



General Assembly

Seventieth session

First Committee

6th meeting

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New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: All delegations taking the floor are kindly reminded to limit their interventions to 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity and 15 minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations.

Ms. Nolan (Ireland): Mr. Chair, first of all, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of my delegation's full support throughout this session. Ireland aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of South Africa, who spoke on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), and by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.2). I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Ireland regards the work of the First Committee as crucial to the objectives of the United Nations and the international community in our efforts to achieve a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world. Seventy years on from the foundation of the Organization, it is our belief that we must all recommit to the vision of its founders, working together to lay the foundations for a better, more secure future for all.

Ireland regards the questions at the core of the First Committee's mandate — disarmament and arms control — as essential to the achievement of the vision set out in the United Nations Charter, and most recently, to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). In the face of the complex challenges and humanitarian tragedies that we are witnessing on a daily basis in so many parts of our world, who can deny that securing genuine and comprehensive disarmament and arms control across the range of weapons of mass destruction and of conventional weapons is needed today more than ever?

This year has seen some successes in relation to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, evidence of what the international community can achieve when Governments and civil society work together in pursuit of common goals. We welcome the agreement reached in relation to Iran's nuclear programme and support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency with regard to the implementation of the agreement. Equally, we want to highlight the momentum and commitment that led to the early entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December last year and the successful first Conference of States Parties hosted by our fellow NAC member Mexico in August. In the last year there have also been successes with respect to biological and chemical weapons, with the continued implementation of the programme for the destruction of Syria's stockpiles of chemical weapons. We also welcome the growth in adherence to the related conventions, bringing them ever closer to complete universalization.

Set against those successes, Ireland wishes to highlight the continuing and deeply troubling reports of the use of chemical weapons by both State and non-State actors in Syria. We also regret the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty

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on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to agree on an outcome document. I would like to reiterate our thanks to the President of the Review Conference for her efforts to achieve consensus.

Nevertheless, Ireland takes some positives from the work that was taken forward, both in preparation for and during the Review Conference. I refer in particular here to the work carried out by the New Agenda Coalition and other partners in relation to the need to develop legally binding and effective measures to implement article VI of the NPT and the great support that we have received from like-minded States and civil society in that respect. It is our view that progress towards nuclear disarmament is more urgent than ever, bearing in mind today's global security challenges. It is our intention to work during this session of the First Committee towards the establishment of an open-ended working group in Geneva with a mandate to reach agreement on concrete, effective legal measures. For it to have meaningful impact, such a group should be open to all, not be bound by a consensus requirement, and include civil society.

This year, along with the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, the global community has also marked the seventieth anniversary of the devastation and human suffering caused by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, reminding us of the humanitarian imperative that formed the impetus for the great common effort that led to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In that context, we welcome the renewed focus and scrutiny on the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear-weapons detonation, accidental or deliberate. Great credit is due to Norway, Mexico and Austria for hosting three international conferences on the subject of the humanitarian consequences, and I would also like to acknowledge here the impetus provided by the excellent work of the International Red Cross Movement in that regard, as well.

Among the many compelling findings from those conferences was the research into the gender-impact of nuclear explosions, presented in the first instance at the Vienna conference, and expanded on at a well-attended side event organized by Ireland and other interested States during the NPT Review Conference in May. That research, which highlights the fact that ionizing radiation affects women and girls to a far greater degree than men and boys, gives us yet another compelling reason why such weapons should cease to exist.

I said earlier that, while acknowledging the many challenges, Ireland is determined to work on the positives that can be derived from the NPT Review process. As we stated in our closing statement at the Review Conference, article VI of the Treaty imposes upon each State party an obligation to enter into and conclude good-faith negotiations that would produce agreed legally binding measures, placing the process of nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control. Today, 80 per cent of the NPT membership subscribes to the position that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to guarantee that such weapons are never used again under any circumstances.

The humanitarian pledge, now signed by 119 States, represents a further encouraging development. As of this week, a clear majority of the NPT membership has pledged to work towards effective measures to fill the legal gap in article VI. Again, we believe that the task ahead of us all this month is to build on the pledge and continue the momentum to take this important work forward with the urgency that it requires. I look forward to the formal adoption of the humanitarian pledge as a resolution.

It is our strong view that the failure of the Review Conference to achieve an outcome calls for a proactive and effective response. The momentum gained from the humanitarian debate should, 45 years on from the Treaty's entry into force, serve as an impetus to opening the path to full and effective nuclear disarmament, as envisaged by its authors.

With regard to developments in conventional arms, we see some successes but also many challenges. In addition to the welcome progress on the Arms Trade Treaty, we note with concern the ever-increasing proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which have been called today's real weapons of mass destruction, fuelling conflicts everywhere and contributing to criminality and gender-based violence. We call on those countries that have not signed and ratified the Arms Trade Treaty to do so, and on the States parties to ensure that transparent and effective reporting procedures are adopted at the earliest moment so as to ensure the effective implementation of the Treaty.

Ireland strongly supports the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in

All Its Aspects, in particular the pursuit of an integrated approach to tackling the significant problems posed by the illicit accumulation and proliferation of such weapons, including the dangers that they pose for humanitarian and peacekeeping interventions. We welcome and support Sustainable Development Goal 16.4, which aims at reducing illicit arms flows by 2030, and we will continue to support proposals that seek to integrate and address existing gaps in the control of such weapons flows, including through the development of international tracing procedures. Ireland firmly believes that ammunition must also be included in the international community's control systems for such weapons.

Equally, Ireland continues to support the full implementation and universalization of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Additional Protocols, as well as the 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Treaty and the 2008 Cluster Munitions Convention. We welcome the outcome of the Dubrovnik Review Conference, and we express our appreciation to Croatia in that connection. We are deeply concerned at reports of the use of cluster munitions in Libya, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen and call on all States to cease the use of such inhumane weapons and join the Convention.

As technology evolves, so too do the challenges of ensuring that the use of weapons and new technologies, both within and outside conflict situations, remains within the boundaries of international law. Ireland has been pleased to take part in the discussion of lethal autonomous weapons systems at the CCW. We support a strengthened mandate for the CCW to work on and explore that serious emerging challenge for conventional arms control, with a view to developing positions for the CCW Review Conference in 2016. Likewise, we continue to believe that the use of armed drones, as well as the increasing proliferation of such technologies, requires serious consideration by the international community in relation to the moral, humanitarian and human rights concerns raised by their use.

As with small arms and light weapons, the conflicts we are witnessing today are seeing an increasing number of casualties and harm being caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide-area impact in populated areas. It is clear to us that the escalating civilian casualty rates and the destruction of civilian infrastructure arising from their use present a

significant challenge that the international community must address.

Ireland recognizes that women have been and continue to be a powerful force for change in relation to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and we welcome the renewed focus both on women's empowerment and also on the gendered impact of illicit arms proliferation. It is our view that only through fully empowering and making women visible, in all aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation work, including in relation to the nuclear debate, can the international community reach the goals to which we have all long aspired. Twenty years on from the Beijing Platform for Action and 15 years since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), it is time for a genuinely equal contribution, by men and women, to the goal of global peace and security.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the work of the Committee. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. I would also like to thank Mr. Kim, Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement (see A/C.1/70/PV.2) and for the work and dedication of his entire team.

Fifteen years into the twenty-first century, we note with great concern that we have not yet managed to eliminate weapons of mass destruction — weapons that threaten humankind's very existence. The humanitarian impact of the possible detonation of nuclear weapons, the horror of the use of chemical weapons, the threat of the possible use of biological weapons and the availability and misuse of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, renders this an even more dramatic race against time.

That is why today, as in the past, Argentina continues to stress the need to achieve the universality of existing legal disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. That should be the goal during the second decade of the twenty-first century, as it is the only way to lay the foundation for security as opposed to mutually assured destruction. Argentina reiterates that achieving the universality of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control instruments is a legitimate aspiration for Argentina and the international community, and actively promotes it.

We are aware of the major crisis in confidence being experienced by the nuclear disarmament and

non-proliferation regime, especially considering the lack of consensus on the final document of the recent Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Progress is needed on the commitments made in 1995, during an unrestricted and unconditional review of the Treaty, and in successive Review Conferences. That will ensure that the legitimacy and credibility of the NPT is not irreparably damaged. More importantly, it will enable strict and resolute compliance with the letter of the Treaty and implementation of its three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in a simultaneous and balanced fashion. The lack of consensus at the recently held Review Conference does not exempt any State Party, to any degree, from the obligations assumed under the NPT.

We welcome the holding of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. Although the Treaty did not meet the expectations of some delegations, it is indisputable that its entry into force, in record time, speaks volumes about the urgent need for a vast number of countries to have an instrument that exerts greater control on the arms trade and protects their citizens from the consequences of the diversion of such weapons. For the first time, a legally binding instrument regulates the transfer of conventional weapons at the international level. It contains common criteria for all States and provides transparency and predictability, thereby making a tremendous contribution to confidence-building.

The right of States to legitimate defence has also been safeguarded, and furthermore, the contribution that the Treaty makes to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law should also be highlighted. Argentina awaits with interest the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, which will provide an effective response to the serious consequences of illicit, unregulated trade in arms for many people and States and for international peace and security.

Around the world today, it is estimated that more than 650 million small arms and light weapons are being illegally traded, 1,500 people die each day as a result of armed violence, and 60 per cent of all human rights violations are committed with small arms. In that regard, we hope that the next biennial meeting of the United Nation Programme of Action on Small Arms will be an opportunity for us to thoroughly consider

its implementation at the national, regional and global levels. It will also be the ideal opportunity to share experiences on ways to effectively combat the scourge of small arms and foster greater levels of cooperation.

In conclusion, I underscore once again Argentina's commitment to the work of the First Committee. We hope that, under your leadership, Mr. Chair, this will be a fruitful session. To that end, you, Sir, can count on the full cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Kihurani (Kenya): My delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the position of Chair of the First Committee and assures you of our full cooperation as you steer the deliberations, negotiations and decisions on peace, security and disarmament in the Committee going forward.

My delegation also wishes to align itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

Kenya believes that the world must be free of nuclear weapons. We have had a steadfast position on that issue through our commitment and advocacy for universal membership in the nuclear-weapons treaties, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the regional nuclear-weapons-free-zone security arrangements. Kenya has also been a strong advocate of multilateral diplomacy as a means of achieving non-proliferation, disarmament and international security. However, despite the efforts expended by the global disarmament machinery to advance our collective nuclear security goals, the attempts have continued to flounder time and time again.

We wish to emphasize that, in our view, discussions prioritizing some issues of the debate on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, such as the fissile material cut-off treaty, essentially mean that focus on other, equally important aspects is diminished. The conclusion of a comprehensive, transparent, irreversible and verifiable treaty on the elimination of nuclear weapons should remain the goal and priority of the international community.

We wish to recall our disappointment and, needless to say, that of most members of the international community, regarding the failure to make any progress

in the deliberations on nuclear disarmament during the NPT Review Conference held at Headquarters earlier this year. That lack of forward movement is reminiscent of the continued deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) regarding the nuclear-isarmament agenda. The lack of consensus on a programme of work for the nineteenth year running and hence the continued failure to make any headway in structured and substantive discussions on the core items on the CD's agenda is regrettable.

While we, as well as most other States, continue to emphasize the role of the CD as the global community's single multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament, it is not surprising that there has been an increasing number of calls to involve civil society in the deliberations of the CD — and might I add, also in those of the First Committee — to bring in fresh perspectives that may jog some of the intractable positions that have held the Commission hostage for years. If that stalemate, as well as the lack of political will by some member States, continues to persist, then we must consider the gains that could be achieved by including the voice of civil society, if we are to fulfil the commitment entrusted to us to build a safer and more secure world for current and future generations. In that regard, we note the positive efforts made so far through the convening of the first-ever Informal Civil Society Forum on the Conference on Disarmament by the then Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference in Geneva in March 2015.

The sense of frustration with the inertia on the part of States in achieving any progress in nuclear disarmament talks is also growing, as people around the globe endeavour to inspire, pressure or persuade their Governments to initiate negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons. That is the reason for the increasing clamour for deliberations on nuclear disarmament to be taken outside the established frameworks in a process that is open to all and blockable by none.

That call is further strengthened by concern about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Kenya continues to express its own apprehensions about that issue, as, while no country in Africa possesses nuclear weapons, the continent would not be shielded from the effects of nuclear weapons. Indeed, the effects would have a particularly devastating impact on Africa, owing to the limited resources available for building

preparedness and response-capacity. However, even for the developed countries, no amount of preparation could ever make any country capable of withstanding the devastating immediate and long-term impact of a nuclear explosion on its people.

The discourse on the prohibition of nuclear weapons therefore needs to move beyond discussions about deterrence and nuclear doctrines. It must transcend politics and turn towards pragmatism, it must move past the interests of a few nuclear-weapon States and shift to a process where a majority of interested States can work together to put in place effective prohibitions against nuclear weapons. Consequently, as a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons may not be within our reach through the established frameworks of the NPT and the CD, a graduated process to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons may be undertaken through other efforts mandated by the First Committee and the General Assembly.

Kenya signed the humanitarian pledge following the convening of the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. My delegation now looks forward to working with like-minded countries on proposals and resolutions aimed at ending the nuclear-weapons status quo that will be discussed in this session, including recognition of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons; commitments to fill the legal gap and take multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations forward. We must stand ready to look for solutions through such frameworks and arrangements, if we are to make any headway in the path towards the eventual achievement of legally binding norms that will create a safer, nuclear-free world.

The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons continues to be a serious concern in numerous countries globally. The possession of arms by lawless offenders, along with the resultant gun violence, has led to the destruction of livelihoods, impacted negatively on socioeconomic conditions, fed terrorist movements and resulted in other human suffering to various degrees.

Kenya itself has been a victim of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which have been utilized to carry out a number of terror attacks on our soil, as well as to engage in other criminal activities. Those arms clearly find their way into Kenyan territory through illegal and unauthorized channels, as they do

in many other countries. As the deaths and injuries resulting from those weapons in the hands of lawless offenders have continued to mount, so too arms traders, brokers and profiteers have continued to increase their sales.

That situation calls for increased international cooperation to stem the problem. In that regard, we note the encouraging work that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is undertaking, including most recently the deliberations and conclusions reached at the second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Programme of Action, held in June, and we reiterate our commitment to its efforts. We also appreciate that the coming into force of the Arms Trade Treaty has provided for, among other issues, better management of small arms, particularly if the Treaty is genuinely implemented in terms of registry and monitoring measures. We welcome the fact that those two instruments, together with Sustainable Development Goal 16.4, which seeks to significantly reduce illicit arms flows by the year 2030, have inherent complementarities that can substantially advance the cause of the elimination of illicit small-arms transfers.

However, there is still work to be done to strengthen the commitment of States to the fulfilment of the provisions and intent defined in those instruments and principles. It is therefore important for the First Committee to consider means to limit excessive production, accumulation and stockpiling of small arms and light weapons by various arms-producing States. We must work together to find the means to completely stop the flow of arms to non-State actors, such as militant groups and warlords, in conflict-prone countries through appropriate measures, including the effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.

We reiterate our concern about the continued advances being made towards the weaponization of outer space through the development of military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space for the targeting of space-based assets. That is a frontier that can provide immense communication, trade, scientific and other benefits for humankind and should be preserved and used in a spirit of cooperation for peaceful uses only. Already many developing countries are making advancements in economic transactions through the use of information and communications

technology, and that is an area that is promising in terms of levelling the playing field for them in their interactions with more developed economies. However, the continued militarization of outer space is inimical to the promotion of economic development or to disarmament and the strengthening of international security.

We commend the efforts made so far to keep a critical focus on that matter through the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. It is our view that peace and security in outer space can best be promoted through measures with appropriate and effective verification provisions aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. We therefore add our voice those calling for joint collaboration towards the development of an international code of conduct on the use of outer space, as a precursor to the negotiation of a treaty banning the placement of weapons in outer space.

In concluding, my delegation remains committed to working with Member States to advance the interests of peace and global stability through the work of the First Committee.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): On behalf of the delegation of Malaysia, allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee, as well as to the other members of the Bureau. My delegation pledges its full support and cooperation to the Chair and its able Bureau. We trust that your wisdom will guide the Committee's work, and we look forward to a successful conclusion of these proceedings.

Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

Despite the challenging start earlier in the proceedings, let us not forget what we have come here to do. We need to collectively remind ourselves of the need to overcome being caught in a web of unproductive machineries dedicated to disarmament. Real, consensual and productive outcomes towards total disarmament remain few and far between. Developed with great care over the years, existing disarmament machineries that have led to unfulfilled obligations

must be reviewed and revitalized. That gives hope for tangible outcomes in the field of disarmament and international security, which is in danger of entering a perilous stalemate.

We cannot deny that this is the reality that we face in the work of our Committee, and the only way forward is to prevail over the regressive steps that our collective efforts have caused. The stalemate sometimes affects the overall priority that we place on achieving nuclear disarmament. Hence, we in the First Committee have a lot to do in the weeks ahead. Let us have a clearer perspective on our obligations to ensure a secure and safe future for our future generation.

On a positive note, we welcome the adoption of the Security Council resolution that led to the historic agreement and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in July between Iran and P5+1 (Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), annex A). We should build on that positive momentum, so as to move forward and remove old habits and negative mentalities that have led to an impasse in the field of disarmament and international security.

Malaysia deeply regrets that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has been deadlocked for almost two decades. The impasse calls for us to reinvigorate efforts to rationalize our priorities on issues under the CD's agenda, instead of being fixated on preconditions for commitment or on the rule of consensus to achieve progress, and thereby compromising the high ideals that we have set. Our delegation hopes that a step in that direction will be the consideration of a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention.

It is simply discouraging that, only 20 years after striking a deal among the State parties to the NPT at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, we failed to agree on the final document at the 2015 Review Conference, rendering the outcome decidedly lacking. Malaysia is unwavering in its conviction that the pillars guiding the NPT — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — must continue to guide our vision towards total and complete disarmament. We believe that all States have obligations to strengthen their efforts to comprehensively address those three pillars in a balanced manner. On that note, we call on NPT State parties to reaffirm and strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty.

Our delegation looks forward to being able to welcome the growing support on outcomes relating

to the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and hopes to continue seeing meaningful actions taken to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons. We believe that the humanitarian approach would add value towards broadening the international discourse on nuclear disarmament, and we are ready to work with Member States on proposals aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, Malaysia welcomes the successful convening of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Oslo, Nayarit in Mexico, and Vienna towards that cause.

Malaysia also welcomes the progress of the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December 2014 and the convening of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Cancún in August. Building on the momentum of the success in Cancún, we remain committed to working towards being able to accede to the Treaty, as efforts are under way to ensure the harmonization of the articles in the Treaty with existing domestic legislation. It is our hope that the Treaty will continue to enjoy the strong support of Member States, in particular in the South-East Asian region, in an effort to stem the illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the region.

As part of our continuing commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Malaysia will co-organize at the national level a series of technical cooperation programmes in December 2015 to enhance the national implementation of the Convention, as well as to develop cooperation on safe working practices and accurate techniques and procedures for assessing the risks of biological misuse. We are confident that the shared knowledge, awareness and values for universal adherence to BWC and compliance with its provisions will contribute to strengthening the implementation of the Convention.

Malaysia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), will also introduce the biennial draft resolution on the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone under the agenda item on general and complete disarmament. The introduction of the draft resolution is timely, as we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the signing, by ASEAN member States, of the Treaty in December. Malaysia believes that the draft resolution is another positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament and is essential in the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones. My delegation believes that resolving all outstanding issues regarding

the strengthening of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zone, together with our ASEAN neighbours, affirms our commitment to preserve South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We look forward to deliberating on elements that could be incorporated into the draft resolution in the coming days.

As in previous years, Malaysia will be submitting its traditional draft resolution entitled “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*” (A/51/218, annex). We will be introducing this year’s draft resolution, which will incorporate technical updates, during the cluster on nuclear disarmament. On that note, my delegation wishes to invite all Member States to support that draft resolution and to consider joining the growing number of States as co-sponsors.

In concluding, Malaysia stands ready to work with you, Mr. Chair, in ensuring that we register greater progress and less inertia, towards an improved and tangible outcome for the First Committee. Our delegation remains committed to fulfilling our obligations under the NPT in the hope of achieving a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your chairmanship of the First Committee during its seventieth session. I am confident that, under your able leadership, we will be successful. I would like to reassure you, Sir, of my country’s support and cooperation.

Also, let me say that my country supports the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

We are meeting this year in the light of several challenges related to non-proliferation. Our meeting provides a golden opportunity to review the implementation of the commitments we undertook within the framework of disarmament treaties, especially after the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This is also an opportunity to maintain contacts with a view to finding new procedures within the framework, procedures that take into account the very delicate balance between the three pillars of the Treaty.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that the international community is well aware of the dangers that nuclear weapons represent, disarmament efforts have not been entirely successful and have not enabled us to implement article VI of the Treaty. The potential use of nuclear weapons is still a threat to international peace and security, which is why every year we mark 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. To date, the international community still faces the same challenge: how to balance the commitments of both non-nuclear and nuclear States under the NPT — in the case of the former, their undertakings to renounce nuclear weapons, and in the case of the latter, their undertaking to negotiate in good faith with the aim of eventually eliminating such weapons.

Despite the various resolutions that mandate the elimination of nuclear weapons, regarding which Egypt has repeatedly demanded that stress be placed on the importance of the steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed on under the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the lack of political will to implement those resolutions means that we are still threatened by nuclear weapons, and they still represent a genuine danger to international peace and security. We would also like to point out that the extension of the time allowed under the NPT as of 2015 does not mean that nuclear States are entitled to the privilege of nuclear status forever. We would therefore like to express our concern about the fact that new types of weapons, studies and research are being developed and carried out constantly in order to modernize nuclear stockpiles rather than to diminish their importance.

It is in the interests of non-nuclear States to ensure that they are able to implement their inalienable right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as laid down in article IV of the NPT. That should not be misinterpreted with greater obstacles placed in the way of those States, nor should Member States be required to sign an additional protocol as a prerequisite for possessing nuclear material. And despite the fact that the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and technical cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency is a right of Member States, it is not being sufficiently exploited by non-nuclear States. Such States are still dealing with restrictions on nuclear materials and the equipment they need in order to develop their peaceful nuclear programmes.

Egypt is taking major steps towards building its first nuclear power station in order to generate electricity and meet its needs in various areas, medical, agricultural, scientific and so on. We are cooperating fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency in order to ensure that every stage of the process complies with the various nuclear-security standards and safeguards, as a basic condition for verification of our nuclear activities. We would like to see that regime universalized for every country.

For four decades, we have been trying to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons, a goal that has been one of our top priorities, given its importance and the potential risks to the countries of the region, particularly since one of those countries does have a nuclear capability that has not been internationally verified or inspected. That poses a threat to peace and security in the Arab region, as well as to security internationally. The 1995 Resolution on the Middle East was adopted at the NPT Review Conference 20 years ago, and constitutes a legal basis for achieving that objective. It was the only such resolution focused on a single region and emphasizing that region's singular nature, but it has not been implemented, and that has also contributed to the unilateral and unjustified postponement of the hoped-for 2012 conference on the subject.

We have nonetheless been doing everything possible to participate actively in the Coordinator's efforts, and we will continue to participate in all related official and unofficial meetings in Vienna and Geneva. Despite all such positive efforts, the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free-zone initiative is still blocked. The problems have been compounded by the absence of the United Nations as an actor in the process, as well as the fact that some parties have tried to insert issues of their own that had nothing to do with the Treaty or the mandate laid down in the 2010 action plan — that is, a mandate to make the Middle East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. For us, the 2012 conference was not an end in itself but a means and a decisive step towards implementing the 1995 resolution, which could improve the universalization and effectiveness of the NPT, particularly where nuclear weapons are concerned, since it requires all of us to come up with new ideas aimed at ending the impasse. While we fulfilled our obligations, others have done the opposite, and we have seen much equivocating.

In that regard, at the most recent NPT Review Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement asked the Secretary-General for a mandate to ask the countries of the Middle East to convene a meeting with the aim of creating a zone in the region free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as a prelude to further technical activities that every country in the region would participate in, and to ask members of the Security Council to freely conduct negotiations on a binding regional treaty that could enable us to see our hopes realized. In that regard, we feel compelled to highlight the unfortunate action of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, which broke the consensus during the most recent NPT Review Conference here in New York, disregarding the text of the Treaty and creating major problems for the outcome document of the Conference, which had been approved by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of Arab States.

Egypt would like to reiterate its reservations with regard to the Arms Trade Treaty, while affirming our positive position regarding the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms. We must respect the right of States to ensure their legitimate self-defence and their unrestricted ability to conduct trade in conventional weapons. No treaty or mechanism should be used for political purposes in that area, and restrictions should be aimed not at the right of States to manufacture, export and transfer conventional weapons but only at the illegal trade in such weapons. That difference is essential to the national security of States.

Regarding the growing security threats that the international community is facing, we would like to emphasize Egypt's positions, particularly regarding space and security in space, the common ownership of space, the right to the equal and fair use of space for peaceful purposes and international cooperation in space. In that regard, we welcome the joint African position on a code of conduct for space activities, established at the Luxembourg meeting under the auspices of the European Union in 2014 and confirmed at the meeting in New York in July. We would also like to take note of the most recent meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. A number of reports emerged from the meeting that have major international significance.

Given my country's role and interest in disarmament and non-proliferation, we will make every effort to achieve concrete and positive results in the First Committee during this session and to establish a new foundation for agreement on international disarmament and security.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly, as well as the other members of the Bureau and Mr. Kim Won-soo, the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his essential role. I would also briefly like to thank the Chair of the Committee at its previous session.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier in the debate by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

This year we are celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, the Organization founded to maintain international peace and security in the wake of the tragedy that brought suffering to the whole of humankind in the form of the Second World War, and in particular, in the wake of the horror of the nuclear strikes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We are also commemorating the seventieth anniversary of that human tragedy. And yet, 70 years after the creation of our international Organization and 40 years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we are still plagued by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, which pose a threat to the entire world.

My country would like to reiterate its appeal to Member States to turn the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In that regard, we would like to recall the initiative for that purpose that we launched at the end of 2003, at a time when Syria was a member of the Security Council. Syria reiterates that WMDs will never be successfully eliminated in the Middle East as long as Israel, the sole nuclear Power in the region, is not party to the Treaty, since it has not submitted its nuclear installations for inspection and verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with no preconditions and on an equal basis with every State Member of the United Nations and the States parties to the NPT. No country possessing nuclear weapons, including some permanent members of the Security Council, should be providing

Israel with advanced nuclear technology, and yet for decades those same countries have continued to protect Israel's exceptional nuclear status, in violation of their obligations under the NPT. As a result, Israel has been able to manufacture and produce nuclear weapons and their vectors so as to undermine peace and security in the Middle East and consequently the whole world.

The Syrian delegation considers the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach a consensus on a final document extremely regrettable. The failure to reach the consensus that was widely expected by most of the States parties to the NPT was due to the actions of certain countries whose participation is vital to the NPT; it is a scandal, since the problem was caused by measures that were proposed for the sole purpose of protecting Israel so that it could keep its nuclear weapons and avoid accession to the NPT, in flagrant violation of every one of the Treaty's provisions.

The events of the last meeting of the Review Conference recalled the same scenario that we have seen in the Security Council. During those meetings, the United States and Great Britain, two of the countries charged with working to maintain international peace and security as permanent members of the Security Council, are also very important to the NPT. Those two countries used the right of veto to protect Israel's violations from any international decision. The majority of the countries of the United Nations urged Israel to accede to the NPT. We all think that Israel is never going to do that as long as Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and France protect its work to develop its nuclear programme.

Even if the Review Conference was unsuccessful, Syria will continue to be committed to and respect the NPT's provisions, including its so-called fourth pillar — the creation of a zone in the Middle East free of WMDs. In that regard, we reaffirm the importance of the 1995 Review Conference's resolution on the Middle East, a major component of the package indefinitely extending the NPT, whose provisions would remain in force until the relevant provisions of the NPT itself enter into force. Bearing in mind the agenda of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, we reiterate the importance of holding a conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. That conference has been postponed, owing to the negative positions on the issue of Israel held by the countries protecting it at this year's Review Conference. Those countries

support Israel's interests instead of forcing it to face its international obligations regarding nuclear weapons.

My country reaffirms the inalienable right of States parties to the NPT, on the basis of article IV of the Treaty, to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, in cooperation with the IAEA. Syria is opposed to any attempt to interpret that text in a way that undermines the rights of States to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes. We would like to commend the brotherly country of Iran on its resilience and success in that regard, particularly in the wake of the historic agreement protecting Iran's historical interests, which makes it possible for it to continue to develop atomic energy for peaceful purposes and see its sanctions lifted and trade resumed. The agreement is the result of serious and tireless diplomacy and demonstrates the ability of such efforts to defuse major crises.

The Syrian delegation reiterates the importance of dealing with the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation through multilateral diplomacy. In that connection, we would like to emphasize the fact that the Conference on Disarmament is the only multilateral platform for disarmament deliberations, and its rules of procedure should be respected. It is one of the essential pillars for any successful efforts on disarmament.

The Government of Syria emphatically condemns the criminal use of chemical weapons, because we are convinced that the use of WMDs, including chemical weapons, is unacceptable, unethical and reprehensible. That is why, at the end of 2013, Syria accepted the initiative of the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, to join the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), since we would like to see the Middle East free of WMDs, including nuclear weapons.

We joined the Treaty in order to prove that we are opposed to any use of chemical weapons. Furthermore, Syria has honoured its commitments in the framework of the Convention, despite the very difficult conditions that we have been facing. If Syria had not cooperated with the mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, we would not have been able to achieve that goal. We therefore affirm the importance of transparency, objectivity, credibility and non-politicization.

Those are very important principles for collaboration with the Government of Syria, as they are essential for monitoring the implementation mechanism created under Security Council resolution

2235 (2015), especially in the light of our experiences with other missions in the past, missions that violated every rule, especially through their use of witnesses pushed forward by various parties, as well as partial investigations that took place outside the territory of Syria, without any cooperation whatsoever with Syrian authorities. We will fully cooperate with the implementation mechanism, as we have done with other United Nations missions. That will take place in the framework of respect for the territorial integrity, independence and national security of Syria.

Study of the phenomenon of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has shown all of us that some countries participate in the transfer of such weapons to non-State actors and terrorist groups in order to deepen crises and undermine the stability of some countries.

When it comes to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), we were deeply concerned at the lack of clear language in the Treaty to prohibit the provision of conventional weapons by States to terrorist groups. The current situation in Syria, and that in other countries as well, bolsters our arguments: the provision of weapons to terrorist organizations, which we hesitate to call non-State actors, undermines peace and security in the region. Even worse, among the countries that opposed those concerns regarding the ATT, there is one country that supplies such weapons by air to armed terrorist groups that are on the Security Council's lists, and it is because of them that my country is spiralling into chaos.

In conclusion, for over four years Syria has fallen prey to a ferocious war, and I would need several hours to detail who the actors are in that war, including Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and the Al-Fatah Army. The joint movements of Da'esh and the Al-Fatah Army are waging war on the State, the people, the civilization and the culture of Syria, on behalf of other countries. Those terrorist groups have weapons, including chemical weapons, and they have lethal and non-lethal forms of ammunition, which they receive from certain countries, including countries that are members of the Security Council. That sort of provision of weapons to terrorist groups flouts all United Nations resolutions on disarmament and non-proliferation and resolutions on the fight to counter terrorism.

I reaffirm that it is important for all countries to respect their obligations under the provisions of the various resolutions of the Organization. I reaffirm that

Syria, its army, its people and some kindred States are resisting terrorism on behalf of all humankind. We must unify our efforts to fight terrorism and those who provide terrorists with money, weapons and other forms of support.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I wish to respectfully remind delegations, in the interests of the First Committee as a whole, to kindly limit their statements to 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): Mr. Chair, at the outset, allow me to warmly congratulate you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of our delegation's full cooperation during the session. Portugal is sure that under your able leadership, we will make progress in promoting the goal of achieving a safer world.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement previously delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.2) and would like to make further comments in our national capacity.

Portugal strongly believes that any global international process aimed at promoting disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and international security should fully respect the key principles of inclusiveness and multilateralism, in strict adherence to universal human rights, international humanitarian law and the interests of the protection of civilians. In our view, those are the major preconditions for achieving effective progress in collectively building up a safer and sustainable international security environment.

Advancing human security must be our principal objective. In that regard, we share specific humanitarian, moral and legal concerns relating to ongoing developments on a set of so-called new-era warfare weapons, including the proliferation of armed drones, the eventual development of a system of lethal autonomous weapons, the aggressive use of cyberspace and, finally, the risk of the militarization of outer space. As a matter of urgency, we encourage the continuation of the ongoing international discussions and initiatives on those subjects at both the political and the technical levels. In our view, such discussions should take into account the need to promote transparency and applicable international law or, when needed, the establishment of regulatory multilateral security frameworks responsive to the objective of protecting civilians and universal human rights requirements.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain at the core of our agenda. Like many others, we were disappointed by the inability to reach a consensual final-outcome document at the end of the recently held Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nevertheless, the progress verified during the discussions should be seen as providing a valid basis for work and for future negotiations.

Our common objective — a world without nuclear weapons — must be resolutely pursued in the interest of all humankind. Saving future generations from persistent threats of catastrophic nuclear detonations, whether intentional or accidental, is indeed a major ethical imperative for all of us and, ultimately, a call for the survival of humankind. In that regard, we welcome the well-grounded international debate on the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear-weapon detonations, and we stress the need to take further steps to pursue nuclear disarmament in an effective and resolute way. Indeed, more should and could be done. We favour, among other measures, the establishment of an inclusive open-ended working group. We also take this opportunity to appeal to all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States without preconditions and become members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

On a more positive note, we are pleased to acknowledge the remarkable breakthrough that we saw in 2015 in the case of Iran. Through the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, endorsed by the Security Council, and of the road map for the clarification of outstanding issues with the participation of the IAEA, Iran and the international community achieved a crucial compromise that we hope will be upheld throughout the full implementation of both agreements. Regrettably, similar considerations cannot be said to apply to the outstanding issues related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Syria. We reiterate the appeal to those States to fully comply with their obligations under the IAEA and the NPT.

It is crystal-clear that there is an urgent need to make progress in multilateral and effective disarmament negotiations. However, such an endeavour requires inclusiveness and true multilateralism. We should keep in mind that the creation of the Conference on Disarmament in 1978 clearly upheld those requirements, as called for in the Final Document of the Tenth

Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2). It is unfortunate that 16 years after the most recent expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, its doors remain closed to all other States, including mine, that have presented an interest in becoming full participants in the Conference.

We believe that the nomination of a dedicated Special Rapporteur would be a valid and concrete option for advancing discussions in that regard. The fact is that, beyond the enlargement of its membership, the Conference on Disarmament remains in an agonizing stalemate, requiring further joint commitment and collective constructive work to overcome it. The adoption and subsequent implementation of new disarmament treaties and agreements represent a critical task that is crucial for preserving and promoting existing internationally agreed disarmament and arms-control instruments.

We welcome the outstanding work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with respect to Syria. It stands out as an illustration of the success that is achievable when joint political commitment mobilizes the required collective efforts for taking action. Nevertheless, we remain concerned by the official reports of chlorine use in Syria and by the alleged recent use of chemical weapons in Iraq. We acknowledge with appreciation the mechanism consensually adopted by the Security Council last August to assess responsibility for the chemical attacks in Syria. We call on all parties to cooperate fully in that investigation, in line with Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2235 (2015).

It is particularly alarming that non-State actors, including radical extremist and terrorist groups, could gain access to the means and expertise needed to use various types of weapons of mass destruction or even conventional weapons with indiscriminate impact, such as dirty bombs, barrel bombs and other improvised explosive devices. Those threats must be urgently addressed by the international community in a coordinated and cooperative way.

Outer space is and should continue to be a weapon-free zone. In order to achieve that goal, it is of paramount importance that multilateral legal instruments be established to ensure that outer space is used only for peaceful, scientific and development-related goals. The draft international code of conduct for outer space activities, which enjoys the full support of Portugal,

is a meaningful example of the kind of instrument required for that purpose. By adopting that draft Code, States would be subscribing to a new framework of confidence-building measures, as highlighted in the conclusions of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189). We look forward and with confidence to the 22 October joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees on a broad array of outer space-related issues.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a major achievement on the part of the international community, and, as many other Member States have said, we are very pleased at its relatively early entry into force and at the results of the first Conference of States Parties to the Treaty in Mexico. Focus must now be placed on its universalization and implementation, which we hope will have a very positive impact on regions affected by conflict or extremist threats or that are emerging from conflicts that cause tremendous harm to civilians. We would also reiterate that, for the first time, the General Assembly has at its disposal a legally binding instrument aimed at regulating the legal conventional arms trade to directly benefit global security, regional stability and the protection of civilians, thereby contributing to the advancement of human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Moreover, also for the first time, the link between gender-based violence and the global arms trade has been addressed in a multilateral treaty. Portugal appeals to all States not yet parties to ratify or accede to the ATT as soon as feasible.

With respect to the illicit traffic and production of small arms and light weapons, Portugal shares the international community's concerns about the very negative consequences of those phenomena, which particularly affect some of the poorest, most vulnerable and most unstable countries and regions in the world. My country has been contributing its expertise in the framework of several European Union initiatives and programmes aimed at reinforcing national and regional capacities to address trafficking in small arms and light weapons, including in the Sahel region and Mali.

The reported resumption of the use of prohibited cluster munitions in populated areas in Libya, the Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen, deserves our strongest condemnation. Also, the recurrent use of barrel bombs in Syria cannot pass unnoticed and without firm reproof, and the same applies to the indiscriminate use,

in various parts of our world, of improvised explosive devices and anti-personnel mines, particularly in populated civilian areas.

To conclude, I would like to stress that Portugal strongly believes in the need to systematically consider humanitarian law and human rights values and requirements in all disarmament and non-proliferation discussions and initiatives, with the active involvement of civil-society actors. In that connection, we must uphold the interdependence and synergies between the core principles and goals of the United Nations, namely, peace, security, human rights protection and development.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I wish to respectfully remind delegations, in the interests of the Committee as a whole, to kindly limit their statements to 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. We are confident that you will contribute to the success of the Committee's work. Mr. Chair, I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, for his wise leadership during the proceedings of the previous session, and I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of the United Arab Emirates in seeing to the success of the work of the Committee.

We align ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Oman, who spoke on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively (see A/C.1/70/PV.2), and the representative of Japan, who spoke on behalf of the States members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (see A/C.1/70/PV.3).

We come together here today to reiterate our intended goal of ensuring regional and international peace and security, especially in the context of the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. The emergence of serious security challenges threatens to undermine what we have achieved over the past seven decades in the areas of disarmament and international security. In that context, the United Arab Emirates reiterates its firm belief in

the importance of making use of all international multilateral forums, such as the First Committee, which is the General Assembly's Main Committee dealing with disarmament and international security, in order to reach consensus on disarmament and international efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including efforts to designate 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, the decision to convene a review conference on disarmament in 2018, and the raising of awareness of the humanitarian implications of nuclear weapons.

The United Arab Emirates attaches particular importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), based on our strong desire and commitment to full global security. Moreover, the United Arab Emirates is pursuing a fixed national policy, and our stands with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation issues are clear. We affirm that the peaceful use of nuclear energy requires a transparent approach and the fulfilment of the obligations of non-proliferation. Accession to and the full implementation of the international conventions in both areas — disarmament and non-proliferation — are therefore of paramount importance for my country.

The United Arab Emirates has always expressed its concerns about Iran's nuclear activities and stresses the significance of Iran's full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency to dispel those concerns. The United Arab Emirates therefore hopes that the agreement on Iran's nuclear programme will provide the country with an incentive to open a new chapter and help the world to have greater confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. We therefore call upon Iran to fully meet its international obligations and responsibilities under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

My delegation is disappointed at the inability of the 2015 NPT Review Conference of the Parties to adopt a final document. The Conference also failed to adopt forward-looking measures towards declaring the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which constitutes a setback for that important process. My delegation believes that achieving progress on that matter would significantly support stability and security in the Middle East.

There is no doubt that there are major challenges today that require the international community to

work hard to achieve the long-awaited goal of making the Middle East a region free of nuclear weapons. My country will therefore continue supporting all constructive efforts aimed at achieving that noble goal and urges all States in the region to play a productive role in that respect. From that point of view, we renew our call to Israel to join the NPT, since it is the only State in the region that has not yet done so.

The United Arab Emirates believes that the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regimes are critical elements for ensuring sustainable peace and security in the world. We also regard the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as a mechanism instrumental to the achievement of the goals of nuclear disarmament. In that context, the United Arab Emirates expresses its concern with respect to the lack of progress made towards bringing the Treaty into force. My country urges States to honour their international commitments and refrain from conducting any nuclear tests. In that regard, we have expressed our deep concern about the tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In conclusion, we call upon the international community to seize the opportunity afforded by the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations to reach a consensus on developing the work of the First Committee in order to promote regional and international peace and security. We also look forward to highlighting the efforts of the United Arab Emirates in the area of disarmament during the thematic discussions at this session.

Ms. Fofana (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Chair, my delegation would like to extend its warm congratulations to you on your election as Chair of the First Commission. These congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau. We assure you, Sir, of our full cooperation in the Committee's deliberations, in the hope that our work will bear fruit. We agree with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia, who spoke on behalf of the Group of African States and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

Burkina Faso remains deeply concerned about the persistence and extent of the proliferation of light weapons and small arms, which remains by far the biggest threat to peace and security in Africa and particularly in the West African region. In that regard, we would like reaffirm our determination to fight against the

illicit trafficking of and morally bankrupt trade in such weapons, as that trade provides the main supply channel for rebels, terrorists and the various armed groups that are responsible for most contemporary conflicts, with serious consequences for our States and the lives of innocent people, in particular instability, insecurity, organized crime, serious violations of human rights and especially the unravelling of the socioeconomic fabric.

In addition, Burkina Faso welcomes the entry into force on 24 December 2014 of the Arms Trade Treaty, which is, without a doubt, an appropriate collective response that will allow us to regulate and stabilize imports, exports and international transfers of weapons by eradicating all unscrupulous, lawless actors. We are confident that the Treaty will reinforce the existing instruments in our subregional area, including the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, adopted on 14 June 2006. Moreover, through international cooperation and assistance, the Treaty will help to strengthen the capacity of our existing national structures, such as the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the High Authority to Control the Importation of Arms and Their Use, in Burkina Faso. We therefore welcome the success of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held from 24 to 27 August 2015, in Mexico, and call upon all stakeholders, in particular States, to take responsibility and show that they are committed to its full implementation.

Forty years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), humankind continues to live under the spectre of more than 17,000 nuclear warheads. There is an ever-increasing number of attempts to acquire new nuclear weapons or to improve existing ones. The failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference, held from 27 April to 22 May 2015 here in New York, is a real cause for concern and casts serious doubts on our genuine desire to preserve our planet from the consequences of a nuclear explosion. Burkina Faso reaffirms its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, it being clear that the risk of a nuclear disaster, whether intentional or accidental, has never been higher.

My delegation reiterates its call for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the universalization of the NPT. Strict compliance

with those two fundamental instruments would ensure a world safe from the nuclear threat. That is why Burkina Faso ratified the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as the Treaty of Pelindaba, which establishes Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We have committed to their implementation through the creation of the National Authority for Nuclear Energy, the National Authority for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the Authority for Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety.

We welcome the recent conclusion of the agreement on Iran's nuclear programme and hope that it will restore confidence between States and give way to new perspectives that lead us towards the achievement of our ultimate goal: the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We urge all parties to be part of the momentum and to step up their efforts for nuclear disarmament, in particular the nuclear Powers, and we invite non-nuclear-weapon States to renounce any desire to acquire nuclear weapons.

We welcome the International Day against Nuclear Tests as well as of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, commemorated on 29 August and 26 September, respectively, and hope that they will contribute to the completion of general and complete disarmament in the nuclear domain.

The theme of the general debate of the seventieth ordinary session of the General Assembly — “The United Nations at 70 — a new commitment to action” — invites us to fulfil our commitment in the area of disarmament and international security, the primary responsibility for which lies with our Committee. For several years, the disarmament machinery has been at an impasse, in particular the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We recall that, unfortunately, the Disarmament Commission has been unable to produce an outcome since 1999, and that the Conference on Disarmament has not concluded a single instrument since 1996. It is urgent to break that ongoing unproductive cycle, which undermines the credibility of the disarmament machinery and brings its existence into question.

Accordingly, we call on States to show genuine political will and flexibility in order to provide the international community with new legal instruments to address contemporary security challenges, in particular the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons,

the exponential increase in military spending, the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons, the arms race in outer space, new cyberattack capacities and the use of armed drones. We support the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in the hope that it will succeed in reforming the CD and in improving its working methods, in particular the rule on consensus, and in adapting the CD to the world as it is today.

Burkina Faso welcomes the adoption on 25 September of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which gives us the opportunity to elaborate new, more ambitious perspectives in keeping with the deep and legitimate aspirations of our peoples. We welcome the adoption last July of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, which is of crucial importance, even a *sine qua non*, for the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through the mobilization of financial resources. In that context, no resources or any option should be overlooked. We cannot ignore the huge and ever-expanding budget devoted to the arms race.

Burkina Faso wishes to recall the symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development, and wishes to take this opportunity to urge the international community to engage in a genuine process of disarmament that would release additional financial resources for development, in accordance with the Programme of Action adopted on 11 September 1987 at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and also in accordance with Goal 16 of the new 2030 Agenda on inclusive and peaceful societies.

Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to congratulate the Chair and the rest of the members of the Bureau of the First Committee on their election.

El Salvador subscribes to the statement made by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/C.1/70/PV.4).

El Salvador shares the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, my Government regrets how little has been done in that area. For that reason, we call for continued negotiations in the First Committee with a view to achieving a world free of those threats.

We also consider the combat against illicit small arms and light weapons a priority, and express our concern at the growth of the arms race in outer space, which should not be used for aggression of any type. Allow me to recall that nuclear weapons, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and the deployment of weapons in outer space pose a global threat owing to their destructive power and the danger they pose to the environment and the very survival of the human race. That is a reality that we cannot ignore. In that regard, El Salvador is concerned by the lack of concrete action taken to address these issues.

The delegation of El Salvador is ready to support any initiative aimed at the elimination of the use of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, El Salvador believes that relevant efforts were undertaken by the States members of Latin America and the Caribbean when they adopted and declared the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world, embodied in the Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1967, and to which El Salvador is a signatory. Nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute significantly to the rejection of weapons of mass destruction and are a solid foundation for the development of a universal international prohibition on nuclear weapons and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. That is why our delegation supports the will of various countries to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. Under that criterion, El Salvador supports the efforts made by the sister Republic of Kazakhstan to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

El Salvador believes that now more than ever it is important to continue strengthening all existing tools to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. We recognize that we have reached a critical point in that area, considering the negative results of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which took place at Headquarters in May. We deplore the limited support for actions aimed at achieving a serious commitment. My country supports the position that the NPT is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. We therefore believe that the action plan adopted at the Review Conference in 2010 is the path and the way ahead for the materialization of specific measures in that matter.

Allow me to affirm that El Salvador shares the view that human development and security are fundamental and mutually complementary elements that enable all people to freely enjoy their rights and contribute to socioeconomic development, democratic governance and sustainable development. In accordance with

that paradigm, El Salvador bears witness to major challenges in the field of human rights, peace and security. In that sense, we believe that the global illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons constitutes a serious threat to our security and development, both as countries and zones and regions in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Aware of the situation, which affects thousands of lives in our region and throughout the world, El Salvador was one of the first 60 countries to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty. At the national level, our Government has made the necessary efforts to realize and comply with that binding international legal instrument. In that regard, we reaffirm our commitment to continue supporting and strengthening the obligations and responsibilities under the Arms Trade Treaty. We are very happy to be able to already present the first results achieved in our efforts to promote compliance with that Treaty.

The problems facing the international community in the field of development, poverty eradication and the elimination of disease are linked to disarmament. That is why my Government urges the international community to continue taking appropriate measures to comply with United Nations resolutions on disarmament and make progress in that area. We also call for a continued discussion on the humanitarian consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction.

It is difficult for us to understand how, this year, we were able to approve a magnificent document on financing for development and an even more magnificent one on the Sustainable Development Goals, while, in the meantime, the arms race, which is swallowing billions upon billions of dollars, continues to increase. We are more than convinced that the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation are priority issues on the agenda of the United Nations and essential components for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Finally, El Salvador reiterates its commitment to continue working and bringing together efforts in international forums that contribute to raising awareness of the serious consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction and the real and imminent threat of the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons in various regions of the world.

Mr. González Franco (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor during the general debate of the First

Committee, allow me to express, on behalf of the Republic of Paraguay, our wishes for success in your important functions, Mr. Chair. We are convinced that, with your vast experience, you, Sir, will be able to guide our deliberations to a fruitful conclusion.

My delegation supports the statement delivered by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/C.1/70/PV.4).

With the new session of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which took place last May, we once again reiterate our country's firm commitment to the pursuit of disarmament in all its aspects, in particular with regard to nuclear disarmament. We are convinced that the complete elimination of nuclear stockpiles is the only solid guarantee of international peace and security and of the survival of the human race. In that regard and in line with that position, Paraguay firmly supports all initiatives aimed at complete nuclear disarmament, and in particular the draft resolution on that topic submitted to that end of the First Committee session. In the same vein, my country unconditionally supports non-proliferation and arms control in their various aspects, as they are essential to the maintenance of international peace and security. We also believe that it is necessary to reaffirm the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, while duly observing the necessary safeguards and security standards for nuclear-plant operations. At the same time, Paraguay, as a State party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), once again calls upon the States that have not yet done so to make a positive contribution by adhering to the CTBT, which is necessary for its entry into force and is an essential first step towards eliminating the nuclear threat.

Paraguay has been and remains aware of the serious and painful threat to the societies in our region and to the entire world represented by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as the various crimes related to that trade, such as terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and others. Based on those considerations, we call on the international community to redouble its efforts to achieve tangible and productive results and thereby eliminate the painful consequences of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. At the same time, we reiterate the importance of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and

Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons to effectively complement and coordinate all efforts to that end.

As a demonstration of Paraguay's commitment in that area, my country made all the governmental and legislative efforts necessary to adopt and become a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, which has been in force since December 2014. We actively participated in the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which took place at the end of August in Mexico, where the necessary guidelines were established for promoting accurate and transparent rules to provide an appropriate standard for the arms trade.

With regard to the area of international assistance and cooperation, Paraguay wishes to highlight the significant progress achieved in our country this year. In that context, we believe that it is necessary to emphasize the undisputed role of international cooperation, in particular in the case of our country, with regard to training in the use of new technologies for tracing weapons, as well as in their identification and marking and in the creation of testing systems for them, to name the most important aspects.

In accordance with those principles, Paraguay once again calls on the international community, in particular the relevant organs of the United Nations system, to continue providing the assistance and training needed, both technical training and the training of human resources, to meet the dynamic requirements inherent in disarmament in all its aspects.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia): I personally am very pleased to see you, Sir, in the Chair. I extend to you our congratulations and, through you, also to the members of the Bureau. Rest assured we are in full support of you, Mr. Chair, and we look forward to working with you on your ambitious goals. We also express our appreciation to our other colleague, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray of Jamaica, for the excellent work he did in chairing the First Committee during the sixty-ninth session.

Armenia wishes to underscore the paramount responsibility of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. We attach significance to that role, since the security of our people is inextricably linked to the peace and sustainable development of our region and beyond. We are of the view that the unconditional implementation and further strengthening of the existing disarmament and

non-proliferation agreements, as well as international verification mechanisms and institutions, should become a priority for the international community.

Armenia considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), based on its three main pillars, to be a cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We believe that upholding and universalizing the NPT is at present more critical than ever. However, it is of particular concern that the NPT Review Conference held in April and May 2015 failed to agree on a final document. It is, therefore, a collective responsibility to strengthen efforts towards solving impending issues and making the functioning of the NPT as effective as possible.

With regard to combating the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, Armenia considers Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to be the primary international tool. We regularly submit updated matrixes to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). As an important additional voluntary measure, earlier this year the Government of Armenia approved the 2015-2020 national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and committed to its full implementation in close cooperation with experts from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative of the European Union.

The excessive accumulation, uncontrolled spread and illicit trafficking of small arms in all its aspects poses a serious threat to peace and undermines efforts to ensure an indivisible and comprehensive security. Armenia remains committed to the effective and full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is the only global instrument in that field containing a number of important measures that include regional cooperation.

While welcoming the outcome document of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Armenia looks forward to constructively engaging in the sixth

Biennial Meeting of States, which will take place in early 2016. We believe that the emphasis should be placed on strengthened international cooperation and assistance, as well as the sharing of best practices and commitments to stop the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Armenia continues to maintain effective cooperation within the OSCE framework on issues related to small arms and light weapons. From 6 to 8 October 2015, a workshop on the subject of the physical security and stockpile management of small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition was held in Armenia. That is the second such workshop hosted by Armenia in the past two years.

Armenia also believes that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty — a long-overdue task — will be a decisive step forward towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and achieving a world free of such weapons should continue to be an objective decisively pursued by the international community.

We still see merit in implementing the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). The Treaty has played a key role in reducing military equipment to a remarkably low level. Over the years the Treaty has eventually created an unprecedented culture of arms control through its information exchange and verification mechanisms. Unfortunately, the CFE Treaty recently has been experiencing serious implementation problems. It is obvious that the new security environment in Europe needs a careful reassessment which must be followed by the establishment of a functional conventional arms-control regime. Such a regime should inherit those components of the existing one that have proved their viability.

As a strong advocate for the strengthening of international humanitarian law and fully supportive of its humanitarian goals, Armenia considers the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Mine Ban Convention to be important international instruments needed to achieve the goal of the eradication of an entire category of excessively injurious conventional weapons. We remain unequivocal in our view that the human and social costs of the uses of anti-personnel mines, booby-traps and other explosive devices far outweigh their military significance. While not formally a party to those Conventions, given the present specific security

environment of our subregion, we fully adhere to their principles and voluntarily implement them by building the relevant capacities and taking practical actions. To that end, we value greatly the assistance from our international partners.

On 4 April, the Secretary-General, in his message on the occasion of the International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, urged Member States

“to stay committed to the cause of mine action through financial contributions and political support, which is particularly crucial this year as the General Assembly debates assistance in mine action”.

He called upon Member States to recommit to working with affected States to reduce the menace of mines and explosive hazards. We are fully supportive of that call.

We stress once again the importance of continuous efforts aimed at further improving and expanding the international legal system in the field of the conventional arms control regime. Armenia fully supports the principle of the indivisibility of international security, which implies the understanding that each and every country shares a responsibility to guarantee peace and security for all. Finally, we are committed to the strengthening of the institutional capacities of the United Nations in those fields and stand ready, through a constructive dialogue, to contribute constructively to the work of the Committee.

Mr. Khoo (Singapore): As this is the first time that Singapore is taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of your Bureau on your appointments. My delegation is confident that, under your able leadership, we will work productively and constructively towards a successful outcome.

My delegation recalls that, following the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, there was cautious optimism that disarmament efforts were finally gaining momentum. A substantive Final Document, which reflected the commitment by States parties to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, had just been adopted. The United States and Russia had just signed the New START Treaty, committing to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads deployed. Nuclear-weapon States were working constructively with States members of the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (ASEAN) towards their accession to the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Unfortunately, five years on, that positive momentum seems to have abated.

Singapore regrets that the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to adopt a consensus final outcome document at the 2015 NPT Review Conference in May despite all the efforts that had been invested in the process. It is also worrying that there has been little discernible progress on the implementation of the 22 actions related to nuclear disarmament in the 2010 Review Conference's Final Document. The nuclear-weapon States have yet to make concrete progress on nuclear disarmament, and the issue of convening the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction remains in limbo. All of those factors have contributed to serious doubts about the continued efficacy and credibility of the NPT.

Notwithstanding its imperfections, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. Singapore remains firmly committed to the NPT process and the objectives of the NPT. We support the advancement of global nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the right of sovereign States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in a safe, secure and safeguarded manner. The three pillars of the NPT are mutually reinforcing and equally important. The continued relevance of the NPT will depend on the delivery of its objectives on all three fronts. Rather than seeking to attribute blame for the disappointing outcome of the 2015 Review Conference, NPT States parties should reaffirm their commitment to upholding the NPT and intensify our search for common ground. Only in the spirit of compromise will we be able to drive the process forward towards our shared objectives. We must also work towards the universalization of the NPT and find a way to involve nuclear-weapon-possessing States that fall outside the ambit of the NPT in disarmament discussions. Their exclusion undermines our collective efforts towards complete nuclear disarmament.

The Humanitarian Initiative on the Impact of Nuclear Weapons gained prominence and political support this year. Today, 119 nations, including Singapore, have formally endorsed the humanitarian pledge. Two nuclear-weapon States attended the third International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact

of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna last December for the first time. That issue was also an important element in the discussions at the 2015 Review Conference. In the meantime, however, States also need to make a greater commitment to uphold the NPT, in particular article VI, in order to eliminate the risk posed by nuclear weapons.

Singapore supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as concrete, pragmatic steps under article VII of the NPT, and as building blocks towards the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We have consistently supported efforts to achieve genuine and lasting peace in a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East through open, genuine and constructive dialogue involving all relevant parties. In that context, we are disappointed that references to convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction could not be agreed on at the 2015 Review Conference, which ultimately contributed to the inability to secure a consensus on the final document. We reiterate our calls for all relevant parties to continue their engagement in a constructive manner and strive to convene the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as soon as possible.

Twenty years ago, the leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations signed the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Bangkok, unified in their resolve to preserve South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. After a series of lengthy negotiations, nuclear-weapon States were scheduled to sign the Protocol to the Treaty in July 2012. Unfortunately, the signing was scuppered as a result of the last-minute submission of reservations by nuclear-weapon States, which were not only broad and with substantive implications, but also incompatible with the object and purpose of the Treaty. Nevertheless, we reaffirm our commitment to working closely with the nuclear-weapon States so as to resolve outstanding issues and to working towards the collective signing and ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty by the nuclear-weapon States without reservations.

Singapore welcomes the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed between the P5+1 and Iran. We commend the hard work and efforts of all the parties involved. The agreement is a positive step in the right direction, but the implementation of the agreement will be crucial. We urge all parties to fulfil their respective obligations expeditiously and in good faith, for the sake

of their own interests and those of the international community. We further urge Iran to extend its full cooperation to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the implementation of the Road-map for the Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues regarding Iran's Nuclear Programme, signed with the IAEA on 14 July 2015.

We were pleased to welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December 2014, which Singapore signed. Singapore has consistently supported global efforts to establish common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. Singapore is actively working to review and assess existing frameworks and legislation to ratify the ATT. With the ATT in force, the export of conventional weapons will be more closely regulated. That is a significant step towards greater accountability in the global arms trade.

Outer space, one of the few realms that humankind has yet to fully conquer, holds untold opportunities. The number of orbital launches worldwide was at its highest in 2014 in 20 years, with 2015 set to be just as busy. The number of space-faring nations has rapidly expanded, accompanied by the development of their capabilities. Miniaturization has enabled the construction of smaller, cheaper satellites. Over the last few years, Singapore-built microsatellites, nanosatellites and picosatellites have been launched into space to serve various purposes such as imaging and the tracking of environmental changes.

Satellites today play an indispensable role in our daily lives. We rely on them to make a phone call, navigate with the help of Google Maps and forecast the weather. Their growing importance, as well as the increasing number of stakeholders in outer space, reinforces the need to strengthen the safety, security and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space. In particular, space debris poses a key challenge, with more than 20,000 pieces of debris larger than 10 centimetres orbiting Earth at over 27,000 kilometres per hour. With the number of satellites climbing steadily, the risk of collision has also increased. That issue should be tackled expeditiously. A possible avenue would be through a multilateral framework on rules of behaviour in outer space. Countries should build a consensus on norms that encourage the peaceful use of space as a global commons for the benefit of all States.

In conclusion, there is urgent work to be done to strengthen the international security regime. Nearly 70 years ago, the General Assembly adopted its first resolution establishing a commission whose mandate included the elimination of all atomic weapons and other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction (resolution 1/1). Every Secretary-General since the founding of the United Nations has supported the goal of nuclear disarmament. The importance of disarmament has not been lost upon us. Our common goal must remain general and complete disarmament. While we acknowledge that that is a long-term aspiration, we must redouble our efforts to ensure concrete progress expeditiously, and to ensure that disarmament does not remain a quixotic quest.

Mr. Jurgenson (Estonia): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on assuming your position. You can be assured of our full support in your efforts to achieve a successful outcome of this very important session.

Aligning ourselves fully with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.2), we would like nevertheless to highlight some specific issues to which Estonia attaches particular importance at this year's session of the First Committee.

Estonia shares the view of the overwhelming majority of Member States, namely, that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is an extremely important instrument in our efforts to curb illicit and illegal transfers of conventional arms to conflict zones or parties of armed conflict. We commend the substantive outcome of the first Conference of States Parties to the ATT in Cancún, Mexico, this year, which established a solid base for the functioning of the ATT; the rules of procedure and financial and management regulations are in place now; the Treaty also has a headquarters and a first interim Head of its Secretariat. But that does not mean that we can now sit back and relax. There is still much to do in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Treaty. Already by the end of the year the State parties have to submit their initial reports on the national implementation of the ATT, and they must also pay their first membership dues.

Another very important job to do now is to work towards the universalization of the Treaty. It is also important to get the world's largest exporters of conventional arms on board. We would like to encourage the States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so in an urgent manner. The ATT community has a

responsibility to support countries with little experience and low administrative capacity. Estonia is definitely ready to help, mostly through the European Union outreach programmes and by sharing its expertise and know-how in arms and export control. My country is strongly committed to the implementation of the ATT at both the national and the international levels. The entry into force of the ATT reminds us once again of a previous time when the international community was able to make progress in concluding a universal treaty on disarmament and non-proliferation.

For Estonia, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is indeed a vital multilateral instrument for international disarmament and non-proliferation, and we therefore deeply regret that today, almost 20 years after the opening of the CTBT for signature, the Treaty has still not entered into force. We hope that this year, when we commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, we will have an important incentive to enhance multilateral efforts towards the universalization of the Treaty and the promotion of its goals. In that regard, we urge all States, particularly those whose adherence is required for the CTBT to enter into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

Estonia welcomes the historic agreement on a comprehensive settlement regarding the Iranian nuclear programme. That agreement proves that, even in the case of extremely complicated international issues, diplomatic efforts can help to provide a peaceful and constructive solution. We call on Iran to fully implement the action plan that was agreed upon. Hopefully, the agreement will help to contribute to the gradual alleviation of tensions in the region. We strongly support the long-term mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency aimed at verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear-related commitments, and we would like to confirm our commitment to supporting that process, both politically and financially.

We regret that the 2015 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was not able to agree on an outcome document, and we hope it will be possible to do so next time. Until then, the 2010 action plan remains valid and should be fully implemented. For Estonia, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the true cornerstone of global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This year we mark the forty-fifth anniversary

of that unique multilateral instrument, witnessing its vitally important role in keeping our world more secure and less armed, and paving the way for creating conditions for a nuclear-weapon-free world, which we all dream about. Bearing in mind the current severe security environment, there are no shortcuts, no simple solutions, no alternatives to that forum.

Estonia shares the ultimate goals of the discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, but we are not convinced that by simply banning nuclear weapons on paper we will get to global zero. The process should be realistic, transparent and inclusive and should certainly involve the participation of the States possessing nuclear weapons. We need to work methodically and with realism in order to attain the necessary confidence and transparency to achieve nuclear disarmament, and thus achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

In that regard, we welcome the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on how to advance negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty (A/70/81). We hope that the report will provide an impetus to launch the necessary negotiations as soon possible. We also support the establishment of a properly mandated and inclusive open-ended working group to conduct discussions on the ways to identify and elaborate effective measures for nuclear disarmament that will contribute to our shared goals.

The three pillars of the NPT, namely, disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology, stand for peace, security and trust. Aggressive actions taken by the armed forces of the Russian Federation against Ukraine have jeopardized all three of those principles in the Euro-Atlantic region. By illegally annexing Crimea and exercising the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine, the Russian Federation has clearly violated, among other international agreements and norms, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances. We believe without a doubt that the strategic decision by the Ukrainian Government 20 years ago to join the NPT as a non-nuclear State in return for security assurances was the right one. We call upon the Russian Federation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum in connection with Ukraine's accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. In that regard, we call on Russia to honour international legal

norms and its international commitments, end its illegal annexation of Crimea and take immediate and concrete steps to fully implement the Minsk agreements.

Estonia is an active observer State to the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We remain deeply concerned by the long-standing deadlock in the CD and by the its persistent inability to commence substantive work. That is a judgement that has been constantly repeated by all Member States over the years, and this year again is no exception. The CD agenda encompasses global concerns, and we believe that those concerns should be negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, with the wider participation of interested States. At this point, I would like to reiterate Estonia's request to participate fully and equally in the disarmament discussions as a full member of the CD. We also reiterate our call for the early nomination of a special rapporteur to review the issue of membership, in order to bring more relevance and legitimacy to the CD. In our view, we should implement the idea enshrined in the final declaration (resolution A/S-10/2) of the first session of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1979, namely, that all nations in the world are responsible for international peace and security, and that they therefore all have the right to participate in international disarmament negotiations.

We note with concern that ballistic missiles and related technologies are still being used around the world as operational weapons. We do not believe that the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) has been able to play a central role in preventing missile proliferation. That is exactly why my country, following its initial candidature 12 years ago, presented an update of the technical dossier to the MTCR. We believe that Estonia's membership in the MTCR would serve the regime well. It would extend the territory of the MTCR's specific controls, add expertise on unmanned aerial vehicles and space technologies, enlarge the circle of intelligence-sharing and information exchange and law enforcement and, as such, support the non-proliferation efforts of the MTCR. We also strongly advocate for the membership of all States members of the European Union (EU) in the MTCR, since they all meet the high standards and criteria of the MTCR, given the fact that they are part of the EU single market and as such are also potential suppliers of MTCR-controlled items. Moreover, we continue to support the universality and implementation of The Hague Code of Conduct as the

only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument against ballistic missile proliferation.

Supporting mine-clearance activities remains essential for the stabilization processes of post-conflict States and the safe return of refugees. My country is determined to support humanitarian demining and mine action. We have increased our contributions over the past few years, and we continue to do so. That includes financial support for the United Nations Mine Action Service, as well as the cleanup of areas with explosive remnants of war and other mine-clearance activities under several bilateral and international humanitarian projects. We also urge all States that have not done so to join the Mine Ban Treaty.

Finally, the broad use of digital services demands a high level of cybersecurity, and for Estonia, the social, economic, political and military aspects of cybersecurity are intertwined. We consider it elementary that countries abstain from attacking critical national infrastructure. We also call for responsible behaviour towards global communications infrastructure so as to promote access to information and trust in information and communications technologies (ICT). We consider it the responsibility of every country to draft and enforce national laws that help control the malicious uses of ICT by non-State actors and to seek ways to better formulate, disseminate and promote responsible and active cyberpolicies, along with the respective narratives and argumentation. It is also important to take forward the progress achieved in the 2014-2015 by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on information security by further promoting norms of State behaviour that support openness, accountability and other democratic values in cyberspace. For Estonia, such goals include unrestricted access to the Internet and the protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as improved cybersecurity through better attitude, design and competence.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I wish to remind delegations to kindly limit their intervention to 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity, in the interest of the whole Committee.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventieth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your expertise, wisdom and exceptional experience will contribute to the success of our deliberations. I wish to

thank and congratulate all of the members of the Bureau and wish them every success. I also wish to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, for his efforts as Chair of the First Committee during the sixty-ninth session.

My delegation expresses its support for the statements made by the representative of Oman on behalf of the Group of Arab States and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

The Kingdom of Bahrain confirms its stable and consistent position on disarmament and international security and all efforts aimed at ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through actions to control their production and curb their spread, leading to total disarmament, so as to achieve security and stability in the world. In that context, we affirm the importance of designating 26 September every year the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons as a necessary step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We call on the international community to begin negotiations on a comprehensive and non-discriminatory treaty to ban the use, transfer, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. We also call for a high-level conference on the elimination of nuclear weapons no later than 2018, with a view to taking stock of the progress accomplished in that key area under resolution 68/32.

We reiterate the importance of making the Middle East region, including the Arab Gulf, a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and the need for Israel to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to place all of its nuclear installations under international verification under the International Atomic Energy Agency regime. We regret that an agreement was not reached at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which did not show tangible progress in the area of eliminating nuclear weapons and disarmament owing mainly to the failure to implement resolutions and action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

We hope that the agreement signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P5+1 countries on the Iranian nuclear issue will lead to stability and peace in the region, despite the absence of any mention of the real problems in the region, and to its transformation into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We stress the importance of the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes

and of strengthening cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which is a natural right of all States, on an equal footing and in keeping with international legal norms and transparency standards and in accordance with the agreements signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain expresses its full commitment to work with you, Sir, and other Member States in order to make progress on all avenues related to disarmament and international security to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction.

Ms. Nguyen Phuong Nga (Viet Nam): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the seventieth session of the General Assembly. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Viet Nam associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Myanmar, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

Seventy years ago, the United Nations was established with the lofty goal of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The Charter established the framework for a system of collective security based on the prohibition of the use of force in international relations, the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law and respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the formation of multilateral institutions so as to give practical effect to those principles. Viet Nam continues to strive to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

The First Committee is holding this debate against the backdrop of a growing number of challenges to international peace and security. The continued existence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and the illicit trade in and transfer of small arms and light weapons pose serious threats to peace and security, stability and development. The potential catastrophic humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons, in particular, is unbearable and should compel us to consider eliminating them as soon as possible. International efforts should be further intensified to pursue global disarmament and non-proliferation. The international community needs to find ways to increase transparency, build confidence,

and lay the groundwork for and pursue further actions to maintain world peace and security.

Viet Nam continues to support efforts to achieve comprehensive disarmament and non-proliferation, with the highest priority given to the general and complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the outcomes of the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna in December 2014. The endorsement of the humanitarian pledge by 119 States, including Viet Nam, is additional testimony to the strong desire of the international community to put an end to the threat of destruction by nuclear weapons, and it can offer a platform for launching negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

We reiterate our commitment to and strict implementation of the obligations under the fundamental disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other relevant Security Council resolutions. As the 2015 NPT Review Conference failed to adopt an outcome document, we believe it is crucial to effectively implement the 64-point action plan of the 2010 Review Conference across all of the Treaty's pillars, namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We welcome the work done by the Group of Eminent Persons in advancing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and call upon States that have not signed or ratified the CTBT to do so at the earliest time possible. We actively support the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its safeguard system, whose effective implementation is of paramount importance to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are fully committed to cooperating with the IAEA and other international partners, so as to ensure nuclear safety and security and promote the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Viet Nam is pleased to have fulfilled its responsibility as a member of the IAEA Board of Governors for the term 2013-2015.

We have also been working closely with the IAEA and other international partners in the field of capacity-building, which is of utmost importance for the responsible development of nuclear energy. Viet Nam underlines the importance of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which is one of the most effective tools for ensuring peace, stability

and cooperation in the region. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to work towards the early signing and ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty.

With regard to conventional weapons, while reaffirming the legitimate rights of States to manufacture, trade and retain conventional weapons for national self-defence, Viet Nam commits itself to positively implementing many of the related international cooperation agreements, including through the submission of early reports on imports and exports to the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms. We support the effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is aimed at curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons across borders and at preventing them from falling into the hands of criminals and terrorists.

As one of the few countries heavily affected by cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance left over from devastating and protracted wars, Viet Nam supports the humanitarian goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Convention, including the establishment of a cooperation mechanism and international assistance to address the aftermath of war. The Government of Viet Nam has adopted many policies and guidelines aimed at addressing the post-war consequences of bombs and mines, including a comprehensive national action plan for the 2010-2025 period. We commit ourselves, politically and practically, to improving the livelihood of the victims of bombs, mines and other explosive remnants of war by providing assistance, including treatment, rehabilitation and support for victims' reintegration into socioeconomic activities. We thank all international partners that have supported that humanitarian endeavour and look forward to continuing and increasing international support.

Enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations disarmament machinery is a shared objective. We support the enhancement and reinforcement of the disarmament machinery, with special attention given to the revitalization of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission in order to enable the negotiation of primary issues regarding nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Let me conclude by stressing that this Committee, as a true, multilateral and inclusive deliberative forum, has an important responsibility to pave the way for the common goals of disarmament, non-proliferation and international peace and stability. My delegation stands ready to engage constructively with you, Sir, and other Member States in this common effort to advance a safe, stable, peaceful and prosperous world for all.

Ms. Rodriguez Pineda (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your recent election to guide the work of the First Committee. We also wish to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, Courtenay Rattray, and his team for their excellent work at the previous session. I assure you, Sir, that you have my delegation's full cooperation and wishes for the successful work of this Committee. We associate ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/C.1/70/PV.4), and Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/70/PV.2).

Deploping the lack of progress in the area of nuclear disarmament is almost a ritual for many of us in the First Committee. This year we also deplore the failure of the most recent Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At the same time, the Conference on Disarmament has not offered recommendations in 15 years and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, almost 20 years after its adoption, has still not entered into force. However, this session is exceptional, not only because of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, but also because of the optimism and renewed interest of many States in moving towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala said at the most recent Conference to Facilitate the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty a few weeks ago, despite the lack of concrete progress in the implementation of that Treaty and the NPT in recent years, the voice of the large majority of Member States against those deadly weapons is growing ever stronger. Two years ago, we decided to observe on 26 September every year the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Since 2013, a series of conferences has been held on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, first in Oslo, then in Nayarit, Mexico, and in Vienna. In that regard,

we are encouraged by the numerous new initiatives that have established various avenues to move towards that noble goal.

Nevertheless, it is important that those initiatives not be mutually contradictory or duplicate the work of our Committee; rather, they should complement one another, be mutually reinforcing and contribute added value. The Austria Pledge, now known as the Humanitarian Pledge, enjoys the endorsement of 119 States, including all members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, of which we are particularly proud. That demonstrates that our region remains at the forefront of the fight against nuclear weapons. Ours is also the first densely populated zone to have been declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The non-nuclear-weapon States must continue to stand firm and recall that nuclear disarmament is the responsibility of all, not just a small group of nuclear-weapon States. We must demonstrate that our firm commitment to complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament has not wavered and that we are committed to filling the current legal vacuum on nuclear weapons in order to achieve their prohibition, as we have done with all other weapons of mass destruction.

Initiatives such as that on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons seek real solutions so that we can emerge from the impasse in which we find ourselves. That demonstrates that the failure of the most recent NPT Review Conference, far from discouraging us, is serving as a collective impetus for an increasingly vocal majority that is less willing to reiterate the same commitments in the hope that this time we will see progress. We see no parallel track here nor any intention to undermine the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as some have asserted. We must recall that the goal of the NPT, the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, is the total elimination of nuclear weapons and not the safeguarding of consensus or the maintainance of the status quo indefinitely.

The NPT is an essential basis for the achievement of nuclear disarmament, but the *sine qua non* condition for it to continue to be relevant and be applied effectively is to give due attention to all three pillars of the Treaty, namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They are closely linked and mutually reinforcing. As a State party to the Treaty, we are committed to promoting its universality

and the full observance of each of its provisions. Its fulfilment is a legal obligation, and all States must provide clear evidence of their adherence to the letter and spirit of that international legal instrument. The NPT was not designed to serve as a permanent regime; rather, it is the result of a commitment that should culminate in the fulfilment of its obligations by all parties. It is clear that we, the non-nuclear-weapon States, have carried out our part of the commitment. However, we continue to wait for the nuclear-weapon States and their associates to do the same.

Small arms and light weapons cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people every year around the world; they foster conflict and gender-based violence, and the explosive remnants of war are, every so often, easily diverted to illicit markets and later constitute a threat for decades. In Guatemala such weapons have aggravated and prolonged the domestic armed conflict, and today the illicit trade in weapons feeds the armed violence and insecurity suffered by my country, where there is an increased flow of arms linked to organized crime and local gangs. However, many of those weapons are also left over from previous armed conflicts. The fight against that scourge is one the main priorities of our Government, because its impact on Guatemalan society is immeasurable and claims the lives of thousands of victims, weakens the social fabric and impacts our development capacity.

As a phenomenon that transcends borders, countries and regions, it is clear that no State can confront the problem alone. It also transcends the area of international security, and its cross-cutting nature and impact on socioeconomic development, human rights, health and stability should be considered. The recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) promotes the creation of just, peaceful and inclusive societies. It is therefore crucial to have a multilateral framework that recognizes the responsibility of States to protect their civilian populations from the devastating consequences of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, given the link between the presence of those weapons and their exacerbation of armed violence. At the same, there should be international cooperation mechanisms to fight the illicit trade in weapons and mitigate its impact on civilian populations.

The Arms Trade Treaty is the first legally binding instrument whose objective is to reduce considerably the human cost of the proliferation of weapons at the

global level, prevent arms traffickers from taking advantage of the weakest point in the legal supply chain of weapons and establish the responsibilities of each actor who participates in that chain. Guatemala signed the Treaty shortly after its opening for signature, and we hope to complete our domestic process for ratification shortly. We are also proud of the recognized leadership of our region in that area; we took action from the start of the Treaty and worked diligently for its adoption. We congratulate Mexico on having been the venue for the first Conference of State Parties and for its work as the provisional Secretariat of the Treaty. Important decisions were adopted at the Conference that will affect the Treaty's implementation in years to come.

While we are disappointed by some of the decisions taken, we are encouraged by the fact that, as a whole, we gave the Treaty solid bases, such as its rules of procedure and financing. We hope that, in the next few years, the Secretariat will be expanded not only in terms of staff, but also in terms of its functions. While we are aware that it is not a perfect treaty, it has the potential to make a real difference and to ensure that weapons-exporter countries, -importer countries and -transit countries work under the same standards.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate its commitment to the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms, as well as its follow-up mechanisms. We note with concern the lack of progress achieved, even when we were able to adopt final documents, such as at the Review Conference and the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action. Also of concern is the tendency to measure success in terms of consensus. Even if consensus is reached, rather than enabling real progress and allowing for the evolution of that important instrument, its relevance has turned into a de facto veto used by some who seek to impede the Programme of Action from developing and adapting to new realities and challenges. On that final point, we welcome the specific attention devoted to the illegal flows of weapons in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2015/289). We agree fully with the recommendation to consider new areas of focus for fighting such flows. That can have an immediate effect on the intensity of armed violence, and the report recognizes that the real value of small arms in the market depends on their being an uninterrupted supply of weapons.

Guatemala emphatically condemns the use of cluster munitions by any actor and under any circumstances. That constitutes a violation of the principles enshrined in international humanitarian law. We reaffirm our commitment to contributing to the effective implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and we welcome the holding in Dubrovnik of the first Review Conference.

Finally, Guatemala is committed to the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, and we fully condemn their use. Universal adherence by all States to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention is imperative, as is full compliance by all States parties with their provisions. We welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) and the establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I wish first to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your well-deserved election marks the recognition of the prestige of your country at the United Nations and your own talents and personal qualities. You have the support of my delegation in your efforts to ensure fruitful deliberations. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Benin aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/70/PV.2). I also wish to make a few general comments on the agenda item to the Committee.

My delegation has also noted with great interest the report of the Secretary-General on some of the points under consideration (S/2015/289).

The realization of a more secure world is becoming an increasingly firm goal, and therefore efforts by States for the next 15 years are critical. That imperative is contained in Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which involves States in promoting the world we want. The aim of the Agenda is a clear indication of the importance that the United Nations and the international community attach to the establishment between now and 2030 of a world that offers the best opportunities for our people. That unequivocal commitment offers an unprecedented, historic opportunity to bring together

the right conditions for nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the development of States, as well as the total elimination of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. That new framework for the action of the United Nations for the next 15 years also imposes new responsibilities on United Nations disarmament mechanisms. The main bodies in that field must work to achieve the consensus needed to deal with the ongoing differences among Member States.

Those differences are the main reason for the deplorable stagnation that has jeopardized the efforts of the international community in that area for several years. It is now urgent, therefore, to start negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament with a view to the speedy adoption of a global convention on nuclear weapons, banning their stockpiling, production, transfer and use or threat of use, as well as negotiations on the destruction of existing stockpiles of those weapons. It is also imperative that the necessary political will be manifest within the Conference on Disarmament so that reasonable progress can be made on the matters of which it is seized.

It is alarming that, despite the concerns expressed through the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, thousands of such weapons continue to exist in the world. Modernization programmes for those weapons are constantly being implemented, and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence continues to be a major factor in the security policy of certain States. Benin therefore welcomes and supports the central role that the United Nations plays and should continue to play in promoting dialogue among States on the question of disarmament, and it reaffirms its support for the decisions and resolutions stemming from the commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. That Day offers an appropriate opportunity to raise the awareness of taxpayers in countries producing such weapons with regard to their economic costs and to draw attention to the benefits to be derived from general and complete disarmament for the world, including in the nuclear domain. The progress achieved in those areas will help increase the efforts and resources available for the promotion of integrated, inclusive and sustainable development, which is what the rest of the world calls for.

Benin welcomes the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world, including the zone established in Africa with the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty, all of which constitute unquestionable gains in the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, my delegation cannot understand the postponement of the diplomatic conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Benin supports the efforts under way to eliminate differences and obstacles to the holding of that diplomatic conference. At a time when extremist groups aspire to use nuclear weapons and spare no effort in trying to carry out mass atrocities, we call for the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime in order to prevent non-State actors from gaining access to nuclear material and technology. The recent news of the possible trafficking in nuclear weapons is therefore of concern. That will require the strengthening of international cooperation and assistance, as well as scrupulous respect for Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Benin welcomes the efforts of the United Nations to promote security on the African continent, particularly the assistance to and support for capacity-building provided to African States by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament at Lomé. We reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and underscore the need to carry out the important efforts needed to strengthen the capacity of African countries, such as Benin, and to ensure the transfer to them of appropriate technology for the efficient control, tracing and marking of small arms and light weapons. Those needs are also challenges that the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty will help us to meet, and we therefore welcome its entry into force.

Mr. Molnar (Hungary): Since this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor in an official meeting of the First Committee during this session, I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of your very important post and assure you of my delegation's full support.

Hungary fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.2). I would like, however, to make a few remarks from our national perspective.

This year we have witnessed both positive and negative developments in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, areas that are fundamental to ensuring that our collective ambition for a more stable and secure world is fulfilled. The first outstanding event of the year was the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Although there was no consensus on the final document of the Review Conference, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the fundamental framework for pursuing multilateral nuclear disarmament. We need, therefore, to reiterate our firm commitment to the fulfilment of the objectives of the Treaty and the comprehensive action plan adopted by the 2010 Review Conference.

As far as nuclear disarmament is concerned, Hungary shares the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, a noble objective that is at the heart of United Nations disarmament activities. We do our utmost to contribute to the efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the NPT. In our view, that goal can be achieved only through a gradual and inclusive process, based on concrete and practical steps, a process that fully engages nuclear-weapon States and at the same time promotes international security and stability.

An essential building block that is still missing from the legal architecture of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests. That was the reason why, two years ago, Hungary, together with Indonesia, chose to undertake the duties of co-coordinator under article XIV of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to promote the entry into force and universalization of the Treaty. While doing so, Hungary put particular emphasis on contacts with African countries. We are pleased that, during our tenure, three States, including two from the African continent, joined the CTBT community. It is reassuring that, following the end of our term at the article XIV ministerial conference this past September, two countries truly dedicated to the objectives of the Treaty, namely Japan and Kazakhstan, will carry on the important functions of co-coordinators. In line with our national commitment, Hungary will also remain engaged in promoting the entry into force of the CTBT.

Another concrete step towards a world free of nuclear weapons would be the start of negotiations

on a fissile material cut-off treaty verifiably banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Concluding a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty would constitute a significant contribution to both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. By limiting the amount of direct-use materials, the fissile material cut-off obligation would also contribute to the implementation of the NPT, including its article VI obligations. Hungary was privileged to be a member of the Group of Governmental Experts set up by the General Assembly to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to future negotiations on the treaty. In our view, under its competent Canadian chairmanship, the Group of Governmental Experts held substantive and constructive discussions on a broad range of issues and, in accordance with its mandate, was able to produce a consensus final report (A/70/81). That report provides the international community with a full picture of the complexity of the issue and a detailed analysis of the available options. We hope that the report of the Group of Governmental Experts, with its conclusions and recommendations, will facilitate the commencement of negotiations without further delay on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as part of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

Hungary considers nuclear security to be an increasingly important aspect of non-proliferation efforts and a critical element of the issues underlying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Although the responsibility for nuclear security rests with States, in our globalized world no State can ensure effective nuclear security on its own. Hence, international cooperation in that field has become indispensable, and the Nuclear Security Summit process is an excellent example of that. In a mere five years it has produced high-level political commitments and greatly facilitated national efforts with regard to mitigating the threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism. Hungary has been honoured to participate in the Nuclear Security Summit process and to have served as the co-coordinator of the working group on the International Atomic Energy Agency, which plays a central role in that area. We are convinced that the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Washington, D.C., in spring 2016 will be an important milestone in our endeavours to strengthen

the control of weapons of mass destruction in general and improve nuclear security in particular.

Cluster munitions fall into a category of conventional weapons that cause so much harm and human suffering, especially to civilian populations, that a need has emerged to ban them. We are therefore deeply concerned about recent reports of their use in various parts of the world. Since the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the number of States that are party to the Convention has grown fast and now totals 96. However, we consider it important to continue to work to universalize the Convention in order to achieve a critical mass of States that are party to it. We are confident that, after the successful holding in September of the Convention's first Review Conference — at which States parties not only took stock of the progress achieved so far but agreed on some key decisions for the next five years as well — the Convention has moved on from its initial phase and entered a new and mature, though no less challenging, stage on its journey towards fulfilling its goal of a world free of cluster munitions.

The Arms Trade Treaty has been an important priority for Hungary since its beginnings. We are convinced that, if properly implemented, it can prevent or at least reduce the illicit trade in arms and their diversion to illicit markets or unauthorized end users, ultimately saving the lives of millions. The fact that my country was among the first to sign and ratify the Treaty is clear testimony to our support. We are pleased that the Treaty was able to enter into force as early as 2014 and that it was possible to hold the first Conference of its States parties in Cancún, Mexico, in August of this year. We commend the fact that a number of key decisions were taken there. At the same time, we are aware that implementation remains the key challenge, and for that we need a well-defined permanent reporting tool providing maximum transparency within the scope of the Treaty. It is only by fulfilling the obligations that we have undertaken as States parties to the Treaty that we can make it a real milestone in the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms. We must also keep in mind that some of the key players in the international arms market have yet to ratify the Treaty, and we must therefore continue to reach out to them as part of our universalization efforts.

Last but not least, I would like to remind delegations that Hungary, following its practice of

previous years, has prepared a draft resolution on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which is a fundamental pillar of the international community's efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The fortieth anniversary, in March, of the Convention's entry into force also served as a reminder that we must commit to preserving and strengthening it. The eighth Review Conference of the BWC, to be held in late 2016 after the end of the current intersessional cycle, offers an excellent opportunity to do so. Hungary attaches great importance to ensuring a transparent and inclusive preparation process for the Review Conference, which will enable us to conduct a due and balanced consideration of both the substantive and procedural issues related to the review of the Convention and its implementation. We hope that the draft resolution will again be adopted by consensus, as has been the case every year so far.

Mr. Waheed (Maldives): On behalf of the Maldives delegation, I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee and to assure you of our full support in the work ahead. I would also like take this opportunity to thank Ms. Angela Kane, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for their efforts to support the work of the Committee.

The Maldives does not produce any type of armaments or weaponry, nor do we have any ambitions to do so. The Maldives does not have the assets to enable it to play any role, other than a moral one, in the strengthening and enforcement of a global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We can only state our opinion and concerns about the topic and voice our support for those who stand up for non-proliferation and disarmament.

We have always held the view that the presence of weapons of mass destruction within the global community represents as much of a threat to us as it does to every other country in our global community. Should a nuclear strike occur, its effects would be felt throughout the world. We are speaking in this debate today because we believe that every one of us, as part of a community of nations, has a moral imperative to do our part to preserve and ensure global peace and security.

The Committee holds this debate every year, and every year we express our unwavering stance in favour of non-proliferation and disarmament and against the stockpiling of nuclear arms and the deployment of arms in outer space. We play our role, however small it may be, in such matters by presenting recurring reports to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention. Our reports focus particularly on the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction. The Maldives has consistently paid attention to and been deeply involved in disarmament debates from their initial stages, including debates on nuclear non-proliferation negotiations.

Forty-five years ago, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons came into force. The Treaty sets out the importance of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology and lays out the objective of achieving nuclear as well as general and complete disarmament. Today we are still concerned about the threat of nuclear warfare and the stability of non-proliferation regimes, which constitute the basis for nuclear disarmament and the guarantee of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is to our global detriment that, as of mid-2014, an estimated 16,300 nuclear weapons remained in stockpiles around the world. Most recently, the use of chemical weapons in Syria has shown that that issue continues to present a genuine and significant danger, as well as demonstrating the humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons.

Since 1970, significant progress has been made with regard to the so-called three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty — non-proliferation, disarmament and the right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Most recently, we have been encouraged by the nuclear deal agreed between Iran and the P5+1, which demonstrates the willingness and disposition of the international community to find lasting solutions that can help to end the use of nuclear weapons around the world and brings us a step closer to a safer and more peaceful planet.

Conventional weapons pose an equal threat to humankind. The possibility of putting small arms and light weapons in the wrong hands increases the threat they pose by further destabilizing already fragile situations. It worsens the risk of violence escalating

into civil war and large-scale regional or international conflict. The Maldives welcomed the Arms Trade Treaty's entry into force in December 2014, and regards it as a clear demonstration of the global community's resolve to control conventional weapons. The Maldives is in the process of completing its domestic procedures for acceding to the Treaty, which will further strengthen our existing domestic laws and enhance our capacity to ensure that Maldivian territorial waters are not used as a trans-shipment point for any illicit arms.

The Maldives is well aware of the fundamental importance of compliance with commitments made in the context of disarmament. On the national level, our stringent domestic laws and means of control have ensured that our country has no illicit trade whatever in arms, either within the local population or with other countries. At the international level, the Maldives submits an annual report to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

We have always pushed for regional disarmament with the goal of pursuing and ensuring peace, security and stability. The Maldives has consistently advocated for the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace since the General Assembly's adoption of its Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in 1971 (resolution 2832 (XXVI)). It is our hope that through cooperation among Indian Ocean States and other concerned parties, we will be able to maintain the region as a zone of peace.

The General Assembly's recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) constitutes a reaffirmation of our desire for world peace and disarmament and calls into question the amount of money that is spent on the production of arms every year. Every dollar we spend on producing nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is one that we could and should be spending on development. It is a dollar that could be spent on overcoming poverty in our countries, educating our children, eradicating non-communicable diseases, on hospitals, food, clean water, climate-change adaptation and building resilience. Every dollar we spend on such weapons is a dollar that could be invested in our shared future.

In conclusion, the international community has a moral responsibility to take concrete steps in its endeavours to make our world free of nuclear weapons with the aim of safeguarding future generations. The

Committee has a massive responsibility to address all the issues involved, and my delegation stands ready to work with everyone in order to help it succeed.

The Chair: I would like to thank the interpreters for working late, which underlines the importance

of ensuring that all delegations adhere to the agreed time limits.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.