



SUMMARY RECORDS

**OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION HELD DURING THE 129th ASSEMBLY IN GENEVA
(OCTOBER 2013)**

on the subject item

**"Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world:
The contribution of parliaments"**

chosen for debate by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

during the 130th Assembly in March 2014 in Geneva

**Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world:
The contribution of parliaments**

Item 3(a) of the agenda

Panel discussion on the subject chosen for debate by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security during the 130th Assembly

Sitting Of Tuesday, 8 October
(Afternoon)

The meeting was called to order at 2.35 p.m. with the President of the Standing Committee, Mr. S.H. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), in the Chair.

The PRESIDENT welcomed all participants to the meeting and recalled the long engagement of the IPU on the subject of nuclear weapons. Following a recommendation from the 125th Assembly in Bern, the IPU, in cooperation with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), the Swiss Foreign Office and the World Future Council, had recently published a Handbook for Parliamentarians on Supporting Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation.

He introduced the two co-Rapporteurs who had been appointed at the 128th Assembly, Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba) and Mr. B. Calkins (Canada), and three expert panellists, Mr. M. Dengo (Costa Rica), Chair of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, Baroness Miller, Member of the House of Lords, United Kingdom Parliament, and Mr. A. Ware, Global Coordinator, PNND.

He drew attention to the information paper that had been made available by the Secretariat on the proposed amendments to the Statutes and Rules of the IPU, including to the Rules of the Assembly, which would affect the working methods of the Standing Committees. He urged all Committee members to read that paper, which outlined the key changes.

A video provided by the delegation of Kazakhstan in support of the International Day against Nuclear Tests (29 August), entitled 'Embrace! A World Free of Nuclear Weapons', was screened. The video outlined the history of the testing of nuclear weapons since 1945 and their devastating effects on the environment and human health and set out the arguments in favour of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and how it would be an important step towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. M. DENGO, Panellist, recalled the discussions that had already been held during the present Assembly on the impact of natural disasters and urged parliamentarians to recognize how much worse the scale and effect of a nuclear explosion would be for the world. The IPU had long understood the importance of the issue of nuclear weapons; the Handbook for Parliamentarians that it had recently published on Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament was extremely didactic and valuable for parliamentarians and anybody who wished to read more about the history and complexities of those weapons and the action – or indeed inaction – that had been taken in that area. Meetings such as the present Assembly provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to recognize that they all faced similar challenges and could work together towards common goals. As Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament, he understood well the role that parliaments could play in bringing about a world free of nuclear weapons, not least because, whatever measures were adopted in the future, they would all have to be approved by parliaments. They also helped to create foreign policy and ensured that the necessary funds were available; when

they scrutinized budgets and the amounts that were allocated to armament, it was important for them to think about how the same funds could be used for development. Parliamentarians should make good use of their political power, seeking to change views in their countries on such important topics.

He informed the Committee that the results of the discussions of the Open-Ended Working Group had been very positive; the sessions had been valuable both from the political and technical points of view and all participants had expressed their opinions clearly. The Working Group had taken an "inventory" of all existing instruments related to nuclear disarmament and relevant multilateral negotiations. Civil society organizations had also provided valuable contributions to those sessions and the results of the work. The Working Group had produced a report which looked at inter alia: how to advance negotiations; elements to be included in the negotiations; the role of nuclear weapons within the framework of security in the 21st century; and the role of the international community, States and other players.

Baroness MILLER, Panellist, said that since the IPU Assembly had adopted in 2009 its resolution on "Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments", there had been many other good initiatives, including the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group; the conference on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, first held in Oslo earlier in 2013 and for which there would be a follow-up conference in Mexico in 2014; and the IPU Handbook, which would enable all parliamentarians to be more informed about the type of questions they should be asking governments. However, much of the progress had only been made by non-nuclear-weapon States; there had been much less progress from nuclear-weapon States. Indeed, no substantial progress had been made regarding obligations under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), on those States giving up their weapons. It was time for the whole international community to address the dangers of the continued existence of nuclear arsenals around the world.

Many parliaments and sections of civil society did not view nuclear weapons as still being a great threat; complacency had set in after living with those weapons for so many decades and none of them being used. It was a dangerous attitude, as there was no way to guarantee that they would not be used in the future, whether by accident or design. The number of nuclear weapons may have reduced, but they were far more powerful now than in the past.

It was the duty of parliamentarians to do all they could to raise awareness of the consequence of even a "small-scale" nuclear explosion. At present in the United Kingdom there was an ongoing debate about the renewal of the Trident nuclear submarine system. She lamented that fact as, on one hand, the country had recently recognized the need to enforce international law and prohibit the use of chemical weapons but, on the other, maintained an opposing view on nuclear weapons. She was disappointed when the United Kingdom Government had chosen not to attend the conference in Oslo on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons but hoped that it would change its mind in time to attend the forthcoming meeting in Mexico.

The nuclear powers had a responsibility to fulfil their obligations under the NPT and it was important that they understood the views – and the anger – of other countries, which would be affected socially, economically, and environmentally by even a small-scale nuclear exchange. It would be a difficult road to a world free of nuclear weapons but it was the duty of parliamentarians to ensure that governments took part in negotiations.

Mr. A. WARE, Panellist, said that parliamentarians had a responsibility to ensure peace and security in their constituencies, promote the common aspirations for peace, security, and a nuclear-weapon-free world, and work with local legislatures on relevant initiatives. The video shown to the Committee had made it clear that, despite the end of the Cold War and a

reduction in nuclear-weapons testing, the danger had not gone away. In fact, the risk of using nuclear weapons had possibly grown, given the increased risk of non-State actors obtaining those weapons or fissile material.

The doctrine of relying on nuclear weapons prevented the international community from developing cooperative security mechanisms and from being able to allocate any of the US\$ 100 billion spent on weapons of mass destruction each year to other issues such as financial, environmental, or health crises. Parliamentarians needed to play a key role in channelling the necessary resources – financial and otherwise – to resolving the issue and creating a nuclear-weapon-free world.

After years of slow progress at sessions of the Conference on Disarmament, owing to political differences and an inability to negotiate for disarmament, a new process had been established in the Open-Ended Working Group. Participants, from both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States had been able to share their perspectives and proposals on how to take forward multilateral negotiations for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. He firmly hoped that the mandate of the Working Group would be extended beyond its initial one year so that the Group could continue its positive work.

The main challenge in any negotiation was that a number of nuclear-weapon States and their allies still saw a role for nuclear weapons in the world. Until it was possible to move beyond that attitude, it would be difficult to instigate necessary measures such as ensuring a CTBT that all States would ratify, controlling fissile materials, and reducing the number of nuclear weapons ahead of their full elimination. Parliamentarians, however, had the ability to pave the way by voicing their ideas within the IPU and other forums.

He strongly encouraged discussions on establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East and elsewhere and encouraged parliamentarians from NATO countries in particular to push for a global security framework that did not rely on nuclear weapons. He lauded the IPU Handbook, which had been produced in conjunction with PNND and contained many ideas and examples of action that all States could take.

Ms. Y. FERRER GÓMEZ, co-Rapporteur, said that achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world was one of the highest priorities for humanity. The only way to ensure that such weapons were not used was to destroy them; it fell to parliaments to demand that their governments fulfilled their responsibilities to bring about complete and irreversible disarmament. Legislators in States with nuclear weapons needed to ensure that there were unequivocal guarantees in place that their countries would not use, or threaten to use, those weapons. Nuclear deterrence needed to be abandoned as a policy, as it did nothing but encourage the continued existence of nuclear weapons.

In the near half-century since the NPT had been signed, very few advances had been made; while it was true that there had been a reduction in the number of weapons in the world, those that still existed had been perfected and their destructive power was now greater than ever. The amount spent on those weapons each year was over US\$ 100 billion; parliaments needed to scrutinize national budgets and military spending, remaining mindful of how much could be achieved if that same amount was spent instead on development issues. Parliamentarians needed to call on the nuclear powers to meet their commitments under the NPT and to apply the measures set out in the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in the Middle East, was essential, as such zones contributed greatly to international peace and security. The right of States to research and develop peaceful uses of nuclear power, such as for energy, also needed to be recognized.

All countries should press for the beginning of negotiations on a universal and legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament. There were still some States that opposed such a process but international peace and security would only be achieved if the production, procurement, testing, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons were prohibited by such an

instrument. A clear time frame for the elimination and destruction of nuclear weapons needed to be set internationally as soon as possible.

Mr. B. CALKINS, co-Rapporteur, said that his background paper was based on the underlying premise that, in the 21st century, the challenges of dealing with nuclear weapons were more political than technical; for that reason, he believed parliamentarians had a crucial part to play in achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The key challenges they all faced, however, were in the areas of non-proliferation and preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons; disarmament and ensuring that nuclear-weapon States reduced and eventually eliminated their stockpiles; and cooperation and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. All those challenges had been addressed in the NPT and the priority should now be to ensure that it and other existing international instruments were implemented effectively, while carefully balancing the different efforts aimed at non-proliferation and disarmament. Countries had differed in their views on which should be achieved most urgently, but he believed both were necessary.

Under the NPT there had been several positive outcomes, including that the number of States with nuclear weapons stood at no more than nine, much lower than had once been predicted, and that other States had fulfilled their commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons. Implementation of the NPT needed to be improved, however, as proliferation had still occurred and there were still some States that had not signed the Treaty and were therefore under no obligation not to develop those weapons. Those States should urgently be persuaded to sign the Treaty in order to guarantee universal security. Regarding disarmament, all nuclear-weapon States bore the responsibility for eliminating the estimated 17,000 weapons in existence and remained accountable for their action, or lack thereof, in that regard.

Other important international agreements included the CTBT, which could not enter into force until eight specific States had ratified it, and the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty, which would ban the production of the fissile material that provided nuclear weapons with their explosive power. As the Conference on Disarmament functioned on the basis of consensus, some States had been able to block crucial negotiations. The entire international community needed to redouble its efforts to ensure the success of both treaties.

Recent years had, however, given rise to renewed interest and momentum regarding non-proliferation and disarmament, with the creation of the United Nations Secretary-General's five-point proposal on disarmament, important speeches on the issue by the President of the United States, and the adoption of an action plan on disarmament at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Parliamentarians needed to do all they could to help maintain that momentum. They should hold governments to account on compliance with the NPT and urge them to accept new commitments in favour of eliminating nuclear weapons.

He hoped that the present debate would provide valuable input for the resolution that would be drafted and which he hoped would lay the groundwork for a successful 2015 NPT Review Conference and the eventual achievement of the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Debate

Mr. G. LI (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)) said that he was encouraged to see parliamentarians creating awareness of and pushing for a nuclear-weapon-free world, especially as, in recent weeks, States Parties to the CTBT had underscored their commitment to its objectives. The Treaty had near universal membership and the number of ratifications had risen to 161. It represented an essential part of the legal and technical foundation of verifiable, transparent and irreversible nuclear disarmament and a firm barrier against the further development of those weapons. The prospect of the entry into force of the Treaty seemed more positive than it had for many years, as the United States had re-

engaged on an unprecedented level, constructive discussions had been held in China, and Israel had initiated discussions on the Treaty in its own parliament for the first time in over a decade.

Parliamentarians had a key role to play in keeping its entry into force high on the political agenda. For those whose countries already supported the Treaty, they needed to remain resolute in their determination to see the process to its end.

Mr. A. LARIJANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the current numbers of nuclear weapons globally had the capacity to destroy the planet several times over and, with increases in the past decade of sectarian and religious conflicts, there was an ever greater risk of their procurement and use by non-State actors. More worrying was that some States were increasing the risk further by providing terrorist or non-State groups with weapons – including weapons of mass destruction – and other resources, as had been seen recently in the Syrian Arab Republic.

More than 65 years had passed since nuclear weapons were first used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the world was still witness to the nuclear powers modernizing their nuclear arsenals every year. For that reason, Article VI of the NPT, which described the necessary commitments of nuclear-weapon States, was crucial, but without real action and outcomes under that Article, there would remain an impasse in global efforts for non-proliferation and disarmament.

While Israel had never openly acknowledged it, there was very little doubt among the international community that the country was in possession of nuclear weapons. Iran strongly disagreed with the support that many countries gave to Israel, given its double standards when speaking out against chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and when arguing in favour of the sanctions that had been imposed on Iran. In regard of the latter, Iran had stated many times that nuclear weapons had no place in its defence policies and fatwas, or religious decrees, had been issued prohibiting weapons of mass destruction in the country.

He urged all parliamentarians to approve international laws on the prohibition of the production and stockpile of weapons of mass destruction and which would oblige all nuclear-weapon States to accept and adhere to the NPT. All nuclear weapons should be destroyed within a set time frame and under the supervision of the IAEA.

Mr. V. SENKO (Belarus) lamented that, despite global discussions on the issue of nuclear disarmament for over half a century, the problem was still far from being resolved. The number of nuclear States had remained roughly the same and the number of warheads had in recent times been reduced by several thousand, but many countries were not seeking the complete elimination of their nuclear weapons and some of the motivation for creating nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East, had been lost.

As the first State to voluntarily give up nuclear weapons without any preconditions, Belarus remained committed to disarmament and non-proliferation. He was concerned, however, that the guarantees of security provided to Belarus in the Budapest Memorandum following that action were now no longer recognized by some nuclear States.

It was essential that all countries recognized the right set out in the NPT for States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination, or indeed double standards, and in accordance with their non-proliferation obligations. Belarus hoped that the resolution would emphasize that parliaments, governments and civil society should use every means possible to urge nuclear States to comply with their international commitments.

Mr. A. AL-TRAJI (Kuwait) emphasized that it was the responsibility of parliamentarians to give due consideration to the concepts of peace and security. Noting that over 180 countries had ratified the NPT, he added that implementation of the Treaty in the Middle East remained a challenge. There were many conflicts in the region and Israel's accumulation of nuclear weapons also represented a threat. Further, the Iranian position on nuclear

weapons was still not clear to many in the region. His country hoped that Israel would destroy its weapons and that a peaceful solution could be found to the Iranian situation, so that the Middle East could live peacefully and be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Kuwait had been among the first countries to sign the CTBT and called on others to do more to ensure the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. B. BOUTKHIL (Algeria) said that the issue of nuclear proliferation was of great interest given the many relevant resolutions adopted by international organizations. While exhorting all parliamentarians to ensure that the right of countries, particularly developing countries, to use nuclear energy in a peaceful manner be upheld, he called for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which posed a constant threat. Algeria hoped for an internationally binding agreement on the elimination of those weapons, not least because it had suffered greatly from the testing of nuclear weapons in its territory in the 1960s. Given the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, Algeria also called for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

There had been more than sufficient time since the signing of the NPT in 1968 for the nuclear powers to eliminate their weapons and yet there was still no certainty over when that would be achieved. Renewed political will was needed, with the rest of the world pressing those nuclear States to respect international agreements.

Mr. S.Y. NAIK (India) underscored that the risk of nuclear proliferation was a grave threat to all civilization, all the more so if nuclear weapons fell into the hands of non-State actors or terrorist groups. The international community needed to acknowledge that, almost five decades after the NPT was signed, it was still no closer to launching negotiations for achieving the complete elimination of those weapons. India believed that the goal of disarmament could be achieved through a clear, stepwise process that was underwritten by international commitment and a non-discriminatory multilateral framework. India was the only nuclear-weapon State that was ready to engage in such negotiations; the country had tabled working papers on disarmament at the United Nations General Assembly and also supported proposals for a convention on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

India had a strong record in non-proliferation and had put in place a stringent export control system. The country also espoused the policy of "no first use". India believed that parliaments had a key role to play in keeping disarmament high on the political agenda, through ensuring the ratification of relevant international instruments and enacting appropriate national legislation.

Mr. E. AOUN (Lebanon) expressed grave concern over the growing threat of the existence of nuclear weapons and the potential harmful consequences on health, development and the environment. There was no justification for their continued existence and all support for their use should be condemned.

As guardians of democracy, parliamentarians and the IPU should ensure that necessary measures were implemented, such as respect for the principles contained in relevant international instruments and in the UN Charter. There also needed to be an effective international legal framework that could administer justice when those principles were violated.

Lebanon was concerned not only by nuclear weapons, but by other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons. Parliamentarians needed to speak out against the use of all such weapons and to impose sanctions where necessary. The country welcomed all efforts by the United Nations and other organizations to encourage governments to comply with international instruments on the elimination of nuclear and other weapons. The international community had a responsibility to work for peace and security and to preserve the planet for future generations.

Mr. A. NEOFYTOU (Cyprus) said the greatest challenge to international peace and security remained the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and every State should prioritize preventing their spread and development. Parliamentarians needed to apply constant pressure on their governments to change national approaches to proliferation and press them to establish comprehensive strategies in accordance with international treaties and to monitor results. The IPU should continue to promote dialogue on the subject, with a view to ensuring a better future for all people in a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. A. ALNUAIMI (United Arab Emirates) welcomed the advances that countries had made in reducing their nuclear arsenals but remained concerned by the potential consequences on global peace and security, which were exacerbated by some countries still refusing to either sign the NPT or to allow access by the IAEA. The greatest threat would come if any nuclear weapons fell into the hands of terrorist groups.

His country believed it was essential for the Middle East to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone and urged the whole international community to help resolve the Israeli nuclear weapon situation, which provided an incentive to others in the region to develop such weapons. He urged the Israeli Parliament to ratify the NPT.

Mr. L. KAZABU (Zambia) said that it was well within the power of parliaments to advance the cause of nuclear weapon non-proliferation and disarmament. They should seek to ratify swiftly all relevant international treaties and protocols and urge governments to engage constructively in United Nations discussions and negotiations on nuclear issues. Parliaments also needed to use their oversight role to scrutinize governments' implementation of and adherence to those treaties and should seek to raise public awareness of the threats posed by nuclear weapons.

Mr. A. SHAHID (Bangladesh) reported that his country had always advocated for complete nuclear disarmament, especially as it was located in close proximity to three nuclear powers and had good reason to worry about the effects of nuclear weapons. Such weapons could not guarantee security and peace and Bangladesh urged nuclear States to provide security assurances to non-nuclear States.

It was time for the international community to choose either to continue living with the danger of nuclear weapons, which were expensive to maintain, or to give them up and spend the same amount on development. Parliaments needed to devise ways to bring the nuclear powers to the table to negotiate.

Ms. A.M. MARI MACHADO (Cuba) said that the concerns of the international community continued to grow in the face of the risks and humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. The IPU needed to make its voice heard in favour of nuclear disarmament and a resolution must be drafted that ensured the three pillars of the NPT were respected.

Governments needed to work towards the disarmament of existing weapons, the halting of all nuclear testing, and the development of new weapons. The Latin American and Caribbean region was a nuclear-weapon-free zone and Cuba hoped that a similar zone would soon be established in the Middle East.

Parliamentarians needed to remember the critical link between peace and development and thus push for the billions of dollars that were currently spent on nuclear weapons to be allocated instead to ending poverty and hunger and promoting development globally.

Mr. B.-W. CHANG (Republic of Korea) stated that in order to achieve non-proliferation and disarmament, parliamentarians needed to ensure that all States Parties to the NPT enhanced their efforts to comply with it through sharing information and expertise with each other. All countries that had not yet signed the Treaty should urgently seek to do so and to halt any development of nuclear weapons.

The situation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was of particular concern, as that country had already acceded to the Treaty once, but had later withdrawn and conducted nuclear testing. The Republic of Korea was making considerable efforts to resolve the situation through peaceful means, especially as the threat of nuclear weapon use by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea affected not just that region but the whole world.

As shown by the 64-page action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, international momentum on non-proliferation and disarmament was building. Governments and NGOs had a crucial role to play, while the IPU should scale up its efforts to make parliaments more visible and engaged in that endeavour, including through monitoring latest developments on countries' accession to relevant international treaties and promoting further discussions on the issue.

Mr. G. SCHNEEMAN (South Africa) said that the effects of nuclear weapon detonation were not constrained by national borders and all countries should be concerned by its catastrophic humanitarian, socio-economic, and environmental consequences. It was in the interests of all that nuclear weapons were not used under any circumstance. The only way to guarantee that, however, was through their complete elimination. He hoped that South Africa's disarmament of its nuclear arsenal served as an example and challenge to others.

It was the shared responsibility of all countries to ensure the disarmament of nuclear weapons through fulfilling the objectives of the NPT and parliamentarians could play a key role through enacting relevant legislation and establishing national institutions to regulate nuclear material. They could also encourage the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as that in Africa. It was the duty of all to continue raising awareness of the consequence of the use of nuclear weapons and to work for the benefit of future generations by ridding the world of that threat.

He said that the recently published IPU Handbook was a beneficial tool, which he hoped all parliamentarians would use as they advanced the cause of non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mr. A. NAGATSUMA (Japan) welcomed the chance to join with other parliamentarians who shared the dream of eliminating nuclear weapons. Every year for many years, Japan had submitted draft resolutions to the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament in order to highlight the need for abolishing nuclear weapons; all such resolutions had been approved.

Japan urged all nuclear States that had not yet ratified the CTBT to do so. Furthermore, all non-signatories to the Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on enhancing nuclear non-proliferation systems should seek to sign it. In coordination with nine other non-nuclear countries, Japan had established a non-proliferation and disarmament initiative aimed at understanding the provisions of the NPT.

Mr. Z. SANDUKA (Palestine) said that the international community could never forget what happened when nuclear weapons were used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Everybody understood the risks associated with the manufacturing and proliferation of those weapons and it was the duty of parliamentarians to fulfil the hopes of humanity for a world free of nuclear weapons. To do so, they should call on all governments to stop producing and stockpiling those weapons, to sign the NPT, and to allow supervision and inspection by the IAEA. He stressed that no country should adopt any policy of double standards when it came to nuclear weapons and that no country in the Middle East should be able to stockpile nuclear warheads but refuse to sign the NPT.

Ms. F.Z. NADERI (Afghanistan) said that it was only with collective international efforts that the challenges relating to nuclear weapons would be overcome. The existence of nuclear weapons was a danger to all humanity but it had been a long time since significant action had been taken to prohibit or eliminate those weapons and their testing. Afghanistan understood

well what it meant to be a victim of war and earnestly sought the elimination of weapons of any kind that killed innocent people. Nuclear States should not be considered as "powers" in the world but as "threats". If terrorist groups managed to get their hands on nuclear weapons, the whole world would be at risk.

Mr. T. BARAMO TESSEMA (Ethiopia) underscored that unless there was genuine commitment from nuclear States to neutralize their nuclear arsenals, all people would live at risk indefinitely of the use of nuclear weapons and their devastating consequences. The IPU should engage with the United Nations, the IAEA and other relevant partners to maintain political momentum and achieve a global commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament. The IPU should also press for moving beyond the impasse in disarmament negotiations. All countries needed to be resolute in improving multilateral cooperation within those negotiations. Ethiopia actively collaborated with the IAEA on the peaceful and safe use of nuclear technologies and was committed to strengthening nuclear safety infrastructure to ensure the safe use of equipment.

Mr. H. LUCKS (Namibia) said that, as a member of the IAEA, Namibia strongly condemned the use of nuclear weapons and had consistently advocated the principles enshrined in the NPT. It had also fulfilled its own obligations under the 2009 IPU resolution on "Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments".

Namibia was the fifth largest producer of uranium globally but, while uranium mining was essential to development of the national economy, Namibia sought to ensure that the uranium oxide it exported was used only for peaceful purposes and not for nuclear weapons. The country regularly submitted information to the IAEA on those exports. Namibia had ratified the CTBT and concluded a Facility Agreement with the CTBTO authorizing the latter to conduct work on its international monitoring stations in Namibia to provide data on pressure variations in the atmosphere.

Ms. M. VAN EETVELDE (Belgium) said that it was evident that the world would be a better place without nuclear weapons, which had been a serious concern for over half a century. The nuclear threat associated with the Cold War had come and gone, but new threats had taken its place; some countries still refused to sign the NPT and sought to procure or develop weapons of mass destruction, while the threat of non-State actors or terrorist groups acquiring such weapons had become a grave concern.

Nevertheless, she continued to believe that it was possible to have a world without nuclear weapons. It would be a gradual process, in which she hoped parliamentarians would play a key role and in which careful negotiation among all international partners would be essential to disarmament.

Mr. T. HENARE (New Zealand) reported that, 25 years ago, his country's parliament had passed the first legislation of any country that outlawed nuclear weapons and created a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Despite others saying that New Zealand would lose international friends and trade, time had proven that that was not the case. New Zealand's example also proved that there were no reasons or excuses for having weapons of mass destruction. He urged all parliamentarians to return home and press for the introduction of similar legislation in their own countries.

Mr. T. YAHYA (Indonesia) said that the elimination of all nuclear arsenals and the fulfilment of the provisions of the NPT were essential to achieving a world free of the threat of nuclear weapons. Indonesia had ratified both that Treaty and the CTBT and urged all countries that had not yet signed them to do so. All nuclear States should also seek to reduce their stockpiles and ratify regional agreements to create more nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Mr. ZHOU GUANGQUAN (China) underscored that those countries with the greatest nuclear arsenals needed to prioritize the redoubling of their efforts to reduce the number of weapons that they held, as that would create conditions favourable to the full elimination of such weapons. China saw nuclear-free zones as an important step towards global elimination and called on all States that had not yet signed the CTBT to do so as soon as possible. The country had encouraged the elimination of nuclear weapons for many years and respected its commitment to neither participate in any arms race nor be the first to use such weapons, whatever the circumstances.

Ms. S. TAQAWI (Bahrain) expressed great concern that international law did not at present prohibit States from obtaining nuclear weapons or oblige them to destroy their arsenals. Bahrain had enacted several laws prohibiting the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The country called for all States to ratify the relevant conventions and to enable the better inspection of nuclear facilities, especially as, at present, some countries refused inspection of their nuclear reactors. Bahrain was greatly in favour of making the Persian Gulf region a nuclear-weapon-free zone and guaranteeing States the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, such as energy.

Mr. K. AL SADI (Oman) said that nuclear weapons posed a real threat and his country was making every possible effort to reach the objective of not only a nuclear-weapon-free region but also a nuclear-weapon-free world. Both the executive and legislative branches within the country were pushing for the elimination of those weapons and a ban on their testing.

Mr. R. KHOSHNAW (Iraq) said that his country had been a victim of weapons of mass destruction in the past, including through losing much of its budget and resources to armament. As a result, Iraq had made a commitment to never again fall victim to such weapons. Its Constitution stated that Iraq would never seek to build nuclear military capabilities and would work towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

All parliaments could play an important role in bringing that objective to bear, through ensuring that national resources were not allocated to developing weapons of mass destruction. They should also press governments to sign and ratify relevant international conventions aimed at nuclear disarmament and preventing nuclear tests. Iraq understood well the catastrophic consequences of weapons of mass destruction and urged all parliaments to curb any ambitions for armament on the part of their governments.

Mr. N. SABILYANOV (Kazakhstan) said that, after taking the decision over 20 years ago to close one of the biggest nuclear test sites and to abandon the world's fourth largest nuclear weapons arsenal, Kazakhstan remained an active supporter of the disarmament process. The country had, with others in the Central Asia region, signed a treaty proclaiming the region a nuclear-weapon-free zone and Kazakhstan had recently held an international conference on moving from the prohibition of nuclear testing to a nuclear-weapon-free world. One outcome of that conference was an appeal to the international community to demonstrate strong political will and combine efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and military-oriented nuclear materials. Kazakhstan would soon be hosting another conference, on nuclear security in the modern world, during which participants would be discussing practical measures that parliamentarians could take in favour of disarmament and non-proliferation.

He drew attention to both the work of PNND, which was essential in bringing parliamentarians together to develop joint strategic plans for nuclear disarmament, and to the ATOM (Abolish Testing, Our Mission) Project, which aimed to provide information on the threats and consequences of nuclear tests.

Ms. B. JÓNSDÓTTIR (Iceland) welcomed the many achievable suggestions for action that had been made by other speakers and expressed appreciation for the IPU Handbook on Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which outlined both the vision and the path towards realizing it. She added that the world had run out of patience with the nuclear powers and that it was time for them to give up their nuclear weapons. All parliamentarians from those countries should hold their governments accountable and help to make that happen.

There was at present an historic window of opportunity to establish the peace and security of a nuclear-weapon-free world and it was imperative that the opportunity be seized before any non-State actors managed to produce or acquire nuclear weapons or such weapons were used by accident, miscalculation or design. Parliamentarians had a vital role to play by adopting resolutions or calling on governments to actively support initiatives for the elimination of nuclear weapons. They should also draw attention to new diplomatic opportunities, such as the Open-Ended Working Group and support disarmament education within countries to ensure that societies understood the risks of using nuclear weapons and the benefits of their elimination. Parliamentarians worldwide should work together through networks such as PNND and encourage the creation of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones. Whether from nuclear-weapon States, their allies, or non-nuclear weapon States, they could all take action in favour of what the United Nations Secretary-General had called the "global good" of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Ms. L.A. ROJAS (Mexico) said that the current processes for nuclear disarmament under the United Nations had produced insufficient results, as nothing could happen without consensus being reached. If the majority wanted to see progress, alternative routes needed to be found. She drew attention to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which had been agreed in parallel to United Nations processes and which could serve as an example to those seeking action with regard to nuclear weapons.

Mexico strongly believed that nuclear weapons should no longer be allowed to exist. As long as they did, even if they were not being used, they posed a great danger to the world. An international agreement was needed that went beyond non-proliferation and sought the definitive elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. D. DIAS XIMENES (Timor-Leste) stressed that it was essential to reach consensus on eliminating all weapons that were a threat to innocent people's lives. To do so, all parliamentarians needed to take stock of why so many weapons existed and then work together in peaceful negotiations to resolve the problems that they caused.

Mr. H. NAPOLEÃO (Brazil) reported that his country was categorically against the existence and testing of nuclear weapons and sought their elimination. Brazil used nuclear power for peaceful purposes only and always allowed supervision by the IAEA.

Mr. M. DENGGO, Panellist, welcomed the discussions, which had shown there was clear affinity of feeling and ideas among parliamentarians. As legislators and representatives of the people, they had a unique advantage and he urged them to raise awareness of the afternoon's discussions and the search for consensus on the issue of nuclear weapons within their own parliaments and communities.

Baroness MILLER, Panellist, said that the message she had taken from the meeting was that if everybody wanted something strongly enough, and if everybody worked together, it could be achieved. She noted the references to the duty that they all had to future generations to ensure that they did not have to face the threat of nuclear weapons and recalled in particular the calls to shift spending away from weaponry and instead to global development needs.

Mr. A. WARE, Panellist, said that he had been inspired by many of the comments made; there was a collective dream of a nuclear-weapon-free world and, through working together, parliamentarians could press their governments towards realizing it. Some countries, such as Belarus, Kazakhstan, New Zealand and South Africa, had already taken decisive and inspiring measures to achieve elimination at the national level. It was essential to engage with nuclear weapon States and he welcomed the comments made in particular by China.

He looked forward to the conference to be held in Mexico in February 2014 on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and also hoped that parliamentarians would encourage their governments to support the renewal of the mandate of the Open-Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament.

Ms. Y. FERRER GÓMEZ, co-Rapporteur, said it had been extremely valuable to hear the many statements made, which would be used to inform the resolution that would be drafted. In particular, she recalled the many comments on the urgent need for parliamentarians to fulfil their vital role in ensuring the elimination of nuclear weapons. Many who had spoken had expressed their desire to safeguard humanity and the planet and to avoid its destruction from the use of those weapons. She looked forward to receiving written proposals from delegates ahead of the drafting of the resolution.

Mr. B. CALKINS, co-Rapporteur, welcomed the many statements made, especially those by the delegates of Belarus, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, and South Africa, who had described the positive effects of, and opportunities created by, the unilateral action that each of their countries had taken, in spite of the expected negative impacts of which others had warned. However, regarding the calls for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, he was a little concerned by the repeated references to urging one State in particular in the region to become nuclear-weapon-free. It was essential that all countries in the region, regardless of whether they were nuclear States, sought the same objective if such a zone was to be created.

Free and unhindered access by the IAEA to countries was essential towards building confidence globally and would be a key step towards disarmament. He hoped to hear further ideas on what parliaments could do to ensure that their national legislative framework allowed such access.

The PRESIDENT thanked the co-Rapporteurs, panellists and delegates for sharing their ideas on such an important topic and expressed his hope that, together, they would soon achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.