

Chris,

I would like to thank you for the tireless and innovative efforts you have made since assuming the chairmanship. You have conducted close consultations with all CD members and produced some very interesting papers, including the "food for thoughts" paper. I believe your work will provide a good basis for future deliberations.

I have been advocating that the term of the CD presidency is too short to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament is effectively managed. A change of chairmanship at this point seems only to exemplify the problems we have to address. Nevertheless I have every confidence in your successor and I hope that our new chairman will continue the excellent work you have initiated with the same enthusiasm.

Lastly, as we are all aware, the NPT Review Conference is coming up in a little over two months. The NPT regime has greatly contributed to the international security environment. As Dr. Stedman mentioned yesterday, during the Cold War era, there was a pessimistic prediction that anywhere from between 15 and 50 countries would someday possess nuclear weapons. Thanks to the NPT, however, this is not the case. The NPT regime has therefore benefited all countries, including non-NPT members. It is essential that we maintain a robust and reliable NPT regime. Recent international situations have not made life any easier for us. The Conference on Disarmament is not the NPT, but I believe both have to work to achieve the common objective of international security.

My country looks forward to working closely with all other countries to this end.

Thank you.