

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 2 March 2006, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. PARK In-kook (Republic of Korea)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1008th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference will continue its debate on nuclear disarmament. As I announced at the conclusion of the plenary meeting on Tuesday, the debate will focus on future nuclear disarmament measures. Delegations may also address other issues related to the main theme of our deliberations, that is, nuclear disarmament.

I have the following speakers for today's plenary meeting: Pakistan, Malaysia, India, Algeria, China, Nigeria, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Morocco, France, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Ireland, Canada, Cuba, the United Kingdom and Chile.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): Mr. President, we congratulate you on your assumption of the office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. We are all aware of the efforts you made months before assuming this office to move the CD towards substantive negotiations, albeit through indirect means, to get around the current impasse.

We are in a state of "suspended belief, always open to conviction", to quote T.H. Huxley. We are in "as if" mode, "as if" we will start negotiations. This is a good sign.

We credit you and the other five Presidents of the 2006 sessions with the extended collegial consultations you held despite difficulties. In this regard, we appreciate the zeal and resilience of the first President of this session, Ambassador Rapacki of Poland, and the teamwork of all the incoming Presidents.

We associate ourselves with the position of the G-21, presented by Ambassador Baha Al-Shibib of Iraq on 28 February.

Nuclear disarmament needs no introduction in this body. This is the Conference on Disarmament. Its raison d'être is to save nations from the scourge of nuclear war through disarmament; to avert such a war; and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples.

The legal, political and moral imperatives for nuclear disarmament are apparent. Several speakers last Tuesday reaffirmed and reiterated them.

The NPT reflects the international community's commitment to facilitate the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the liquidation of all their existing stockpiles, and the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery, pursuant to a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. General and complete disarmament, thus, is the desired goal.

The International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of 1996, called for negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention to secure complete and irreversible disarmament. The G-21

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

has put forward proposals for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

The progress made so far in disarmament has been recognized. There are, however, continuing concerns in several areas:

First, the commitment in article VI of the NPT to complete disarmament remains open-ended. There is a growing impression that, with the indefinite extension of the NPT, most nuclear-weapon States presume that they have a permanent right to retain nuclear weapons.

Second, the pace of nuclear disarmament is not fast enough. There are still too many nuclear weapons out there, the bulk of them possessed by a very few nations.

Third, even as cuts into existing arsenals are taking place, new and more sophisticated devices are being developed and experimented. The development and actual battlefield use of mini-nukes have been theorized.

Fourth, the increasing emphasis on nuclear weapons in security doctrines undercuts the logic of disarmament. The geographical scope for the use of nuclear weapons has been expanded to nuclear alliances with the provision to share nuclear weapons and command and control among alliance members. Contrary to resolutions 255 and 984 of the Security Council, doctrines have been expounded for the use of nuclear weapons against biological and chemical weapons and against terrorists.

Fifth, the avowed principles of transparency, verification and irreversibility are not being upheld.

Sixth, there is no movement on the related issues of fissile materials, outer space, negative security assurances, and test ban.

Seventh, the disarmament machinery is in limbo. In fact, it is largely inactive.

We attribute this state of affairs to a flux in the global security architecture. The consensus supporting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has weakened. There are divergences among member States, which cannot be ignored. It is time to take stock of the situation and to evolve a new consensus to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation. This must be done through consultations and agreement among all member States.

A new security consensus will help us in addressing existing and emerging challenges such as WMD proliferation to terrorists, vertical nuclear proliferation, the development and accumulation of advanced conventional weapons, the development and deployment of ABM systems, the absence of an international agreement on missiles, and the militarization of outer space. We can achieve this goal through the Conference on Disarmament or a special session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) or SSOD-4. This could also help us to reconcile nuclear reality to the global non-proliferation regime.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. They should be pursued simultaneously, not sequentially. Credible steps by nuclear-weapon States within a reasonable time frame are essential to revalidate the “bargain” on disarmament and non-proliferation and restore a genuine balance between them. Cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy must continue to enjoy international support under globally agreed conditions to maintain the sanctity of this bargain.

Of course, WMD proliferation is dangerous, but it can be contained only if it is accompanied by a parallel effort to realize WMD disarmament. Discrimination and asymmetric possession of WMD is not a recipe for non-proliferation or regional and global stability. The new threat of terrorists acquiring WMD should be addressed through collective and cooperative measures, not through coercion or discrimination.

Pakistan supports international arms control and disarmament initiatives and efforts. We are against an open-ended strategic or conventional arms race in our region. We will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We are observing a voluntary, unilateral moratorium on further nuclear tests and we are ready to participate in negotiations on a fissile material treaty in accordance with the Shannon report.

With India, we are working on strategic stability, confidence-building and nuclear risk reduction, including the prevention of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. Last year in October, the Foreign Secretaries of Pakistan and India signed an agreement on pre-notification of flight testing of ballistic missiles. This year on 18 January, the Foreign Secretaries mandated two expert groups to continue consultations on security concepts and nuclear doctrines to develop measures for confidence-building in the nuclear and conventional fields.

The international community should reinforce efforts aimed at strategic stability in South Asia at the lowest possible level. Discriminatory approaches could undermine stability. Parity is the best recipe for strategic restraint and stability in the region.

Contemporary security literature is cautioning us that the cold war doctrine of MAD (mutual assured destruction) is being replaced by concepts of “nuclear primacy”. This could set off a destabilizing chain reaction and accelerate a new strategic and conventional arms race. Such concepts and their actualization would also increase the risks of accidental or unauthorized exchanges or even intentional nuclear wars. General and complete disarmament, and multilateral negotiations towards that end, are an antidote for this growing malady.

All is not dark and dismal. This year, the CD is marginally upgrading its activity. The United Nations Disarmament Commission has been revived. SSOD-4 should focus on existing and emerging security challenges. This should be a good backdrop for the CD to agree to a programme of work and start negotiations in earnest on all four interrelated core issues.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Khan of Pakistan for his statement and encouraging words addressed to the Chair and the six presidencies. I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, Mr. Yusri.

Mr. WAN AZNAINIZAM YUSRI (Malaysia): Mr. President, at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Malaysia, I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of our support and cooperation in your endeavours to move the Conference forward and begin its substantive work. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and all the 2006 CD Presidents or the P6 for the work that has been done so far, in particular for the initiative of structured discussions on items of the agenda.

The 1995 NPT Review Conference agreed that the indefinite extension of the Treaty does not accord the nuclear-weapons States the privilege to possess nuclear weapons in perpetuity. The nuclear-weapons States are obliged to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date, and to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Unfortunately, no progress has been made towards achieving a world free from nuclear weapons since this agreement was reached. Despite some reports of bilateral and unilateral reductions, thousands of these weapons continue to be deployed and their numbers remain secret. We wish to underline that reductions in deployments and in operational status cannot substitute for irreversible cuts in and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Any assumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons is incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the NPT regime as well as with the advisory opinion on the *legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons* rendered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 8 July 1996. The decision of the Court remains a historic and resolute decision in the field of nuclear disarmament. The ICJ unanimously concluded that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective control. Malaysia in this regard feels compelled to stress that the decision by the ICJ and the agreement reached at previous NPT Review Conferences, in particular in 1995 and 2000, must be followed by concrete action by all States.

While it is important to focus international attention on concrete steps toward nuclear disarmament which are achievable in the short term, Malaysia is strongly of the view that it is equally important to simultaneously consider the requirements for a comprehensive nuclear disarmament regime in order to develop an international understanding of the final destination of nuclear disarmament steps. We believe that the further development of an incremental-comprehensive approach would assist in the implementation of the programme of action agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and would lead more quickly to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

In this connection, we hope the CD, pending the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, could begin discussions on the legal, technical and political elements required for the establishment and maintenance of a nuclear-weapons-free world, with the aim of integrating such thinking into the development of a programme of action based on the practical steps agreed in 2000 for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the NPT. We are of the view that these elements may include: non-discriminatory general obligations, applicable to States and non-State actors, prohibiting the acquisition, development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons; interim control, protection and accounting of nuclear weapons and fissile material holdings; phases and

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steps for the systematic and progressive destruction of all nuclear warheads and their delivery vehicles; mechanisms for verifying the destruction of all nuclear weapons; mechanisms for ensuring compliance; an international organization to coordinate verification, implementation and enforcement under strict and effective international control; and lastly, disarmament and non-proliferation education to ensure that key sectors of society understand the importance of achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapons-free world and how they can contribute to this goal.

A comprehensive overview of the legal, technical and political requirements for a nuclear-weapons-free world would be able to affirm such elements which already exist, assess those which are currently being developed, evaluate and link those which have been proposed and identify additional elements which would also be required. We are of the view that discussions on verification of the destruction of nuclear weapons could lead to progress in areas such as agreements on data-sharing with States and existing agencies; an international monitoring system comprising facilities and systems for monitoring by photography, radionuclide sampling, on-site and off-site sensors, and other data collection; consultation and clarification procedures; on-site inspections; and lastly, a registry including information gained from States' declarations, the international monitoring system, national technical means, inspections, other international organizations, non-governmental organizations and publicly available sources.

We are of the view that progress should also be pursued in the area of compliance mechanisms by initiating discussion on issues such as technical assistance in the destruction of nuclear weapons, delivery systems and facilities; procedures for national implementation; dispute resolution procedures; penalties for non-compliance; and lastly, recourse to the United Nations Security Council, United Nations General Assembly and the International Court of Justice for further action.

Malaysia strongly believes that the consideration of these elements, which are required for the complete prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, would enable gaps to be identified, preparatory work undertaken and further steps completed. We nevertheless hope that the Conference can agree in the near future on the commencement of multilateral negotiations leading to the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention or a framework of instruments for the complete abolition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

The challenge facing the international community in trying to realize a nuclear-weapon-free world has become more formidable than ever, requiring our full and unqualified commitment to the goals we set ourselves. In this regard, Malaysia would like once again to reiterate the call made by the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at the Kuala Lumpur thirteenth NAM Summit for the CD to establish as soon as possible and as the highest priority an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. We believe that the establishment of this Committee will significantly contribute to our concerted and collective endeavours to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malaysia, Mr. Yusri, for his statement and the kind message addressed to the Chair and the P6. I now give the floor to Ambassador Prasad of India.

Mr. PRASAD (India): Mr. President, my delegation is most happy to see you in the Chair. We would like to congratulate you, the four incoming Presidents, as well as Ambassador Rapacki, for organizing discussions on key issues on the agenda of the Conference. You shall have our full and earnest cooperation.

In my statement today I shall attempt to provide India's assessment of the present situation in the field of nuclear disarmament and the way ahead to accomplish the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. This is perhaps the most critical and difficult issue on the current global disarmament agenda.

Efforts to address nuclear disarmament began as soon as nuclear weapons were first tested and used. Ever since, the international community has accorded the highest priority to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The very first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, resolution 1 (I) of 1946, adopted unanimously, sought the elimination of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction from national armaments, and the use of atomic energy only for peaceful purposes.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament constitutes the basic terms of reference of this Conference. The agenda of the Conference, which we are in the process of addressing, derives from it. The special session accorded the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. It outlined concrete steps to achieve that objective. It affirmed that the ultimate goal was the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Some five years ago, the unanimously adopted United Nations Millennium Declaration reiterated the commitment of the Member States of the United Nations to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving that aim.

The objective factors for the increasing militarization of international relations, a feature of the cold war years, no longer exist. Yet, we are very far from realizing the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. India welcomes the steps taken so far by the Russian Federation and the United States to reduce their nuclear weapons stockpiles, as also their means of delivery. India also welcomes the Russian Federation's willingness to consider further reducing its stockpiles of nuclear weapons to levels lower than those specified in the Moscow Treaty. We hope the process of bilateral reductions will be further continued.

India shares the belief that the very existence of nuclear weapons, and of their possible use or threat of their use, poses a threat to humanity. India has remained committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, to be achieved through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. My delegation believes that there is no reason why nuclear weapons too, like biological weapons and chemical weapons, cannot be eliminated. The

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Conference successfully negotiated conventions to prohibit biological and chemical weapons, and it has now to find practical ways of addressing the issue of nuclear disarmament in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner.

While India will continue to maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrent, there is no dilution of India's commitment to nuclear disarmament, which remains a core concern of India's foreign policy. India continues to believe that the security of India and that of the entire world would be enhanced in a world free of nuclear weapons. Our position is based on the fact that India is not seeking a nuclear arms race with any other nuclear Power. India's nuclear doctrine is well defined and based on a posture of no first use and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Our doctrine also reaffirms India's readiness to join multilateral negotiations for the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. India has continued to observe a moratorium on nuclear explosive tests. We are ready to participate in negotiations in this Conference on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

India attaches the highest importance to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. The Group of 21 proposed this almost a decade ago. It sought to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time. India, together with 27 other members of the Group, also presented a proposal, in August 1996, for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, as contained in document CD/1419.

India's preferred position has, thus, always been for negotiations on nuclear disarmament, as contained in documents CD/1570 and CD/1571. Nevertheless, India decided to support the Amorim proposal and the proposal of the five Ambassadors, hoping that they could become a basis for consensus on a programme of work for the Conference. We recognize that given the current impasse, it may be unrealistic to expect consensus on a negotiating mandate for the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, but anything less than what is contained in the proposal of the five Ambassadors would not be acceptable to us.

India's resolution in the General Assembly on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, first presented in 1982, requests the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations for an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. The resolution reflects India's belief that a multilateral, universal and binding agreement prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would contribute to the mitigation of the nuclear threat as an important interim measure. It would also help create the climate for negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons, thereby strengthening international peace and security.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, India accords high priority to the need for steps to be taken to reduce the risk of the unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. The Final Document of SSOD-1 recommended that to ensure that mankind's survival was not endangered, all States, in particular the nuclear-weapons States, should consider various

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proposals designed to secure the avoidance of the use of nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear war. The residual threats of the accidental and unauthorized use of nuclear weapons can be addressed by moving towards a progressive de-alert of nuclear forces.

India's resolution on "Reducing nuclear danger", first presented in 1998, manifests our conviction that the hair-trigger posture of nuclear forces carries with it the unacceptable risk of the unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. This would have catastrophic consequences. The danger posed by the increased risk of nuclear weapons or their components falling into the hands of non-State actors or, in some cases, rogue actors within State structures, has further aggravated existing dangers. While unilateral, bilateral or plurilateral nuclear confidence-building measures are useful, our aim should be to reach an international understanding or agreements for reducing nuclear danger, as also the risk of accidental nuclear war.

Any solution to end the impasse in the Conference on its programme of work must be responsive to the concerns of member States of the Conference, big or small, developed or developing, nuclear-weapon States or non-nuclear-weapon States, within or outside alliances and privileged security relationships. It must address the security of all, for no State can imperil its security or allow other States to impose their will on it. The way out of the current impasse is for States to agree to deal with all four issues on the agenda of the Conference, as in the five Ambassadors' proposal.

The lack of consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation paragraphs of the 2005 World Summit outcome underscores the fact that, currently, there are sharp differences among States over goals, priorities and approaches in the field of disarmament. These differences cannot be set aside or ignored. Such differences can only be overcome by rising above the practice followed in the past century that sought to perpetuate the asymmetric advantage of a handful of countries at the expense of collective global security. Otherwise, our inability to deal with these fundamental questions will continue to frustrate us in various disarmament forums, whether it is the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament or the Disarmament Commission.

A basic problem afflicting the disarmament institutions and processes is the lack of trust among States. This erosion of trust further begets a lack of willingness for mutual accommodation, making progress on nuclear disarmament even more difficult. We believe that this lack of trust also belied hopes for any consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation issues at the 2005 World Summit. The international security environment will be a key determinant in enabling the realization of the progressive and systematic elimination of nuclear weapons. For any breakthrough, all States will need to engage sincerely in exchanges on their approaches to nuclear disarmament and understand and accommodate each other's security concerns and threat perceptions. Trust can only be restored through a reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear-weapon States to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

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A revalidation of this commitment, with further steps towards its progressive concretion, may be the right way to proceed. The goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, in a systematic and progressive manner, will also be facilitated by reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in the security doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States. Alignment of nuclear doctrines to a posture of no first use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States by all nuclear-weapon States will be an important step in achieving this objective. India is ready to enshrine its commitment to no first use and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States in a legally binding agreement. We are also ready to multilateralize our no-first-use commitment so as to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in the strategic realm. These measures should be within our grasp, given the non-adversarial relations among the major Powers.

Mere tinkering with modalities or revisiting the divisive debates, especially those of the past year, is not going to help. What might be a renewed effort to create a system of global security based on the fundamental changes in the international, political, economic and security environment, which could contribute to achieving the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. As mentioned before, for any measure of nuclear disarmament to be successful, it must be global and non-discriminatory and should enhance the security of all States. The continuing impasse in the Conference is out of tune with the aspirations of the international community, the growing democratic temper of the world, and the absolute imperative of development in an age of globalization. That is why we must persevere in our efforts in the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Prasad of India for his statement and analysis and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Jazairy of Algeria.

Mr. JAZAIRY (Algeria) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, may I begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and thank your predecessor, Ambassador Rapacki, most sincerely for the innovative steps that he took? We should like to extend our condolences to the innocent victims of the misfortunes which recently struck Iraq, Russia, the Philippines and Bangladesh. The Algerian delegation associates itself fully with the statement on nuclear disarmament delivered on 28 February by the Permanent Representative of Iraq, speaking on behalf of the Group of 21. My delegation outlined its position on nuclear disarmament at the meeting held on 26 January 2006. I should like to take this opportunity to focus today on the question of the future of nuclear disarmament and the future steps to be taken in that regard.

I followed with interest the illuminating statements made by a number of our colleagues at the meeting held the day before yesterday. Some made nuclear disarmament hostage to nuclear non-proliferation, others, whose views we share, stated that compliance by States with their obligation to achieve full nuclear disarmament was the only guarantee of non-proliferation. If nuclear non-proliferation is a security issue, nuclear disarmament is a question of global peace.

(Mr. Jazairy, Algeria)

The issue of nuclear disarmament is therefore more important than ever. Nuclear arsenals may have been reduced in quantitative terms, but the role they play in security policies has changed in qualitative terms, increasing our feelings of unease, particularly in the light of the development of such weapons and the affirmation of military doctrines authorizing their use, even against non-nuclear States, not to mention the concept of pre-emptive war.

We welcome the information provided by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and the United States representative, at the meeting held on 28 February, about the measures taken by their countries to reduce their nuclear arsenals. We trust that such assessments will be carried out in future under strict and effective international control, as provided for in article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This would offer people some reassurance, especially since it seems to us that what has been done so far falls short of the commitments made at the multilateral level.

I agree with the views expressed by the Permanent Representative of Italy on the principle of the irreversibility of the possession of nuclear weapons. However, it seems to me that there is an even more important principle at stake, namely, the principle of the irreversibility of nuclear disarmament, as expounded by the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

Nuclear States have a special responsibility for nuclear disarmament, as the representative of Australia recalled the day before yesterday. Indeed, this is a legal, political and moral commitment based on the NPT itself. Had it not been for this commitment, non-nuclear-weapon States would never have accepted the Treaty or agreed to its indefinite extension. It is therefore highly regrettable and worrying, as many previous speakers have said, to see nuclear States prevaricating, retreating from, and even disavowing the commitments and pledges that they made at the 1995 and 2000 NPT review conferences in accordance with article VI of the Treaty.

It makes no sense that nuclear weapons, the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction, are still legally held by a small group of nuclear Powers, while biological and chemical weapons are totally prohibited. Nuclear disarmament is an obligation, not a matter of choice. It is an obligation with regard to means and results. This idea was clearly expressed by Mr. Mohamed Bedjaoui, my country's Minister for Foreign Affairs, when he was President of the International Court of Justice. He said, in a declaration attached to the advisory opinion issued by the Court in July 1996, that "there in fact exists a twofold general obligation, opposable *erga omnes*, to negotiate in good faith and to achieve a specified result".

In order to be effective, the nuclear disarmament process must be transparent, irreversible and verifiable. Compliance with these principles would build trust and help pave the way for the definitive elimination of such weapons.

There are two approaches to achieving this objective. The first and the most ambitious approach would be to address the issue of nuclear disarmament in a comprehensive manner within the framework of a convention prohibiting the development, production, testing,

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stockpiling, transfer, threat of use or actual use of nuclear weapons and their elimination. My delegation supports this approach, inspired by the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, which has proved effective, notwithstanding some recognized shortcomings.

The second and perhaps a more pragmatic approach would be to work towards the attainment of nuclear disarmament in phases. This approach would probably be supported by a large number of delegations, as several colleagues have already said. From this perspective, nuclear disarmament would, in our view, proceed on the basis of a threefold strategy. The first component of the strategy would be a set of measures designed to build confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear States in order to help curb nuclear weapon-building and the threats that it poses. These measures, to be taken over the short to medium term, can be summarized as follows.

Firstly, reducing the role and threat of nuclear weapons, by giving negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, reducing the role of nuclear weapons in defence and security policies and renouncing the policy of threatening to use such weapons, since it is quite clear today that the very mention of this threat is the greatest incentive to the nuclear proliferation which we all fear. In addition, States should renounce the policy of first use of nuclear weapons and remove them from alert status. All these measures would create a climate favourable to disarmament and non-proliferation and hope that, over the medium term, they would allow us to adopt a convention prohibiting the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Non-nuclear States must comply fully with the non-proliferation regime. In this respect, IAEA, through the system of comprehensive safeguards and the Additional Protocol, is the natural legal framework for monitoring and assessment of compliance with the pledges that have been made. This implies an ongoing review of the regime and efforts to improve it, when required.

Treaties on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones must be implemented and regions which have not yet done so should be encouraged to conclude such treaties. In this regard, I should like to pay tribute to Libya for the measures that it has taken to follow through on its sincere intention of fulfilling its obligations in the area of nuclear non-proliferation. I would also remind you of the need to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone pursuant to the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference and the resolutions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

We fully support the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Syria at the meeting held on 28 February on this problem in the Middle East region, which was both eloquent and exhaustive. We hope that the international community will not use double standards and that it will make every effort to ensure that the only State in the region which remains outside the NPT, namely Israel, finally accedes to the Treaty and places its nuclear facilities under the IAEA safeguards regime without any preconditions.

The second component of this threefold strategy consists of measures to halt the development of new nuclear weapons or new systems. These measures are intended to lead to a global ban on the production and development of nuclear weapons. For this, three measures

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must be taken: firstly, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; secondly, the conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosives. Such a treaty, which we would like to see, must take account of disarmament and non-proliferation in line with the report by the Special Rapporteur and the mandate outlined therein, as contained in document CD/1299. Thirdly, a halt must be brought to the development of all kinds of nuclear weapons, and facilities which manufacture such weapons must be subjected to international monitoring and surveillance. All these measures should be carried out over the short to medium term.

The third and final component of this strategy entails a gradual reduction of nuclear arsenals to the lowest possible level based on an agreed timetable which takes account of the principle of undiminished security for all. The ultimate aim of such a process would be to rid mankind of this devastating weapon once and for all. The process must include all nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. During this phase, it will be necessary to conclude a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and the use of military nuclear facilities and materials for peaceful purposes.

The creation of a subsidiary body on disarmament with a mandate confined to discussion on the subject alone, without the balancing elements contained in the five Ambassadors' proposal, is unlikely to win consensus within the Conference.

In conclusion, we note that multilateral cooperation on disarmament, human rights and other matters runs up against the problem of selectivity, discrimination and double standards, threatening to empty multilateralism, in spite of its vital importance, of any real content and to hamper efforts to achieve peace. We must all endeavour to overcome this problem so that this Conference can achieve its objectives.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Jazairy of Algeria for his statement and some practical suggestions and ideas for future nuclear disarmament measures, and the kind words addressed to the Chair and the other presidencies. I would now like to give the floor to Ambassador Cheng of China.

Mr. CHENG (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, at the outset I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the important post of President of the CD and express our appreciation for the efforts made by you and the other five Presidents to promote the work of the CD. The Chinese delegation looks forward to the implementation of the timetable, bringing fresh dynamism to the work of the CD, and is confident that under your able guidance the debate on nuclear disarmament will have a positive outcome.

Nuclear disarmament is related to international peace and security. Unfortunately, in recent years the nuclear disarmament process has been in stalemate. On the one hand, the CD has done no substantive work in this area, negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty are dragging and no consensus has been reached to begin negotiations on an international legal

(Mr. Cheng, China)

instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. On the other hand, the ABM Treaty, once held to be the cornerstone of international strategic balance and stability, has been abandoned and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has still not entered into force. The Seventh NPT Review Conference was inconclusive. The outcome document of the United Nations sixtieth anniversary summit did not contain any agreed language on nuclear disarmament and related issues. Furthermore, non-proliferation is being played up while playing down nuclear disarmament, and this has dulled the international community's awareness of nuclear disarmament as a priority issue. Demand for a legally binding international instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States has been rejected and some important principles adopted at previous NPT review conferences have been called into question. All these developments have had a negative impact on the nuclear disarmament process.

China believes that, to further the international nuclear disarmament process, the international community needs to make sustained efforts in the following areas. First, a secure international environment and strategic stability should be preserved. If nuclear disarmament is to progress, both these issues need attending to. Nuclear disarmament cannot take place in a vacuum. Creating a healthy, positive international security environment and maintaining an international strategic balance is the basis for progress in this area. Efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space and bring about nuclear disarmament complement each other. In this sense, not developing nuclear missile defence systems that undermine strategic stability and not deploying weapons in outer space is crucial to nuclear disarmament.

Second, a balanced approach must be taken to nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear proliferation. Efforts on nuclear disarmament and preventing proliferation complement and reinforce each other. Only if nuclear-weapon States destroy all their nuclear weapons at an early date and non-nuclear-weapon States stick to their pledge not to acquire such weapons while both groups of countries make steady efforts in nuclear disarmament and preventing nuclear proliferation can we achieve the goal of making the world free of nuclear weapons.

Third, basic principles in nuclear disarmament should be upheld. The principles and measures for nuclear disarmament as agreed in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference should be maintained: the reduction of nuclear weapons to be carried out in an effectively verifiable, legally binding and irreversible manner. All nuclear disarmament measures, including various intermediate measures, should be guided by the principles of international strategic stability and undiminished security for all, and should contribute to international peace and security.

Fourth, appropriate intermediate nuclear disarmament measures should be implemented. These include a reduction by the nuclear-weapon States of the role of nuclear weapons, abandonment of nuclear deterrence doctrine based on the first use of such weapons, and repudiation of the policy of lowering the threshold for their use. Every nuclear-weapon State should honour the commitment not to target its nuclear weapons on any other country and not to list any country as the target of a nuclear strike. Nuclear weapons deployed outside States' own

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territory should all be brought home. The policy and practice of a nuclear umbrella and nuclear sharing should be abandoned, and low-yield, easily deployed nuclear weapons should not be developed. Nuclear-weapon States should take all necessary steps to prevent any accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear weapons.

It must be pointed out that in the present-day world where nuclear weapons still exist, the most practical and reasonable intermediate nuclear disarmament measures would be commitments by all nuclear-weapon States not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and to conclude a corresponding international legal instrument to that effect.

Fifth, the CD should establish as soon as possible an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. China favours early agreement on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work based on the five Ambassadors' proposal, so as to allow substantive work to get under way on nuclear disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty, prevention of an arms race in outer space and security guarantees for non-nuclear States. As for the mandate of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, China supports the reasonable position of the G-21.

China has always worked actively to fulfil its nuclear disarmament obligations and promote the international nuclear disarmament process. Its national defence policy is purely defensive. For many decades it has exercised great restraint in the development of its nuclear forces; it has never been part of the nuclear arms race or deployed nuclear weapons abroad, keeping its nuclear forces to the minimum necessary for self-defence.

China favours the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. It has an uncompromising policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and is committed not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States or nuclear-weapon-free zones under any circumstances. It would like to see the early entry into force of the CTBT, which it has committed itself to ratifying swiftly, and will observe a moratorium on nuclear testing pending the treaty's entry into force. It is willing to negotiate an FMCT under a comprehensive programme of work for the CD.

China supports the efforts of the non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, and to this end has signed all the protocols to nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties that are open for signature. China has reached agreement with ASEAN on a South-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty and a protocol thereto, and has no difficulty with the current text of the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaty and protocol. To sum up, China's nuclear policy and practice has positively contributed to the process of international nuclear disarmament. We will, together with all nations, continue to strive to realize the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Cheng of China for his statement and kind and encouraging words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Valery Loshchinin of the Russian Federation.

Mr. LOSHCHININ (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): We believe that this is already the third meeting devoted to this subject. The discussions are moving forward constructively and with a great deal of interest, and this is very important for all of us. From the many statements that have been made it is clear that awareness of the need for nuclear disarmament is growing in the international community. It is obvious that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is possible only through gradual step-by-step progress towards the final objective on the basis of a comprehensive approach with the participation of all nuclear States, and of course while preserving strategic stability and respecting the principle of equal security. Today, we would like to take a broader look at this issue, from the standpoint of the future steps which Russia intends to take in the area of nuclear disarmament, and broadly our approach to particular problems which in one way or another are interlinked with the problems of nuclear disarmament.

I would like to emphasize that we intend to continue our consistent policy of reducing nuclear weapons, taking into account the military strategic situation and the need to guarantee Russia's security. As I have already said, Russia's non-strategic arsenal has been reduced by a factor of four over the past 15 years. The reduction of the level of these weapons will continue. Russia will strictly fulfil its obligations under the INF Treaty on intermediate nuclear forces. In accordance with the provisions of the Moscow Treaty, by the end of 2009 Russia and the United States are to further reduce their strategic nuclear warheads by a factor of roughly three compared with the limits established at the end of 2001. Russia is prepared to continue to reduce its strategic nuclear arsenal even below the level laid down in the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty.

The President of the Russian Federation, V. Putin, has repeatedly expressed our country's willingness to reduce its nuclear arsenal to a level of 1,500 warheads or even lower, on a basis of reciprocity. It is important to bear in mind that the START Treaty on strategic arms reductions will remain in force at least until December 2009, with all its extremely intrusive verification procedures, which in principle play a significant stabilizing role by guaranteeing predictability in the strategic military situation. Of great significance here from the point of view of verification is the question of national technical means, and first and foremost space observation systems.

In international terms it would be very important to follow Russia's example and withdraw all non-strategic nuclear weapons and the corresponding infrastructure to the territory of the States that possess those weapons. In our future actions we will continue to be guided by the need to ensure that steps taken to reduce nuclear weapons are irreversible. The Russian Federation believes that, in the area of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, it is important to draw up an agreement to ban the production of fissile material. On 14 February this year a joint Russian-French declaration on the use of nuclear energy adopted as a result of a visit to Moscow by the Prime Minister of France stated that the two countries were in favour of an early start to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for weapons purposes, and confirmed their support for the existing moratorium in this area. We have consistently advocated the speedy achievement of a

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compromise on a balanced programme of work for the Conference of Disarmament which would allow us to begin such negotiations, and we have made some significant contributions towards achieving that compromise.

It is important to bear in mind that nuclear arms reductions by the nuclear States do not take place in a vacuum. The process of and prospects for nuclear arms reductions are closely related to the implementation of key agreements on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Of course, they in turn are also affected by growth in spending on military preparations in a number of countries, the development of new weapons systems and the deployment of weapons and military infrastructure on land and elsewhere. The implementation of plans to deploy a global anti-ballistic missile system runs counter to the preservation of a strategic balance in the world and has a negative impact on nuclear missile control and disarmament.

The interrelationship between strategic offensive weapons and defensive weapons is perfectly clear and understandable. In particular, this interrelationship was enshrined in the joint declaration issued following the meeting between Presidents V. Putin and George Bush in Genoa in July 2001.

Without any doubt, the deployment of weapons in space would be a powerful destabilizing factor. It would have serious consequences for the whole process of disarmament, for arms control and for international security. A likely consequence would be a new upward spiral in the arms race, not just in space but also on land in nuclear missiles and in other areas, which could give a new boost to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We must use the prestige and authority of the Conference and do everything we can to prevent the realization of such dramatic scenarios and preserve space as the common peaceful heritage of all of humanity. For its part Russia has unilaterally declared that it will not be the first to deploy weapons of any kind in space. We urge all States to take a similar decision. Together with the People's Republic of China and a group of other States, we submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a working paper which has now been distributed in the Conference as document CD/1769. We are convinced that the development in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty on preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space and on the non-use of force or threat of force against space objects will have a positive effect on the processes of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We have already spoken of the urgent need to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the need to work together to find solutions to the new issues that have arisen here. In any event, this needs to be done within the framework of the NPT, making full use of the role and powers of IAEA. There are a whole set of important issues requiring urgent solutions. We believe that IAEA has a crucial role to play in finding a mutually acceptable solution on Iran that on the one hand would allow Teheran to develop nuclear energy, which it has a sovereign right to do, while on the other hand it would provide an assurance of the purely peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. Our talks with our Iranian colleagues have continued in Moscow over the past few days, including talks on Russia's well-known proposal. It is our hope that as the result of these negotiations, we will have the prospect of keeping this entire situation within the purview of IAEA. For this purpose, of course, it is important to extend the moratorium on

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uranium enrichment on Iranian territory and continue contacts with the involvement of all interested parties, leading to mutually acceptable agreements. The forthcoming meeting of the governing body of IAEA on 6 March will be a very important and crucial stage in this process. The Director General of IAEA is preparing his report for that meeting. It is important for Iran to respond fully to IAEA's invitation so as to clear up those questions which have remained unclarified with respect to Iran's past nuclear activities.

A solution to the nuclear problem in the Korean peninsula will in our view be found through the six-party negotiations, in which Russia will continue to participate actively and constructively. Specifically, this solution presumes the return of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the resumption of IAEA monitoring activities in Korea itself, the emergence of the DPRK from its international isolation and the provision of economic assistance to it. Addressing existing problems in the field of nuclear non-proliferation remains on the agenda of the Group of 8, which is currently chaired by Russia. We will continue our attempt to find common approaches to the settlement of these issues through political and diplomatic means while respecting the legitimate rights and interests of all parties.

The development of information, nuclear and other technologies in principle raises a series of important and at the same time sensitive problems which require new, non-traditional joint approaches. One such idea is President V. Putin's initiative for the creation of a system of international centres to provide nuclear fuel cycle services, including enrichment, under IAEA control and on the basis of access without discrimination. The essence of this initiative is the creation of a prototype global infrastructure which will ensure equal access for all interested countries to the benefits of the peaceful use of atomic energy while ensuring strict compliance with all the norms of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We have already submitted this Russian initiative to the Conference, and are prepared to continue discussing it both in a dialogue with all interested States and also within IAEA. In pursuing these ideas, Russia will strongly and consistently comply with and fulfil its obligations in the field of nuclear disarmament. All these activities will promote the attainment of the goals we have set on the issue we are discussing in the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I appreciate your third intervention since you joined the Conference and the kind words addressed to me, and I especially appreciate your views and suggestions for future nuclear disarmament measures, which I am sure will be a basis for further interactive discussions during the session to come, particularly regarding Russia's determination to bring the six-party talks to success. The next speaker will be Ambassador Ri Tcheul of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. RI (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (translated from French):
Mr. President, I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election to the post of President and wish you success. I would also like to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Rapacki, on the enormous efforts he made.

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

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea supports the statement made by the Group of 21 and would like to express its views in this respect. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea considers that nuclear disarmament constitutes the major and paramount task before the Conference on Disarmament and the international community. The negative nuclear doctrine and policy and the nuclear blackmail which are making themselves felt in international relations are spreading grave concern within international society and bringing only instability, blackmail and undesirable consequences. The violation of the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the United Nations Charter and persistent inequality and injustice in international relations are attributable to the unfair nuclear policy and doctrine. This has a negative impact not only on the process within the Conference on Disarmament but also on all negotiating forums on peace and security. Acts designed to halt nuclear activities in other countries while preserving and strengthening one's own nuclear arms are tantamount to refusing to establish fair international relations. As long as the negative nuclear doctrine and threat continue, the hotbed of nuclear proliferation will not have been eliminated. Any position that regards the present inequality and injustice derived from strength as more beneficial must be eliminated.

Our delegation does not agree with the argument that it is idealistic to immediately call for an amendment to the negative doctrine. The principal nuclear-weapon States must display their willingness to take part without delay in multilateral negotiations for an international legal convention on nuclear disarmament. The key and immediate task before us is to implement the suppression of the doctrine of nuclear superiority, the abolition of the nuclear threat, suspension of the race to improve the quality of nuclear weapons, withdrawal of nuclear forces and the nuclear umbrella deployed abroad and the offer of a guarantee of the non-use of nuclear weapons. The process of negotiating nuclear disarmament could start in this direction. Our delegation supports the proposal for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and the start of negotiations as soon as possible.

Our delegation would like to see the strengthening of efforts to adopt the plan of work of the Conference on Disarmament and is ready to make an active contribution. The plan of work should be comprehensive and balanced, acceptable to all. Although the five Ambassadors' proposal does not sufficiently reflect our request, our delegation has expressed its support for that proposal, on the basis of the multilateral spirit seeking to move the work of the Conference forward and its view that this proposal could serve as the basis for our efforts to reach agreement on a plan of work. Our delegation hopes that the concentrated and systematic discussion on the items placed on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with the timetable established by the P6, will contribute to establishing an enabling atmosphere leading to agreement on the plan of work and that it will develop during the negotiating process.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Ri of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and the other presidencies. I will now give the floor to Ambassador François Rivasseau of France.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, after listening to this morning's speakers, I share the view of those who emphasized the very useful nature of our focused work this week. We are here to talk about future measures to be negotiated within the Conference on Disarmament under agenda items 1 and 2.

During the last NPT Review Conference in 2005 in New York, the member countries of the European Union adopted a common position, a common position which binds us all and in which, with respect to the cut-off issue, those States “[appealed] again to the Disarmament Conference for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, without preconditions, and bearing in mind the Special Coordinator’s report and the mandate included therein and, pending entry into force of the said treaty, and [called] on all States to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”.

Following the NPT, this appeal maintains its force, and the French delegation, like its 25 European partners, must put it into effect. In the practical implementation of our commitments, we act in the light of the programme of action and resolution agreed on at the time of the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, as decided by the Seventh NPT Review Conference in its Final Document last summer. Let me briefly remind you of the programme of action as regards the nuclear disarmament component. It includes: conclusion of a joint nuclear-test-ban treaty, negotiation of a cut-off treaty (FMCT), determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally and of general and complete disarmament. The problem of the entry into force of the CTBT is no longer directly a matter for this forum, but the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) occupies a very special place within the process of nuclear disarmament today. This is why, in the First Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations, my country supported the resolutions in that respect - in 2004, resolution 59/81 presented by Canada, and in 2005, the resolution entitled “Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, presented by Japan.

France has been constantly committed to work for the negotiation of such a treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. In his statement last 19 January, the President of the French Republic reiterated the importance France attaches to this treaty. After announcing a halt to the production of plutonium and highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons, France decided in February 1996 to close and dismantle its production facilities in Pierrelatte and Marcoule. Since then my country has been actively involved in this dismantling process, which continues today. This is a complex, lengthy and costly undertaking which will extend over several years. My country is the only nuclear Power to have embarked on this, and France no longer has any facilities for the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

After a long period of stalemate, the cut-off negotiations now have some prospect of being relaunched step by step. In this respect we welcome the possibility offered to us this year to prepare for these negotiations in the framework of the timetable of activities which has just been adopted. We are looking forward to active participation in the debates on this issue,

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because the future measure under items 1 and 2 of the agenda to be negotiated here is the cut-off, and we welcome the opportunity we will be offered during Romania's term in the Chair to intensify our discussions on these items in a focused manner with a view to maintaining greater trust between ourselves.

Our general approach with respect to a cut-off treaty revolves around the following ideas. First, as we have always said in this forum, the scope of the treaty concerns the total prohibition of future production of fissile material for nuclear bombs. It is clear that, unless there is radical change in its nature, the treaty is not intended to cover stockpiles built up prior to the entry into force of the treaty, that this treaty is not intended to cover production for peaceful uses, and that it is not intended to cover non-explosive military uses. However, the purpose of the treaty is quite clearly to impose a quantitative freeze on the maximum level of nuclear arsenals in the world, just as the CTBT imposed a qualitative freeze. There is a strong link between the cut-off and the nuclear test-ban treaties, and our future negotiations should incorporate this fact.

As far as verification is concerned, we still accept the report by the Special Coordinator and the mandate included therein, which refers to verifiability. We attach to this word the meaning it has in French, that is to say, "capable of verification". We also subscribe to the argument whereby no verification measure can provide absolute assurance concerning compliance with the treaty. We consider that it is not appropriate here to set preconditions for the launching of negotiations. The debate on verification must arrive at a solution in the course of the negotiations themselves.

Lastly, the other aspects of the treaty will also, in our view, require further consideration when the negotiations have commenced.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Rivasseau of France for his statement and suggestions for future deliberations during the session to come and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Joseph Ayalogu of Nigeria.

Mr. AYALOGU (Nigeria): Mr. President, please accept my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation assures you of its full support, especially in the search for consensus on our programme of work. My congratulations also go to the last President, Ambassador Rapacki, for the good work he did.

Before outlining Nigeria's views on the topic under discussion, that is, nuclear disarmament, I wish to associate my delegation with the statement read by the Ambassador of Iraq on behalf of the G-21 on 28 February this year.

The most important goal assigned to the CD by the SSOD-1 on disarmament in 1978 was to work to achieve a convention on nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament therefore remains a top priority, not only for my delegation, but, I believe, for the entire international community. Nuclear weapons pose the most horrendous threat to humanity. The effect of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan attest to this threat. To date,

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over 60 years later, Japan still suffers the effects of the bombs. Children from Hiroshima and Nagasaki have come and pleaded with us in the CD to save humanity from the horror in which they are living. Civil society and the Mayors for Peace have also made similar appeals to us. Furthermore, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) gave an Advisory Opinion in 1996 that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflicts and international humanitarian law. In this regard, my delegation stresses the importance of the ICJ advice that “there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control”. From the point of view of my delegation, therefore, ever since the atomic bombs were dropped on the two Japanese cities, nuclear disarmament became ripe for negotiations. The international community acknowledged this and that was why SSOD-1 gave the CD its present mandate on nuclear disarmament.

It is however unfortunate that the CD has not been able to deliver on this mandate. Consequently, rather than a progressive movement towards nuclear disarmament, the number of nuclear-weapon States has increased from two in 1950 to at least eight today. In addition, qualitative technological sophistication in the development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems are taking place. More disturbing is the research into a new generation of nuclear weapons and their modernization, as well as the retention of the option of use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in military doctrines. For countries like Nigeria that have given up the nuclear option, the situation is even more disturbing and complicated by increasing fears that these weapons may proliferate into the hands of non-State actors, particularly terrorists who may use them as their weapons of choice.

I want to draw attention to the nexus between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Both are two sides of the same coin, are mutually reinforcing, with decisive commitment and responsibility on both the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States to pursue nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in good faith. It is in this light that Nigeria commends the inspirational commitment of countries such as South Africa, Ukraine and Kazakhstan that had nuclear weapons but chose to dispense with them in a transparent and verifiable manner. Their decision shows that a country could still feel safe without nuclear weapons. The world would indeed feel safer when every country turns its back on nuclear weapons. The nuclear-weapon States should therefore realize that any presumption of indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by them cannot be compatible with sustaining non-proliferation and the preservation of international peace and security. Proliferation exists today because of the failure to get rid of nuclear weapons. We should not expect non-proliferation efforts to succeed until we are committed to nuclear disarmament in a transparent and verifiable way. The logic is self-evident - nobody can proliferate what does not exist; while those determined will proliferate what exists no matter the control measures put in place. In a nutshell, total prohibition is the only guarantee against the threats that nuclear armament and proliferation pose to mankind.

The incapacity of the CD in negotiating a nuclear weapons convention is largely because some countries still believe that these weapons are necessary for their security. Such a perception cannot help the Conference in attaining its objective of nuclear disarmament. While

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thus we see bilateral and unilateral approaches to the issue, such efforts cannot substitute for nuclear disarmament under a multilateral framework that is verifiable and irreversible. The CD as a multilateral machinery must be strengthened, particularly on nuclear disarmament in a transparent way.

The G-21, through Egypt and Ethiopia in 2005, presented its views on nuclear disarmament. My delegation still strongly supports those presentations. It should also be recalled that 27 members of the G-21 presented working paper CD/1419 in 1996, detailing their proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The principles underlying the working paper are still relevant to nuclear disarmament today. The proposal was comprehensive at that time, and if action had been taken on it, the threats nuclear weapons and their proliferation pose could have been over or at least very much reduced. My delegation is ready to work with interested delegations to revisit the proposal and make improvements to it, taking into account developments since the document was introduced.

Nigeria is committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, which is why we have championed the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Africa. Nigeria believes that it is in the interest of international peace and security for nuclear-free zones to be created in all regions of the world. Nigeria is also committed to its obligations under the NPT and would like to see the immediate implementation of the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference. Nigeria also calls on the nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm their commitments to implement article VI of the NPT. Nigeria regrets that the 2005 NPT Review Conference failed because of strategic manipulations to undermine aspects of the vital pillars on which the Treaty stands and previous achievements. Nigeria believes that the three pillars of the NPT - nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and inalienable right of access to peaceful energy - provide balance for the Treaty. Any attempt to undermine or weaken any of the pillars can only lead to the failure of the Treaty to meet the set objectives. Nigeria stresses the importance of all parties to the NPT to fully implement their obligations, and calls on those yet to join the Treaty to do so without delay and without preconditions.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. Nigeria has signed and ratified the Treaty. We stress the importance and the urgency of all countries signing and ratifying the Treaty without delay and without conditions to enable its early entry into force. Meanwhile, until the CTBT enters into force, we urge all countries to observe the moratorium on nuclear testing.

The Nigerian delegation strongly supported past proposals in the CD aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament, particularly those contained in CD/1570 and CD/1571, for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The A-5 proposal on nuclear disarmament does not fully meet my delegation's expectations, as we would have preferred the ad hoc committee to be given a negotiating mandate. However, since there is no consensus to give such a committee a negotiating mandate, the Nigerian delegation in its usual spirit of flexibility has accepted the discussion mandate on nuclear disarmament in the A-5 proposal. We understand and appreciate that any meaningful agreement can only be a product of give-and-take, taking into consideration

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the long-term benefits and the imperatives of security to the entire international community. We urge members of the CD to adopt a win-win spirit on nuclear disarmament, because nuclear weapons and their proliferation pose threats to both the haves and have-nots.

My delegation believes that allowing civil society to participate more in the work of the CD from this stage would help us to make progress in addressing the threats posed by nuclear weapons. They could be able, through their objective research and analysis, to possibly convince even those in possession of nuclear weapons that the weapons do not make them safer or more protected. Let us consider and take a decision to allow them to make more regular inputs to our work.

Lastly, if we are able to reach agreement on nuclear disarmament, global tension would lessen and more resources would become available for human development, and that would create a better environment for international peace and security to thrive.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Ayalogu of Nigeria for his statement and suggestions and for the warm words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Mohammed Loulichki of Morocco.

Mr. LOULICHKI (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me to begin by expressing to you my delegation's sincere congratulations as you take up this important post and to assure you of the full cooperation of the Moroccan delegation.

My country welcomes the joint initiative of the six Presidents of the 2006 session to hold thematic plenary meetings on all the items on the agenda of our Conference, and looks forward to participating under your chairmanship in this first session on nuclear disarmament and, more broadly, on items 1 and 2 of the agenda. My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of India on behalf of the G-21.

The Kingdom of Morocco has signed and ratified all the multilateral instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction and remains committed to general and complete disarmament, and in particular to irreversible, transparent and verifiable nuclear disarmament. It is our conviction that as long as nuclear weapons exist, there can never be real security or genuine stability, regionally and internationally.

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons established that the unique nature of nuclear weapons, and in particular their destructive capacity, their ability to cause untold human suffering and their ability to cause damage to future generations, make them potentially catastrophic. The Court ruled that the "destructive power of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in either space or time. They have the potential to destroy all civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet". Those words could not be more eloquent. The Court concluded that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, and declared that for all States there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

(Mr. Loulichki, Morocco)

In 1968, the majority of countries gave up their nuclear ambitions when the five de facto nuclear States undertook to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control (NPT, article VI).

The lack of substantial progress in nuclear disarmament is a source of frustration, even concern, for many non-nuclear-weapon States. Of course, the arsenals of the nuclear Powers have been reduced in recent years, but the Powers need to take more significant steps in that direction. Gradual, irreversible, transparent and verifiable nuclear disarmament would contribute to establishing a more favourable climate for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and would even ultimately lead to the removal of that possibility, because that which does not exist cannot proliferate.

In addition, the reassertion of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence by States possessing nuclear weapons undermines the objectives and principles of disarmament and whets the nuclear ambitions of both non-nuclear-weapon States and non-State actors. At a time when the international community is faced with the threat of terrorism, slow progress in disarmament increases the risk of nuclear terrorism. The effectiveness of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in preventing non-State entities from gaining access to nuclear weapons is limited by the existence of nuclear arsenals some of which may not be adequately protected. Disarmament and international security, but also disarmament and sustainable development, are closely interlinked and are crucial to the present and future of humanity.

Since acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1970, Morocco has constantly worked for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their non-proliferation, while reiterating its commitment to the inalienable right of the States parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Thus, in 1973, my country concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with IAEA, and in 2004, we signed an additional protocol to the safeguards agreement under the NPT. My country has also ratified the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and notified the Director General of IAEA that it accepts the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which favours a complete ban on nuclear tests, deplors the delay in the entry into force of the CTBT and in that regard reiterates its appeal to all States which have not yet done so to accede to it without delay and in the meantime respect the moratoria on nuclear tests.

Morocco, which is deeply convinced that international efforts to combat terrorism should cover all aspects of this phenomenon, played an active role as Chairman of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly in the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. In addition, on 26 October 2004, my country submitted its national report in accordance with Security Council resolution 1540, followed by additional information which was submitted to the United Nations on 13 September 2005.

(Mr. Loulichki, Morocco)

The Kingdom of Morocco believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones are a tangible contribution to the cause of nuclear disarmament. Thus, we have continually promoted accession to the NPT with a view to making it universal, as well as the conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements between IAEA and all States in the Middle East region, including Israel, as an important step towards the establishment of a climate of confidence and a preliminary step towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Such a measure would contribute to strengthening the conditions for lasting peace in this region, which has suffered so much for several decades. Pending the establishment of such a zone, my country reiterates its appeal to all parties concerned to solemnly declare their intention to refrain, on a reciprocal basis, from producing, acquiring or possessing nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices and not to permit the deployment of such weapons on their territory by any third party.

Morocco has constantly supported decisions aimed at strengthening the NPT in the treaty review process. Hence it fully supports the positive conclusions of the 1995 and 2000 review conferences and reaffirms the importance of their implementation by the States parties in a transparent, balanced and irreversible way. My country welcomed the adoption of the 13 practical steps in 2000 which, under item 4, called for the immediate establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to study the issue of nuclear disarmament and draft a convention on the subject. Hence it fully supports the mandate of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, as proposed in the G-21's draft decision (CD/1571), which seeks in particular to establish an ad hoc committee within the Conference on Disarmament, under agenda item 1, to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specific framework of time, including a nuclear weapon convention. In the interests of flexibility, my country has also repeatedly stated that it could accept the mandate on nuclear disarmament as set forth in the proposals for a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament that have been made subsequently, providing that they succeed in garnering the necessary consensus for the launching of substantive work in the Conference.

As I conclude this statement, allow me, Sir, like the distinguished Ambassadors and representatives who have spoken before me, to express the hope that the Conference on Disarmament will succeed this year in achieving consensus on a programme of work opening the way in particular to the establishment of a subsidiary body to negotiate general and complete nuclear disarmament. In this way, we could live up to the expectations placed in us by the international community and also answer the frustration of the international community which wishes to eliminate nuclear weapons as quickly as possible and achieve the noble objective of a world free of this threat and ultimately to act consistently to put into practice our respect for the fundamental inherent right of every human being, that is, the right to life.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Loulichki of Morocco for his statement and kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Mr. Sascha Fuls.

Mr. FULS (Switzerland) (translated from French): Owing to the absence of Ambassador Streuli today, I would, if I may, like to take his place.

The invitation extended to delegations in this Conference by the six Presidents for the year 2006 to focus their statements throughout the agenda and in a structured manner calls for the full cooperation of my delegation. It has carefully followed the statements made the day before yesterday on agenda items 1 and 2. Switzerland's position with respect to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is well known. Nevertheless, the interactive and interesting debate during the last plenary session offers us an opportunity to reiterate our position in this regard.

Switzerland supports all multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament and arms control directed towards concrete and verifiable results. For Switzerland, the NPT represents the sole legally binding instrument of global scope intended to promote non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. In this sense, it is a key tool for international peace and stability. Switzerland emphasizes that the stress currently placed on nuclear proliferation should not lead to neglect of the other two pillars of the NPT, including nuclear disarmament. We agree with those who have reaffirmed the links between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the delegation of Sweden in its analysis of existing risks. Accordingly, Switzerland emphasizes respect for the compromise which made possible the conclusion of the NPT among States which renounced nuclear weapons in exchange for an undertaking by the nuclear States to continue their efforts to secure nuclear disarmament. In view of the fact that the overwhelming majority of non-nuclear States parties have respected the undertaking not to acquire nuclear weapons, we call on the nuclear States to continue the progressive implementation of their disarmament obligations.

Since the NPT Review Conference in 2005 was a failure, we are forced to acknowledge that one of the few positive developments which the international community is able to point to in terms of nuclear disarmament remains the SORT Treaty, signed in 2004 by Presidents Bush and Putin. This treaty should lead to a considerable reduction in strategic nuclear weapons, but, as was brought out by a number of delegations on Tuesday, Switzerland considers that, to be credible, any bilateral or unilateral disarmament measure must adopt the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verification. We accordingly support calls for an increase in transparency at the multilateral level concerning progress made in the field of nuclear disarmament.

In the field of non-strategic nuclear weapons, on the other hand, the record is still ambiguous. We observe a marked discrepancy between unilateral pledges and actual achievements. Switzerland attaches importance to all the undertakings set out in the final documents of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. Concerning the achievements of 1995, Switzerland emphasizes the need for full respect for the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament", and in particular emphasizes the following points which have begun to take shape: speedy ratification of the CTBT by the States concerned in annex 2 of the Treaty; establishment of an ad hoc committee within the Conference on Disarmament to

(Mr. Fuls, Switzerland)

commence negotiations on an FMCT treaty; and negotiations on a binding multilateral instrument within the framework of the Conference to offer negative security assurances to NPT States parties which do not possess nuclear weapons.

In short, Switzerland supports proposals for an exchange of views on practical measures which could be adopted in order to make systematic and progressive headway towards the attainment of the objective of nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Switzerland, Mr. Sascha Fuls, for his statement. I now give the floor to Ambassador Mary Whelan of Ireland.

Ms. WHELAN (Ireland): Ireland welcomes the initiative of the six Presidents of the Conference in 2006 to convene special meetings to allow focused discussion on items of our agenda. I wish to address today the important role that we believe greater transparency by States possessing nuclear weapons can play in creating a climate in which greater progress on nuclear disarmament can be made.

The views of my delegation on nuclear disarmament issues were set out in our contribution to the structured debates which took place last year. We will not repeat them now. However, I will say that Ireland is committed to the full implementation of the NPT and believes that the 13 practical steps described in the concluding document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, a document which was adopted by consensus, set out a clear road by which the objective of article VI could be reached.

However, not all members of the CD are parties to the NPT. We hope that all members of the Conference who are not parties to the NPT will use the opportunity presented by this structured debate to share with us their views on how this Conference can best address the issues referred to in agenda items 1 and 2.

The role of greater transparency in achieving our shared objective of nuclear disarmament was recognized at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. There, all agreed on the need for increased transparency by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to their nuclear weapons capabilities and to the implementation of disarmament agreements pursuant to article VI. All States parties also agreed on the need for increased transparency as a confidence-building measure to support further progress on nuclear disarmament. All States parties agreed to report regularly on the implementation of their disarmament obligations under article VI.

We note the statements made by some nuclear-weapons States both in the NPT process and in the Conference on issues related to nuclear disarmament. At the same time we believe that the nuclear-weapon States could demonstrate greater transparency. The need for such transparency relates to a number of factors.

In the first instance, transparency is an important element in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Transparency in the actions and intentions of States possessing nuclear weapons could reduce the incentive for their neighbours to develop such weapons.

(Ms. Whelan, Ireland)

We recall the unequivocal undertaking made by the nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT in 2000 to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. An obvious early step in this process will be increased transparency on their part. Maintaining present levels of holdings or developing new weapons, in the belief that these will enhance national security, would paradoxically result in frustrating efforts to convince others that nuclear weapons are not necessary for their security.

Secondly, transparency will be crucial in enabling the verification of compliance by States with their disarmament and arms control commitments in a self-sustaining process of confidence-building. In turn, verification of warhead dismantlement, disarmament of tactical nuclear weapons, a fissile material treaty and the disposition of surplus weapons-grade plutonium and highly enriched uranium will all require greater transparency of nuclear weapon and fissile material holdings.

The benefits of such transparency include providing each side with more confidence in its knowledge of the size of the other's nuclear weapon and fissile material holdings. It can establish a basis for further reductions with confidence that they would provide mutual security benefits. Transparency can also help confirm that nuclear material in weapons removed from deployment by arms reduction is not being recycled into new warheads.

All of us in this room accepted just a few months ago at the General Assembly that "transparency in military matters is an essential element for building a climate of trust and confidence between States worldwide and that a better flow of objective information on military matters can help to relieve international tension and is therefore an important contribution to conflict prevention". We believe that this principle applies as much to nuclear weapons and weapons-grade material and activities as it does to conventional ones.

We recognize that there will be several levels of transparency in the confidence-building process: transparency between two States possessing nuclear weapons, plurilaterally between several such States as a group, between States including non-nuclear-weapon States and/or international inspection agencies, and wider, public transparency. We accept also that the process of nuclear disarmament is unlikely to succeed where States feel that further disarmament represents a threat to their security. It seems to us that nuclear disarmament is most likely to be conducted as a series of phased transparent, verifiable and irreversible reductions. These phased reductions will permit States to satisfy themselves at each stage of the process that further movements can be made safely and securely. In the initial stages of this process it will be necessary to share certain types of information only among the disarming States involved, notwithstanding the more general obligation on those States to be more transparent in their actions before all States.

In general, transparency should provide not just an accurate picture of weapon and fissile material holdings but be instructive with regard to governmental actions, intentions and capabilities. We believe that a process of transparency, once established, will lead to the publication of increasing quantities of data that will permit cross-checking. This process thus becomes self-corroborating.

(Ms. Whelan, Ireland)

Where States possessing nuclear weapons have taken steps to introduce measures of transparency with regard to their holdings or actions, these measures should be acknowledged and encouraged. We have welcomed the publication in 2000 by the British Ministry of Defence of its historical account of plutonium production in the United Kingdom. We welcomed also an earlier, detailed account of plutonium production in the United States, published 10 years ago by the United States Department of Energy.

In seeking greater transparency from States possessing nuclear weapons we do not call for the disclosure of information that is clearly proliferation-sensitive. Nor do we deny that some information that is not proliferation-sensitive is nevertheless considered for the time being to be sensitive for reasons of national security. However, we believe that far more information could and should be made available than has been the case to date.

We encourage the States possessing nuclear weapons to develop among themselves an understanding of the levels and details of information concerning each other's holdings, facilities and activities that they will be required to share if confidence in the disarmament process is to be enhanced. In our view, this could begin at the level of scientific experts of all such States, who should examine together what level of transparency will be required for effective verification of disarmament measures. We welcome the paper submitted by the United Kingdom to the last NPT Review Conference on the results of its research programme for the study of techniques and technologies relevant to the verification of any future arrangement for the control, reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear weapon stockpiles.

Details of the implementation of existing commitments should also be made available, and we would welcome information from the United States and the Russian Federation on the present status of their Trilateral Initiative with IAEA on the disposition of plutonium stocks surplus to military requirements.

I will conclude with some modest suggestions. As first steps on a path to disarmament, all States possessing nuclear weapons should exhibit greater transparency in their actions and holdings. In particular we encourage the publication by them of complete fissile material production histories similar to the ones that have been published already by the United States and the United Kingdom in respect of their plutonium production. We ask that they begin plurilateral scientific consultations among themselves on the verification requirements for the implementation of effective and irreversible disarmament measures. We urge them all to make regular reports to this Conference, as the nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT have already agreed to do within the framework of the review process of that Treaty, on the steps being taken by them - both individually and jointly - to secure greater progress towards nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Whelan of Ireland for her statement and suggestions, which I am sure will also be a good basis for further intensive discussions during the session to come. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Mr. Eric Walsh.

Mr. WALSH (Canada): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation let me join those that have already done so in expressing our appreciation to you and to the entire P6 for providing the opportunity for a constructive structured discussion permitting what has been thus far a useful exchange of views on nuclear disarmament. We also note positively the large number of substantive interventions that have been made this week, including welcome contributions by the nuclear-weapon States.

You have asked delegations to focus today on the topic of “Future nuclear disarmament measures”, and we are pleased to do so. For the Canadian delegation, we would put at the top of the list the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, which would in our opinion represent a significant nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation accomplishment and one for which the international community has long seen the Conference on Disarmament as the right forum to undertake work. We would like to initiate these negotiations promptly and have, on a national basis, already demonstrated considerable flexibility as to the nature of the mandate under which such negotiations could get under way.

As to other future measures, we have already identified several possibilities in our statement of 23 June 2005, which I will not repeat here. Suffice it to say that, within the context of a discussion or pre-negotiation stage, we see potential for the CD to engage in a constructive exchange and examination of a range of issues connected with nuclear disarmament including doctrine, transparency, irreversibility, verification, dismantlement and disposition, confidence-building measures, and non-strategic nuclear weapons.

We consider focused discussion of issues like those mentioned above could provide useful preparation for and serve as a complement to the CD’s near-term negotiation work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Canada for his suggestion for the work of the CD and the kind words addressed to me.

This concludes this morning’s plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting will continue this debate this afternoon at 3 p.m. I have the following speakers: Cuba, the United Kingdom, Chile and Sweden.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? Sri Lanka.

Ms. FERNANDO (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, I just wanted to take the floor to say a few words to convey my appreciation to you for firmly leading this focused debate on nuclear disarmament. The initiative of the P6 has been successfully launched, judging by the large number of contributions in this first debate underlining the high, even highest, priority given by most member States, including Sri Lanka, towards the cherished goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The debate also brought out the continuing relevance of our multilateral efforts in the Conference on Disarmament and our eagerness to return to meaningful work this year, after the several disappointments experienced in 2005. The serious, thoughtful tone of a number of important interventions - and I am thinking of the contribution of Ambassador Loshchinin of

(Ms. Fernando, Sri Lanka)

the Russian Federation, including one early in the debate, referring to the important processes taking place in the reduction of nuclear arsenals, which was taken up by Mr. Cynkin of the United States with other details - must be acknowledged as progress made and contributing to confidence-building in the Conference, addressing expressed concerns on perceived lack of trust. The debate also opened a window of opportunity to view current strategic thinking on the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, a subject raised by Ambassador Bonnier of Sweden last week. These discussions did provide food for thought for all of us, and we await your guidance on how we now take these discussions forward to the next step.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Fernando of Sri Lanka for her kind statement and encouraging remarks to the Chair. I fully agree with her observation that the Conference got off to a good start with active participation. I hope that this kind of interactive debate will take place in the sessions to come.

Ambassador Trezza of Italy, you have the floor.

Mr. TREZZA (Italy): Mr. President, since I see that we still have at least a quarter of an hour of this session, I would also, like my colleague from Sri Lanka, take this opportunity already to make some remarks with regard to the session that we have had so far.

Let me first start by underlining the usefulness of these discussions and give credit to you for having well prepared them. What we see here is really the tip of the iceberg of the important work that you have been carrying out officially, but behind the scenes.

I think that at the outset of the session we were encouraged by several delegations to try to be innovative in our statements here. This is not always very easy, especially when dealing with an important issue such as nuclear disarmament. We clearly cannot change from one day to another our positions, our postures, on this very important issue.

But I still believe that there are some innovative elements which deserve our attention. First of all, I note that there has been an acknowledgement of the results, although modest, although sometimes insufficient, which have been reached in the field of nuclear disarmament. I would like to join those who have expressed their appreciation for the indications of transparency which some countries, of course mainly the nuclear-weapon States, have given during the session, and we would expect that the remaining nuclear-weapon States would also give this indication of transparency.

I have also noticed that several delegations have acknowledged the relevance of the so-called Global Partnership exercise as an instrument of nuclear disarmament and also as an instrument of nuclear transparency, another issue which has come up very often in our debates. Also, the importance of some confidence-building measures, some of which are very important, such as nuclear security assurances, as well as the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

The priority to FMCT was expressed many times, both as an instrument of arms control - no additional weapon-grade fissile material - and non-proliferation - no additional countries producing such fissile material. The relation between disarmament and non-proliferation, and in particular, specific non-proliferation problems with which we are dealing today was also mentioned in particular, and I would say eloquently by the delegation of the Russian Federation.

The question of verification and verifiability has also been mentioned.

The conclusion that I personally draw from this debate is that nuclear disarmament is indeed a multifaceted issue with which it is very difficult to deal in a single and global way, and that a step-by-step approach is probably more convenient. Our colleague from Algeria mentioned the dilemma with which we are faced: whether to take a global approach or a gradual approach. Our tendency is to favour the latter because we believe it is more realistic. This does not mean that the general question of a global approach to nuclear disarmament cannot be pursued and discussed in this Conference as well. We have indicated our availability to discuss global disarmament within the framework of a subsidiary body.

The PRESIDENT: I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil, Mr. Carlo Antonio da Rocha Paranhos.

Mr. da ROCHA PARANHOS (Brazil): Mr. President, as our Italian colleague has said, we still have a few minutes left. I would like to join others in thanking you very much for the conduct of this work, of this more focused debate, on the issue of nuclear disarmament.

But I would like to stress here that for my delegation, I think that it is important to have your guidance with regard to the following steps. We have heard a number of statements, and very interesting ones, concerning measures taken, and I would like to join others in thanking the Russian and American representatives for their detailed information, but we have also heard important statements with regard to measures that could be, let us say, additionally addressed in deepened analysis in this forum, such as for example the question of enhanced transparency, the question of the place of nuclear arms in military doctrines, the question of verification standards, and I think that we have a lot of material that would justify, in the view of the Brazilian delegation, the creation of an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament.

Therefore, I think that instead of insisting that we could retain just general discussions, I think that we have to have a focus, and as I have said in previous statements, I think that these discussions should contribute to narrowing down our differences with regard to what to do in terms of loci for discussions. That is why I would insist that perhaps we are getting to a ripper moment with a view to discussing the creation of an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador da Rocha Paranhos of Brazil for his statement and kind advice.

Before I adjourn this meeting, I would like to say that first of all, I really appreciate the very interactive participation of all member States. As President of this Conference, I will search for common denominators for common elements, if applicable, to make the debate more organized and interactive and structured during the sessions to come, especially for the following two weeks. In this way, I need more encouragement and good advice during the debate this afternoon.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.