

2 March 2006

Morning Session

Algeria, Ambassador Idriss Jazairy

(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.

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 countrys 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, 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 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.

China, Ambassador Cheng Jingye

(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 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 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, Chinas 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.

Russian Federation, Ambassador Valery Loshchinin

(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 Russias security. As I have already said, Russias 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 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 Peoples 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 Russias 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 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 IAEAs invitation so as to clear up those questions which have remained unclarified with respect to Irans 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 Peoples 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. Putins 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.

France, Ambassador François Rivasseau

(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 Coordinators 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, 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.

Morocco, Ambassador Mohammed Loulichk

(translated from French): Mr. President, allow me to begin by expressing to you my delegations 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.

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, deplores 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.

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-21s 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.

Switzerland, Conseiller militaire Sascha Fuls

(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 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.

Sri Lanka, Ambassador Sarala Fernandoi

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 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.

Italy, Ambassador Carlo Trezza

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.

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.

Brazil, Ambassador Carlos Antonio da Rocha Paranhos

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.