

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.980
17 March 2005

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 17 March 2005, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Tim CAUGHLEY (New Zealand)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 980th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today we will hold the last plenary in the series during which the Conference has been addressed by Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high officials representing member States. We will hear addresses by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

The member States of the Conference greatly appreciate the positive response of our distinguished guests to the invitation extended to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs to address our plenary meetings. Their visit to the Conference is strong testimony of the importance that they personally and their Governments attach to arms control and disarmament and to our endeavours in this regard. Indeed, such a high-level segment of the session has been enriching the Conference with new ideas, with creative political vision and imaginative approaches to both challenges and new threats. It has also been strengthening and further stimulating the multilateralism in the field of arms control and disarmament. We are convinced that the addresses of our distinguished guests, in which they express not only concern over the prolonged impasse in the Conference but also their determined support to this body, are essential in creating the political impetus for the reinvigoration of the Conference on Disarmament, which ultimately should bring the Conference back to negotiations on priority issues.

On my list of distinguished speakers for today I also have Ambassador Idriss Jazairy of Algeria.

But now I have great pleasure in extending a very warm welcome to our first speaker, His Excellency Mr. Kassymzhomart Tokaev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, who will address the Conference.

Mr. TOKAEV (Kazakhstan): I really appreciate the invitation of the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, to address the Conference.

Taking this opportunity I also would like to inform you of the basic position of Kazakhstan on the major issues of disarmament and security.

The system of international security has changed drastically in the past decade. New threats and challenges, the proliferation of nuclear arms and the rise of international terrorism have become a matter of grave concern to the international community. The possibility of the acquisition of nuclear weapons or their components by terrorists has grown tremendously and cannot be excluded as an imminent reality. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to make coordinated and effective efforts at both the international and the regional levels to ensure peace and security. We will not be able to achieve this goal without a strong political will, without a strong commitment to practical steps in the disarmament and non-proliferation areas.

(Mr. Tokaev, Kazakhstan)

From our point of view, the Conference on Disarmament has to be one of the major international instruments playing a crucial role in pursuing disarmament on a global scale. The potential of the Conference has to be further explored for the benefit of the international community.

Existing multilateral instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation are vitally important in responding to the challenges of security. Kazakhstan calls for the strengthened and universal application of the regimes of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and believes that the current international agreements in this area should be adapted to new realities. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, despite recent disappointing developments, still remains the cornerstone in our efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. We hope that the forthcoming NPT Review Conference will outline concrete measures on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Having attached great importance to the full implementation of IAEA safeguards, Kazakhstan signed the Additional Protocol in 2004 and cooperates closely with IAEA in this area. Bearing in mind the continuing importance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Kazakhstan strongly believes that the demand placed on the nuclear-weapon States to grant negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States is well founded and reasonable, and supports the proposal to elaborate within the Conference an international agreement on the non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States against non-nuclear-weapon States.

We also call for an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is critically important for nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and urge the Governments of those States that have not yet signed or ratified this instrument to display political will and genuine commitment to the cause of nuclear disarmament.

As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Kazakhstan is strongly committed to its obligations under the Convention. Kazakhstan wishes to accede to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the appropriate internal procedures are currently taking place. We welcome the efforts of the BWC States parties to develop concerted mechanisms with a view to its strengthening. We believe that in the context of the rapid development of biotechnology and the increased threat of bioterrorism, the establishment of a verification mechanism within the Convention seems to be a challenging problem.

Kazakhstan also believes that the conclusion of a fissile materials cut-off treaty (FMCT) is essential for nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This treaty is expected to tighten international control of the production of fissile materials. We support the mandate for negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials. We are convinced that the start of negotiations on an FMCT will be a significant step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Kazakhstan has also applied for membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Our country is taking steps to reinforce and improve the national export control system.

(Mr. Tokaev, Kazakhstan)

As a State that has voluntarily renounced its nuclear arsenal - the fourth largest in the world - Kazakhstan is actively involved in negotiations to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. In February 2005, the countries of Central Asia finalized the draft treaty. This document has become an important milestone in joint efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. It is important that all the Central Asian countries decided to sign the Treaty in Semipalatinsk - the former nuclear testing site where the former Soviet nuclear programme was realized.

We are strongly convinced that space should be used only for peaceful purposes. Therefore, we support the initiative of the Russian Federation and China to elaborate a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on the threat or use of force against space objects.

Kazakhstan welcomed the creation of the Global Partnership against the spread of WMD and WMD-related materials by the G-8 leaders at the Kananaskis summit. From our point of view, the Global Partnership, in combating the proliferation of all types of WMD and their means of delivery, represents an essential contribution to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

We share the world community's concerns on the illicit trade in and global proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and believe that all necessary measures to inhibit this trend by strengthening control over the export, manufacture and supply of small arms and light weapons must be taken as soon as possible. The ways of practical implementation of the Programme of Action adopted in 2001 at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects became topical issues at the regional conference in Almaty in March 2004.

Global security and disarmament are hardly possible without appropriate measures in strengthening regional security. In this respect, I wish to attract your attention to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, which is successfully held either at the levels of heads of States or at the ministerial level. A unique document - the Catalogue of Confidence-building Measures - which creates the basis for strengthening cooperation and preventing conflicts on the Asian continent has been passed by the member countries of this Conference. This process is gaining momentum, the Conference is being enlarged. Thailand became a new member of the Conference, while Singapore and South Korea expressed their intention of becoming observers in this process. Thus today there are 17 member States of the Conference and more than 10 countries acting as observers. The Conference also includes a number of international organizations.

Multilateral cooperation is very important in facing new challenges to peace and security. Kazakhstan recognizes the leading role of the United Nations in the coordination of international counter-terrorist activities, and believes that the role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee should be increased. The fourth special meeting of the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee with international, regional and subregional organizations took

(Mr. Tokaev, Kazakhstan)

place in my country in January this year. The Meeting highlighted the importance of the interaction of the CTC with regional organizations, which have gained valuable and broad experience in combating terrorism. In its Final Statement, all the participating countries and organizations recognized the vital importance of the universalization of norms in the struggle against terrorism.

It is also important to note that broad measures against terrorism are being taken within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Central Asian Cooperation Organization and the Commonwealth of Independent States. All these organizations are currently engaged in presenting lists of terrorist groups whose activities are going to be prohibited and elaborating the legal framework on combating terrorism.

Kazakhstan stands for the establishment of a council of regional organizations under the Secretary-General of the United Nations. That council could be very useful in coordinating the measures and plans of regional organizations addressing the problem of terrorism.

We have to admit with regret and concern that the Conference on Disarmament failed to adopt its programme of work and thus to fulfil its mandate. However, Kazakhstan believes that preserving this forum is the responsibility of the whole international community. Therefore, we support the idea of maintaining a balance of priorities in the Conference on Disarmament. It is necessary to find a political compromise taking into account the national interests of all States concerned. This objective is quite tangible provided that all member countries exercise their political will, flexibility and responsibility toward the international community.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the Conference, Minister, I would like to thank you very much indeed for your important statement and for the importance attached by your Government to the work of this Conference. I will now suspend the meeting for several minutes to accompany the Minister from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 10.25 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: It is now my great honour to welcome to the Conference on Disarmament His Excellency Mr. Eduard Kukan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, and I now give him the floor to address this Conference.

Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia): It is a great honour for me to address this important forum. The Conference on Disarmament has many times demonstrated its significance for international security, stability, peace, arms control and disarmament and has earned a reputation by many of its important achievements.

A lot of things have happened in my country, Slovakia, since a Slovak Minister last addressed this Conference back in 1997. Slovakia has joined the European Union and other important international organizations. My country has prepared to take a bigger share of responsibility in multilateral affairs. Slovak troops take part in peacekeeping missions in

(Mr. Kukan, Slovakia)

relatively high numbers when measured against the size of Slovakia's army or economy. And, in autumn this year, Slovakia is hopefully going to be elected as a member of the United Nations Security Council, to serve a two-year term in that body, which is the supreme guardian of peace and security in the world.

On the other hand, not much has seemingly happened in the Conference on Disarmament since 1997. At that time, the Conference had just completed the most fruitful period of its existence by successfully negotiating the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. Since then, the Conference has not been able to launch negotiations on any subject.

It must be recognized, however, that over those years a lot of energy has been put into efforts to set the CD back to substantive work. I would like to commend all these efforts, and particularly those of the first two Presidents of this year's session - the Ambassadors of the Netherlands and New Zealand. I understand that they have done their best to achieve at least some progress before the disarmament community moves to New York to take part in the NPT Review Conference in May.

I have come to address this august body today not pretending that Slovakia holds the key to a generally acceptable programme of work. Nor do I pretend that we have discovered the magic formula that would kick-start the negotiations. It is you, the delegations sitting in this room, who are best suited to find the proper recipe once all of you have received a green light from your own capitals. On my part, let me put forward some general observations and concerns.

We believe that when a multilateral body adopts its agenda, it should be prepared to address - in one way or another - all items of interest on that agenda. A comprehensive and balanced approach to dealing with its own agenda would be a sign of elementary respect on the part of the CD for member States who invest considerable human, diplomatic and financial resources to keep the Conference going. On the other hand, by its rules of procedure the CD is obliged to arrive at decisions by consensus. Indeed, topics related to global peace and security, including non-proliferation and disarmament, are far more serious and complex than can be decided by voting. We should not therefore put the blame for the actual lack of agreement on any single delegation or group of States: this is collective work and responsibility. I urge you to step up your efforts to put the existing priorities into a hierarchy and time frame that would realistically reflect the most pressing current threats to global peace and security.

To be more specific, I do see a number of major challenges that this important forum is facing these days. The first major challenge is related to the upcoming NPT Review Conference. The CD was not able to start, let alone complete within the planned five years, negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, in spite of the unambiguous political commitment taken to this end at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. This is an obvious failure and a hard blow to the credibility of this body. The deficit caused by this failure has to be addressed with the utmost seriousness in the coming months.

(Mr. Kukan, Slovakia)

The second major challenge comes with the changing global political and security environment. The United Nations has launched a process of reform in order to live up to this challenge. Can the CD stand idly by? The analysis contained in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change addresses security in many aspects: putting it into a wider context of issues such as development, institutional arrangements and collective security, including subjects directly relevant to the CD such as arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me put some of the ideas in the report into the perspective of the CD.

Launching substantive work in the CD is not an end in itself. It is for the sake and benefit of the noble goals of peace, global stability, security and prosperity for all. Prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction, including their clandestine proliferation, curbing the risk of their falling into hands of non-State actors and terrorist groups, addressing the question of disarmament: these are the topical issues of our times. There is no doubt that the CD has an irreplaceable role in addressing these issues. However, the only viable way for the CD to perform its tasks effectively and to reinforce its relevance lies with the member States. It is the capitals that must take the challenges seriously and initiate action.

Notwithstanding the best intentions of all of us, continuing non-action could lead to the loss of the CD's credibility. To whatever degree the CD may be important, it is only an instrument for the pursuit of States' policies. As a result, it is the credibility of States and of existing achievements in the area of global security that are at stake. Since security is a key element of many other domains of human life and development, the stakes are much higher than those visible at first sight. I believe that this is the way that we, back in our capitals, should look at the CD's impasse.

I am convinced that it is indispensable to change attitudes in the capitals. Instead of waiting for others to make the opening move, it is essential that everybody should look at what they themselves can do at this juncture. It is crucial to re-evaluate our stance on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me use the example of the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They should be in balance to ensure that their overall purpose is accomplished. Nevertheless, it is hard to believe that disarmament and the right to the peaceful use of science and modern technology, as stipulated in the NPT, BWC and CWC, can be properly pursued in a world full of proliferation risks. The European Union Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, adopted in December 2003, provides an important tool for addressing the threat of proliferation. Slovakia, as member of the European Union, fully supports the Strategy as well as the practical measures envisaged therein.

Having said that, a major breakthrough in the CD still seems unlikely to happen soon. It would thus be advisable to make some perhaps small but constructive steps towards meeting each other's expectations and rebuilding mutual confidence. There are many windows of opportunity in this regard. I would like to highlight two of them. The first one is related to the forthcoming NPT Review Conference. A lot depends on its results. Should the Review Conference fulfil its tasks successfully, a good basis would be set for converting its achievements into progress within the CD as well.

(Mr. Kukan, Slovakia)

The second opportunity lies in resolution 1540 of the United Nations Security Council. Its implementation is crucial for progress in the whole area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, including the work of the CD. CD member States should take the lead in fully implementing the resolution in an expeditious and effective manner. That would create an overall positive atmosphere and would set an example also for other States not members of the Conference. It is of essential importance that the process of implementation does not lose momentum, as it will have a strong impact on the aforesaid confidence-building efforts as well. This is a unique opportunity that will hardly occur again.

In this context, I would like to briefly recall the recent summit of the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation in the capital city of Bratislava. The summit has demonstrated once again how important an asset confidence may be. Presidents Bush and Putin have come to common ground on some important issues connected also to security and non-proliferation. We believe that such positive examples will inspire all of us to follow suit. The Bratislava summit represents one of the blocks of the confidence-building process that should be expanded both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Let me conclude by expressing my strong desire that in cooperation with your capitals, you will find a way out of the impasse, and I wish you every success in that endeavour. I hope that Slovakia, as a member of this still important body, will be privileged to join substantive negotiations on the most pressing issues very soon.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the Conference, I want to thank you, Minister, very warmly for your important statement and advice and also for the importance your Government attaches to the work of this Conference. It is much appreciated.

I shall now suspend the meeting for a few minutes in order to escort the Minister from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and resumed at 10.42 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: It is now my very great pleasure to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of you all, to His Excellency Mr. Itsunori Onodera, the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan, who will now address the Conference.

Mr. ONODERA (Japan): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. Let me assure you of my country's fullest support for your untiring efforts and initiatives.

It is a great honour for me to be invited to speak before this historical forum. Today, more than ever, this multilateral negotiating body has an urgent task to undertake. This Conference has produced various multilateral agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation. Those agreements constitute indispensable tools to secure international peace and security. Recently, however, these multilateral instruments have faced various challenges; loopholes

(Mr. Onodera, Japan)

have been unearthed. In this broader context the expectations on the CD are truly high. The CD has already identified key subjects to be tackled. Nevertheless, it has remained at a standstill for almost a decade. This situation is a source of great disappointment and grave concern for the world. This stalemate should be overcome.

This year, the year 2005, is of particular importance to the CD. Firstly, it marks the sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombings in Japan. The ever-stronger voice of Japanese civil society is ardently calling for the elimination of nuclear arsenals. Japan is the only country to have suffered nuclear devastation. Japan has a moral responsibility to the international community to advocate the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and has conducted vigorous diplomatic efforts to realize concrete measures leading to this end. In this practical and incremental approach, the CD has played, and should continue to play, a pivotal role to achieve such concrete disarmament measures.

Secondly, the 2005 NPT Review Conference will be held this year in May. The CD and the NPT regime are separate entities, with respective roles to play. Yet both are key components of the current nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and should therefore play mutually reinforcing roles. The commencement of substantive work in the CD is necessary to give a strong impetus to the upcoming Review Conference. It is therefore an opportune moment for the CD to surpass its current stalemate and to respond to the world's expectations.

Different reasons are given to explain the CD's inability to reach consensus on a programme of work: differing priorities among the respective regional groups, so-called linkage problems or, simply, a lack of political will. In short, there is no consensus among CD member States on which issues are the most important for the CD to address. I would like to make the following suggestions to get past this impasse and create a revitalized and productive momentum in the CD to return it to its substantive task.

Firstly, given the rapidly changing security environment, we can no longer afford to continue lengthy procedural discussions. The CD has to offer new instruments to deal with the imminent security challenges facing us today. From this perspective, the FMCT, prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, is extremely important, not only for nuclear disarmament, but also for nuclear non-proliferation. By halting the future production of fissile material, the FMCT will contribute to the elimination of a potential source of proliferation. For this reason, Japan considers the commencement of negotiations on the FMCT a priority for the CD. There may well exist different perspectives with regard to the possible substance of negotiations. However, no member State, as far as I am aware, disagrees on the commencement of negotiations itself. Negotiations should begin without further delay, and eventual questions on verification can be resolved during negotiations.

Secondly, I would like to point out that, although the real cause of the stalemate in the CD could be attributed to a lack of flexibility from States, there may be room for improvement in the area of current CD procedures. More consistent and harmonized

(Mr. Onodera, Japan)

management by the successive Presidents could facilitate consensus-building. Concurrently with the United Nations reform currently under way, the CD should be examined in a new light to make its operation more efficient and results-oriented. Lack of self-restructuring in any organization can only lead to decline. International forums like the CD are no exception.

In this context I would like to remind you that the CD limits its membership to only 65 States. Twenty-three countries are on the waiting list to enter. Membership was limited to ensure the efficiency of the forum. Thus, we have a strong moral obligation to proceed with negotiations in the field of disarmament for the sake of the international community as a whole.

Before concluding, I would like to draw your attention to the DPRK issue. While the countries concerned were making diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution to the nuclear issue through the six-party talks, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK issued a statement on 10 February 2005 announcing that the DPRK would suspend its participation in the six-party talks for an indefinite period, and that it had manufactured nuclear weapons. This announcement is extremely regrettable, and the international community, including the Government of Japan, has already expressed its deep concern over the statement on several occasions, including at the latest IAEA Board of Governors meeting in early March. The nuclear programme of the DPRK not only represents a direct threat to the peace and stability of the North-East Asian region, including Japan, but also poses a serious challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The international community must not accept, under any circumstances, any development, acquisition, possession, test or transfer of nuclear weapons by the DPRK. The international community should further call on the DPRK to ensure the complete disarmament of all of its nuclear programmes, under credible international verification. It is important for the international community, including IAEA, to deal squarely with the situation so as to avoid any possible regrets in the future. Japan firmly believes that the DPRK nuclear issue should be solved peacefully through dialogue. The six-party talks currently represent the most realistic framework, and should continue to be fully utilized. Japan urges the DPRK to agree to the resumption of the six-party talks at an early date, without preconditions. Japan, together with China, the host country of the six-party talks, and other partners, is ready to continue to make every effort for a resolution through diplomatic efforts, primarily by actively contributing to the six-party talks. Furthermore, Japan believes that, should there be no progress made towards resolving the DPRK nuclear issue, the international community should deal with the situation in a more befitting manner and with a greater sense of urgency.

Japan ardently hopes that the sense of urgency to recommence negotiations, widely shared by members of the CD, results in the start of substantive work this year. I can assure the Conference that Japan will continue to play its part in the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation and renew its strong commitment to constructive multilateralism.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the Conference, I should like to thank very much the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs for his important statement and advice and to thank you very much also for the ongoing support of your Government to the work of this Conference and the support you have expressed for the Chair.

I suspend the meeting for slightly more than for a few minutes this time in order to escort the Parliamentary Secretary from the Chamber.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: I now have the great honour and pleasure to welcome very warmly among us His Excellency Adam Daniel Rotfeld, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. I give him the floor to address this Conference.

Mr. ROTFELD (Poland): Mr. President, allow me to begin with the expression of my highest esteem to you and your predecessors for your continued efforts to bring back the focus of the Conference on Disarmament to its primary interest, which is negotiating international disarmament treaties. Let me stress that you as well as incoming CD Presidents may rely on our full support in the process of fulfilling your difficult task. I would also like to take this opportunity to greet the Secretary-General of the CD and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, as well as his deputy, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey.

The new international environment is characterized by qualitatively new phenomena like mega-terrorism; unprecedented proliferation of weapons, including both conventional and weapons of mass destruction; increasing numbers of States in distress; and the emergence of new capabilities of non-State actors to attack States. A combination of these elements poses a major challenge to States, their stability and security.

Even the most powerful States are not able to face and deal with new challenges alone. We must therefore find ways to make multilateral structures effective and adequate so States can cooperate and respond to threats within the existing multilateral institutional framework - first and foremost within the United Nations system.

However, it is a fact of life that new security structures emerge outside the United Nations system, including in the non-proliferation and disarmament area, and sometimes it is necessary. This should not lead to a marginalization of the United Nations and renationalization of security policies.

Today, more than ever, the United Nations must play a critical role as it strives to hammer out a new political consensus and advance possible progress in peace and security. There is room for optimism, but much hard work lies ahead. In this context, Poland assesses positively the report of the High-level Panel, "A more secure world: our shared responsibility". Most of the Panel's recommendations respond properly to the major threats to peace and security

(Mr. Rotfeld, Poland)

in today's world. The report successfully attempts a broad review of issues connected with the global system of collective security, from conceptual foundations to institutional matters. The report, in our view, offered a good basis for the preparation of United Nations summit decisions in 2005.

We welcomed the fact that the report took into account certain Polish suggestions and recommendations. We are glad that on many points it is consistent with the initiative of a "New political act" for the United Nations for the twenty-first century, presented by Poland in the United Nations General Assembly in 2002. On 8 February, I submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General draft elements for a New political act, which could be adopted and preferably signed by heads of State and government at the planned 2005 summit. We conceive of the New political act as a new consensus over how the United Nations Charter could best serve the implementation of its principles and objectives at the dawn of the twenty-first century. We need a concise and solemn declaration, which would contain commitments to a number of value-based principles of a code of conduct, interpreted in the light of global security phenomena to which every State is subject.

The key challenges on the international community's agenda are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. We have some tools to counter them, but today they are insufficient.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime is equipped with a number of acts of international law, like the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. It is also enforced by the activity of the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as the export control regimes. We cannot underestimate the bilateral agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation on the utilization of the post-Soviet nuclear stockpiles - a legacy of the past. Hence the array of agreements relevant to stopping the proliferation of fissile material is broad and so far works, if not effectively enough. The crucial missing link in its chain is the lack of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force 35 years ago, has defied gloomy predictions that, today, we would find between 15 and 50 nuclear-weapon States. With 188 States parties, it is one of the most universally supported international treaties. Given the grave perils that nuclear proliferation poses for all States, the NPT has been a true cornerstone of global security. The Final Document adopted at the 2000 Review Conference clearly demonstrated that all the States parties to the NPT are seriously committed to the realization of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Let me reiterate my Government's long-standing position that the advancement of nuclear disarmament implies a successful mixture of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures which complement and strengthen each other. Furthermore, progress on and prospects for nuclear disarmament directly affect global peace and security. This is the reason for our strong belief that the role of multilateral forums on disarmament should not be diminished, although we highly appreciate and welcome unilateral or bilateral nuclear disarmament efforts by the nuclear-weapon States. Accordingly, Poland attaches great importance to the outcome of

(Mr. Rotfeld, Poland)

the 2005 NPT Review Conference as a significant achievement, and strongly hopes that this event will contribute to disarmament efforts in other bodies and forums, especially in this body. I would like to use this opportunity to call upon the NPT States parties to make every effort possible to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and provide us with a substantial Conference outcome comparable to those of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences.

The Conference on Disarmament can contribute effectively to the progress of the multilateral system. The CD has played an important role in the past. It has been a venue where the most important disarmament treaties have been negotiated. It has served the goal of strengthening international peace and security through the enhancing of multilateral disarmament well. During the cold war and since its end, the Conference has been a forum of dialogue and confidence-building. It has been a place where States can discuss and, when the time comes, negotiate matters of the utmost importance to their security interests. Although achieving consensus has never been easy, the Conference and its predecessors have been able to negotiate and agree on such important treaties as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention or the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to name but a few. The CD successes in the past have stemmed from the fact that there has been genuine political will to advance multilateral disarmament.

Today the Conference on Disarmament - for eight years already - dwells on discussions about its programme of work. We see endless meetings about what the CD should work on, instead of discussions on the details of negotiated treaties. Some delegations do not show the necessary flexibility, while the majority of delegations are ready to start substantive work.

We need to break the stalemate of the CD. We face growing challenges in the area of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. The nuclear non-proliferation regime is under huge pressure. Illicit networks supplying WMD-related materials and technologies have proved to pose a far greater threat than we ever expected before. Man-portable air defence systems (MANPADs) have become a deadly tool in the hands of terrorists, and vast stocks of chemical and biological weapons are still posing a threat - especially if they fall into the hands of non-State actors. This list can continue.

Poland - with its allies and partners - acts with energy to prevent those threats. My country is a participant in activities under the Proliferation Security Initiative, which was launched in Kraków in 2004. We support the full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540. We assist partners in the destruction of chemical weapons. We are actively engaged in the G-8 Global Partnership against the proliferation of WMD.

This Conference faces important tasks. The long-awaited negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) should strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and advance the disarmament goals of the international community. Discussions about nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States should also help strengthen the role of the Conference in multilateral arms control and disarmament. It is our view that the CD should not refrain from addressing the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We would thus fulfil our obligation to preserve outer space for peaceful uses.

(Mr. Rotfeld, Poland)

The recently presented views by this and the previous President of the CD on the state of affairs in the Conference are realistic and give us hope to establish the long-awaited programme of work. Let me stress Poland's willingness to start substantial work in this body as soon as possible. There are also other issues that could find their way into the schedule of activities of the CD. We should not limit ourselves to traditional issues. MANPADs, verification of and compliance with disarmament treaties, conventional weapons, confidence-building measures are just a few examples of what this Conference could reflect on.

Voices of frustration, suggesting the suspension of the work of the Conference, have recently been heard. While sharing the overall feeling of a certain disappointment with the results of the work of this body, I cannot agree with such suggestions. I must emphasize once again that the CD has proved its value in the past. I strongly believe that it still has important tasks to perform.

With your permission, Mr. President, I would like to add here, having in mind my previous position, not in the capacity of Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, that probably the time is ripe to initiate and inspire a new style - a group of professional security experts and security analysts - to discuss individually, not as representatives of States, what has to be done in order to offer another approach to States. In other words, we have at the moment, within the United Nations High-level Panel, within the OSCE eminent personalities, within NATO, a new concept recently created by Chancellor Schröder, a kind of Harmel Report II, within the other different multilateral bodies, a kind of approach that there is a need to present something innovative, creative, a totally different approach, because we are confronted with different problems, and I would suggest, without having a kind of decision, that we inspire the group of leading best and brightest security analysts, plus some think tanks like, let's say, my previous SIPRI and let's say, IISS in London, or some other institutions, to prepare some suggestions for the Conference. It seems to me that it would be a much more creative approach than to have another commission or another official State body.

While strengthening our efforts to reach consensus on the substance of the work of the Conference, we should bear in mind that new challenges require new responses. Organizations created in the bipolar world must adjust to the current reality. We do not need to change the rules of procedure or founding charters. What we need is a new political consensus, an expression of political will that may enable the international community to act.

I would like to conclude by saying that we must have the courage to go beyond our narrow national security interests in order to enhance the international system which will be providing security for all. General de Gaulle once said: "There are moments when the will of a handful of free men breaks through determinism and opens up new roads. People get the history they deserve". Let me express my sincere hope that all countries represented in this body can be free enough to open new perspectives. And I'm confident that you, all of you, deserve the commencement of long-awaited negotiations.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the Conference, I thank very warmly the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Poland for his important statement and for his thoughtful advice. And I thank you, Minister, too, also for the importance which your Government attaches to the work of this Conference and for the support you expressed to its presidencies.

I shall adjourn the meeting once again just for a few moments this time to escort the Minister from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.25 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: I will now continue with the speakers' list for this morning, and I will now call on the distinguished representative of Algeria to take the floor.

Mr. JAZAIRY (Algeria) (translated from Arabic): First of all, I would like to fully support what the Ambassador of Egypt, Ms. Gabr, said on 15 March 2005 when she clearly spelled out the position of the G-21 group, which includes Algeria. During this week we have had the opportunity to listen to statements from the foreign ministers of 10 countries. This shows the interest that these countries and the international community take in questions of international security and disarmament, as well as in the work of our Conference.

The foreign ministers of Peru, Finland, Ukraine and Kazakhstan drew our attention to an issue of great importance, namely the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. They focused on the importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects adopted by the United Nations in 2001. While that issue is not a focus of our deliberations on the programme of work, it is nevertheless of crucial importance. The use of such arms, even if they are classified as light weapons, is responsible for heavy loss of human life, not to mention the damage it does to socio-economic development. According to available data, most of the armed conflicts which have taken place in the past couple of years have involved light weapons, claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands of victims. A total of 500,000 people died in such conflicts during the last year alone, according to the Foreign Minister of Peru. This figure is rising steadily, both during times of peace and times of war. At the same time, the stockpiles of these weapons have increased to approximately 700 million items; 59 per cent are in the hands of civilians and the remainder are in the possession of military personnel, police forces and non-State actors, including terrorist groups.

International terrorism, transnational organized crime and local conflicts all exacerbate the negative impact on victims of the use of small arms and light weapons. The rising death toll linked to the use of light weapons has mobilized the international community to take steps to reduce the lethal impact of these weapons. This mobilization culminated in the United Nations conference which took place in July 2001 on this issue. The conference concluded with the adoption of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Africa is one of the regions that has suffered most from the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons, fuelled by the greed

(Mr. Jazairy, Algeria)

of death merchants. Since Algeria is convinced of the need to control this trade in order to preserve and strengthen international peace and security, it participated actively in the 2001 United Nations conference and supported the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference. Since then, it has worked hard to implement the Programme of Action. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that Algeria will host a regional conference from 11 to 13 April in cooperation with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. The conference will focus on the implementation of the 2001 Programme by Arab States. Representatives from the League of Arab States and countries from the African Sahel will take part in the conference, together with experts from United Nations specialized agencies, UNDP, INTERPOL, the League of Arab States, the African Union and non-governmental organizations.

The conference, which is to be held after the Arab summit in Algiers, will focus on the implementation of the Programme of Action by Arab States and will consider means to promote regional cooperation, including with neighbouring African countries. It will also focus on the preparation of the Second Biennial Meeting of States which will take place in New York in July 2005. In addition, Algeria is planning a national seminar on caring for victims of anti-personnel mines. The meeting will take place in the last week of April this year. These two initiatives are evidence of Algeria's desire to meet its international obligations and to promote dialogue with a view to eliminating this scourge which continues to threaten humanity.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Algeria, Ambassador Idriss Jazairy, for his statement. I have no other speakers - I see the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. AN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to make a brief statement on behalf of my delegation.

We have listened with much attention to the statements made at the plenary during this week by the Foreign Ministers of various countries. We appreciate the efforts of high-level officials to revitalize the work of the CD. We hope that these efforts will continue in the right direction.

The impression we have from those statements is that the CD really has a long way to go. We have also felt a sense of disappointment. That is that the essence of the matter is afraid of being touched upon and only the surface is being fumbled. If one would ignore the essence of any issue and see only the phenomenon, that issue cannot be resolved. If smoking is to be removed, fire, its source, should be extinguished. As long as the fire is there, the spread of smoke cannot be prevented.

There has been mention of the withdrawal of my country from the NPT and its possession of nuclear weapons. The CD is not an appropriate forum to address this issue, but since the issue was taken up and mentioned, we would like to make a few remarks. In a word, it is due to the extreme threats posed against the sovereign rights and the right to existence of the DPRK that it withdrew from the NPT and was compelled to possess nuclear weapons.

(Mr. An, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

The Government of the DPRK stated this very clearly in the statement of its Foreign Ministry on 10 February 2005. We have never felt obliged to be bound by the NPT at the sacrifice of our sovereign rights and at the sacrifice of our nation and people. Our nuclear option is only a self-defence measure which cannot be otherwise in the worst situation imposed upon us from the outside.

It is quite justified for a sovereign State to think of a corresponding self-defensive measure to defend its sovereignty and people, when it is obvious that there is clear pursuit of a policy aimed at repressing its sovereignty and destroying the country by force. We believe that this will be the same case with any sovereign State. As long as such a hostile policy continues, the self-defensive nuclear deterrent means will likewise continue to be strengthened. It must be the core concern to be paid to the unilateral and arrogant policy which gives rise to this situation. And it will be the appropriate concern and demand to be made on the right track.

I would point specifically to the statement of Japan. From the policy of the Japanese Government, Japan is not in a position to be honestly involved in the discussion process of the nuclear issue. However, Japan has been allowed - the DPRK has allowed Japan - to attend the six-party talks in order for them to learn how to take up the proper approach to the issue and how to behave for peace and security in the region. But Japan has only pushed the aim to achieve its unilateral ambition through the talks. That ambition is to revive militarism and to achieve overseas expansion militarily. Japan does not want the resolution of the nuclear issue. They want to continue to fish in troubled water. Japan has not given up its past ambition: the dream of having the whole of Asia at hand. It is still a danger point.

On the first day of our plenary, back in January, two statements impressed, even touched my delegation, and me, personally. Those two statements were from the Ambassadors of Poland and Germany, who spoke on the occasion of the liberation of Auschwitz camp.

But the feeling I am forced to have today is quite different. Japan had been given the political opportunity by one Power to resurrect without complete elimination of its past crimes, unlike other enemy States contained in the United Nations Charter. Therefore, it does not have a true sense of crimes it has committed in the past. Rather, it thinks that its peace constitution stands in the way of reviving militarism and has searched for an excuse to amend Japan's constitution and revive it. The policy and move of Japan throws dark clouds over the future peace and security of the region.

The DPRK will not tolerate these developments. We will not tolerate this move to revive militarism. If this move continues, the DPRK will respond in a really more befitting manner.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. An Myung Hun, for his statement, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Japan.

Mr. MINE (Japan): The representative of the DPRK has touched upon matters which are related to my country. I would like to make clear again a couple of points.

About our participation in the six-party talks, it seems the DPRK is trying to link Japan's participation in the six-party talks to a certain different issue. However, the DPRK nuclear issue is directly related to Japan's security, and Japan's continued participation in the six-party talks is essential. Other countries participating in the talks concur on this point - that the six-party talks cannot take place without Japan's participation. Given its insincerity vis-à-vis the case which we are discussing bilaterally and multilaterally, Japan does not consider the DPRK in a position to comment on our participation in the talks.

Secondly, Japan, as the only country to have suffered from atomic bombing, has renounced the option of nuclear weapons, in line with international treaties, such as the NPT, and continues to adhere to its three non-nuclear principles of not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan. There is no ground that we are trying to look for the revival of militarism.

And thirdly, about the past, Japan's basic position on past issues stands as stated in the Prime Minister's statement of 1995 and the Pyongyang Declaration. Japan urges the DPRK to take sincere measures based on the Pyongyang Declaration towards resolving these various issues.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Japan, Ambassador Yoshiaki Mine, for his statement. I call on the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. AN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I want to make two points, the first point concerning the nuclear issue and the participation over the nuclear issue. This nuclear issue has been taken up against the background of unstable peace and security throughout the region in which we live, and so those States that attend the six-party talks all have other responsibilities. It is only the issue which belongs to the DPRK. Mainly it is an issue between the United States of America and my country, and Japan also has a responsibility. Since we are a direct party to these talks, we have full power to comment on the quality and qualification of the participation of Japan in the six-party process.

Second point: concerning the Pyongyang Declaration between Japan and the DPRK, it was a very good declaration, but it is not yet being implemented, due to the betrayal move by the Japanese Government. Throughout history, between Japan and the DPRK and Korea, we know Japan very well. The Korean people know Japan too well. Now the Government and people of the DPRK feared even talking with Japan. This is the feeling that we are forced to have.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and before I move into the concluding stages of this plenary this morning, are there any other delegations that would wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case, in which case, let me make a few concluding remarks and also a number of expressions of gratitude of one sort or another.

(The President)

I want to begin by thanking our Secretary-General and my predecessor, Ambassador Chris Sanders for their support and for their success in delivering such a worthwhile high-level segment this year. My gratitude goes also to those members whose Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries of Foreign Affairs took the trouble and time to address us this week. And I cannot emphasize enough how grateful I am for the manner in which Chris Sanders, through his efforts in offering us a possible way forward through his subtle, informal, untabled derivation of the five Ambassadors' proposal, has underpinned a further intensification of the focus on finding a way through the CD's impasse.

I feel that I can safely report that the level of engagement in the CD is heightening. This has been reflected not only in the numbers of Ministers who attended this chamber, but also in what they have said. It is apparent that the view that the CD's problem is one of political will rather than lack of diplomatic inspiration is quite widely shared in governments at ministerial level.

I believe that there is an elevated level of engagement in other respects also. There is widespread concern, as I have said before, that this Conference risks sidelining itself, and a number of Ministers have reminded us of this. And there exists a strong hope in many quarters that an advancement in our work would augur well for the NPT Review Conference, which takes place in six weeks' time.

Through my bilateral consultations, I have concluded that it is within our grasp to convert this heightening of engagement and concern into real momentum. Ideally, we would capitalize on that impulse in the remaining weeks of the CD's first session, prior to the NPT Review Conference and certainly within the term of Nigeria's presidency.

Our capacity to do so must confront certain realities. When I described Chris Sanders' non-paper as an informal derivation of the five Ambassadors' proposal, I did so advisedly. The deal that it represents, as with other manifestations of a multifaceted programme of work advanced in the CD in recent years, necessarily contains elements that are not universally palatable. That is what compromises are all about. The individual pills may be bitter to swallow, but the dose in this case is ineffective unless we swallow them all.

The next phase of the CD's work, in my view, entails the urgent negotiation of the precise prescription of one, perhaps several, of those pills. This will require mutual flexibility, fostered, as I noted on 22 February when echoing Chris Sanders' wise words, by maximum transparency on all sides. I wish Ambassador Joseph Ayologu of Nigeria my full support and warmest greetings for his presidency.

Finally, we thank a number of people whose support has been invaluable. I have already mentioned the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and I also mentioned specifically the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, for their valuable assistance and support, which certainly facilitated discharging my duties as President. I am also very grateful to Mr. Jerzy Zaleski for his expert

(The President)

advice on practices and procedures of the Conference, to his colleagues in DDA, and to the secretaries whose dedication and organizational skills were indispensable in coordinating and scheduling my bilateral consultations these past two or three weeks. Last but not least, I should like to thank the staff members of the United Nations Office at Geneva, interpreters, translators, conference room officers and security officers, whose skills and experience have contributed considerably to the smooth, efficient and safe conduct of our work.

Before concluding the meeting, I wish to remind distinguished delegates that next week, on Monday and Tuesday, 21 and 22 March, the Government of China, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Simon Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Research of Canada and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research have organized a conference entitled "Safeguarding space security: prevention of an arms race in outer space". The Conference will be held here in the Council Chamber. The organizers invite the member States and observer States to participate in the conference.

Unless any other delegation wishes to take the floor at this stage, this concludes our business for today.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.