

**Statement by the President of the
Conference on Disarmament, Tim Caughley (New Zealand)
on 17 March 2005**

In my concluding remarks let me first make a number of really warm thank yous.

I want to begin by thanking our Secretary-General and my predecessor Ambassador Chris Sanders for their support and for their success in delivering such a worthwhile high level segment this year.

My gratitude goes also to those members whose Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries of Foreign Affairs addressed us this week.

And I cannot emphasise enough how grateful I am for the manner in which Chris Sanders, through his efforts in offering us a possible way forward through his subtle informal, untabled derivation of the Five Ambassadors' proposal, has underpinned a further intensification of the focus on finding a way through the CD's impasse.

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

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

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

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

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