Madam Moderator, Distinguished Panelists, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Department of Disarmament Affairs, I would like to extend to you a cordial welcome to this panel discussion on a very important subject. I would also like to express a special word of welcome to the Right Honourable Kim Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada, who herself is a person dedicated to the cause of disarmament. As the moderator has mentioned, this is the second in the series of seminars that DDA is organizing within the margins of the First Committee this year in order to enhance and deepen the understanding of delegations, non-governmental organizations and others with regard to important aspects of the disarmament agenda.

Last April, DDA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, sponsored an international conference entitled "A Disarmament Agenda in the 21st Century" in Beijing, and the conference drew high-level representatives of governments, parliaments, academia and civil society, who addressed defence doctrines, disarmament, and the United Nations agenda.
nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear dangers, missile proliferation and missile defence, conventional weapons, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We have just published the proceedings of the Beijing Conference as one of DDA's *Occasional Papers*, and I would like to take this opportunity to launch the publication.

As the moderator has told you, we had planned to have the conference in Beijing much earlier, but because of the events of 9/11 we had, unfortunately, to postpone it. But it was an opportunity for us to reflect on the impact of those horrendous events on the disarmament agenda. There are many who look upon 9/11 as a watershed event in international relations. Some refer to it as the end of the post-Cold War era, the others talk about it as the beginning of the post post-Cold War era. Whatever way you may choose to characterize the event, there is no doubt about its substantial impact on the disarmament agenda.

The impact of 9/11 on disarmament could be regarded as positive to some extent, because there is a fresh awareness of the need to universalize the current instruments that we have on weapons of mass destruction in particular. We have recently seen the accession by Cuba to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is already the most widely subscribed to disarmament treaty that we have. With Cuba's decision to join the treaty, only three countries remain outside the treaty. The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention likewise require to have greater numbers on board in order to be fully universal. It is with the universalization of these legal instruments that we present a bulwark against terrorism using weapons of mass destruction. But there are other conventions and other legal instruments. The IAEA, for example, has the convention with regard to the physical protection of nuclear material. We have seen from the recent G-8 meeting in Canada a decision to allocate US$ 20 billion for safeguarding the material that could be used to produce weapons of mass destruction.

All these steps are highly desirable, but there are also negative consequences of 9/11. We have seen an enormous surge in global military expenditure, not all of which is justified by the events of 9/11. We have seen that there has been an overzealous reaction to 9/11 and the dangers of asymmetric warfare which do not justify what is happening. There is a continued reliance on nuclear weapons, for example, with even doctrines of the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons being propounded. We have new nuclear weapons, such as the RNEP, the robust nuclear earth penetrator, or a bunker-buster being designed as one of the new uses for nuclear weapons. There is rumour of new biological weapons genetically engineered to resist defences to increase lethality or durability. And there is erosion of nuclear security assurances which have hitherto protected non-nuclear weapons States.

There has been an enormous increase in annual global military expenditure, which today is estimated to be well above US$ 850 billion, and so we have to be aware of the fact that, in looking at the impact of 9/11, we have to ensure that the existing disarmament agenda is not jettisoned on behalf of new threats on the excuse that we have a new threat to contend with. Secondly, within the United Nations Secretariat, as many of you are aware, the Secretary-General put together a group of us as a policy-working group to report on the United Nations and
terrorism. That report is now out - A/57/273 - and while it generally covers the entire subject, it proposes that we adopt a tripartite strategy supporting global efforts: firstly, to dissuade disaffected groups from embracing terrorism; secondly, to deny groups or individuals the means to carry out acts of terrorism; and thirdly, to sustain broad-based international cooperation in the struggle against terrorism. In the report, there is a substantial section on weapons on mass destruction, other weapons and weapons technologies. We make the point that there is no reliable assessment of the quantity or quality of weapons, dual-use and related materials, devices and technologies in the possession of groups and individuals associated with terrorism. At the same time we acknowledge realistically that there are grave dangers associated with the existence of these materials. We referred to what the IAEA is doing, we also referred to the fact that there is also a danger with regard to small arms and light weapons and explosives for a variety of terrorist acts and the importance of preventing that. In the recommendations contained in the report, there are a number of recommendations pertaining to disarmament, one of which is a suggestion that there should be within DDA a mechanism established to produce a biennial public report on the potential use of weapons of mass destruction in terrorist acts. The intention is to have the existing UN resources and specialized databases used together with information from Member States for a report based on open sources in order to serve as a barometer of terrorist danger.

Let me conclude by referring to a proposal on an international commission on weapons of mass destruction that I have made not so long ago in a joint op-ed piece in the *International Herald Tribune* with my friend and colleague, Ramesh Thakur, the Vice-Rector of the UN University, in which we thought that the time was opportune for such a commission, given the present impasse in the various disarmament fora of the United Nations - the Conference on Disarmament, which for the fourth successive year has not even been able to adopt a programme of work; the failure to achieve consensus on holding a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament; the fact that the Disarmament Commission was not even able to meet this year; and the repetitive resolutions that we have in the First Committee which invariably cause divisions among Member States. It is therefore important for us in the context of 9/11 to look afresh at the disarmament agenda, particularly as far as weapons of mass destruction are concerned, and I submit, together with my colleague, that it is an appropriate moment for a Member State or a group of Member States to sponsor a group of eminent persons who could comprise such a commission. This commission could submit a report which would help achieve a conceptual breakthrough as far as the global community is concerned on how we should tackle the problem of both the possession and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, bearing in mind the dangers that non-State actors today present to the international community.

I thank you for your presence at this seminar and thank the distinguished panelists for having consented to speak here.