their wake apocalypse for mankind, and that is why, with a view to making progress with respect to these new issues, it would be helpful if the old ones which we have failed to resolve were taken into account in our thinking with more energy than ever: the question of nuclear disarmament, for instance, which is regarded by everyone as the priority, and also the issue of a halt to the production of fissile material. And I welcome the appeal made by Ambassador Chung earlier for a declaration of intent on the part of the possessor countries today and the producing countries to consider a moratorium on production, and I think this would represent considerable progress if it were done outside the context of any negotiation process. It would be a formidable call for hope and the development of a humanist ideology for which we all wish, that of seeing mankind living in fraternal harmony, freed from all fears for the future.

This session is beginning as far as we are concerned with a number of question marks, but also with grounds for hope, and I am sure that we shall certainly manage to make progress if political will is manifested in a quite patent and visible way in this very room. For my part, I would like to note the departure of certain colleagues who have been particularly helpful in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, who helped us - I have in mind in particular Ambassador Sood of India, Ambassador Westdal of Canada, and of course the Ambassador of Korea, Ambassador Chung, who will be leaving us very shortly. That is why, as I see and welcome the eight new colleagues who are embarking with us today on the collective task, representing a seventh of the Conference on Disarmament, I wish to mention the Ambassadors of Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Sweden, Syria, Romania, Colombia, Belgium and the United States.

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

Thus I would like these eight new colleagues also to bring with them not merely the resources of their abilities, the resources of their experience, the resources of their intelligence, but also the resources which will enable us all jointly to engage in a collective endeavour where there will be neither victors nor vanquished but where only the cause of disarmament will prevail. I am convinced they will provide us with fresh ideas fresh perspectives to enable us to make headway.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. ALBORZI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Madam President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that your diplomatic skills, dedication and known persistence will guide us to a better future for this Conference. You can count on my delegation's support, and please rest assured of its trust and cooperation in the performance of your duties.

Let me also thank you, Madam President, because of your sympathy and solidarity with the Iranian people and the Government of Iran in response to the recent tragic earthquake in Bam.

The degree of the devastation and human injury in Bam was unprecedented, as was the flow of the prompt international aid pouring into my country. We are thankful to all those who helped Iranians leave behind one of the greatest catastrophes.

No doubt, this was an encouraging sign of an international sense of responsibility and burden-sharing that is an asset for the international community. It was an impressive scene of human beings rushing to the help of their kind in the time of mass destruction caused by nature.

At the CD, however, we are responsible for not permitting such mass destruction to be caused by deliberate acts. I am sure that this body, invested with the task of drafting international instruments on disarmament, does have a great role to play in our common endeavour.

I hope that this session of the Conference on Disarmament can, after years, grasp the momentum and begin its substantial work through the earliest possible agreement on a balanced programme of work built upon viable, broadly supported initiatives on the table. We find - as the overwhelming majority do - special emphasis should be put on nuclear disarmament as an absolute urgent necessity and the only real guarantee which could let humankind rest assured against the recurrence of such agonies through man-made catastrophes.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

(The President)

If I see no other requests for the floor, I shall move to the next point. I now intend to suspend the plenary meeting and to invite the Conference to consider, in an informal meeting, which will follow immediately after this one, the draft agenda for the 2004 session, as contained in document CD/WP.533, as well as the requests received from States not members of the Conference to participate in our work during the session, as contained in document CD/WP.534. Both of these documents have been circulated by the secretariat. Thereafter, we shall resume the plenary meeting in order to formalize the agreements reached at the informal meeting.

I should like to remind you that the informal plenary meeting is open only to the members of the Conference.

The meeting was suspended at 4.50 p.m. and resumed at 5.25 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 941st plenary session is resumed.

At the earlier session we had two issues before us. The first issue was the one on the draft agenda, and the second was the request by non-members to participate in our work.

At the informal plenary meeting that we have just concluded, we reached agreement on the second issue, on the requests that are contained in CD/WP.534 for participation in the work of the Conference from States that are not members of the Conference. These requests were received from 26 States: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ghana, Guatemala, the Holy See, Kuwait, Latvia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Oman, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovenia, Thailand and Uruguay.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: On the draft agenda, the informal plenary meeting decided to postpone a decision on it until Thursday, when we will hold an informal plenary meeting. If that is acceptable to the Conference, then we will act accordingly.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our business for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 22 January 2004, at 11 a.m., immediately following the informal meeting, which will be convened at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.