

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 11 March 2004, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Ms. RAJMAH Hussain (Malaysia)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 950th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today is a special day for the Conference on Disarmament, as we will be commemorating International Women's Day, which actually fell on Monday, 8 March 2004. As a lady Ambassador to the CD, it is indeed a great pleasure for me to be presiding over the CD on this very important day, which pays tribute to the pivotal role of women in the world and in our daily lives. As the old English adage goes, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world".

On this very special day, I would like to welcome most warmly the representatives of women's non-governmental organizations who are with us today. They are sitting up there in the balcony. These ladies are participants in the annual seminar which traditionally marks International Women's Day. As in previous years they have addressed a message to the Conference on that occasion. I understand that this year's events are focused on the theme of human security, women and disarmament.

I would now like to call upon the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, to read out the message of the International Women's Day seminar to the Conference.

Mr. ROMÁN-MOREY (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Allow me, please, on my own behalf to extend my warm congratulations to all the ladies - or women - of the world on this very special occasion.

Now I have the honour to read out the message prepared by the non-governmental organizations accredited to disarmament, and I quote:

"Madam President and distinguished members of the CD,

"We first would like to thank you for officially acknowledging the relationship of civil society to the CD. We welcome the decision taken on 12 February of this year as a first step upon which further engagement can be built.

"Throughout the war-plagued history of civilization, leaders and decision makers have been operating within a framework of 'national security'. Most actions taken on the international stage are based on the preservation of national security. How successful has this framework been? Since the end of the Second World War, there has not been more than a week without some conflict somewhere on the planet. During the 50 years of the cold war, the world has witnessed the bloody embodiment of 'national security' during which 315 armed conflicts took more than 27 million lives, wounding 100 million others. At the heart of the cold war lay the notion of nuclear deterrence.

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

“While the cold war ended more than 10 years ago, the nuclear threat has reached another climax. We risk losing the positive gains made in previous years as the nuclear-weapon States reinforce their arsenals, conduct experimental high-level missile tests, research new types of nuclear weapons, and, more and more, non-nuclear-weapon States look to the nuclear option as a way of preserving ‘national security’.

“How did we miss the opportunity for nuclear disarmament that the end of the cold war offered us? How is it that the global nuclear stockpiles are not diminishing irreversibly? How is it that, despite the promise made in 2000 at the NPT Review Conference to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security policy, we continue to find nuclear weapons at the core of security strategy documents?

“You must ask yourselves: Whose security do nuclear weapons guarantee?

“More than three years have elapsed since the Security Council adopted the historic resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Three years onward and we do not want to utilize another International Women’s Day statement to discuss why and how women are affected differently. Instead, we want to demonstrate how a gender analysis can facilitate nuclear disarmament talks. We call for the transition from a national security framework (which has failed) to a human security framework.

“A gender perspective does not mean simply counting the number of women and men at the conference table (although an increase in women decision makers in this forum as in all others would be one way to ensure a gender perspective). Rather, as the action plan of the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) states, ‘Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes in all areas and at all levels’.

“The CD has not yet incorporated the DDA action plan. The action plan is not only relevant to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, it will enhance this body’s efficacy.

“The DDA gender plan, launched during last year’s unsuccessful United Nations Disarmament Commission’s meeting, is itself situated in a human security framework. The plan recognizes that ‘gender analysis begins with people, their experiences and their lives, rather than with notions of State security’. The plan works on the assumption that a shift towards a framework based on human security must begin with disarmament. If we are to realize the promise stated in Article 26 of the Charter to regulate armaments toward the least diversion of global resources, we must challenge the current notion of national security. As the action plan states, ‘disarmament and gender analysis offer critical approaches to the concept of national security grounded in military superiority and the threat of the use of force’. A gender perspective will enable nation States to move away from a narrow military view of security to a universal notion of human security.

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

“Four years into this century we continue to witness major wars among States and within States on nearly every continent on the planet.

“The only way to ensure that no human being, acting on behalf of a State, a group, or individually, will ever use or threaten to use weapons of mass destruction is by their verifiable, transparent, and irreversible elimination. This fact is incontrovertible. Protection of people from mass destruction is only possible by eliminating the weapons that are capable of doing that! This has been, and will always remain, the only way to security. It is within this human security framework that the root causes of terrorism can be properly addressed.

“The cornerstone of the disarmament regime, the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, stands at its most crucial juncture in its history. The world has watched itself backslide on key advancements made at the 2000 Review Conference. Drastic positive measures are needed to ensure the longevity of the NPT. With the third NPT PrepCom fast approaching, all States parties to the NPT and the peoples they represent are greatly dependent on the work of this Conference on Disarmament.

“The CD and the NPT share many of the same issues. If the CD were able to make substantive progress on some of them, such as negative security assurances, the positive effect on the NPT would reverberate throughout the international disarmament regime. The CD has the responsibility to demonstrate the vitality of the international disarmament regime as a way of strengthening the NPT review process.

“One way to start to demonstrate this would be to officially adopt the Five Ambassadors’ proposal now and work in line with it. There are no obstacles to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). If certain key States still have not formulated a position on an FMCT, the participants of this seminar urge you to go ahead without them. Work on this treaty must begin as soon as possible, so that any production of fissile material becomes as inconceivable as a return to full-scale nuclear testing is today.

“Those States that have demonstrated their commitment to the prevention of an arms race in outer space must continue to hold informal discussions within the CD, the secretariat, in the world’s capitals and elsewhere. If negotiations in the CD are not yet possible due to the positions of certain States, dialogue must continue to move forward. It is important to continue to draw public and media attention to the imminent threat to space. If this generation fails to save future generations from a militarized outer space, it will be the biggest failure of humankind since the unleashing of the atomic bomb.

“We know that it is somewhat unfair to claim that ‘the CD has not done any work’. We know that, while no progress on negotiations have moved forward in eight years, that all of you are working hard to come up with the right words, the right bargains, the right compromises to move this stalemated body toward a substantive

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

programme of work. But something is not working. All of the words spoken in this room, all of the speeches delivered on this floor over the past eight years have brought us no closer to security.

“We offer you today a new way of thinking, a new framework in which to devise your strategies and craft your positions. Not one human being in the world will be less secure once you have managed to negotiate an FMCT. What a responsibility and privilege you have, to be charged with the responsibility and ability to protect the lives of every person on the planet! And it really is within your power. By starting work on that treaty now, you will be taking one critical step toward the safety and security of every single human being on earth.

“This is what we offer you as non-governmental organizations: expertise, dedication, and a reminder of the humanity common to us all. We are not here to criticize and blame the delegates for the continued spectre of nuclear war; we are here to speak to you as individuals, as human beings, all fighting the fight for the survival of the human race, free from the threat of nuclear terror and free from the heavy burden of all weapons of war. As Ben Okri, a Nigerian poet and winner of the Booker Prize, wrote, ‘The real war always has been to keep alive the light of civilization, everywhere. It is to keep culture and art at the forefront of our national and international endeavours. The end of the world begins not with the barbarians at the gate, but with the barbarians at the highest levels of the State. All the States in the world. We need a new kind of sustained and passionate and enlightened action in the world of the arts and the spirit’.

“Let us commence this new kind of sustained and passionate and enlightened action on this 2004 International Women’s Day.”

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference for reading out the message of the seminar. For my part, as President, let me thank the women’s non-governmental organizations for their message of peace and for their great interest in the work and progress of the CD. I would like to assure them that the delegations to the CD take seriously their concern for international peace and security. Indeed, these are the very objectives of the CD. Notwithstanding its current difficulties, the CD has never lost sight of its responsibilities and role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament dealing with issues of international peace and security. So please be assured, ladies.

Before we move on to the other business of the day, and to lighten the atmosphere a little bit, I am duly reminded of a quip that the Secretary-General of the CD made at a recent luncheon organized by the lady Ambassadors in Geneva last Monday. You are getting into trouble, Mr. Secretary-General. Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze said in jest at the luncheon that men make wars and women make children. This remark immediately brought a rejoinder from a lady Ambassador who was present. And she retorted, “Men make wars and women make children, but men certainly have something to do with that as well”. I am not going to name the lady Ambassador. The point is that in war and in peace, both men and women have important roles to play. As the hands that rock the cradle, women of course have a pivotal role in assuring good

(The President)

will and peace in the world. So to all the women in the world who are dedicated to the noble cause of peace, the Conference on Disarmament salutes them for their noble role on this very auspicious commemoration of International Women's Day.

Let us now move on to our other business for the day. I have the following speakers on my list for today's plenary meeting: Nigeria, Malaysia, Thailand, Serbia and Montenegro, and Norway. I would first like to give the floor to Nigeria, Mr. Owoseni, to speak on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. OWOSEN (Nigeria): Madam President, on behalf of the Nigerian delegation, let me express my profound pleasure at seeing you assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the first time by Malaysia. Coming on the heels of your two immediate predecessors as Presidents, namely Ambassador Inoguchi of Japan and Ambassador Mohamed of Kenya, your assumption in the third straight relay of lady presidents has brought not only glamour and excitement, but also some measured movement in the right direction, from the otherwise general staleness in this forum in recent times. I have in mind the illuminating and serious efforts, even if modest gains, in the areas of focused discussions on core issues and the enhanced participation of non-governmental organizations in the CD's work. I am happy that you have intensified efforts to build on these achievements in the past four weeks of your tenure. My delegation also takes this opportunity to congratulate the non-governmental organizations on their statement to the CD today on International Women's Day, which was marked on 8 March 2004.

Twenty-two years ago, when the two of us participated in the United Nations Fellowship Programme on Disarmament, as young diplomats from our capitals, representing Malaysia and Nigeria, we were particularly elated to watch the robust proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament, on the sidelines, in this very ornate Council Chamber in August/September 1982. As we all recall, the cold war was then still raging and the East-West military-cum-ideological rivalry was at its peak. The CD was thus a politically polarized forum then, from the aftermath of the Second World War. However, it is on record that the G-21 and other developing member States, spearheaded by the Non-Aligned Movement, rose to the challenges by assuming the spectacular responsibility of channelling global efforts towards multilateral disarmament negotiations which led to the remarkable achievements that the CD and its predecessor, the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENCD), could justifiably look back to with pride. The 1967 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the 1981 Convention on Inhumane Weapons (CCW), the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention, and the 1996 Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty are pertinent in this regard. When complemented by other real disarmament agreements concluded at regional levels, such as the 1967 Tlatelolco Treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone for Latin America, the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga for the South Pacific, the 1995 Bangkok Treaty for South-East Asia, and the 1996 Pelindaba Treaty for the African continent, it is thus clearly evident that the developing countries have made significant contributions and collective sacrifices in the sphere of global peace and security as well as regional and multilateral disarmament under effective international control. These initiatives and agreements today underpin the multilateral non-proliferation regime upon which we in the CD are trying to construct an edifice of more concrete, irreversible disarmament agreements that would guarantee lasting peace in a post-cold-war era.

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

As a former United Nations' Disarmament Fellow and a distinguished representative of Malaysia, the country which currently chairs the Non-Aligned Movement and played a vital role in the history of that organization, your presidency provides a unique opportunity to situate the past achievements of the CD vis-à-vis the current stalemate prevailing since 1997, now leading the CD to atrophy and consignment to virtual irrelevance in the discharge of its responsibilities. This is why I share the views expressed in your opening statement of 19 February 2004, and I quote: "If we do not, together, do something to move the CD forward, it will become irrelevant and will wither away as delegations refocus their limited resources to more pressing demands elsewhere. At a time when the global community is faced with grave challenges to peace and security, the CD has no choice but to ... get its act together".

The Nigerian delegation believes that the actual challenge facing the CD is to refocus it in order to continue to deliver on its mandate and objectives, and thus prevent it from the unfortunate complacency manifested in recent years, allowing the CD ultimately to be turned into a lame duck in the sphere of negotiating meaningful disarmament agreements that could eliminate the terrifying danger posed by nuclear weapons and the activities of proliferators, as well as the relentless pursuit of the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, as the most destructive in the arsenals of nations today.

In recent times, the CD has been treated to subtle efforts, no doubt meant to reorientate it from its mandate and set objectives. These subtle efforts, in various guises and excuses, all masquerade under the orchestrated notion that some items on the agenda are not mature for substantive consideration and negotiation leading to agreement. On this altar, the overwhelming challenges of nuclear armament, the weaponization of outer space, and the absence of security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, have all been consigned to the cooler. At the same time, we are also being told that secondary items should be prioritized and tackled headlong instead, because they are likely to enjoy consensus. Thus, the CD has continued to be shackled down under the weight of the rule of consensus, which if not quickly rescued to ensure its responsible use, could ultimately determine the fate of the CD itself.

As a representative of Nigeria that has contributed so much, in concert with other fellow non-aligned countries and G-21 members, to bring effectiveness and mentioned recorded successes in the past decades, I am at pains to note that the CD, which I first observed with keen admiration from the sidelines in 1982 during the cold war era of tension, is now unfortunately being characterized by stalemate and lack of achievement since 1997, ironically at a time when the world is supposed to be enjoying peace. This implies that while the cold war has happily ended, the fundamental challenges facing mankind have virtually not changed, namely the issues of common security and common development under a collective international architecture. Thus, unilateral approaches and attempts at marginalizing the interests and aspirations of other countries will not solve the common global problems or lead to any lasting peace. This is at the core of the crisis confronting the CD, using the lack of consensus as the alibi or convenient escape mechanism.

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

The CD and the overall multilateral disarmament agenda are thus at a crossroads. Is the world going to move forward into an era of meaningful accelerated disarmament, with the net dividends of decreasing tension, real peace, mutual trust, and accelerated global development? Or are we going to be bedevilled with perhaps different but equally deadly post-cold-war-era foes of laager fortifications as a substitute for collective security, while the aggressive forces of poverty and underdevelopment hold sway in three quarters of the world, with predictable global consequences in terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, destabilization by non-State actors through illegal trafficking and the acquisition of small arms and light weapons in many developing countries, among other new transnational threats to security and development?

At the bottom of the unrelenting global tension is fear and insecurity, mainly resulting from the overkill military capability of the rich and the mighty, vis-à-vis the reality of the defencelessness of the many poor and underdeveloped. Reinforcing this, more than any weapons system, are the huge, devastating nuclear arsenals in the hands of a few that can nevertheless obliterate human civilization several times over in warfare. Since all weapons systems ever acquired, including atomic bombs, have been used in warfare, or are intended or developed to be used, the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use at any time, in order to save our and succeeding generations from this scourge.

This is why my delegation believes that the CD has no choice but to work harder, as a topmost priority, to achieve a convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction (i.e. a nuclear weapons convention), as the most important goal assigned to the CD by the first special session on disarmament (SSOD-I) in 1979, to which my delegation remains committed. This also explains why Nigeria believes that pride of place should be given by the CD to nuclear disarmament, as the most crucial initiative that can eternally nail the coffin on the incubus of nuclear proliferation, and thus ensure the consolidation of post-cold-war peace and expected concomitant accelerated global development.

Unfortunately, consensus is still being prevented on this important item. But it is on record that those who have been preventing consensus on the CD programme of work since 1997 are not the members of the G-21, which have worked tirelessly in the past, and continue to work assiduously towards the resumption of substantive negotiations in this forum, the latest being the cross-group A-5 proposal that now enjoys preponderant support in the CD. Although the A-5 proposal does not meet Nigeria's expectation in the area of giving a negotiating mandate on nuclear disarmament, we nevertheless support it in the usual spirit of flexibility.

The antecedents of the past, when important multilateral disarmament agreements were negotiated and concluded, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty earlier mentioned, point to the inescapable fact that any meaningful agreement can only be a product of give and take, taking consideration of the long-term benefits and security to the entire international community, and not a take-it-or-leave-it, winner-takes-all situation that is being

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

indirectly foisted on the CD on important issues on the agenda. Thus, my delegation believes that while consensus has never been easily reached in the CD, even during past negotiations leading to those important agreements mentioned, ultimate consensus can also be secured in the sphere of nuclear disarmament, if there is sufficient flexibility and the necessary political will to exorcise the terrible ghost of global nuclear annihilation, once and for all.

The history of the proliferation of nuclear weapons illustrates that by failing to curb or stop their own vertical proliferation, the nuclear Powers have inadvertently encouraged other States to proliferate horizontally, from two nuclear Powers in 1950 to at least eight States today. What is true of nuclear weapons is also true for other weapons of mass destruction. The lack of seriousness in nuclear disarmament has unfortunately generated certain impressions around the world, questioning the bona fide commitment of the nuclear Powers to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The continuing technological sophistication of these weapons, in violation of the commitment under article VI of the NPT, and the refusal to conclude a legally binding multilateral agreement to extend negative security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to the developing countries that have renounced the possession of nuclear weapons, can only reinforce these impressions.

In view of the obvious glorification of the possession of nuclear weapons, so to say, can the rest of the world be expected, legitimately, to fold their arms unconcerned, without apprehension about the lessons of history where slave trade, colonialism, and numerous other forms of brutal subjugation, which today are at the root of our underdevelopment, especially in Africa, were accomplished by sheer force of military might against the defenceless poor? The Nigerian delegation thus believes that the five major nuclear Powers, as permanent members of the Security Council, should re-commit themselves to genuine nuclear disarmament, because any presumption of their indefinite possession of nuclear weapons cannot be compatible with sustaining global non-proliferation. As a first, tangible step in that direction, they should lead the way to ensure the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as a demonstration of good faith in this regard.

Another point I want to share with you on the way forward is whether the time is not ripe for the CD to examine and perhaps review the utility or effectiveness of the monthly rotational presidency of the CD by member States. While it may have served a useful purpose in the past, in order to balance different political perspectives during the cold war era, my view is that it is increasingly becoming a mere rotation or game of musical chairs, with very little to celebrate in it, because it leaves insufficient time at the disposal of successive Presidents to carry out serious, behind-the-scenes consultations with various groups which are often the grease that oils the wheels of flexibility on difficult issues in the CD. Certainly, many delegations will share the view that what is crucial for all of us here as member States of the CD, as well as the international community as a whole, is not the number of Presidents we have in rapid monthly succession, or where they come from in particular, but the more important achievement of a breakthrough and concrete progress in the programme of work. In this vein, consideration could be given to the idea that a President's tenure be extended to at least two months in the future, in order to give a reasonable time for consolidation of Presidential efforts and initiatives. If this involves a change in the rules of procedure, so be it, and my delegation will support such a change, in order to respond to and cope with one of the peculiar challenges of our time. The

(Mr. Owoseni, Nigeria)

recent agreement on the enhanced participation of non-governmental organizations in CD work is most welcome by my delegation, as a good example in this regard, even if the modalities are still being worked out.

Madam President, as you finish your tenure as President this week, and as I also bid farewell to the CD, let me conclude by reminding all of us in the CD that disarmament is not an end in itself, but is geared towards the lessening of global tension, the enthronement of peace and security for all nations, the reduction of military acquisitions to the lowest possible level of armaments, and above all, the release of scarce resources for global development. In this vein, Nigeria reiterates that the ultimate way forward for the CD, in order not to slide irretrievably into irrelevance, is to take the bull by the horns and hold tenaciously to its responsibility to the global community in its quest for genuine disarmament. Pursuit of security through acquisition and possession of the most sophisticated and deadly weapons, which are essentially wasteful overkill, on the one hand, when coexisting with widespread material want, poverty, and underdevelopment on the other hand, can only breed a sense of injustice, frustration and insecurity in many parts of the world. We must thus appreciate the interrelationships between disarmament, global security and common development in order to see our way through in the CD. It goes without saying that in order to attain common global security and development, the G-21 and other member States committed to a nuclear-free world must not relent, but persevere, whatever the odds or obstacles on their path, either now or in future, in confronting the admittedly painstaking but inescapable challenges of achieving nuclear disarmament as the linchpin to successful comprehensive disarmament in general. This is actually the *raison d'être* for the creation of the CD in 1979, its continued existence today, and the major determinant of its place in history, as the sole multilateral negotiating body of the global community on disarmament. Efforts at escapism or gerrymandering from these challenges will continue to lead the CD into a deeper quagmire, which should be avoided at all costs, in the interest of humanity. Nigeria thus calls all CD members, including the non-governmental organizations, to the rescue.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his very significant statement on nuclear disarmament. He has also raised some very significant points on the rules of procedure, which the CD will continue to ponder. And since you are leaving the CD, Mr. Owoseni, my dear friend, I would like to wish you the very best in your future endeavours. I must say that I remember very fondly the times we spent here as Disarmament Fellows. Little did we realize then that we would become delegates to the CD. So all the best to you, my dear friend.

Distinguished delegates, if you permit me, I wish to take off my Presidential hat for a while to deliver a national statement as Ambassador of Malaysia to the CD.

In August 2002, I went to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan to deliver opening statements at the 2002 World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs on the invitation of the Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (Gensuikyo). Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the two cities in Japan which were the targets of atomic bombings, on 6 and 9 August 1945 respectively.

(The President)

While in Nagasaki, I met with Mayor Iccho Itoh of Nagasaki, who extended an invitation to the Ambassadors of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to come to Nagasaki to hold a meeting of the CD in Nagasaki. At the plenary meeting of the CD on 22 August 2002, held in this Council Chamber two years ago, I dutifully conveyed Mayor Itoh's invitation to the CD.

Recently, I was pleasantly surprised to receive another letter from Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba of Hiroshima, the other city which had suffered from the effects of an atomic explosion, who expressed interest in reinforcing Mayor Itoh's message by extending a welcoming hand from the city of Hiroshima to the Conference on Disarmament as well. In his letter, Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba of Hiroshima said "The sixtieth anniversary of the bombings will occur in August next year. We would be profoundly appreciative if the Conference on Disarmament would hold its regular summer session in 2005 in Hiroshima. The distinguished delegates would be our most honoured guests at our anniversary memorial ceremonies."

I am therefore pleased to hereby convey the invitation of Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba of Hiroshima to all delegations of the Conference on Disarmament by circulating a copy of the Mayor's letter, dated 18 February 2004, with my national statement.

In transmitting the Mayor's letter, I would like to recall my own emotions as CD Ambassador during my visit to the only two cities in the world that have ever suffered from the effects of nuclear weapons. This is what I said two years ago in this very chamber, and those feelings have continued to haunt me ever since. I quote my own statement from the year 2002:

"I must confess that my visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki left a stark and lasting impression on me as to the devastating effects of nuclear war. If before I had only read about the nuclear tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the visit provided me with an opportunity to see the effects of nuclear bombs with my own eyes. And seeing is believing! My visit to the atomic bomb museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was an emotional and moving experience as I was able to witness the devastating effects of atomic bombs. The damage caused by these atomic bombs, which are as nothing by comparison with the even more sophisticated and more powerful nuclear weapons of today, was horrendous, to say the very least. The scenes that I witnessed in the two museums were like pictures out of a horror movie: black, burned bodies, charred buildings, a city completely obliterated, pieces of skin dripping like plastic from the ghostly-looking figures of men, women and children scurrying desperately to look for water to quench an unbearable thirst, only to find the water equally polluted by a viscous substance that rendered the water unfit for consumption; pictures of thousands of dead bodies. The blast from the atomic bomb in Hiroshima was so strong that the shadow of a man sitting on some stone steps was forever imprinted on the stone slabs and exhibited in the museum for all to see. Radiation from the atomic bombs lingered on for years to sow its effects on the health of the victims who survived. The 'Hibakushas', as the survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings came to be known in Japan, live on to tell the tragic tale of the mornings of 6 August and 9 August 1945, when atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, at precisely 8.15 a.m. and 11.02 a.m., respectively."

(The President)

As Ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament - the only multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, and therefore with the moral, legal and political responsibility to work towards disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament - it is our duty to ensure that there will never be any more Hiroshimas, never any more Nagasakis and never any more *Hibakushas*. At the invitation of the two Mayors, let us all go to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to see, and to feel, the horror of nuclear bombs, and from there find the inspiration to give greater meaning to our efforts in the Conference on Disarmament, where substantive progress has eluded us thus far. To quote Mayor Akiba: "Perhaps by returning to this fateful spot, the world can regain the path to human security in a nuclear-weapon-free world and thereby ensure that Nagasaki remains the last city ever to experience such a cruel fate."

If Mayor Akiba's invitation for the CD to hold its regular summer session in August 2005 in Hiroshima is procedurally and technically too difficult to implement, then the CD Ambassadors should at least try to accept the invitation to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I am sure that the two Mayors will be pleased to play host to such a distinguished group of Ambassadors, and the CD secretariat can be charged to make the necessary administrative arrangements for interested CD Ambassadors.

I know that in working towards this objective, the CD can count on the support of Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan, and through her the Government of Japan, whose commitment to the issue of nuclear disarmament lies deep and strong as a result of the tragic experience that the Japanese people went through in 1945. The issue of nuclear disarmament is also of the highest priority to the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 21 within the CD.

I will, as Ambassador of Malaysia to the CD, hand over the invitation from Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima to the President of the Conference on Disarmament and the CD secretariat so that due consideration can be given to the invitation and an appropriate reply be sent to Mayor Akiba by the CD President - this would be the next CD President.

I would now like to put back my President's hat and give the floor to Thailand, Ambassador Chaiyong Satjipanon, to make a statement on anti-personnel mines.

Mr. SATJIPANON (Thailand): At the outset, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Ambassador Rajmah Hussain, on your assumption of the presidency of this important meeting. Speaking today, three days after International Women's Day, I feel it is a privilege to have you as our President. As your colleague and friend, I have no doubt that your wisdom and ability will guide us through a difficult task. I have full confidence in you and wish to assure you of my cooperation and support.

And on the occasion of International Women's Day, my congratulations also go to our lady colleagues in disarmament for their active roles.

I have asked for the floor today with the aim to maintain the momentum set out by many of my colleagues during the last two weeks. As many of you may recall, 1 March this year marks the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the

(Mr. Satjipanon, Thailand)

Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. This occasion is also a symbolic prelude to the Convention's first Review Conference, to be held this year in Kenya. It is also halfway through our collective commitment to do away with all mined areas. It is therefore a time for rejoicing and reflection. Thailand, as the President of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, or 5MSP, wishes to highlight the strong point of the Convention, which can contribute to the work of the CD.

The success of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a direct result of the dynamic synergy between public and private actors who have worked closely together for the cause of putting an end to human suffering. In this regard, the CD's recent decision to engage actors from civil society in its work is not merely a refreshing development but also a timely response to changes in a larger environment. Thailand hopes that private actors will be encouraged to make a constructive contribution to the CD as much as they can.

Inclusiveness and synergy among relevant actors may be one important ingredient in the rapid progress of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. But behind them lies a more significant driving force that animates all of us to work untiringly towards the goal of a mine-free world in which we all can live our lives to the full with freedom from fear. To States parties and other relevant agencies who are committed to this goal, the Convention does not aim simply at arms reduction. Rather, it bows to the higher cause of putting an end to human suffering. And when we think about anti-personnel mines or other types of weapons far beyond the matters of the numbers of ammunition or the idealistic concept of peace and security, we feel energized and ready to make even impossible changes. As my colleagues and I have been stating to the CD's plenary sessions for the last two weeks, there is a story worth exploring in how much we have achieved under the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. With 141 countries having joined it, the Convention is living proof of multilateralism that works.

During the 5MSP, Thailand, as President, came up with the President's Action Programme, highlighting the fact that the anti-personnel mine ban should be considered in terms of development. Clearing mined lands equates to creating an enabling environment for leading lives free from fear and from want. Since the 5MSP, Thailand is pleased that progress has been made in our collective efforts with Canada and Norway in engaging the World Bank more closely in mine action. Thailand hopes that the discussion between the World Bank and a group of Resource Mobilization Task Force members will yield a fruitful result and further contribute to bringing mine action even closer to the issue of socio-economic development.

As the President of the 5MSP, we have also encouraged all the parties concerned to do more in all aspects of mine action, particularly awareness-raising and regional initiatives. The results after the meeting have been more than satisfying. To mention a few, ever since the 5MSP, the number of regional workshops, seminars and conferences has been flourishing, contributing to greater cooperation and a further exchange of best practices among regional States. Thailand will also host a regional seminar in the second half of this year with the dual aim of promoting coordination in this field and raising the public profile of mine action, especially in the critical period leading up to the first Review Conference. We feel the urgent need to promote political will and public awareness in countries in Asia, where less than 40 per cent of States have joined the Convention.

(Mr. Satjipanon, Thailand)

There may be times when we sit wondering why we are doing what we are doing in this grand, imposing room. Whose glory are our sweat and patience to serve? To whose lives do we want to make a difference? Answering these questions, I find peace and security too broad an answer and too little an inspiration. Disarmament in itself could be a rather cold, dry concept. Let us think about pain and happiness, poverty and development, that arms and disarmament can cause and cure. Maybe we could find a way out of the impasse we have been drowned in.

In closing, it is my honour to have had a chance to make remarks at the CD and to share with you our experiences in the field of the anti-personnel mine ban as well as its implications for humanity and its well-being. I hope that this will have left you with some thoughts worth revisiting.

The PRESIDENT: I would like to thank the Ambassador of Thailand for his statement and also for his very emotional appeal at the end of his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia and Montenegro, Ms. Dusanka Divjak-Tomic.

Ms. DIVJAK-TOMIC (Serbia and Montenegro): Madam President, at the outset let me congratulate you on your successful presiding over the CD in the past month. My country, as an observer, follows with keen interest current discussions aimed towards overcoming the problems that for years have caused a stalemate in its work. We hope that the CD will soon be able to resume its mandate as the sole international body mandated to conduct negotiations in disarmament matters. My country supports the efforts of the member States to that end, and sees the A-5 initiative as a solid basis for further discussion that could result in a consensus on the programme of work during this year's session.

My Government fully respects and implements the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter in its international relations. In line with our sense of shared responsibility, we find it useful to bring updates on the relevant standpoints and activities of the member States regarding disarmament and related issues before the CD. It is our position that the more transparency and exchange of information we have in this field, the more we contribute to the enhancement of mutual confidence and promotion of peace and stability in the world. I take the floor today with this very aim, to inform the members of the CD where we are at this point in implementing all our international obligations and what is ahead of us. It is a comprehensive flash summary of the different issues, and a number of copies are available at the desk at the back of the room, unfortunately not enough for circulation.

Let me start with the Ottawa process, as one of the areas where Serbia and Montenegro has lately made a significant breakthrough. To recall, during the recent meetings of the Standing Committees of the Ottawa process, my delegation tried to portray a clearer picture of how we plan to fulfil our new obligations, and what are our major problems and needs. As I already mentioned in that statement, by depositing the ratification instruments with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on 18 September 2003, Serbia and Montenegro formally acceded to the Convention. Pursuant to the rules defined therein, the obligations of Serbia and Montenegro under the Convention are due on 31 March 2004.

(Ms. Divjak-Tomic, Serbia and Montenegro)

This was our modest contribution to the universality of the Ottawa Convention, which marked its fifth anniversary only on 1 March. With Serbia and Montenegro, Greece and Turkey joining the Convention in 2003, the entire region of south-eastern Europe proved its full commitment to free their people from the scourge of APMs. This is, undoubtedly, yet another positive development that will further enhance the feeling of security among ordinary people and promote mutual confidence, peace and stability in the entire region. Having in mind what this region went through only a few years back, we deem that this has much more substantial meaning than a pure increase in the number of States parties to the Convention. Having said that, I have to reiterate that our task will not be fully accomplished until our region is free from even a single activity which is in contravention of the letter and spirit of the Convention, even conducted by an individual terrorist. Unfortunately, at this point it still has not been the case in some parts of my country, despite all the Government's efforts to bring peace and stability to each and every corner of the country and the prevailing positive development in the entire region.

We are fully aware that the real business is yet ahead of us. Firstly, under the provisions of the Convention, we will have to destroy about 1.3 million APMs within a relatively short time limit. We deem it realistic to fulfil this task in three years, provided the necessary resources have been obtained. Preparations for this task have been under way for some time, but we must rely greatly on international assistance. To that end we particularly look towards the leading States parties to the Convention that are also CD members, and do hope that their understanding will not be lacking. We commend all those that have already expressed readiness to provide help - Canada, in particular, as the coordinator of the NAMSA Trust Fund in this matter.

We are also working on the initial report under article 7, which is due by 28 August this year. The ministries in charge in both republics have been informed of the need to consider the possibility of amending their Penal Codes in accordance with article 9 of the Convention.

Though it is not easy, I am convinced that the problem of the destruction of stockpiles will be solved somehow and within the time limits. However, my worry is how to find an efficient way to ease the human suffering of thousands of victims of APMs and their families throughout the world! In my firm conviction this is a far more important and complex obligation to fulfil. It has no time limits and its multifaceted complexity that we have to deal with demands much more than our honest good will and sympathies. This problem of the rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration of APM victims is even more serious in the developing countries and countries in transition, as is my country. For all that this issue deserves to be much more focused upon during our preparations for and at the forthcoming first Review Conference in Nairobi. What we really need is not protracted discussion, but rather very concerted collective action, followed by the firm determination of all States parties to get the job done similar to the one concerning stockpile destruction.

Let me stress some of the issues that we attach particular importance to and in which we have invested most of our efforts to join the current international trends and activities ever since our full reintegration into the international community in late 2000.

(Ms. Divjak-Tomic, Serbia and Montenegro)

Serbia and Montenegro is firmly committed to non-proliferation of WMD, and actively participates in international efforts to suppress them. It pays full attention to this issue particularly within the context of the rising global threat of and the need to fight terrorism around the globe. We consider that a strict national control regime is of particular importance, especially having in mind that our region, due to a protracted crisis, has been fertile soil for all kinds of illegal activities, including all kinds of organized crime. As such, it provides a favourable environment for terrorists as well.

For all these reasons, we have started the process of working out a new, stricter legal control regime that should take into account the current negative trends both on the global as well as the regional levels. The draft law on transfers of weapons, dual-use goods and technologies, which will be in line with European Union standards, is in the process of finalization.

As a non-nuclear State party to the NPT, my country fully respects all its obligations. It has never produced or otherwise obtained or used this type of WMD. Our activities are focused on improvement of the control regime under the auspices of IAEA. We are working on further enhancing the security and safeguards of the radioactive materials used for peaceful purposes only, applying the highest international standards. With the assistance of the United States of America and the Russian Federation, radioactive material from the "Vinca" nuclear institute has been safely transferred to the Russian Federation, as the country of origin.

Serbia and Montenegro signed the CTBT on 8 July 2001. The internal legal ratification procedure has already been instituted in Parliament.

Serbia and Montenegro renewed its membership of the BWC in 2001. It fully complies with the Convention and supports all efforts towards the enhancement of the non-proliferation regime of the BWC.

Since joining the CWC Convention in 2000, my country fully complies with all its provisions and maintains good relations with OPCW in The Hague. This has proved to be particularly important with regard to the conducting of on-site inspections, in accordance with articles 5 and 6 of the Convention. The part of the equipment that once was used for military purposes has been destroyed thanks to international assistance. OPCW has verified its destruction.

We are currently in the process of considering participating in some other international initiatives aimed at suppressing the proliferation of WMD.

On 26 February 2004 the Government adopted a declaration by which it took on the obligation of bona fide compliance with and implementation of the provisions contained in the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) guidelines, the updated Equipment, Software and Technology Annex of 30 May 2003 and the Guidelines for Sensitive Missile-relevant Transfers of 7 January this year. It also accepted the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation initiated by the MTCR member States in November 2002.

(Ms. Divjak-Tomic, Serbia and Montenegro)

Concerning small arms and light weapons (SALW), Serbia and Montenegro has taken important steps towards suppressing their illegal transfer. The coordinated actions of our security services have resulted in the suppression of the illegal transfer, possession and use of the forbidden SALW. In cooperation with the international community (the United States of America and NAMSA, in particular) and under the auspices of the centre for the control of SALW in south-east Europe (SEESAC), a large quantity of about 100,000 different SALW, about 2.5 million items of munitions as well as about 1,200 light rocket launchers (MANPADS) have already been destroyed in Serbia and Montenegro.

My country actively implements the United Nations Programme of Action on illegal transfers of SALW and is a member of the United Nations Working Group's bureau for the commencement of negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on the identification and tracing of SALW.

As to the CCW, as one of the highly affected countries, my country supported and participated in last year's negotiations that resulted in Additional Protocol V on ERW. We continue to support further discussions within the agreed mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts on ERW as well as MOTAP, and also other efforts with the aim of further enhancement and development of international humanitarian law. To that end, we decided to accede to Amended Protocol II, and ratification is in progress.

On 7 November 2003 a declaration on acceptance of amended article 1 of the CCW was deposited with the United Nations Secretary-General and in February this year confirmed by the depositary.

On 12 August 2003 the United Nations Secretary-General confirmed the acceptance of the ratification instruments of Serbia and Montenegro to Additional Protocol IV.

In closing, I would like to focus on some activities within the internal domain that undoubtedly have a much wider impact.

It is important to mention that, ever since the political changes in the country in 2000, we have started the process of comprehensive democratic reforms, including the reform of the military and security sector. We are working on a new defence strategy and military doctrine, in accordance with the new security environment, both in the country and in the region. In the new environment those who used to be our harsh enemies proved to be our unavoidable partners within our common efforts to build new security structures for a better and safer future for all.

Further to this, it should be known that under the Constitutional Charter that regulates relations and shares authority within the State union of Serbia and Montenegro, the internal mechanism for the implementation of international obligations has been restructured. The new arrangement implies that the State union of Serbia and Montenegro is the legal subject of international law, empowered to conclude international agreements, yet its member States are entitled to their implementation. It implies that all decisions of the Council of Ministers and the Assembly of Serbia and Montenegro must be confirmed by the Governments and the Parliaments

(Ms. Divjak-Tomic, Serbia and Montenegro)

of the two republics. According to that, all changes in the legislature and the implementation of all measures and provisions demand the respective activities at the level of the two republics.

At the very end I would like to point out our firm conviction that each of these measures and activities that we have been taking does have an important positive impact on enhancing overall stability in our region. The real value of each and every one of these measures should be judged from a specific angle, having in mind that this region has for years been burdened with protracted crisis, thus very favourable for all kinds of unwanted activities. However difficult, we are determined to stay firmly on this path.

I thank you for your patience and kindly request, Madam President to have this statement officially circulated within the common practice of the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Serbia and Montenegro for her very comprehensive statement, and I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Norway, Mr. Paulsen.

Mr. PAULSEN (Norway): I listened with great interest to the contribution to the CD from civil society this morning, and my message is very brief. It is the hope of my delegation that next year, a representative of civil society, herself or himself, can address the CD directly and not through an intermediary. Norway supports appropriate civil-society participation in all multilateral forums, including the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Norway for his statement. We will take due note of your request and see whether we can evolve in that direction by next year.

The Secretary-General would like to say something.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Secretary-General of the Conference): Of course, we pay due respect to what the Norwegian representative told us, with the agreement of all the regional groups. As I understand it, that was not the case this year, because one of the regional groups was not willing to agree to the non-governmental organizations speaking publicly before the CD. And that is the only reason why the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament became what the Norwegian representative called an "intermediary". With your help, we hope that we will never use intermediaries in the future, specifically on such a bright day and celebration as 8 March.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General for his clarification. We hope that everybody can come on board next year to allow the non-governmental organizations to make their own statement. The next speaker is the Ambassador of Japan.

Ms. INOBUCHI (Japan): I would like to make a short intervention concerning the statement made by the Ambassador of Malaysia concerning the letter sent to Her Excellency by one of the local governments of Japan.

(Ms. Inoguchi, Japan)

The strong desire of the people of Japan, including the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that the tragic experiences of nuclear devastation never be repeated by the generations to come in any part of the world is well known.

The Government of Japan has been making the utmost efforts to promote nuclear disarmament with the aim of achieving a peaceful and secure world, free of nuclear weapons, as shown, for example, in Japan's United Nations General Assembly resolution on nuclear disarmament entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", which received 164 votes in favour last December, the largest ever since its first adoption.

Japan has also been making patient efforts in requesting the CD to start FMCT negotiations. The Japanese Government has also shown tireless commitment to promote the early entry into force of the CTBT.

The Government of Japan does believe that the sixtieth anniversary of the bombing is an important occasion to renew our determination never to repeat the nuclear devastation.

With respect to the invitation extended by the Mayor of Hiroshima, Mr. Akiba, my delegation will listen carefully to the reactions of the CD. As the distinguished Ambassador of Malaysia rightly suggested, I would like to stress that visiting Hiroshima and Nagasaki would provide further background knowledge and insight on the issues the CD has to deal with.

It is the political will of the international community to finally bring the CD to a breakthrough, and the people of Japan hope to generate momentum and have an impact on the political will of the respective States in order to further promote disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Japan for her reaction to the Mayor's invitation. I will now give the floor to the Ambassador of Ireland.

Ms. WHELAN (Ireland): Madam President, Ireland would like to support the statement of Norway in relation to the role of civil society. It will come as no surprise that the delegation of Ireland would support an enhanced role for civil society in all the United Nations forums, in international forums and in the CD. We recognize that a step forward was made under the Kenyan Chair in relation to the role of civil society, and we would like to see that further developed. In particular, we would like, as the delegation of Norway would, to see women's non-governmental organizations being in a position to make their statement at the next International Women's Day, and I would like to thank the secretariat for having read it out today.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Whelan, for your statement, and as I said earlier, we will take note of these proposals and we will continue to see whether everybody can come on board so that the non-governmental organizations can deliver their own statement by next year.

So this concludes the list of speakers for today. In case I have missed anybody, are there any more requests for the floor? So we will proceed with the business for today.

(The President)

Now I would like to invite you to take a decision on the request of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to participate as an observer in the work of the Conference during the session. This request is contained in document CD/WP.534/Add.4, which is before you.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure? I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: At the Presidential consultations yesterday, I brought to the attention of the Group Coordinators communications from a number of member States informing us about the intention of their Ministers of Foreign Affairs to address the Conference as follows, and I will read them out. On Tuesday of next week, 16 March, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Canada, Ireland and Sweden, as well as the State Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Cabinet of Bangladesh, will address the CD. On Wednesday, 17 March 2004, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands will address the CD. And on Thursday, 18 March, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka will address the CD.

In accordance with the previous practice of the Conference, I would like to propose that the Conference holds three plenary meetings next week, that is, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, in order to accommodate the requests of the Foreign Ministers. Since our distinguished speakers will have a very tight schedule on these days, these meetings will be convened punctually, and therefore on behalf of the incoming President, Mexico, who will preside over these meetings, I would like to appeal to all delegations to be present in the Council Chamber at 10 a.m. sharp, on Tuesday and Thursday, and on Wednesday, I believe it is at 11 a.m.

Since Malaysia's presidency is coming to a close, I would now like to deliver my closing statement.

As Malaysia's presidency of the Conference on Disarmament comes to a close, I would like to reflect on the past four weeks when Malaysia was in the driving seat to steer the work of the CD forward.

I must say that the past four weeks have been an interesting experience for Malaysia, and for me personally, to be so closely involved in issues affecting international peace and security, where the stakes are indeed very high and the sensitivities very acute. As I indicated in my opening statement on 19 February 2004 when assuming the presidency, I have exerted maximum efforts to bring the delegations of the CD towards consensual agreement on a programme of work that is balanced and acceptable to all. My task as President has been to facilitate discussions and the meeting of minds. I started the first week of my presidency by consulting with key delegations on the proposal to establish subsidiary bodies in the CD with a discussion mandate. As I soon discovered during the course of the consultations, the substantive gaps

(The President)

between the delegations were too wide to be bridged at the present moment, given the sensitivities pertaining to the number of subsidiary bodies to be established and the type of mandates for each respective body.

The Presidential consultations were, however, not altogether fruitless, for it was during the course of these consultations that the idea was born of convening an informal plenary session on the programme of work of the CD, which has eluded us for the last seven years and which has been the main reason for the stalemate in the CD. This is notwithstanding the A-5 proposal, which is currently the only proposal on the table for a programme of work and which has received broad support, but upon which key delegations have yet to pronounce their position. I have also discovered, to my horror, that there is a lot of mistrust and misunderstanding between delegations and between groups on each other's position in regard to a possible programme of work.

I am pleased that my subsequent proposal for "open-ended informal consultations on a work programme" duly took place on Tuesday, 9 March 2004 in this very chamber and received wide support, judging by the number of interested delegations who attended. Some 31 delegations, representing all groups and including all P-5 delegations, took the floor to indicate their positions on a possible work programme, and I must sincerely thank all delegations for their interventions which have helped a great deal in clearing up the misunderstanding, if not the mystery, surrounding the work programme. Even key delegations who had not voiced their position before did so during the consultations, which I consider as a very positive development and which demonstrates a desire to cooperate and advance the work of the CD. Given the short duration of my presidency, which is only a month, I am satisfied that I have done my utmost to fulfil the President's obligations as spelt out under section VIII of the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament on "Agenda and programme of work".

If I may, I would like to highlight some broad trends that revealed themselves during the open-ended informal consultations on the work programme of the CD. I must stress, however, that I am identifying these trends from an academic approach, with the help of "Friends of the Chair" and under my own responsibility as current President. I am doing so with a view to making substantive progress in the CD, as the Secretary-General of the CD, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, has indicated the need to build upon the informal consultations by moving the process forward. The broad trends that I have identified are as follows:

The A-5 proposal, as amended in document CD/1693/Rev.1, enjoys broad support but is considered as an evolutionary process towards a programme of work.

The time to actually embark on a substantive programme of work is not ripe yet, as some key delegations are still studying their positions. However, key delegations who are still formulating their positions are urged to do so quickly in the interest of putting the CD to substantive work again. There is a realistic recognition that the decision-making process involves the capitals of key delegations.

(The President)

Mandates are a touchy issue and so is the issue of linkages, with some delegations wanting to see the adoption of issues in the A-5 proposal as a package, while others want a clear delinkage.

However, delegations are not opposed to having informal plenaries on agenda items that may help to bring the process forward.

Informal plenaries must, however, be focused on helping to bring the process forward, and it is suggested that the informal plenaries could focus on the issues identified by the A-5 proposal, with a discussion mandate for the time being.

Different delegations, and by the same token different groups, have different priorities on the various issues before the CD, with some emphasizing nuclear disarmament, others FMCT, PAROS, NSA and so on. Some delegations have identified FMCT as being “ripe” for negotiations.

Given the present international climate, it is felt by some delegations that there is a need to address issues emanating from present-day challenges, thus the need to address “out of the box” issues. But it was stressed that the “out of the box” issues should be relevant to the work of the CD and should not eclipse the traditional issues on the agenda of the CD which had been adopted by consensus.

Multilateralism is certainly very much alive, and is an important driving force for the CD.

Due recognition has been given to the role of the President in moving the process forward in the search for a programme of work for the CD that is balanced and acceptable to all. The President has been urged to seek initiatives in this regard, including drawing up a suitable timetable and finding the right mechanism for a work programme, within the mandate entrusted to him/her under the rules of procedure of the CD.

Based on that short analysis that I have given under my own responsibility as the current President, I would want to continue working with the incoming Presidents of the CD to move the process forward in formulating an interim work programme, pending the adoption of a final programme of work that, willy-nilly, has to take account of the decisions to be made by key capitals. However, as they say, “the devil is in the details”, and I would like to have more time to contemplate with the incoming President, Ambassador Pablo Macedo of Mexico, and also Mongolia, as the President-in-waiting, and other “Friends of the Chair”, how best to proceed.

In closing, I would like to thank all past Presidents of the CD who have helped in the consensus-building with their various initiatives and proposals, and the secretariat, led by the Secretary-General of the CD, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, for their staunch support for the work of the presidency. My sincere thanks also go to the interpreters and Conference staff, without whose assistance the CD would not have been able to function.

(The President)

My last words are of course reserved for the next President, Ambassador Pablo Macedo of Mexico, and his delegation. Ambassador Macedo had the opportunity to chair the CD temporarily when I was in Caracas, Venezuela, to attend the G-15 summit. Let me wish you the very best, Pablo, and I know that your keen interest in seeing the CD achieve substantive progress in the role that has been assigned to it will ensure that you will weather whatever storm that lies ahead. It would be good to remind ourselves at this juncture that “where there is a will, there will always be a way”.

I would like to wish everyone “terima kasih dan selamat maju jaya” in my native Malay language, which means “thank you and the very best of luck”.

So that concludes my concluding statement as President of the CD. And that also concludes our business for today, unless I see any delegations wishing to take the floor. I see none.

So the next plenary meeting of the CD will be held on Tuesday, 16 March 2004 - at 10 a.m. sharp because we have a Minister coming - under the presidency of Mexico.

The meeting is adjourned, and I thank all of you for your wonderful cooperation.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.