The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Opening of the session

The Chair (spoke in Spanish): I declare open the 2013 organizational session and 329th meeting of the Disarmament Commission.

Adoption of the agenda

The Chair (spoke in Spanish): The Commission has convened today for a brief session to deal with its organizational matters, including the election of the Chair and of other members of the Bureau for 2013.

I wish now to draw the Commission’s attention to the provisional agenda for this organizational session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.69, which is before members. Are there any comments from delegations?

There being none, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.69.

The agenda was adopted.

Election of the Chair

The Chair (spoke in Spanish): In accordance with the established practice of rotation, it is the Group of Western European and other States that has the honour to nominate the candidate for the post of Chair of the Commission at its 2013 session. I have received an official communication from the Chair of that Group informing me that the Group has endorsed the candidature of Ambassador Christopher Grima, Permanent Representative of Malta, for the chairmanship of the Commission for its 2013 session.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that it is the wish of the Commission to elect Ambassador Christopher Grima as Chair of the Disarmament Commission by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chair (spoke in Spanish): On behalf of the Commission and on my own behalf, I congratulate Ambassador Christopher Grima, Permanent Representative of Malta, on his election to this high office. I express a commonly shared view when I say that we are looking forward to benefiting from his broad diplomatic experience and negotiation skills. We wish him success in discharging his new and important duties. For our part, we will remain at his service, ready to provide support and counsel, as necessary.

With those brief remarks, I now invite Ambassador Christopher Grima to take the Chair.

Mr. Grima (Malta) took the Chair.

Statement by the Chair

The Chair: At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the members of the Commission for electing me as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. I also want to thank Ambassador Román-Morey for his kind words and good wishes addressed to me. I count on the support and cooperation of all Member States in achieving the important goals ahead of the Commission.
Before I turn to the next item on our agenda, allow me to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey for the excellent guidance and leadership he provided as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2012 substantive session. It was a particularly challenging session of the Commission, given that it was the beginning of the three-year cycle, and Ambassador Román-Morey’s leadership role resulted in a promising start to the cycle. My gratitude also goes to other members of the Bureau for their valiant and tireless efforts. Finally, let me thank delegations for their constructive spirit and cooperation during the previous session of the Commission.

**Election of other officers**

**The Chair:** Like the Chair, other officers of the Bureau are elected on the basis of the established principle of rotation. I have been informed that while the Group of Western European and other States has nominated a candidate for Vice-Chair of the Commission, consultations are still ongoing within other regional groups on possible candidates for the remaining posts of Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur.

The official communication from the Group of Western European and other States indicates that the Group has endorsed Mr. Hartmut Koller-Lenhardt of Austria as Vice-Chair from the Group of Western European and other States.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. Hartmut Koller-Lenhardt of Austria Vice-Chair of the Commission for the 2013 substantive session, by acclamation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria for an announcement.

**Mr. Adejola** (Nigeria): With your permission, Sir, I would like to announce the candidatures of Mr. Amr Fathi Aljowaily of Egypt and Mr. Bafetigué Ouattara of Côte d’Ivoire as Vice-Chairs from Africa.

**The Chair:** May I take it that the Commission wishes to elect the representatives just mentioned, from Egypt and Côte d’Ivoire, as members of the Bureau?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** Allow me, on behalf of the Commission, to warmly congratulate the representatives of Austria, Egypt and Côte d’Ivoire and wish them every success in discharging their duties. The Commission will take up the election of other members of the Bureau at its next meeting, in April.

**Review of the draft resolution submitted to the First Committee at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly relating to the Disarmament Commission**

**The Chair:** As members of the Commission are aware, yesterday the General Assembly adopted a resolution that has specific bearing on the work of the Commission. For the sake of clarity and for the benefit of members of the Commission, I would like to refer to that resolution.

Resolution 67/71, entitled “Report of the Disarmament Commission”, was adopted by the General Assembly yesterday, 3 December, under agenda item 96 (b). The relevant paragraphs of the draft resolution, namely, paragraphs 7 and 8, read as follows:

“Recommends that the Disarmament Commission continue the consideration of the following items at its substantive session of 2013:

(a) Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons;

(b) Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

“Requests the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2013, namely from 1 to 19 April, and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session”

I have just outlined the resolution that contains the mandate for the upcoming work of the Disarmament Commission. Now I will open the floor to those delegations wishing to make a statement or comment on anything I have said so far.

**Mr. Román-Morey** (Peru) *(spoke in Spanish):* As this is the first time that I take the floor from my delegation’s seat, allow me to reiterate to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission for the substantive session of 2013. We are certain, as we said earlier, that, with your broad experience and diplomatic skill, we will achieve concrete results in the upcoming session of the Disarmament Commission.
As Chair of the Commission during its 2012 session, I take this opportunity to offer a brief sketch of the work of the Disarmament Commission at its 2012 session.

As is well known, this year marks the beginning of a new three-year cycle for the Commission, which is the primary deliberative body of the United Nations charged with considering and drafting recommendations in the field of disarmament. To lay the groundwork for the relative measure of success that we achieved in April, before beginning our work I held informal consultations with all regional and bilateral groups and interested parties on the substantive agenda of the Commission. To complement those consultations, I presented to the parties a document that showed the trends that the Chair would have to address and a group of proposals to be debated. That was further complemented by intensive debates and laborious negotiations during the first week of the substantive session in order to reach consensus on substantive issues to consider.

On the fourth day, and not without difficulty, the Commission finally reached a consensus on addressing the following topics: recommendations to achieve nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. As in previous years, two working groups were established to consider those items on the agenda.

This year, however, the richness of the debate on the possible agenda resulted in the decision of the Commission to meet in informal sessions to consider the working methods of the Commission and elements for a declaration on the fourth decade of disarmament. Subsequently, the Friends of the Chair were appointed to coordinate negotiations on possible recommendations on those issues.

As can be seen from the documents that were discussed in the working groups, substantive deliberations were held this year. Unfortunately, however, the Commission was not able to present recommendations on the matters under discussion. Although the Commission was about to do so, it was a lost opportunity to recommend consensus proposals to the negotiating forums on disarmament for greater action by the international community. As I indicated in my closing remarks to the Commission, if I may permit myself to mention it, “we are very close to reaching universal decisions, the initial and final objective of which is exclusively to support a good cause for the benefit of the entire international community” (A/CN.10/PV.328, p. 13).

Finally, I would like to publicly acknowledge the valuable work of the Chairs of the Working Groups, the Bureau of the Commission and the Friends of the Chair, who all worked tirelessly to achieve a successful outcome. Thanks to their efforts, the Commission is on an excellent footing to pursue its work in 2013. Let us not squander valuable opportunities to build a consensual resolve within the international community to live in a world of peace and security. I would also like to thank the Secretariat and the Office for Disarmament Affairs for their tireless support.

Finally, in my capacity as representative of Peru, let me say, Mr. Chair and my friend, that we are willing and able to continue to provide support and guidance, if you desire it. Please know that you will have my personal backing.

Ms. Rafti (Cyprus): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). First, we would like to express our sincere thanks to Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, the outgoing Chair of the Disarmament Commission, for his tireless efforts during the previous session. We wish to congratulate the newly elected Chair, Ambassador Christopher Grima.

We take this opportunity to assure him of our full support. The EU looks forward to working closely with you, Sir, and we are convinced that under your leadership the work of the Disarmament Commission will advance. We also congratulate the elected Vice-Chairs and wish them success in their work. We look forward to continued discussions on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

In conclusion, we would like to wish you, Sir, every success in your future work and reiterate to you the full support of the European Union.

Provisional agenda for the 2013 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission

The Chair: The provisional agenda for the 2013 substantive session is contained in document A/CN.10/L.70. As participants can see, there are two
substantive items, namely items 4 and 5. I will take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the provisional agenda for the 2013 substantive session as contained in document A/CN.10/L.70.

It was so decided.

The Chair: During the deliberations of the First Committee, the Chair of Working Group I, Mr. Naif bin Bandar Al-Saudary of Saudi Arabia, indicated an interest in continuing to chair that working group. With respect to Working Group II, Ms. Véronique Pepin-Halle of Canada has already left New York and is currently assigned to another post by her Government. Therefore, I urge the Group of Western European and other States to conduct the necessary consultations to find a replacement for the Chair of Working Group II. At its next meeting in April, the Commission will formally appoint the chairs of the two working groups.

Organizational matters

The Chair: The Disarmament Commission is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and meets annually. Its sessions are financed from the regular budget and do not require additional funding. Moreover, in accordance with decision 52/492 of 1998, the annual substantive sessions of the Commission should last three weeks. As a result, during the 2013 session, the Commission will work on the basis of our usual practice, that is, a full three-week session from 1 to 19 April.

It was so decided.

The Chair: I should like to note that according to the established practice, all organizational matters should be concluded at the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission. Unfortunately, as I have already informed the Commission, we are not in a position to conclude those organizational matters in view of the following outstanding vacancies: two Vice-Chairs from the Group of Asian and Pacific States; two Vice-Chairs from the Group of Eastern European States; one Vice-Chair and a Rapporteur from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; and a Chair for Working Group II.

As members can see, that is a tall order, and I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the regional groups concerned to conduct all necessary consultations in order to enable the Commission to start its substantive work, as planned, on 1 April with a full Bureau. Accordingly, it might be advisable for the Commission to conclude today's organizational session and give the Chair and delegations time to continue further consultations on those issues and to take them up at an appropriate time.

I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Seifi Pargou (Islamic Republic of Iran): First, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to assume the chairmanship of the Commission at its 2013 substantive session. Secondly, I would like to thank the outgoing Chair, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Permanent Representative of Peru, for his efforts.

Thirdly, I would like to raise a technical question related to paragraph 4 of document A/CN.10/L.69. I know that we adopted the provisional agenda contained therein, but in contrast to the provisional agendas of previous organizational sessions of the Disarmament Commission, in which reference to the draft resolution relating to the Disarmament Commission included the draft resolution's symbol, this year reference is made without including the symbol.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Commission.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Commission): The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran is absolutely correct. In recent years, in previous provisional agendas for the organizational session, we did include the official symbol of the draft resolution. However, unlike in previous years, this organizational meeting is taking place during the fall. We have looked at the precedent of the Committee, and during meetings that have taken place in the fall, given the fact that the official symbol was not yet assigned to the draft resolution and that the draft resolution was yet to be submitted for processing, the only language available has been the language of the past, so we have used that as a precedent for today's meeting. But the representative of Iran is absolutely correct that in previous years, given the fact that the organizational meetings happened the same year as the session of the
Disarmament Commission, the official symbol was used.

*The Chair:* If there are no other pressing issues to discuss, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to conclude its 2013 organizational session and to resume the unfinished organizational business at the first meeting of the Disarmament Commission, on 1 April 2013.

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.*