



# General Assembly

Seventieth session

## First Committee

**12**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Thursday, 22 October 2015, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom . . . . . (Netherlands)

*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

#### **Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items**

**The Chair:** This morning the Committee will first hear from the remaining speakers on the nuclear weapons cluster, and then proceed to its consideration of the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction. All delegations taking the floor are kindly reminded to observe the time limits of five minutes for national statements and seven minutes for group statements.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.52.

**Mr. Kadykov** (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to assure you, Sir, that the delegation of Kazakhstan is ready to cooperate with you and work closely with other delegations in order to achieve our common goals and objectives.

It is well known that the people of Kazakhstan suffered greatly during the era of the Cold War and the nuclear arms race. Almost 1.5 million people were affected by the consequences of the more than 500 nuclear tests conducted at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. The humanitarian imperative that resulted, coupled with our leadership's political vision, determined the firm position taken by the people and the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, whereby

we renounced the nuclear weapons we possessed and closed down one of the world's largest nuclear weapon test sites.

Having experienced the catastrophic consequences of nuclear tests at first hand, my country has signed on to the Austrian-led Humanitarian Pledge and would like to help increase the momentum for its global awareness. We fully endorse the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and call on all Member States to take practical action to help implement its goals.

For many years, the international community has been deeply divided on the issue of nuclear disarmament. We strongly believe that real progress in that area requires a collective commitment on a global scale to the goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. It requires compromise and a genuine interest in finding common ground rather than routine reiterations of national policy positions. We are confident that now is the time to highlight what the world community accepts as fundamental principles and objectives for the field of global nuclear disarmament.

That is why Kazakhstan has come forward with an initiative for the adoption of a draft United Nations universal declaration on the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons. Its primary objective is the reaffirmation by all States Members of the United Nations of their political commitment to the goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world, and to bringing together in one place a statement of the common ground that all States share on the issue of nuclear disarmament. By laying out a synthesis of the basic

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principles that unite all nations on the goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, the draft declaration has the potential for revitalizing the global process of nuclear disarmament and breaking the vicious circle of divisions in the disarmament community. It also has the potential for boosting the morale of the disarmament community, which in the years to come will be essential if we are to marshal the political will to expand that common ground in order to encompass the means of fulfilling our disarmament commitments.

The chronic deadlock in disarmament has resulted in a loss of confidence in the entire disarmament process. Reaching consensus on the basic goal would be a welcome step forward in restoring some of that lost confidence and building new trust, which will help to assure the international community that nuclear disarmament is not only supported as a goal but is actually happening. This draft universal declaration is proposed so that we may build on that modest progress by showing that global nuclear disarmament is an issue that unites humankind rather than dividing it. It is a goal that has been pursued for so long at the United Nations that it has become part of the Organization's identity as an institution. It can and must be an issue that unites all nations. That is why we need a universal declaration, so that we can end the disarmament standstill and start the great journey ahead.

The delegation of Kazakhstan has submitted the text of a draft resolution on a universal declaration (A/C.1/70/L.52). We hope that it will be supported by all Member States, and we have requested sponsors for it.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.55.

**Mr. Ejinaka** (Nigeria): I would like to begin, Sir, by expressing my delegation's appreciation for your efforts and able leadership and to assure you and the Bureau of our continued cooperation and support.

The delegation of Nigeria aligns itself with the statements delivered on this cluster on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/70/PV.9) and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/70/PV.10). We also align ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the De-Alerting Group (see A/C.1/70/PV.9) and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative.

On behalf of the Group of African States, the Nigerian delegation would like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.55, entitled "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty", on the instrument also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba. The text of the draft resolution has already been circulated to all Member States. We have noted with satisfaction delegations' overwhelming support for the resolution on this topic in past sessions of the General Assembly, and we ask for their continued support in that regard. Our introduction of the draft resolution once again serves to emphasize Africa's strong commitment to maintaining the continent and the areas adjoining it as a zone truly free of nuclear weapons.

The Nigerian delegation sees nuclear-weapon-free zones as a credible way of promoting a two-pronged approach to achieving the overall objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The significance of such zones lies not just in the fact that they ban the production and possession of nuclear weapons within the territory of the Member States of the region but, importantly, they also prohibit stationing such weapons within the zones.

In that regard, my delegation would like to stress that, despite the notable setbacks we have to seen to the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, we must continue our efforts to ensure that the commitments and obligations of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are honoured. We continue to call on all stakeholders and States within the region to work for its success. We believe that, with an appropriate demonstration of political will and a determination to succeed on the part of all parties, the important and essential goal of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction will be realized.

The catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from either the deliberate use or the unintentional explosion of nuclear weapons remain a compelling reason that certain Member States should cease their unnecessary denial of the existential threat that such weapons represent to the human race and the urgent need to address the issue of their possession. In that context, we would like to echo the 1978 pronouncement of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which underscored that "nuclear weapons pose the greatest

danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization.” (*resolution S-10/2, para. 47*) Similarly, the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference highlighted the issue strongly, expressing deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. In that connection, Nigeria strongly supports the initiative behind the convening of three international conferences highlighting the theme of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Based on Nigeria’s strong commitment to the ideals of nuclear disarmament, we will support all the draft resolutions related to the issue, including those highlighting the ethical imperatives for a nuclear-free world and similar measures.

Nuclear weapons and their proliferation create challenges to security, especially within the context of new realities such as threats from global and transnational terrorism. The risk of nuclear materials falling into the hands of non-State actors, including those associated with the possible transfer of nuclear technology to terrorist groups, remains a matter of great concern to my delegation. We welcome the continued efforts in that regard by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), particularly through the role it plays in monitoring and inspecting nuclear facilities. We urge the countries concerned to ensure that they observe and comply with IAEA safeguards and standards at all times.

While nuclear-weapon States have continued to hold on to their stockpiles, a new phase in the nuclear arms race is evolving, with more States acquiring the capacity to develop such weapons. While some nuclear-weapon States have publicly announced reductions in their nuclear arsenals, my delegation still considers the burden of a world with thousands of such doomsday weapons to be unacceptable. Such stockpiles pose a tremendous danger to humankind and the whole of human civilization. That is why Nigeria has joined the call to ban all nuclear weapons, the only known weapons of mass destruction that are not yet prohibited by an international legal instrument.

There are numerous global instruments for measuring both the pulse of the numerous dangers that the possession of nuclear weapons poses to the international community and the progress being made towards nuclear disarmament in today’s world. What has patently been lacking is the political will that can ensure implementation. In that context, my delegation reiterates that, despite the unpleasant conclusion of the

2015 NPT Review Conference, the obligations of States parties to the Treaty, including absolute respect for its three-pillar system, must remain sacrosanct.

As part of the multipronged approach to nuclear disarmament, my delegation continues to stress the necessity of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), bearing in mind the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States in that regard. There can be no doubt that the CTBT offers hope for the possibility of halting the further development and proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

As a State party to the NPT and a member of the Conference on Disarmament, Nigeria will continue to promote a multilateral process and, by aligning with Member States across all regions, to express its support for the NPT as the cornerstone for consolidating the global non-proliferation regime and other machinery for promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. My delegation supports all useful international efforts aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament, including the best intentions of this Committee and the General Assembly.

**Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka): It is a pleasure to see you chairing today’s meeting, Sir. We will cooperate with you fully as you steer this important Committee’s work in the coming weeks.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/70/PV.9).

The need to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is now more urgent than ever. Sri Lanka’s commitment to eliminating the threat posed by nuclear weapons is reflected in the international treaty obligations we have undertaken in the field of disarmament. It is our belief that a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament is required if we are to achieve the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Total elimination is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. All States have an obligation to negotiate in good faith to achieve that objective, which remains largely unfulfilled despite the 1996 advisory opinion handed down by the

International Court of Justice. While the outcome of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was disappointing, it should not deter our resolve. We must strive to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and other forms of weapons of mass destruction. A fundamental shift in the mindset that relies on nuclear armaments is essential if we are to achieve the goals of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Strengthening the disarmament treaty regime is essential if we are to ensure a rule-based regime for nuclear disarmament. In that connection, Sri Lanka wishes to recall, and reiterate its support for, the key recommendations of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, namely, the paramount value of multilateralism and the overall importance of treaties and international law in attaining the goal of disarmament.

Sri Lanka remains committed to striving with all States and other stakeholders to make nuclear disarmament achievable and to bring the peaceful uses of nuclear technology within reach. As with other States parties to the NPT, we consider that we have an inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, as provided for in article IV of the Treaty. Equally, nuclear-weapon States have a clear responsibility to take effective measures to eventually eliminate nuclear weapons, as provided for in article VI. It is therefore imperative that they implement that obligation in good faith. We must recognize the inextricable links between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We call on all States parties to put into effect the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, including the principle of irreversibility.

While efforts should continue towards the objective of general and complete disarmament, we have seen a new paradigm in the nuclear discourse that makes it imperative to ensure that we achieve nuclear disarmament based on humanitarian norms. It follows the emphasis of the 2010 NPT Review Conference on expressing concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That movement has now made steady progress. Sri Lanka values the work being done in the area, including by civil society and think tanks, and fully supports this initiative.

As part of our nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation priorities, the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is now recognized as imperative. Sri Lanka reiterated at the 2010 NPT Review Conference that it was moving towards ratifying the CTBT as soon as possible. In the meantime, we are planning a number of support activities with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in the coming years, with a regional on-site inspection training programme to be held towards the end of this year, a manifestation of our commitment to realizing the goals set by the CTBT.

It is impossible to overemphasize the increasingly important role of nuclear security in an era where the possibility of nuclear material and technology reaching the hands of non-State actors remains distinct and dangerous. The emergence of new forms of terrorism, including cyberterrorism, asymmetric conflicts and new types of weapons make the evolving scenario an alarming one. We call for support for the safeguards mechanism of the International Atomic Energy Agency, including its emergency and incident-reporting system. The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials is a centrepiece of the legal architecture for nuclear security. In addition, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism provides a comprehensive legal framework for preventing nuclear material from falling into unlawful hands and for dealing with crisis situations in such eventualities.

We support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and consider such zones to be a form of mutually assured security networks among members. Our support especially extends to the call for a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction.

We would also like to highlight the importance of education on peace and disarmament. In that context, we would like to cite the initiative taken in Sri Lanka by C.G. Weeramantry, a former Judge of the International Court of Justice, in establishing the Weeramantry International Centre for Peace Education and Research in 2001. There is a great need to support disarmament education, particularly in developing countries, and to provide the expertise needed to understand and analyse new trends and developments in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation field, including the dynamics and particularities of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

It is Sri Lanka's earnest hope that all States will summon the courage to demonstrate the political will and initiative that are essential if we are to create a world free of nuclear weapons.

**Ms. Barker-Manase** (Marshall Islands): On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your chairship of the First Committee. We would also like to express our support for the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Palau (see A/C.1/70/PV.11).

The Republic of the Marshall Islands experienced 67 nuclear weapon tests between 1946 and 1958. The total tonnage of United States tests in the Marshall Islands was 100 times greater than the total tonnage of its atmospheric nuclear tests at the Nevada test site. By the 1980s, the health effects of fallout and radiation exposure from the total of 67 bombs dropped in the Marshall Islands were evident, with cancer rates among the Marshallese people that were between 2 and 30 times higher than those among United States citizens, as documented in an independent health survey conducted from 1985 to 1989 by Dr. Rosalie Bertell and the International Institute of Concern for Public Health. By the mid-1990s, an unusually high number of thyroid disorders were documented throughout the Marshall Islands, not only in the northern atoll communities of Rongelap and Utrik, where United States scientists had focused their medical research efforts.

The Marshallese people have been witnesses to the uncontrollably destructive capability and indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons. In that context, we strongly believe that the international community must underscore the importance of understanding the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and of the fact-based discussions on the effects of nuclear weapons held at the three conferences on their humanitarian impact. We also urge the international community to recognize that nuclear weapons should never be used again under any circumstances. We therefore welcome Austria's draft resolution on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/70/PV.9).

As a country that has witnessed the destructive capabilities of nuclear weapons, we share our South African colleagues' views on the ethical imperative for a world free of nuclear weapons, as set forth in a draft resolution introduced yesterday (A/C.1/70/L.40).

Among other things, we agree with the draft resolution's assertion that nuclear weapons are a global threat and must be eliminated as soon as possible. Even one nuclear weapon is one too many, let alone the thousands of warheads that currently make up the global nuclear arsenal, a large number of which remain on high-alert status. We also agree with the draft resolution that discussions, decisions and actions on nuclear weapons must focus on the effects of those weapons on human beings and on the environment on which all depend, and must be guided by an awareness of the unspeakable suffering and unacceptable harm that they cause; and that greater attention must be given to the impact on women and the importance of women's participation in these discussions, decisions and actions.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is gravely disappointed by the outcome of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The vast majority of parties at the Review Conference recognized that the pace of fulfilment of nuclear disarmament commitments was slow and unacceptable. The status quo on nuclear disarmament is simply unacceptable. We stress that all parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must act on their commitments under article VI of the Treaty, while identifying and pursuing effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and cooperating with all stakeholders to achieve that goal. We therefore align ourselves with Austria's draft resolution (A/C.1/70/L.38) on the humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

This year marks the seventieth anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and of the founding of the United Nations. In the Organization's very first resolution (resolution 1 (I)), our predecessors stressed the need to establish a world free of nuclear weapons. Yet despite continued calls for action and hundreds of subsequent General Assembly resolutions, not enough has been done. Consensus has been blocked in the Conference on Disarmament for two decades.

It is time for all States Members of the United Nations to take action aimed at negotiating for a world free of nuclear weapons, as our cases in the International Court of Justice underline. We therefore urge all States to engage in appropriate and workable multilateral forums to deliberate on and negotiate the effective measures we need to achieve a world free

of nuclear weapons. We would like to emphasize that any such forums should not have to operate under a rigid unanimity rule and should provide avenues for civil society to participate fully. In that context, we welcome draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.13, on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, sponsored by our colleagues from Mexico, Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Ireland, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa and Uruguay.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/70/L.23 and A/C.1/70/L.28.

**Mr. Robotjazi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/70/PV.9).

The Islamic Republic of Iran underlines the imperative of the total elimination of nuclear weapons as a requirement of international security and an obligation under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The best characterization of the state of affairs with respect to the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments is that it shows a complete lack of progress. As a result of the opposition of a small minority of States, the 2015 NPT Review Conference could not conclude with a substantive final document. We attach great importance to the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is vital that we follow up vigorously on the implementation of the nuclear disarmament commitments agreed on at its Review Conferences.

In that context, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has submitted a biennial draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", to be issued as document A/C.1/70/L.23. The text is similar to that of a previous resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session in 2013, with only some technical updates made in order to reflect the result of the 2015 Review Conference. The draft resolution calls for the full and non-selective implementation of the nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

The unprecedented dissatisfaction voiced at the General Assembly's high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament in 2013 (see A/68/PV.11) and the 2015 NPT Review Conference is testament to the deep frustration of the international community and non-nuclear-weapon States about the consequences of the current piecemeal approach to nuclear disarmament. That incremental approach has failed to deliver on its promises, and there are still thousands of nuclear weapons that threaten to annihilate humankind, whether intentionally or accidentally. As was proposed in 2013 by the Non-Aligned Movement, whose members number 120 States, the solution to the current unacceptable state of affairs is to begin negotiations as soon as possible on a comprehensive nuclear convention banning nuclear weapons and providing for their verifiable and irreversible destruction within a specified time frame.

We have heard the nuclear-weapon States' arguments about the impracticality of a comprehensive approach for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, but they are far from convincing. Such endless arguments run counter to the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice in its 1996 advisory opinion asserting the obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. The arguments also ignore the fact that a similar comprehensive approach has been successful in bringing about the elimination of the entire categories of biological and chemical weapons, something that initially looked unfeasible and very ambitious but was finally achieved through the mustering of genuine political will. If the nuclear-weapon States cannot muster similar political will and make a fundamental change to their approach to nuclear disarmament, the NPT may not survive in years to come.

Nuclear-weapon States are quick to blame security conditions for the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. But the cause is the continued lack of any political determination to abandon the doctrines and strategies of nuclear deterrence and the balance of nuclear terror, which can make sense only under the outdated and erroneous security paradigm that lies at the core of the predicament we face in the area of nuclear disarmament. The continued existence of nuclear weapons is the main obstacle to discarding that ill-advised paradigm and replacing it with an inclusive global security system in which there is no place for nuclear weapons.

While it is true that some reductions have taken place, they are limited and reversible. While the mere affirmation by the nuclear-weapon States of their commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons is welcome, it is obviously insufficient and does not equate with compliance with their nuclear disarmament obligations under the NPT.

Frustration over the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament is strong and deep. However, we should not allow it to turn into pessimism and passiveness in pursuing the full implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments or to cause us to resort to actions that would most probably lead to further division among the NPT parties. Rather, as we move towards the 2018 United Nations high-level conference on nuclear disarmament and enter into the 2020 NPT review process, we need to re-engage positively in a focused and determined manner to push for progress in meeting nuclear disarmament obligations. We strongly believe that an open, inclusive and consensus-based process, in the framework of the United Nations, is capable of securing the broadest possible participation of nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States in a meaningful and truly global endeavour to identify and develop effective measures on nuclear disarmament, including legal provisions required for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

To that end, delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has submitted at this session of the First Committee a draft resolution entitled “Effective measures on nuclear disarmament”, which will be issued as document A/C.1/70/L.28. Pursuant to the draft resolution, an open-ended working group would be established to meet in New York for three sessions of 10 working days each, in 2016 and 2017. The draft resolution invites all States to engage actively in an open and inclusive process.

In the interest of time, and given the fact that I have reached the time limit, I will not read out the rest of my statement. Rather, my entire statement will be posted on PaperSmart.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

**Mr. Salvia** (Holy See): My delegation extends its congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, as you lead the First Committee, the work of which is critical to the United Nations mandate to bring about a more peaceful and stable world.

At the outset of its seventieth session, Pope Francis addressed the General Assembly and spoke directly of the challenges we deal with in the First Committee. He noted that “the ever-present tendency to allow arms to proliferate, especially weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons” (A/70/PV.3, p. 5) was contrary to the foundations of the fundamental juridical framework set out in the Preamble and in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, and in practice denies them. The Pope affirmed:

“A system of ethics and laws based on the threat of mutual destruction, and possibly the destruction of all humankind, is a contradiction in terms and an affront to the entire edifice of the United Nations, which would become a group of nations united by fear and distrust. We must work hard for a world free of nuclear weapons by implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in letter and in spirit, until such instruments are totally banned.” (*supra*.)

Recalling the words of Pope Francis, and noting the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to agree on a final outcome document, the Holy See wishes to underline once more that nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction are irreconcilable with, and contrary to, an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence among peoples and among States.

We are painfully aware that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is languishing, despite the important efforts highlighted at the ninth Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT, held just two weeks ago, pursuant to article XIV of the Treaty. This step towards a world free of nuclear weapons is long overdue.

Similarly, the beginning of negotiations to establish a binding cessation of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons has languished in the Conference on Disarmament. That failure has prevented the establishment of a subsidiary body that, even though it would not have a mandate to negotiate further steps or building-blocks in that body, could nevertheless consider many aspects of nuclear disarmament that required such deliberation. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether the General Assembly will decide to establish an open-ended working group with a similar mandate. Both options were provided for in the unadopted draft

final document of the ninth NPT Review Conference, and neither was known to have presented an obstacle to agreement. It is incumbent upon the United Nations to redouble its efforts to advance these processes, under way for decades but currently moribund, which aim to reduce further the role of nuclear weapons in international security.

On the other side of the ledger, the Holy See recognizes and welcomes the ongoing successful implementation of the New START Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States, under which the numbers of nuclear weapons continue to be reduced. It has also taken positive note of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action undertaken by Iran, the permanent members of the Security Council, Germany and the European Union. For the first time in many years, there are reasons to hope that the concerns and tensions arising from the nuclear energy programme in Iran may be laid to rest as the Plan of Action is implemented.

With those ongoing positive developments, it should be possible to generate momentum for negotiations to reduce further the nuclear weapon stockpiles of States, whether bilaterally or through a broader process, and to halt the further build-up of nuclear arsenals in those nuclear-weapon States not parties to the NPT, thus enabling the setting of ceilings on the numbers of nuclear weapons globally.

Similarly, the First Committee has a strong interest in creating and bringing forward with greater determination the long-overdue process towards the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The tensions and conflicts in the Middle East warrant our urgent efforts to support cooperation in the region, as well as in other regions of the world.

Non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament are vital elements in advancing global security and stability. Without them, the achievement of the just-adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) is jeopardized. The Holy See joins with all persons of goodwill in seeking a future in which the threat of nuclear disasters will have been eliminated and the use of force to resolve conflicts between States will be increasingly reduced, pursuant to verifiable agreements.

As Pope Francis wrote on the occasion of the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear

Weapons, “a global ethic is needed if we are to reduce the nuclear threat and work towards nuclear disarmament.” To promote that global ethic, we must encourage States and civil society to pursue initiatives aimed at a deeper understanding of the grave humanitarian effects of the use of nuclear weapons. Such initiatives should not only be encouraged, but they also should be deemed to be necessary if we are to build public awareness on the moral imperative to abolish nuclear weapons.

**The Chair:** We have heard from the last speaker on the nuclear weapons cluster.

The Committee will now begin its consideration of the cluster “Other weapons of mass destruction”.

**Mr. Isnomo** (Indonesia): I am very pleased to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) on this very important cluster theme.

Mindful of the threat to humankind posed by existing weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and underlining the need for the total elimination of such weapons, NAM reaffirms the need to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction, and therefore supports the necessity of monitoring the situation and triggering international action as required.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) note with satisfaction the effective operation of the Convention as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. They call upon all the nuclear-weapon States parties concerned to ensure the complete destruction of their remaining chemical weapons within the final extended deadline, and invite all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Convention to do so as soon as possible with a view to its universality.

While paying due respect to the victims of chemical weapons and their families, States parties to the CWC stress the importance of achieving and maintaining a high level of readiness in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, in order to provide timely and needed assistance and protection against use or threat of use of chemical weapons, including assistance to the victims of such weapons.

NAM States parties to the CWC call for the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, without any discrimination and restriction. In that regard, they attach high importance to the adoption by the NAM States parties to the CWC of a plan of action on article XI, on economic and technological development for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of article XI.

NAM State parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) believe that the Convention represents an important component of the international legal architecture related to weapons of mass destruction. They recognize that the lack of a verification system continues to pose a challenge to the effectiveness of the Convention. They call for the resumption of the multilateral negotiations to conclude a non-discriminatory, legally binding protocol dealing with all articles of the Convention, in a balanced and comprehensive manner, to sustainably strengthen the Convention, including through verification measures. They urge the party rejecting negotiations to reconsider its policy. They further emphasize the need for enhancing, without restrictions, international cooperation and assistance and exchanges of toxins, biological agents and equipment and technology for peaceful purposes without any discrimination, in conformity with the Convention. Furthermore, NAM State parties to the BWC look forward to a successful BWC Review Conference in 2016.

NAM calls upon all Member States to support international efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and urges them to take and strengthen national measures, as appropriate, to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and materials and technologies related to their manufacture.

In the context of Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004), 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008) and 1977 (2011), on the areas covered by multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction, NAM underlines the need to ensure that any action by the Security Council does not undermine the Charter of the United Nations, existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction and international organizations established in that

regard, nor the role of the General Assembly. NAM cautions against the continuing practice of the Security Council to utilize its authority to define the legislative requirements for Member States in implementing its decisions. In that regard, NAM stresses that the issue of the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors should be addressed in an inclusive manner by the General Assembly, taking into account the views of all Member States.

**Mrs. Carrión** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Allow me, on behalf of the member States of UNASUR, to recall that in the Declaration on Security in the Americas signed in 2003, our countries declared our objective “to make the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons”. Likewise, through a resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), we decided unanimously to “fulfil concretely the shared commitment of member States to make the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons.” (*Organization of American States resolution 2107 (XXXV-O/05), para. 1*)

The States of UNASUR strongly condemn the existence of chemical and biological weapons, and they reiterate that their use is a crime against humanity. The catastrophic consequences of their use must be prevented through their total elimination. UNASUR reaffirms its commitment to prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and to their total elimination, as agreed in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We also support its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation, and we encourage continued work towards its universalization.

As we reiterated at the seventh UNASUR summit, held in Paramaribo, our region views the use of chemical weapons in all their forms as a war crime and a crime against humanity, and it affirms the need to address the matter from the standpoint of international law in an impartial and transparent manner. We also take this opportunity to vigorously condemn any use of toxic chemicals, such as chlorine, as a weapon.

The Union recognizes the important progress achieved in the elimination of Syria’s chemical

weapons programme. We reiterate the importance of the adoption of the decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council in September 2013 on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, as endorsed by Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the joint OPCW-United Nations mission and Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), of August 2015, adopted unanimously to establish a mechanism to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The UNASUR States welcome with appreciation the ratification by Myanmar and the accession of Angola to the Convention. While welcoming the growing participation of States in the Convention, we call on States that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so as soon as possible. We also express our appreciation for the efforts made by the OPCW to promote the universalization of the Convention and the full implementation of all its provisions.

We reiterate the importance of the agreement reached in December 2011, which established a framework for finalizing the destruction of remaining chemical arsenals, thus safeguarding the integrity of the Convention and the credibility of the OPCW. In that connection, we call on countries with chemical weapons to abide by their obligations in the terms set forth in the Convention and to destroy their arsenals within the agreed time frame. We also call on all States that may possess chemical weapons to eliminate them and to accede to the Convention promptly and without conditions.

UNASUR points out that the provisions of the Convention should be implemented in such a way as to not impede the economic or technological development of States parties and international cooperation in the area of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, as well as activities related to international, scientific and technical information and chemical products and equipment for the production, the manufacture or the use of chemical substances for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.

The UNASUR States express their recognition of the contribution of the Technical Secretariat for the development and efficiency of the organization, which helps it to achieve the objective and aim of the Convention and ensures the full implementation of its provisions, including those geared towards the

verification of its international compliance while it acts as a forum for consultation and cooperation with the State parties. UNASUR appreciates the cooperation and international assistance provided by the OPCW, including by promoting events to provide assistance and protection against chemical weapons, which are held annually in various UNASUR countries. We believe that this type of initiative contributes to promoting a safer environment in our region.

UNASUR welcomes the outcomes of the third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in The Hague from 8 to 19 April 2013. We highlight in particular the consensus approval of its final report, which was geared towards all aspects of the Convention and made important recommendations on its continued implementation.

UNASUR also reaffirms the fundamental importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biologic) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). We also pledge our readiness to continue to cooperate actively and constructively to further the objectives of the full implementation and universalization of the Convention. We share with other States the notion that effective international action against biological threats must be universal, legally binding and non-discriminatory. There is a need to design and implement additional measures to guarantee the effective implementation of the prohibition of these weapons. For that reason, we support the timely resumption of the negotiations on a protocol to the BWC that would establish an effective verification regime, with a view to the universal implementation of the Convention.

UNASUR member States have actively participated in the Meetings of States Parties and in meetings of experts. We welcome the discussions that took place in accordance with the standing programme that was approved at the seventh Review Conference of the BWC and, more specifically, those discussions geared towards strengthening cooperation and assistance under article X, which is a key tool for furthering the objectives of the Convention.

UNASUR remains convinced that national measures become commitments contracted by States in practical and effective actions. Therefore, we reiterate our support for the Implementation Support Unit, which has provided assistance to Member States.

In short, UNASUR reaffirms that the CWC and the BWC are vital international legal instruments that can guide our multilateral efforts in the fight for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international control.

**Mr. Al Tawaiya** (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first, Mr. Chair, to reiterate the confidence of the Group of Arab States in your capability and ability to lead the work of the First Committee to success.

I would like to express the support of the Group of Arab States for the statement made earlier by representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

The Arab Group is strongly committed to its position of principle, which has remained unchanged. Our priority is the establishment of a world free of weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, chemical or biological. At the same time, we also strongly favour the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The Arab Group has played an effective role in the efforts aimed at the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. At the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) we expressed our conviction through a series of practical steps proposed for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The Arab Group has always supported the goals of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. The Arab States continue to participate actively towards achieving those goals.

The Arab Group considers that the Israel's adherence to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State would contribute to building trust and expanding the universality of the Treaty, as well as strengthening international and regional security and the credibility of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The 2015 NPT Review Conference failed to adopt an outcome document, in spite of the tireless efforts of the Arab Group. That failure only strengthens the

paralysis of the efforts seeking to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Previous NPT Review Conferences included the practical steps regarding the three pillars of the Treaty and indirectly linked the three pillars to the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, providing a unique opportunity to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the region.

In a historic decision based on the traditional good faith of Arab States, our States have agreed to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in order to rebut the allegations that could justify the existence of Israeli nuclear weapons and the existence of weapons of mass destruction, which are a regional threat. Furthermore, Arab States are strongly committed, as evident in the draft resolution that we traditionally present to the First Committee, to the overriding priority of nuclear disarmament in the Middle East.

The Arab Group calls on the international community to step up its efforts to expand the universality of all instruments and treaties pertaining to weapons of mass destruction, including those that contribute to creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Arab Group once again reiterates its commitment to participating in serious negotiations aimed at creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. That was clearly reflected in the working paper submitted by the Arab Group and endorsed and adopted by NAM at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The Arab Group aspires to see Israel and other regional stakeholders make a positive contribution to those negotiations.

Finally, the Arab Group wishes to remind the international community of its political and moral responsibility to make the efforts necessary to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in order to strengthen the international disarmament regime.

**Ms. Maja** (Finland): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland. The complete version of this statement is available on the Internet.

In our statement on other weapons of mass destruction last year (see A/C.1/69/PV.14), we welcomed

the international mission to remove and destroy Syria's chemical stockpile. The Nordic countries are proud to have played a significant part in that unique exercise.

Against that background, the Nordic countries are particularly outraged by the continued use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian conflict. The Fact-Finding Missions of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have reported about repeated and systematic attacks in which chlorine and similar industrial chemicals were used to poison and terrorize civilians. Reportedly, many of the attacks involved helicopters, an asset that only the Syrian Government possesses. We are gravely concerned by recent reports regarding the alleged use of sulphur mustard by a terrorist organization in Iraq and Syria. Any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances, is unacceptable and is a violation of international law.

The Nordic countries welcome the decision of the Security Council to establish the Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify those responsible for these horrific and inhumane attacks, for which there can be no impunity. We stand behind Virginia Gamba and her teams in their important work. We also once again call upon Syria to cooperate fully with the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team.

Irrespective of the chemical issue, the conflict in Syria continues to escalate, with devastating effects. The humanitarian costs are increasing every day, and the refugee crisis is growing. It is imperative that efforts to find a political solution to the conflict be intensified. Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura has our strong support.

The destruction of chemical weapons in the possessor States remains a vital task. The Nordic countries urge the Russian Federation, the United States and Libya to speed up destruction. We welcome progress in the destruction of category 2 chemical weapons in Libya.

We welcome the recent accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) by Angola and Myanmar, and understand that it is anticipated that South Sudan will soon become a party too. That would leave only three countries outside the regime. We call on Egypt and Israel to ratify the CWC without further delay, and on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to follow suit, giving the Convention a global reach.

The OPCW is approaching the end of the destruction phase, and it is in need of reorientation. In the future, the organization will need to focus on preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons, including the risk of the misuse of toxic chemicals by non-State actors.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and their Destruction Biological (BWC) is a cornerstone of the international disarmament architecture. The Nordic countries welcome the accessions by Andorra, Mauritania and Myanmar, and call on all remaining States to join the treaty.

Biotechnology is a rapidly evolving science, and ambitious and forward-looking initiatives are required to strengthen the BWC. In the months leading up to the eighth Review Conference, we believe that State parties should focus on areas where unity is possible, and on pragmatic steps that can serve to strengthen the Convention in a constructive manner. Those include efforts to ensure improved national implementation, to universalize the Convention, to strengthen article VII, on assistance and protection, and to improve the use of confidence-building measures. We see the Review Conference to be held next year as an opportunity to open up for enhanced implementation of the treaty through a strengthened intersessional process. We believe that dedicated working groups to consider relevant issues may be the best way forward.

The Nordic countries are actively supporting the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in strengthening the operational preparedness of the Secretary-General's investigative mechanism. A meeting was held in Stockholm earlier this year, with the participation of laboratories from all Nordic countries, in order to initiate the consideration of a biological laboratory network in support of the Secretary-General's mechanism.

The Ebola epidemic in West Africa has demonstrated that outbreaks of infectious diseases are not only a matter of public health, but may also lead to humanitarian, economic and security crises.

We welcome the Global Health Security Agenda as an effort to establish capacity to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to biological threats. In that regard, it complements our common efforts to ensure the absence of biological weapons. All Nordic countries are actively engaged in the Global Health Security Agenda. Finland currently chairs its steering group, while Denmark and Sweden have taken leading roles on different action

packages. Norway has taken on a leading role in a multisectorial approach to strengthen the International Health Regulations.

In conclusion, I would like to draw members' attention to a side event that will be organized by Finland in cooperation with the Stimson Center, on Wednesday, 28 October at 1.15 p.m. in Conference Room E, on this topic: "Addressing biothreats: why global health security matters". Fliers for the event are available in the back of the room.

**Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is this year's Chair of the informal group made up of Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (BRICS). Russia has the honour to deliver our joint statement on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC).

(*spoke in English*)

The BRICS countries attach high importance to the Biological Weapons Convention as the first disarmament treaty banning an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. Welcoming the fact that 173 States parties have acceded to the Convention, we stress the importance of efforts to ensure universal adherence. The original purpose of the Convention, as formulated in its preamble, has remained relevant since 1972: to exclude completely the possibility of bacteriological and biological agents and toxins being used weapons. Its continued importance is reaffirmed against the backdrop of the ever-increasing pace of developments in the areas of dual-use science and technology relevant to the Convention.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force. We share the widespread interest among State parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention through a legally binding protocol. BRICS countries are convinced that the effectiveness of the Convention could be greatly enhanced through the adoption of a universal, legally binding and non-discriminatory protocol dealing with all articles of the Convention, including verification, in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

The strengthening of the Convention, if it is to realize its full potential, must be achieved on a

sustainable basis that is impervious to the vicissitudes that may lie ahead. By doing so we will send a clear signal that it is possible to enhance international security through multilateral negotiations, thereby strengthening multilateralism, enhancing international cooperation and promoting the role of the Convention in reducing and eliminating the threat posed by biological weapons to international peace and security.

As we continue our endeavours to strengthen the Convention, it is vital that we also focus on the development and cooperation features of the Convention. In that regard, we stress the full and comprehensive implementation of article VI of the Convention, recalling that States parties have a legal obligation to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes, as well as not to hamper the economic and technological development of States parties.

We call for the elimination of all restrictions to peaceful biological activities, in particular the exchange of equipment, materials and information needed to promote capacity-building in the fields of sanitary control and the prevention, diagnosis and eradication of infectious diseases, including the production of vaccines and biological materials.

States parties must also be aware of the threat of terrorists gaining access to sensitive biological materials. There needs to be a balance between security concerns and access to technological advancement. Oversight measures to identify and manage biological risks should be proportionate to the access risks and should not restrict science for peaceful purposes. Tighter controls over sensitive goods and technologies must be complemented by provisions on cooperation so that the pursuit of security goals will not hamper legitimate rights to technical and scientific development.

The BRICS countries look forward to working with all stakeholders to the Convention so that its full potential be may fulfilled. We look forward to the holding of the eighth Review Conference, to be held in 2016, to review the operation of the Convention while taking into account the decisions and recommendations of the seventh and all other previous Review Conferences. To that end, we support a substantive preparatory process and call on all State parties to show the necessary will to enhance the prospects for a successful Review

Conference. The BRICS countries are committed to playing a leading and constructive role in achieving that objective.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Bylica** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 28 member States. Furthermore, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement. I will read out a short version only. The full version will be posted online.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery constitutes a growing threat to international peace and security. The international community cooperated effectively and acted promptly in carrying out the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpile. The removal and ongoing destruction of the declared Syrian chemicals and of the remaining production facilities constitute a significant step towards the necessary complete and irreversible dismantling of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The EU contributed €17 million to the joint United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) plan for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. Several EU member States made financial and other contributions to support the plan and gave in-kind assistance for the removal, transportation and destruction of chemical materials.

The European Union is gravely concerned about the systematic and repeated use of toxic industrial chemicals, such as chlorine, as chemical weapons, as confirmed in the reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission. New, similar allegations continue to be made. We share the view that the evidence presented by the Fact-Finding Mission is substantial. It includes reports of the use of helicopters, a capability that only the Syrian regime possesses. We support the OPCW Director-General's decision that the Fact-Finding Mission will continue its work, and we remain determined to sanction those responsible for those horrific acts. In the same vein, we welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2235 (2015). The Syrian authorities must cooperate in a transparent and open way with the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team to respond fully to their queries on gaps and discrepancies in the initial and subsequent declarations by Syria.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a key component of the non-proliferation and disarmament framework. The EU and its member States are the largest contributors to the OPCW and will continue to substantially support its activities financially and in kind. Achieving the goals of time-bound destruction and universality continues to pose challenges. We welcome the recent accession of Myanmar/Burma and Angola to the Convention, and we encourage the remaining four countries to do so without delay. We call upon possessor States to expedite the destruction of their chemical weapon stockpiles. We stress our willingness to assist new States parties in meeting their obligations under the Convention. We welcome the OPCW Director-General's initiative to initiate consultations on the future role of the organization. We stand ready to participate in the relevant activities. We attach particular importance to the retention and further strengthening of the organization's capability for carrying out its verification mission, including investigations of alleged use of chemical weapons and challenges inspections.

The European Union and its member States attach high priority to further strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). In the past decade, we have funded numerous projects in support of the BWC and will continue to do so. As part of their concrete efforts to strengthen confidence in compliance with the BWC, the EU and its member States promote measures aimed at increasing the quality and the relevance of confidence-building measure (CBMs) submissions. With the financial support of the EU, the Implementation Support Unit has developed a CBM electronic facility. We must continue to work to make the CBM process as effective as possible. The current intersessional process also provides an opportunity to identify innovative approaches to enhance national implementation through voluntary exchanges of information, such as the proposed peer-review mechanism.

As illustrated by the Ebola outbreak, working in strict coordination with the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is a necessity and must be further encouraged. In that context, we welcome the Global Health Security Agenda.

We welcome a wider cross-regional dialogue on ways and means to strengthen the Convention and look

forward to productive discussions at the next Meeting of States Parties.

The EU has continued to make progress in the implementation of its chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear Centres of Excellence Initiative, which aims at reinforcing the institutional capacity of partner countries to prevent, detect and fight the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk and strengthen the overall security architecture. The project is the largest initiative contributing to non-proliferation ever undertaken by the European Union. Approximately €100 million is dedicated to its implementation.

The EU and its member States strongly believe that the proliferation of missiles continues to be a serious concern to us all, and a threat to international peace and security, as reaffirmed in Security Council resolutions. A number of tests of short- and medium-range missiles conducted over recent years outside all existing transparency and pre-notification schemes and in violation of Security Council resolutions, especially by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, deepen our concern. The use of ballistic missiles by the Syrian Government also raises deep concerns. We therefore strongly support The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation as the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument concerning the spread of ballistic missiles. The EU promotes the universalization of the Code of Conduct and calls on all States that have not yet done so to adhere to it as soon as possible.

We believe that the Missile Technology Control Regime, in which we continue to promote EU member States' membership, plays a key role in preventing missile proliferation. We are also in favour of examining further multilateral steps to prevent the threat of missile proliferation and to promote disarmament efforts in the missile field.

We continue to support other international mechanisms designed to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, such as the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The EU Centres of Excellence continue to contribute within the Global Partnership. Export controls, particularly those based on the Australia Group lists, are also very important tools to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): A little more than two years ago, the international community welcomed the unprecedented achievement of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the 27 September decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which allowed for the removal and verified destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons programme. However, let us be clear that, just a month prior to such an accomplishment, the Syrian Government launched a horrific attack with the nerve agent sarin against an opposition-controlled suburb of Damascus — leaving nearly 1,500 dead, many of them children. The subsequent accession of the Syrian Government to the Chemical Weapons Convention was an act of political expediency in the face of mounting international pressure; unfortunately, it has not proved to be either a moral conversion on the part of the Syrian Government or an actual renunciation of chemical weapons.

Syria, like all other States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, is legally bound not to use chemical weapons under any circumstances and not to possess them. Regrettably, the United States — indeed, all of the members in this room — have cause for serious concern that the Government of Syria has violated, and continues to violate, both of those fundamental obligations.

Just a year ago, on 10 September 2014, the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission, in its report, confirmed the use of chemical weapons in Syria. There was a compelling set of conclusions and evidentiary findings in the report implicating the Syrian Government in deadly chemical weapons attacks during April and May of 2014. The report further concluded that the testimony of primary witnesses and supporting documentation confirmed with a high degree of confidence that a toxic chemical — likely chlorine — was used as a weapon, systematically and repeatedly, in attacks against three opposition-controlled villages in north-west Syria.

Subsequently, in February of this year, the OPCW Executive Council expressed its “strong conviction that those individuals responsible for the use of chemical weapons should be held accountable.” In doing so, it voiced its serious concern with regard to the conclusions of the Fact-Finding Mission report. A month later, on 6 March 2015, the Security Council, in resolution 2209 (2015), echoed the very same concerns and convictions of the Executive Council. Even now, the United States awaits the findings of the ongoing Fact-Finding

Mission's efforts with respect to other allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

While serious concerns continue with regard to the use of chemical weapons in Syria, a significant step has been made to identify those involved in using chemical weapons in Syria. On 7 August 2015, the Security Council adopted resolution 2235 (2015), which established the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. This important international mechanism, the culmination of a year-long diplomatic effort that began with the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission, sends a clear message to all those involved in chemical weapon attacks in Syria that the international community has tools to identify them. The Joint Investigative Mechanism will soon be operational and begin its work

“to identify to the greatest extent feasible individuals, entities, groups or Governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons” (*resolution 2235 (2015), para. 5*).

in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Concerns about continued use of chemical weapons in Syria are further compounded by the recent OPCW Technical Secretariat's report on discrepancies and omissions in Syria's declaration and related information submissions. Despite 18 months of intense consultations with Syrian authorities, the OPCW Technical Secretariat has been unable to verify that all of the chemicals, munitions and facilities that made up the Syrian chemical weapon programme have been declared and — as required by the Convention, decisions of the OPCW Executive Council and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) — eliminated.

The objective of the historic decision of September 2013 and its United Nations counterpart — Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) — is the complete elimination of the Syrian chemical weapon programme. Verifying the accuracy and completeness of Syria's chemical weapons declaration and related submissions is absolutely fundamental to the achievement of that compelling objective.

In that same spirit of determination, we must address and take seriously the threat of biological weapons. Technological advances and the diffusion of knowledge, for all their positive effects, place biological weapons capabilities within reach of more

nations and terrorist groups than ever before. The world is currently witnessing renewed use of chemical weapons; there is no reason to think such actors will draw a moral line at the use of biological weapons. And the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has demonstrated the international community's vulnerability to infectious disease, raising troubling questions about our collective ability to respond to the deliberate use of such a pathogen. We must take stronger international action to confront this threat — and next year's Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference is our opportunity.

Some Governments, as we have heard today, are again calling for the negotiation of a legally binding protocol to the Convention as the solution to every problem. My delegation understands why that may seem appealing, but it is, unfortunately, a road that goes nowhere. But we are not faced with a choice of doing everything or doing nothing. By acknowledging our differences, setting them respectfully to one side and focusing on practical steps that build on areas of agreement, the Review Conference can take steps to rapidly and significantly strengthen the Convention.

The Review Conference should take steps to strengthen national implementation, including effective national systems of export control. In that connection, the United States is pleased to have submitted for the December BWC Meeting of States Parties a joint paper with India on strengthening implementation of article III. The Review Conference should also agree on measures to strengthen confidence in the Convention, building on existing measures and real-world experience. And it should take steps to ensure greater international preparedness for a biological weapons attack or disease outbreak, both by strengthening mechanisms to support article VII of the Convention and by working to build national capacities.

No matter how much we accomplish at the Review Conference itself, however, we will also need to equip ourselves to support, implement and build on these agreements in the years to follow — and so the Conference should also take steps to strengthen our ability to take collective action at and between review conferences. We should act to enhance the quality of our expert deliberations, strengthen the authority of the annual Meeting of States Parties, reinforce the Implementation Support Unit, and provide greater oversight and coordination of our collective work by establishing a steering committee.

That approach to the Review Conference will allow BWC States parties to take action where agreement can be found, establish structures to support the implementation of those agreements and allow for ongoing work on issues that require further attention. Let us not wait until the day when we can agree on everything. Instead, let us take action where and when we find agreement, to create a safer, more secure world. The United States stands ready to work with all BWC States parties to achieve that important goal.

A more detailed version of my remarks will be made available on the QuickFirst website.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of the Russian Federation on behalf of the BRICS countries — Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa.

In the past year, China continued to faithfully and strictly implement its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), making a positive contribution to the promotion of the universality and effectiveness of the Convention. China also continued to help other States parties strengthen their capacity to implement the Convention by donating funds through the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, providing protective equipment and co-hosting workshops and seminars.

With a strong conviction in the political settlement of disputes, China actively involved itself in international efforts to resolve the Syrian chemical weapon issue. By providing experts and equipment for verification and destruction and joining in the multilateral naval escort of the shipments of Syrian chemical weapons, China played a significant role in defusing the crisis and in the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons.

China has committed itself all along to the comprehensive and strict implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). In that regard, China has established a complete legislative framework and a national implementation mechanism, exercised effective control over the export of dual-use biological items and technologies and made continued efforts to strengthen bio-safety and bio-security, as well as epidemic surveillance. China is of the view that the eighth Review Conference of States Parties to the BWC provides the international community with a good opportunity to explore concrete measures to strengthen the Convention. It is our hope that, in next review cycle,

work could be focused on the formulation of a code of conduct for scientists in the field of biology and on the establishment of a multilateral and non-discriminatory export-control regime.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the victory of the world anti-fascist war and the centennial anniversary of the first massive use of chemical weapons. During the Second World War, the Japanese invaders systematically developed and used biological and chemical weapons in China, in blatant violation of international law, massacring the Chinese people in the most inhumane manner. That has become a chapter of the utmost barbarism and cruelty in the history of humankind.

During Japan's aggression against China from 1931 to 1945, the Japanese army built a large number of poison-gas factories and chemical weapons assembly plants in many Chinese cities, including Dunhua, Hailar, Taiyuan, Yichang, Jinan, Nanjing, Hankou and Guangzhou. Japan deployed chemical warfare troops in Shanghai, Yichang, Taiyuan and other places. According to incomplete statistics, the Japanese army systematically and indiscriminately used chemical weapons more than 1,131 times in 77 counties or districts across 14 provinces in China, resulting in large numbers of civilian casualties.

Even today, the huge amount of Japanese abandoned chemical weapons on Chinese soil still poses a grave threat to people's lives and health, as well in connection with environmental security. So far, Japanese abandoned chemical weapons have been discovered in more than 90 locations in 18 provinces or municipalities. The largest burial site is located in Harbaling, Jilin province. In Harbaling alone, it is estimated that over 330,000 pieces of Japanese abandoned chemical weapons are buried. To our disappointment, to date only around 50,000 Japanese abandoned chemical weapon items have been retrieved safely, of which only 38,000 were destroyed. It is worth pointing out that abandoned chemical weapons pose a greater threat to people and the environment than do stockpiled chemical weapons.

For Japan, the destruction of chemical weapons that it abandoned in China is a binding international obligation under the CWC. It is disconcerting to note that Japan has failed to meet the deadline for the destruction of its abandoned chemical weapons as prescribed by the Convention, and the current pace of

destruction has repeatedly fallen behind the destruction plan schedule. China urges Japan to expedite work on the implementation of its obligations and to decontaminate all affected land in China as soon as possible.

In addition to the use of chemical weapons, the Japanese army also established bases for biological warfare troops in China. According to Japanese historians, Japan had five germ-warfare units with more than 20,000 personnel. Among them, the most notorious was unit 731, which was based in Haerbin. The experiments on living human bodies by these germ warfare units resulted in the deaths of more than 20,000 people. The majority of the victims were Chinese, but they also included Russians, Koreans and Mongolians. The Japanese aggressors also waged large-scale germ warfare in China by aerial spraying and releasing into rivers and lakes plague, cholera and typhoid germs. According to incomplete statistics, Japanese germ warfare caused as many as 1.2 million civilian deaths — four times the number of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings. Among them, 769,772 were killed immediately, and about 350,000 died of infection. Taking into account the subsequent epidemics, the death toll should have been even more horrific. On the eve of its imminent defeat, the Japanese invaders, in an attempt to cover up their war crimes, blew up the related facilities, destroyed experimental equipment and documents, secretly executed all the detainees and shipped the documents and research papers back to Japan. Of all the Japanese war criminals convicted by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, more than half were involved in germ warfare.

During the Second World War, the Japanese militarists committed numerous heinous crimes and caused horrendous suffering to the Chinese people and to the peoples of other countries. Seventy years after the war, Japan is still going to great lengths to cover up and evade history.

China stands firm in upholding the victorious outcomes of the Second World War and the post-war international order, and firmly opposes any devious act aimed at denying or distorting history. China urges Japan to face up to the history, genuinely reflect on its war responsibilities and take concrete steps to win the trust of the neighbouring countries and the international community at large.

**Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh): As this is the first time that I take the floor, let me address my felicitations to

you, Ambassador Van Oosterom, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and my appreciation to you for the successful steering of today's discussion.

Despite having universal instruments like the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), the world is not yet safe from other weapons of mass destruction similar to chemical and biological weapons. Some recent occurrences are a sad reminder of that harsh reality.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement in this discussion.

Let me reiterate Bangladesh's unflinching commitment to general and complete disarmament and non-proliferation, which remains a constitutional obligation. This is reflected in the fact that we are a signatory to all major multilateral disarmament treaties, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its protocols, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Treaty and the Arms Trade Treaty. Bangladesh also strongly adheres to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and continues to voice hope for a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

In 1997, right after ratifying the Chemical Weapons Convention, Bangladesh submitted a necessary declaration regarding chemical weapons and their production facilities. To meet the obligations of CWC, the Chemical Weapons Prohibition Act 2006 was passed by the Parliament and the Bangladesh National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention was established. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has already conducted a number of inspections in Bangladesh's various declared facilities under the Other Chemical Production Facilities category. In continuation of such efforts, Bangladesh is going to organize the sixteenth Asian Chemical Congress, from 18 to 21 November.

Recently, experts from Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) visited our key national installations to see the security and safeguard measures in place and made some recommendations for improvements. The matter has been addressed in the national action plan for

ensuring compliance with resolution 1540 (2004). We also organized a national workshop with the concerned United Nations experts to raise awareness about compliance with resolution 1540 (2004), including on preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

In line with its motivation to accede to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in March 1985, Bangladesh has continued to manifest a strong commitment towards total renunciation of biological and toxin weapons, both nationally and internationally. Our main laboratories, like the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research and the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh are engaged in extensive international cooperation, particularly with the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States. We have formed a multi-stakeholder national international humanitarian law committee, which deals with all relevant international humanitarian law instruments, including the BWC. Presently we are looking to enact national legislation for the BWC, as we already have for the CWC. In that, Bangladesh might need assistance on legislative drafting, for which consultation with the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit is ongoing in Geneva.

In that connection, I reiterate the call by the Non-Aligned Movement for effective implementation of article X of the BWC through enhancing international cooperation, assistance and exchanges in the use of toxins, biological agents, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. It is an essential part of compliance with the Convention and realization of the purpose and objective of the Convention. Bangladesh would like to see all States not party to the BWC — signatories and non-signatories — to embrace that international consensus as soon as possible by becoming State parties. Clearly, concluding a non-discriminatory, comprehensive and balanced legally binding agreement on biological and toxin weapons is essential to further strengthening the BTWC.

Because of rapid advances in the fields of science and the emergence of non-State actors, the threat of chemical or biological weapons is on the rise. That is why we need to redouble our efforts in important areas to ensure effective implementation of those Conventions. We believe the strengthening and universalization of the two key Conventions, along with the strict implementation of Security Council

resolution 1540 (2004), is indispensable. If we can do so, we may hope that the scourge of chemical and biological weapons will be eradicated totally from the globe in the near future.

**Ms. Jaquez** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): This year we proudly celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. The year 2015 is also particularly important and is an invaluable historic opportunity for us to reflect in depth on some events that impacted past generations and are directly linked to the issues under consideration by the First Committee. Those issues require that we take action to make further headway on disarmament and non-proliferation with the common goal of creating a world free of weapons of mass destruction and their indiscriminate and inhuman consequences.

We recall that in 1915, in Ypres in Belgium, chemical weapons were massively used for the first time in history. Today, 100 years later, we see with sadness that once again those weapons are being used, and now against the civilian population. We strongly condemn those acts as they violate the principles of international humanitarian law and human rights and constitute war crimes.

To ensure that we do not see any further use, production or transfer of that type of weapon, almost 20 years ago we, as an international community, established the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are very close to achieving the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention, given that to date it has 191 States parties. It is the disarmament instrument with the largest number of States parties and has established the highest standards for international verification, including inspections at any place and time without the right to refusal. Mexico calls on countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention do so promptly and help strengthen and universalize the regime established under that Convention. That is to the benefit of the international community as a whole.

Since September 2013, the OPCW has shown its relevance and effectiveness, especially on the ground, by supervising the work of the physical destruction of chemical weapons and facilities for their production in Syria. It established the Fact-Finding Mission that confirmed the systematic and repeated use of chlorine gas as a chemical weapon against civilians in that country, and it consequently adopted a series of

related decisions that together form the relevant legal framework for full compliance with the obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. We therefore urge the Syrian authorities to continue cooperating with the OPCW, and we welcome the decision adopted by a vote of OPCW Executive Council firmly and vigorously condemning the use of chlorine gas in Syria. That demonstrates the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention in the international security system.

We believe that the OPCW, given the technical advantages and experience it has acquired in its almost 20 years of existence, is called to play an important role in the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in identifying those responsible for those acts and bringing them to justice. The synergies created between the OPCW and the United Nations, based on the allegations lodged in Syria, show the importance of the multilateral framework built to address those kinds of situations, which are harmful and require a collective response by the established international bodies.

Mexico reiterates its firm condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by any actor and under any circumstance and expresses its support for the mandate of OPCW Fact-Finding Mission. Mexico calls once again on those countries that still have chemical weapons to redouble their efforts to ensure that their chemical stockpiles are dismantled to achieve the goal of eliminating those weapons of mass destruction from the world.

The Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons celebrated 40 years since its entry into force. It is the first multilaterally negotiated United Nations treaty that prohibits an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Mexico wishes to underscore the need to strengthen the regime established under that Convention, which by prohibiting biological weapons and their means of delivery constitutes a fundamental pillar in the solid international architecture for disarmament, non-proliferation, security and global public health. While we have obtained favourable results with the regime and its implementation, as well as with the voluntary presentation of reports on measures of confidence-building, the ability to verify the implementation of and compliance with the Convention is still pending.

Mexico stresses the desirability of bringing the Biological Weapons Convention into the twenty-first century in order to meet the new challenges arising

from socioeconomic development and the great strides achieved in life sciences that have led to the current increased life expectancy for human beings, as well as from the adverse effects of climate change on living organisms throughout the world. Mexico wishes to reiterate once again that the Convention can be verified by various methods and bodies that facilitate the verification of the elimination of weapons prohibited by the Convention, in a multilateral and binding manner, bearing in mind that strengthening the framework of that important treaty is necessary and possible.

The eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, scheduled for 2016, will be a valuable opportunity that must be seized collectively and in solidarity in order to define the type of Convention that we want. To that end, Mexico reiterates the need for international cooperation that is based not only on financial support, but also, *inter alia*, on the exchange of information, experiences, lessons learned, good practices, education, training, the exchange of expertise and transparency.

**The Chair:** I apologize to the representative of Mexico and ask for her kind cooperation, in the interest of all of us, in keeping to the agreed time limit.

**Ms. Jaquez** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): To conclude, Mexico reiterates that it neither possesses nor has possessed chemical or biological weapons and that it neither produces nor has produced them. We stress our firm commitment to disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems. We are convinced that multilateralism and negotiation are the only valid path to the peaceful settlement of disputes, and we therefore reiterate that a sustainable system of international peace and security must be based not on weapons of mass destruction, with their indiscriminate and inhumane consequences, but on the rule of law.

**Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express Algeria's support for the statements made earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of Oman, on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Algeria once again expresses its unwavering position that weapons of mass destruction of any type are a threat to humankind. The complete elimination of those weapons, and of nuclear weapons in particular, is a top priority in establishing international peace and security. Ensuring the universality of the

relevant conventions is of fundamental importance in establishing a world free of all such arms and the danger they pose.

Our country welcomes the result obtained within the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention, a unique instrument that could not only prevent the use of those weapons of mass destruction, but also seeks to strengthen the peaceful use of related materials. In that context, Algeria would like to call on all the signatories of the Convention to redouble their efforts aimed at destroying the stockpiles of those weapons once and for all. Moreover, Algeria would like to work to bolster and promote international cooperation within the area of developing chemical processes for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

With regard to the Biological Weapons Convention, Algeria reiterates the absolute need to comply fully to all facets of that Convention so as to have a truly legally binding instrument that fully covers all aspects of the Convention, in compliance with the Algiers Declaration adopted at the seventeenth Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, which took place in May 2014 (A/68/966, annex I). In that context, we underscore once again the need to work to prevent the production of new arms of mass destruction by strengthening the role of the Conference on Disarmament and implementing recommendations that could lead to negotiations concerning which weapons that should be eliminated, in particular weapons containing phosphorous and radiation.

Algeria supports the establishment of zones free of weapons of mass destruction in all their forms throughout the world with a view to achieving the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation, as factors for stability and regional and international peace and security. In that regard, Algeria expresses its deep concern over the obstacles placed in the way of implementing resolutions establishing a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, 20 years after the adoption of such a resolution at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and that no progress has been made on that important and key issue. My country would also like to express its deep concern with regard to the ongoing threat posed to the environment and security of the region by Israel's continued refusal to adhere to the conventions prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, which

represents a very serious threat to the region and the world.

**Ms. Guitton** (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement of the European Union earlier. I would like to make several additional remarks in my national capacity.

The issue of weapons of mass destruction is of crucial importance to my delegation, as current events continue to confirm. The situation in Syria remains of concern. Despite the condemnation of the international community and the adoption of three Security Council resolutions, there were multiple attacks using chemical weapons 2014 and 2015.

Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), which established the Joint Investigative Mechanism on the use of chemical weapons in Syria, was an important development this year. France supported and co-sponsored that resolution. Several investigations led by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have already confirmed the use of chlorine gas in Syria but were not able to identify the perpetrators of the attacks, having no mandate to do so. The Investigative Mechanism allows us to entrust that task to an independent and neutral body. To that end, it will work in close coordination with the OPCW. Having established that Investigative Mechanism, we are working to put an end to impunity and the chemical threat. Those responsible will have to answer for their actions.

More generally, recent developments illustrate once again the urgent need to find a political solution in Syria. We must commit to ending the violence and to rapidly resuming dialogue and the political process. In that regard, we fully support the ongoing efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura.

The year 2015 marks the ninetieth anniversary of the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. France is the depositary of the Protocol, which was the first text to ban the use of such weapons even in time of war. We call for its universalization and the removal of reservations. Apart from that, France continues to act with determination to maintain the operational capacity of the Secretary-General's mechanism for establishing the facts in cases of the alleged use of chemical or biological weapons, and in June we held a

training course in France in that area for experts from about 15 countries.

This year we enter the final phase of the intersessional process for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), before the Convention's eighth Review Conference, to be held in 2016. France is fully engaged in the search for innovative and effective solutions for strengthening transparency and confidence between States parties in implementing the BWC. Specifically, we proposed the establishment of a voluntary peer-review mechanism designed to enable collective and participatory assessments of States parties' implementation of the BWC's provisions. France submitted itself to such a review in December 2013, during a pilot exercise that brought together experts from nine different countries, and we are pleased that other countries have announced their intention to do so before the Review Conference.

More broadly, the goal of the BWC intersessional process is to do thorough work on the implementation of the Convention and identify elements of consensus, and the Review Conference should enable us consolidate those results. For that we will need a collective effort that transcends regional differences. At the Meeting of Experts in August, France, together with India, submitted a proposal for establishing a database of offers of assistance under article VII of the Convention. This operational and specific proposal has already received a good response, and we encourage interested delegations to sponsor it with a view to the upcoming Review Conference.

Another central issue is that of delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction. Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004), 1887 (2009) and 1977 (2011) dealt with the proliferation of missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction that constitute a threat to international peace and security. The Iranian and North Korean missile programmes, in particular, have been progressing in violation of United Nations resolutions. With regard to the worrying proliferation of missiles, it is urgent that we intensify our efforts to strengthen multilateral arrangements, including The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, which we would like to see universalized, and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

**Mr. Combrink** (South Africa): At the outset, my delegation would like to associate itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of

Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of the Russian Federation, on behalf of the BRICS countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Given the devastating humanitarian consequences associated with the use of weapons of mass destruction, no cause can ever justify the use of such weapons by any actor under any circumstances. It is clear to my delegation that the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction should remain one of our key priorities. That includes achieving the universality and full and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as well as transparent, irreversible and verifiable progress towards nuclear disarmament.

In the area of chemical weapons, South Africa welcomes the significant progress achieved in the elimination and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons and chemical weapon production facilities, and we recognize the international community's efforts to destroy those chemical weapons. We have noted with concern recent developments and reports relating to the alleged use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Iraq. We are equally concerned about reports of the alleged use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. South Africa supports the joint efforts of the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations, in accordance with their mandate to bring the perpetrators to book.

We also welcome the progress made by other major possessor States parties to destroy their remaining chemical weapons stockpiles and abandoned and old chemical weapons. In the case of chemical weapon stockpiles, we note that all possessor States parties are on track to meet the planned completion dates for destroying their remaining stockpiles. Earlier this year, in Ypres, Belgium, we commemorated the centenary of the first large-scale use of chemical weapons. The Ypres Declaration is a clear indication of the commitment of all States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. South Africa recognizes the role of the Convention in enhancing regional and international peace and security, as the Convention sets out, as well as the importance of ensuring its universality. The object and purpose of the Convention will be fully realized only when complete universality is achieved.

We are positively disposed to the current debate on the priorities and role of the OPCW beyond 2025, on the role of non-State actors in relation to the Convention and on the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, as well as to discussions on preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons. However, we believe that in the short term the OPCW's objectives and primary focus must continue to be complete disarmament and the elimination of all declared chemical weapons under strict and effective international control, in accordance with the Convention.

South Africa remains committed to strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention to ensure that our common goal of preventing the threat posed by biological weapons is achieved. My delegation remains concerned about the threat posed by naturally occurring organisms, as well as by those that could be deliberately manufactured and manipulated for use as weapons of mass destruction. It is critical that we achieve our common goal of eliminating the threat posed by biological weapons.

Besides the obvious security benefits of the BWC, the Convention also contains important cooperation and assistance provisions that could strengthen the international community's ability to combat the debilitating impact of disease on people's health and countries' socioeconomic development. South Africa therefore believes that greater international coordination and assistance are required to alleviate the burden of the threat posed by biological weapons. Among many others, initiatives such as exchanges on biological sciences and technology, the promotion of capacity-building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis, and the containment of infectious diseases could be further explored.

The intersessional process agreed to during the seventh Review Conference of the BWC provides an opportunity for States parties to strengthen implementation of the Convention in some important areas. In that regard, South Africa actively contributed to the discussions on article VII by submitting a working paper on procedures for assistance under the article that also suggested possible guidelines for requesting assistance.

South Africa remains concerned about the Ebola outbreak, which illustrated the importance of international cooperation and assistance in combating and managing disease outbreaks. We believe it may

be helpful at some stage to analyse the international assistance and response to the Ebola outbreak with a view to identifying lessons that could be useful with regard to implementation of article VII. In that context, South Africa welcomes the forthcoming Review Conference and the need for States parties to effectively use the remainder of the intersessional process to develop the necessary common understandings and effective action in order to strengthen implementation of the Convention.

In conclusion, it is crucial that we universalize the BWC and the CWC if we are to achieve effective eradication of all biological and chemical weapons. We therefore call on the countries that are not yet party to them to join without further delay.

**Mr. McConville** (Australia): The international community must remain steadfast in countering the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, and we must remain resolute in our determination that there are no circumstances justifying the use of such weapons.

Tragically, atrocities still occur. Australia is deeply concerned about ongoing reports of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq. We underscore our serious concern regarding the recent findings of the Fact-Finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which asserted, with a high degree of confidence, that chlorine had been used as a weapon in three locations in Syria from April to August of 2014.

We welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), which will make it possible to identify those responsible for using chemical weapons in Syria. In that respect, we are pleased to have provided \$2 million towards the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons capabilities.

We must continue to work collaboratively to adjust policies and regulations to reflect constantly evolving new threats and technologies in the field of weapons of mass destruction, including through the application of robust export controls. This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the formation of the Australia Group, an international grouping of 42 countries committed to harmonizing export controls. The aim of the Group is to prevent rogue States and terrorists from obtaining what they need to build chemical and biological weapons. Through the regular meetings of the Australia Group, which we chair, we collaborate on new ways to curb the spread of chemical and biological weapons.

The Biological Weapons Convention not only underpins the international norms against biological weapons, but also facilitates global efforts to promote peaceful uses of the life sciences. Rapid advances in the biosciences and biotechnology continue to make the pursuit of a biological weapons programme ever more feasible for a growing number of countries — if they were to decide on such a regrettable course. As recent events in West Africa demonstrated with the Ebola virus, the risk of a major viral outbreak can quickly become a global concern. That has implications not just for the region in question, but also for the global economy and the movement of people.

Against that background, within the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention, Australia, as Chair of the Western Group, remains committed to strengthening the Convention, including working hard to achieve a successful Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention in 2016. We are working to make progress on a number of issues. They include building up effective export control systems, as exemplified in our co-sponsorship of a United States joint export control working paper earlier this year; a more systematic science and technology review mechanism; developing a better article VII response mechanism; and encouraging cross regional support for more effective national implementation of the Convention, including article X cooperation. We urge all delegations to work collaboratively towards a strong Review Conference outcome.

Finally, Australia urges all Member States to fulfil their obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and other related resolutions. Resolution 1540 (2004) remains central in combatting the challenge of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Its full implementation by Member States is thus an enduring international security priority.

**Mr. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by extending to you, Sir, the other members of the Bureau and other participating delegations our appreciation for the efforts made in the past few weeks. Indeed, we have completed a good deal of work on our agenda.

My delegation supports the statements made earlier on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The dangers linked to the use of weapons of mass destruction are growing. Humankind remembers

the atrocities and the disasters experienced, and the frightful cost paid by millions due to the irresponsible decisions — made counter to international law and human dignity — to use these weapons. It is regrettable that these prohibited weapons continue to be used in certain conflicts. That should prompt us all to coordinate our efforts to ensure that there are no further recurrences of these tragedies, to save humankind from the catastrophic fallout from the use of these weapons, and to sow the seeds of hope of a world free of these frightful weapons.

Having discussed other weapons of mass destruction under the previous agenda item, I will now turn to chemical weapons, which are widespread throughout the world and represent an imminent danger to our region. It is well known that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), to which most States are party, is the international convention that enjoys the widest support. The Convention has become a symbol of the respect for international law and in particular the rules of war. The CWC governs the behaviour of parties in conflict. The prohibition of chemical weapons has become a moral, political and legal prohibition that requires ongoing implementation. For historical reasons, it prohibits the use of chemical weapons regardless of the reasons.

The CWC was the culmination of legal and diplomatic efforts to condemn the use of chemical weapons. It is an embodiment of the conviction that using such weapons is unacceptable. Even the possession of such weapons is now internationally proscribed. It governs the behaviour of the international community and indeed of all Governments. The use of these weapons is to be condemned and calls for their users to be isolated and brought to account. They must not enjoy impunity.

What happens when some regimes arbitrarily use these prohibited weapons against their citizens? Thousands of civilians, including women and children, have paid the price for the arbitrary use of chemical weapons. That is evidence of the fact that weapons of mass destruction continue to be used and that the implementation of the conventions and international instruments prohibiting their use is necessary.

We reiterate our principled position with regard to the need to address this threat. The region to which I belong is unique in terms of its conflicts, sudden disturbances, and the presence of weapons of mass destruction and terrorist groups. All of that explains

the danger of using these weapons. The State of Qatar has therefore participated in every effort to end the possibility of the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction with a view to lessening tensions and strengthening peace and security in the region. We believe firmly that no strategic equilibrium can be based on the possession of such weapons or other weapons of mass destruction; it must be founded on States' successful efforts to work for their peoples' development and prosperity. There will be no peace or stability in the world as long as weapons of mass destruction and the threat of their use continue to exist.

**Mr. Banerjee** (India): India associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Russian Federation, on behalf of the BRICS countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

India greatly values the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) as examples of non-discriminatory treaties in the field of disarmament aimed at the total elimination of a specific type of weapon of mass destruction. Their success can be a model for dealing in future with the other such weapon of mass destruction — nuclear weapons.

Since disarmament is a primary goal of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the remaining States possessing chemical weapons should comply with their obligations under the Convention as soon as possible. India completed the destruction of its chemical weapon stockpiles in 2009, within the time frame stipulated under the CWC. The provisions of the Convention should be implemented in a manner that does not present obstacles to legitimate activities, especially in countries such as India, with large and growing chemical industries. Universality is also fundamental to the Convention's success. The use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone should be condemned and the international norms established against their use should not be breached.

India contributed to the joint international efforts of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons aimed at ensuring the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapon stockpiles. The international community should continue to be vigilant regarding the possibility of

non-State actors and terrorist groups seeking or using chemical weapons.

India remains committed to improving the BWC's effectiveness and strengthening its implementation and universalization. We share the widespread interest among States parties to the Convention in strengthening its effectiveness and improving its implementation by negotiating and concluding a protocol for that purpose. We believe that to be necessary, in view of the new challenges to international peace and security resulting from proliferation trends, including the possible threat posed by terrorists and other non-State actors seeking access to biological agents or toxins for purposes of terrorism.

We support a robust consultation process among all States parties in the lead-up to the eighth Review Conference of the Convention, to be held next year, with a view to helping the Conference succeed through solid preparation on substantive and procedural issues. India is making substantive contributions in that regard. We have submitted two joint working papers — the first, with France, on measures aimed at strengthening assistance under article VII of the Convention, and the second, with the United States, on strengthening implementation of article III. They are proof of India's efforts to contribute concrete proposals on key aspects of the Convention and our willingness to work with partners to build broad-based understandings and agreements that could benefit all State parties to the Convention.

India is committed to maintaining the highest international standards relating to control of nuclear, chemical, biological and toxin weapons and their means of delivery. In that regard, we have made considerable progress in our engagement with the relevant multilateral export-control regimes, with a view to attaining full membership. We have strong, legislation-based national export controls consistent with the highest international standards. We have filed reports with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and have provided our most recent update this year.

A world without weapons of mass destruction would be a world without fear of instant annihilation. In conclusion, I would like to quote Rabindranath Tagore, a great son of India and a great poet from the soil of Bengal.

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high / Where knowledge is free / Where the world has not been broken up into fragments / By narrow domestic walls / Where words come out from the depth of truth / Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection / Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way / Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit / Where the mind is led forward by thee / Into ever-widening thought and action / Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

**Mr. Laggner** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): This year, the town of Ypres commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the first large-scale use of chemical weapons. The ceremony enabled us not only to honour the memory of the victims of those tragic events, but also to remind the world that despite the atrocities committed there 100 years ago and the admirable efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its member States to eliminate the global inventories of such weapons, their use continues, as confirmed by the conclusions of the OPCW’s inquiry into the allegations of the use of chlorine as a weapon in Syria.

My country is very concerned about these findings. Switzerland firmly condemns any use of chemical weapons. We demand that their use cease immediately and that respect be ensured for the obligations of international law. Switzerland welcomes the fact that the Security Council has recognized the need to hold the perpetrators of these acts to account. Resolution 2235 (2015), which established the United Nations-OPCW Joint Investigation Mechanism aimed at identifying the perpetrators of these acts, is an important step in rendering those responsible for these crimes accountable for their actions, whatever side they are on. Switzerland will give its full support to the Mechanism and to the OPCW in its other ongoing missions.

These facts underscore more than ever how important it is to maintain and strengthen our universal norms against chemical and biological weapons, while affirming our shared responsibility on the issue. In that regard, Switzerland calls on all States that have not yet done so to accede as soon as possible to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

The problem of chemicals that act on the central nervous system, also known as incapacitating agents,

continues to be a concern. Switzerland reiterates its belief that a comprehensive, focused and inclusive debate based on the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention is an important factor in establishing transparency and confidence among States parties. In close collaboration with Australia, we have continued to conduct informal consultations in order to raise awareness of the issue. We call on all States parties to the CWC that have not yet done so to establish their position on chemicals that act on the central nervous system by explaining their national policy on the subject. We also call for support for launching a participatory discussion of such chemicals under the auspices of the CWC’s governing body.

Switzerland welcomes the initiatives undertaken in recent years to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. We believe it needs stronger mechanisms if we are to solve the problems related to States parties’ implementation of and compliance with its provisions. There are still numerous challenges in the area that will require significant additional efforts between now and the holding in 2016 of the Convention’s eighth Review Conference.

Developments in science and technology also play a pivotal role in the continued relevance of the Biological Weapons Convention, given the challenges they raise in the application and sustainability of the international norm against biological weapons. BWC States parties must take those challenges into account and provide sufficient time and resources to address them. While Switzerland welcomes the discussions in the area of science and technology that have taken place under the current intersessional programme of work, it is convinced that there is a need for a more effective and sustainable approach.

Developments in science and technology are technical in nature, and the process through which they are identified and their implications assessed should be as well. A technical body in the framework of the BWC dedicated to reviewing scientific and technological developments would provide for a more comprehensive technical basis for such work and help to insulate technical discussions from policy considerations. That would leave BWC States parties well placed for the ensuing policy discussions in the framework of the broader intersessional programme of work. It is important to develop common views on that question before the 2016 Review Conference. We stand ready to work together with all States parties, the scientific

community and the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit to advance this issue.

We also hope that BWC States parties will make progress in the implementation of article VII of the Convention. In that regard, I would like to announce that Switzerland will organize, in November, the first in a series of workshops to continue discussions on the role, activities and designation of biological laboratories nominated to the roster of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons. One of the main objectives of the workshop series will be to elaborate on the question of international quality assurance requirements that designated laboratories would have to meet in order to ensure the full scientific and political acceptance of their results in the event of an investigation of alleged use of biological weapons under the Mechanism.

**Mr. Alokly (Libya)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to express our support for the statements made earlier on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of Arab States.

Libya confirms the effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is the only instrument that prohibits the use of an entire category of weapons. Libya supports a verification regime and calls for strengthening international cooperation with regard to chemical weapons used for peaceful purposes. Based on that principle, Libya commends the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which is one of the most universal international organizations. We welcome the efforts of the Director-General, the exhaustive report and entire team of the OPCW.

Libya has been conscientious in respecting all its obligations through 2016 under the CWC within the time frames established by the Executive Council, despite the difficult circumstances currently being experienced by our country. In that connection, we note the official declaration made by the OPCW on 4 February 2014, affirming that Libya had completely rid itself of all its chemical weapons, namely, sulphur mustard, either in bulk or used in ammunition or bombs. On that occasion, a ceremony was held at the area where the chemicals had been stored in Jafra. The OPCW Director-General, together with his delegation and high-level representatives of the international partners who helped Libya achieve that objective, were also present.

Based on the OPCW's plan to destroy the stockpiles of chemical weapons in Libya by 29 April 2012, Libya has continued to destroy its Category 3 chemical weapons. In 2014, Libya completed the destruction of its Category 1 chemical weapons. As far as its stockpiles of Category 2 weapons are concerned, we note the statement made earlier by the representative of Finland on behalf of the Nordic countries, in which she encouraged us to expedite our destruction of those weapons. We note the progress Libya has made and that, according to the OPCW inspectors and experts' reports, the remaining stockpiles are non-military in nature and their security is being strictly protected until we can eliminate them by the end of 2016.

It is clear that biological and chemical weapons cause harm to all of humankind. Some of those weapons and their harmful effects are not limited to the time and place in which they are used, but can cause serious and irreversible damage to human beings and the environment. For that reason, and aware of the risk they pose, Libya has been a party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention since 1982. Libya welcomes the Convention as an important tool in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. To that end, Libya has cooperated with the OPCW ethics committee in managing the dangers posed by chemical weapons. Libya also calls for the establishment of a mechanism to verify implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and calls once again on all countries to accede to the Convention and efficiently implement it.

**Mr. Benítez Verson (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): The existence of weapons of mass destruction poses a serious threat to international peace and security. Cuba does not possess or intend to possess any kind of weapons of mass destruction and strongly supports their prohibition and elimination. Our country is committed to the full and effective implementation of international legal instruments that prohibit such weapons.

The complete destruction of all categories of chemical weapons within the agreed timetable should continue to be one of the top priorities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The OPCW plays an important role in the promotion of economic and technological development of the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, in particular the less developed countries. In that context, we must urgently adopt a plan of action to guarantee the full, effective and non-discriminatory

implementation of article XI of the Convention, as such a plan has already been postponed for too long.

The discriminatory restrictions that continue to be imposed by States parties on transfers for the peaceful use of materials, equipment and technology in the chemical sphere are unacceptable and should be lifted. They are contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Chemical Weapons Convention. A clear example of such restrictions are those that are imposed against Cuba under the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on our country.

We welcome the successful implementation of the agreements reached on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, within an unprecedented time frame and amid exceptionally difficult conditions. We also welcome the pace of destruction of that country's chemical weapons production facilities. These achievements have been made possible largely by the cooperation of the Syrian Government.

Cuba reiterates its unequivocal commitment to the strict implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The possibility of any use of bacteriological and toxin agents as weapons should be completely excluded. We reiterate the importance of promoting international cooperation for peaceful purposes within the framework of the BWC. Full implementation of article X of the Convention is a priority for developing countries party to the Convention. Cuba believes that the only effective way to strengthen the BWC is through the adoption of a legally binding and multilaterally negotiated protocol that addresses the gaps in that instrument and includes the basic pillars of the Convention, such as international cooperation and the verification of all the articles of the Convention.

We share legitimate international concerns about the risk of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction. We insist that such risks cannot be eliminated by applying a selective approach that is limited to addressing horizontal proliferation while ignoring vertical proliferation and disarmament. If we truly wish to combat the possible use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists, it is urgent that progress be made in the area of disarmament, including the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. Cuba insists that the Security Council do nothing to undermine the central role of the General Assembly

and the existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming Cuba's continued commitment to the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

**Mr. Kim Young-moo** (Republic of Korea): Since their entry into force, both the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) have served as the core pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime and have moved continuously towards universalization. However, given the rapid development of science and technology, combined with the wide availability and inherently dual-use nature of those weapons, the international regime against biological and chemical weapons should be adapted to meet emerging challenges.

The Republic of Korea has consistently supported the strengthening of the BWC regime, based on each State party's robust implementation of the obligations under the Convention. That should be complemented with strong measures to build confidence among the States parties, sufficient capacity-building and assistance, and adequate consideration of the impact of relevant technological developments. Efforts to strengthen the Convention should be both pragmatic and realistic. We believe that the intersessional programme, as agreed at the seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, in 2011, has contributed to building a common understanding and taking effective measures for strengthening the treaty regime. Based on the final document of the Conference, we are ready to work with others to further develop the mechanisms for strengthening the Convention in the run-up to the eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, next year.

The Republic of Korea is committed to international cooperation and assistance efforts to build the capacity of States parties. Such efforts include various projects, from the construction of medical facilities to the provision of technical assistance and medical staff training in accordance with the Korea International Cooperation Agency. Furthermore, we take an active role in the Global Health Security Agenda with a view to facilitating cooperation and assistance for capacity-building and achieving our common goal of combating infectious disease and bioterrorism. Against this backdrop, the Republic of Korea hosted a Global

Health Security Agenda ministerial-level meeting this September, in Seoul, and is actively participating in the multisectoral rapid response steering group.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the BWC, the first treaty to put a comprehensive ban on a certain type of weapons of mass destruction. I would like to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the Republic of Korea to the Convention and to the success of the 2016 Review Conference.

Since September 2013, the international community has worked together to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons programme. Despite many difficulties, our joint efforts have successfully accomplished the removal of the declared chemical weapons stockpile from Syria. Ninety-eight per cent of Syria's declared chemical weapons have been destroyed, and progress has been made with respect to the 12 chemical weapons production facilities in Syria. Despite this achievement, however, my delegation is deeply concerned about the continuing allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in Syria. In that regard, the Republic of Korea supports the continued work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fact-Finding Mission and Declaration Assessment Team to establish the whole truth of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, and welcomes the establishment of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. To ensure its effective implementation, the OPCW and the United Nations should continue to cooperate closely, and all parties in Syria should cooperate fully with the Joint Investigative Mechanism.

My delegation is also concerned over the recent report that terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, may have acquired chemical agents that can be used as weapons. Considering the increasing threat posed by non-State actors and the dual nature of chemical agents, the prevention of the hostile use of toxic chemicals as weapons by non-State actors should be one of our priorities. One hundred years have passed since the first chemical weapons attack happened in Ypres during the First World War. In order to prevent the use of chemical weapons, achieving universal adherence to the CWC is an utmost priority. My delegation welcomes the accession of Myanmar and Angola to the Convention and urges the few remaining countries outside the Convention, including North Korea, to follow suit without any delay or precondition.

**Mr. Anton** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain fully endorses the statement earlier made by the representative of the European Union.

The Chemical Weapons Convention, successor to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, is one of the major multilateral achievements in the field of disarmament. It is the first treaty to ban an entire category of weapons and to establish a very solid verification mechanism. Spain wishes to congratulate Myanmar and Angola for their recent accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, two milestones that bring us very close to the universalization of the treaty, which is essential to disarmament.

Spain welcomes the international community's successful efforts to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons programme, regarding it as an example of international cooperation, and reiterates its support for the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with regard to bringing the elimination of those weapons to a successful conclusion. Aware of the dramatic situation in Syria and of the terrible suffering of the Syrian people, we call on Syria to comply fully with Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the decisions of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and to complete the total dismantling of its chemical weapons programme.

Spain is deeply concerned about the use of toxic chemicals confirmed by the report of the Fact-Finding Mission and condemns any use of toxic chemicals on human beings anywhere. These violations of the Convention and of Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015) offend the human conscience and have caused enormous suffering to the Syrian people. For that reason, we welcome Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), which established the Joint Investigative Mechanism and represents an important step forward with regard to the investigation of allegations of use of toxic chemicals. In addition to acting as a deterrent, the Mechanism should make it possible to duly try and hold to account those responsible for the use of these substances before the international community.

For Spain, preventing non-State actors and terrorist groups from obtaining access to weapons of mass destruction is a high priority. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is an essential tool in that effort, which should be based on effective international cooperation. Spain reiterates the importance of meeting

the obligations and commitments under resolution 1540 (2004).

As the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), Spain is working to strengthen the resolution by, inter alia, working to achieve universality in national reporting on the implementation of the resolution; improving the management of the assistance mechanism, with the ultimate goal of strengthening national capacities; supporting a regional approach, with particular attention to Africa; encouraging greater disclosure of the Committee's work, maintaining active dialogue, as appropriate, with relevant stakeholders in the area of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and devoting more attention to new threats and areas such as biosecurity.

But perhaps the fundamental issue during the Spanish chairmanship is the ongoing process of comprehensive review of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), to be completed by December 2016. The comprehensive review is essential to adapting the entire structure of the resolution to the development of new threats in the area of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors and terrorist groups, with the ultimate objective of making that structure more effective.

At the national level, Spain has adopted its national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). It defines the objectives, operational lines of action and measures necessary to meet the obligations arising from that resolution. Among other things, the plan includes preventive security measures and cooperation with those States that may require assistance to meet those obligations.

The Biological Weapons Convention is the linchpin of efforts to eradicate the threat of proliferation of the offensive use of pathogens. Spain considers it essential to continue working to universalize the Convention and to promote its effective implementation. In that regard we have helped to build capacity with respect to implementing the commitments of this Convention, especially in the region of Latin America.

Spain attaches great importance to the enforcement and implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention at the national level. In that context, Spain has developed a national plan on biosecurity, as set out in our national security strategy. The establishment of the national plan on biosecurity seeks to develop all the

necessary measures to enable effective guardianship of relevant biological agents, controlling physical access to them and the physical protection of facilities where such agents are handled. A national committee on biosecurity responsible for monitoring the national plan was also created. Not only is this plan based on our commitments under the Convention, it is also part of the implementation of our national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

**Ms. O'Brien** (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add several remarks in my national capacity.

Weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery remain among the most immediate and pressing global threats to the security of humanity. Ireland regards the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as vital to the global community's efforts to ensure a world free from weapons of mass destruction. We call strongly on those remaining States that are not yet parties to these Conventions to accede to them and to complete universalization of these essential instruments.

Ireland greatly welcomes Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013 and the considerable efforts of the international community. We were pleased to support, in our national capacity, the efforts to remove and destroy the Syrian Government's declared stockpiles of chemical weapons. We also welcomed the draft report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in July, which confirmed the removal of chemical weapons from all declared chemical weapons storage facilities in Syria. We look forward now to the destruction of these facilities so that they may never again be used for that purpose.

While welcoming these developments, which represent one of the international community's most consistent and conclusive actions of recent times, we are appalled at reports of the continuing use of chemical weapons in Syria. Ireland reiterates our call to refer possible war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Syria to the International Criminal Court in light of the compelling confirmation found by the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission that chlorine was used systematically and repeatedly in that country.

Those responsible for these appalling crimes must be held accountable.

Ireland continues to give high priority to further strengthening the BWC. As the world seeks to handle and mitigate the effects of the recent deadly Ebola crisis, we are reminded of the lethal impact that biological pathogens can have and the need for a strong, effective and universal BWC. We look forward to considering how this can be achieved at the Meeting of States Parties in December, and to next year's Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

This year the world has witnessed unspeakable acts of violence by groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, including reports of use of chemical weapons by non-State actors in both Iraq and Syria. As Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) celebrated its tenth anniversary last year, the importance of the resolution and its forceful obligations on all States to prevent non-State actors from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction is more crucial than ever.

Likewise, the proliferation of ballistic missiles continues to pose a threat to peace and security. Ireland is proud to adhere to The Hague Code of Conduct, which is the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument in this arena. The missile technology control regime also imposes effective export controls, and Ireland looks forward to and endorses its enlargement to include all European Union member States.

We wish to express our regret that the recent NPT Review Conference failed to produce an outcome document. We also regret, in particular, the failure to convene a conference on achieving a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We wish to reiterate our thanks for all the efforts of Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava of Finland. We hope that the foundations that he has laid will in time lead to progress on this crucial issue.

This year the international community gathered at Ypres in Belgium to commemorate the first use of a chemical weapon in warfare. One hundred years later can we not agree, for the sake of all humankind and our fragile planet, to finally put all weapons of mass destruction beyond use for all time?

**The Chair:** I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind the Committee that there is a maximum of 10

minutes for statements made in exercise of the right of reply.

**Mr. Sano (Japan):** Allow me to exercise the right of reply in response to the remarks made by our colleague from China.

First of all, in our view, this forum should be used not to bring different interpretations to past events, but to discuss current and future efforts to secure the complete ban on biological and chemical weapons. We believe that such remarks, which are not in line with the purpose of this forum, should be restrained. We will continue to engage actively in international efforts for disarmament and the non-proliferation of biological and chemical weapons, and expect to have discussions that are not confrontational but, rather, constructive in nature.

Secondly, regarding the chemical weapons used during the war, the numbers mentioned by the Chinese Ambassador are based upon incomplete statistics, as he stated in his remarks. The Government of Japan does not have objective and concrete records to confirm the point of the Chinese side on chemical weapons use by the former Japanese army during the Second World War. The number of chemical weapons used described by China is questionable. It could be exaggerated because it may include battles in which the former Japanese army was not involved. The historical records on the quantity remain fragmented. The whole picture is not clear.

Thirdly, regarding the abandoned chemical weapons in China, Japan takes our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention seriously. Japan is committed to the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in China and has invested significant human and financial resources. Although the abandoned-chemical-weapons project entails various challenges and uncertainties, there has been steady progress. For example, the project in Nanjing was completed in 2012. The project in Huan was completed in 2015. In Harbaling, the largest burial site of abandoned chemical weapons in Jilin province, test destruction operations began in December last year. We believe that was a significant step forward for the abandoned chemical weapons project.

We would like to emphasize that the unprecedented and extremely challenging project can be carried out only through close cooperation and coordination between Japan and China. In that respect, Japan

reaffirms its commitment to continuing to do its utmost to advance our project with the cooperation of the Government of China. Keeping in mind the bilateral discussions and discussions in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, we believe that China should have no concern about the ongoing joint efforts of Japan and China.

Fourthly, regarding the issue of the safety of Chinese inhabitants during the project, unfortunately several accidents related to abandoned chemical weapons occurred after the war, and one person lost his life. The Government of Japan considers these accidents to be extremely regrettable and has expressed its heartfelt sympathy to the families of the victims. The Government of Japan has taken preventive measures, such as publishing and distributing brochures to Chinese citizens to raise their awareness. In any case, Japan continues to do its utmost to complete the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons as soon as possible in cooperation with China, which will eventually lead to the prevention of such accidents.

**Mr. Ibrahim** (Syrian Arab Republic): Syria reiterates its strong condemnation of the horrific use of chemical weapons against its citizens and soldiers and stresses its commitment to the full implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention as a State party and within the framework of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Some statements referred to the findings of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission. Quoting any particular fallacy from those reports means that those States side with a mission that is biased and lacks objectivity, professionalism and transparency. I would like to make several points in that regard.

First, the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission visited Syria only once, and yet it was able to produce three reports filled with scientific and professional mistakes, and shortcomings. Furthermore, the Fact-Finding Mission did not conduct any field visits to any of the sites to collect the needed samples.

Secondly, the Mission, instead of visiting Syria and cooperating with the Syrian Government, resorted to working from Turkey. It accepted the coerced information and witnesses presented by the Turkish regime, which is deeply involved with terrorists and also provides them with all manner of weapons, including chemical weapons and toxic materials.

Thirdly, the witnesses cited by the Fact-Finding Mission were located in an area far from the site of the alleged chemical attacks, and all the information presented by those witnesses was not based on scientific evidence. The methodology of work of the Fact-Finding Mission runs counter to the legal standard of collecting samples. The Mission did not present any material substantive evidence of the use of chlorine, such as the analysis of samples of soil, vegetation or livestock, or of alleged chlorine-caused casualties. The Fact-Finding Mission did not even present any samples or evidence of the so-called barrels used in the alleged attacks.

Finally, the Mission completely ignored all the information presented by the Syrian Government and opted to take on board baseless allegations presented by unidentified parties.

These are only a few of the many shortcomings in the reports of the Fact-Finding Mission, and yet some are still keen to depend on them. I would like to invite those who presented baseless allegations to beware of such rhetoric. We have all seen what the United States' allegations about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq has caused in that brotherly country, and we all should be cautious of such destructive trends, which pose a grave threat to regional and international peace and security. It seems that the delegations of the United States and a few others prefer to continue certain policies that cause destruction and chaos in the Middle East and other parts of the world instead of supporting a multilateral path of diplomacy and a multilateral political approach that can enhance peace and stability for all of us.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China): I would like to make several points in response to the remarks made by the Japanese Ambassador.

First, it is true that I quoted incomplete statistics, but the true figure can only be higher. When the term "incomplete statistics" is used, what is meant are the statistics available now. There will be new statistics available in the future, I am sure, but the truth is that once all the statistics are there, the number of casualties can only be higher.

Secondly, I want to say that we are again witnessing the Japanese delegation employing its usual tactic of denying history. I would like to advise the Japanese representative that there is no use trying to cover up the war crimes or playing the victim. The only way out is to repent and seek the forgiveness of the countries against which they have committed horrendous atrocities.

Thirdly, with regard to the abandoned chemical weapons, I would like to share with the Committee the fact that according to the Chemical Weapons Convention, all chemical weapons, including abandoned chemical weapons, should be destroyed no later than 10 years after the entry into force of the Convention. The Convention entered into force in 1997. So the 10-year period has long passed. Indeed in 2006, the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons adopted a resolution that extended the deadline for the destruction of the Japanese abandoned chemical weapons to 29 April 2012. Unfortunately, however, that deadline was also missed, forcing the Executive Council to take a decision to extend the destruction timeline once more. Given all these missed deadlines, we cannot but question the sincerity of the Japanese Government in implementing its internal obligations.

Fourthly, the Japanese ambassador just said that this is not the place to talk about the past. Why, then, has Japan spoken of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? And, as I said, the only way to look into the future is to face up to the past, and that is what the Japanese Government has failed to do over the years.

**Mr. Denktaş** (Turkey): I have to make use of the right of reply even before I make my statement. I would like to put on record that we categorically deny the allegations of the representative of the Syrian regime, which has lost all legitimacy. Syria, which has been categorized as a State sponsor of terrorism, has been condemned countless times by the international community for its brutal policies and has a well-known record of aiding terrorist organizations and providing safe haven for terrorist leaders. In my statement, I will touch on activity regarding our thematic discussion today.

**The Chair:** In view of the end of the availability of interpretation today, I appeal to delegations to refrain from making second interventions.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply to the comments made by the representative of Syria. Contrary to what was said, it is Syria that is responsible for the chaos in its region, carrying out barrel-bombing and other types of attacks on its people. What Syria needs to do is to abide by its international commitments, comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and cooperate with the Fact-Finding Mission of the Organization for

the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism.

I think that to try to lay blame on the international community for the problems in Syria is itself a fallacy, and therefore, as I said, the Government of Syria needs to comply with its obligations and cooperate with the international community so that we can deal with the aftermath of the horrific attacks that have taken place.

**The Chair:** Several delegations have asked to speak for a second time in right of reply, and I now give them the floor.

**Mr. Sano** (Japan): I would like to respond once again to the Chinese representative. Throughout its post-war history, Japan, based on its feelings of deep remorse regarding the war, has upheld all the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and followed the path of a peace-loving nation that contributes to world peace and security. As part of that contribution, Japan has earnestly addressed the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Our record for the past 70 years speaks for itself and, I believe, is widely recognized by the international community.

I would like to remind the Committee of the fact that during the visit to Japan of the former President of China, Hu Jintao, our two leaders agreed to issue a joint statement stating clearly that

“the Chinese side expressed its positive evaluation of Japan’s consistent pursuit of the path of a peaceful country and Japan’s contribution to the peace and stability of the world through peaceful means over more than 60 years since the Second World War”.

China has thus already made clear that it has a policy of evaluating Japan’s path as a peace-loving country in an agreed-on document. It is now important that both China and Japan establish a future-oriented relationship of cooperation in order to tackle the common challenges facing the international community.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China): In our view, regarding the remorse that the representative of Japan mentioned, worshipping major Second World War criminals is the opposite of an act of remorse. Secondly, regarding Japan’s claims to be a peace-loving nation, making efforts to amend a peace constitution is not the expression of the normal behaviour of a peace-loving country.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*