

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Mr. President, even though sometimes in the fast lane things happen rapidly, I did just join a consensus on behalf of the United States in favour of the decision which you placed before us, but I feel constrained to make a certain explanation of my action in that regard. It is an explanation in the nature of making clear that from the United States perspective, this CD decision says what it does say but it does not say what it does not say. By that I mean that for us we are not agreeing hereby to commence CTBT negotiations in the CD now, but rather we are agreeing to do so later, after we have first reached agreement on the specific mandate for our Conference's nuclear testing Committee. As our British colleague pointed out last week, we believe as he does, that the five nuclear-weapon States have particular responsibility for ensuring the success of the negotiations and, in that regard, the United States is continuing discussions with the other four on the question of the way ahead in these negotiations. Even as these discussions continue for us, we have agreed it would be appropriate as the decision states for the NTB Ad Hoc Committee Chairman to conduct informal consultations on how to organize the negotiations, including on this specific mandate.

Mr. QUIROS (Peru) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor in my capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21; I am sure that Ambassador Urrutia would have liked to have been in this room now, at what I would term a historic moment for the work of the CD, but as he is attending another meeting, I am taking his place. On behalf of the Group of 21, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to you for the excellent work you have done and which has enabled us to take a step forward that I am sure will go down in the annals of this Conference and, I believe, opens up a new stage in what lies ahead of us. The Group of 21 considers that the decision that has just been adopted provides the opportunity the Group has been seeking for many years of initiating a comprehensive test-ban treaty that is universal and internationally verifiable. We offer you our warmest congratulations and the Group is ready to go on very actively and to participate very actively in the consultations Ambassador Tanaka will be holding in order to have a mandate as soon as possible, as stated in the last paragraph of the decision.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I am very grateful to the representative of Peru, especially for his kind words, but I must say that the outcome is the fruit of the efforts of all delegates and delegations to bring the various positions closer together and to seek flexibly and in a constructive spirit for the decision we have adopted. I may have played some role, but that role would not have been possible without the understanding and flexibility shown by a large part of the delegations present here and involved.

Mr. ERRERA (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, I too welcome the consensus that has just been achieved on the document and extend my congratulations to you. We are particularly gratified because the document includes two points that we and, I think, many others, have viewed as essential from the outset. The first concerns the nature of the treaty to be negotiated within the Conference on Disarmament. That nature has to do with the fact that, as we have said on several occasions, the major objective that we are pursuing is the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and,