



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

First Committee

15th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 52 (b) and 90 to 106 (continued)

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

The Chair: The Committee will resume its consideration of the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction and continue with the remaining speakers on the list. I once again urge all speakers to kindly observe the time limit of five minutes when speaking in their national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of groups. The Committee will continue to use the buzzer to remind delegations when the time limit has been reached.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Körömi (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their means of delivery remain a grave threat to international peace and security. Although the international treaty regimes and export controls

arrangements have slowed the spread of WMDs and their delivery systems, a number of States have sought, or are seeking, to develop such weapons. The risk that terrorists could acquire such weapons, material and means of delivery adds an increasingly critical dimension to that threat.

The EU finds it deeply shocking that the international community continues to face the use of chemical weapons despite international law prohibiting them. The use of chemical weapons by anyone — whether it be a State or a non-State actor, anywhere and under any circumstances — is abhorrent and must be rigorously condemned. There can be no impunity, and those responsible for such acts must be held accountable. The EU recalls that, as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Syrian Arab Republic has explicitly obligated itself not to possess, develop or use chemical weapons. The EU notes with great concern the successive reports of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), according to which the Organization is not able to confirm that the Syrian declaration regarding its chemical weapons programme is complete and accurate. We urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to extend full cooperation to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in order to resolve all outstanding issues and convince the international community that its chemical weapons programme has been destroyed in a complete and irreversible manner.

The EU notes with great concern the confirmation by the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab

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Republic of the use of sarin in a chemical-weapons attack in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017, the exposure of victims to sulphur mustard in Um-Housh on 16 September 2016, and the conclusions of the August and October 2016 reports of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) (S/2016/738 and S/2016/888, respectively), which confirm that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces were responsible for three chemical attacks and Da'esh for one. The EU supports and encourages the JIM to promptly identify those responsible for such use of chemical weapons. The EU looks forward to the timely renewal of the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and its continuing investigations into further outstanding allegations of chemical-weapons use in Syria.

The EU continues to support activities in all areas of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including national implementation, assistance and protection, international cooperation and, in particular, the Africa programme. More than €12 million have been provided to the OPCW to that end. Further, the EU and its member States reaffirm their support for the implementation of the plan to destroy the remaining Libyan chemical stockpile. We underscore that universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention remains a top priority for the EU. We once again call on those States not yet party to the CWC — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Israel and South Sudan — to join the Convention without further delay, thereby contributing to the goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

Our commitment to the strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) remains firm. In the absence of a dedicated effective, intersessional programme, EU-funded project activities amounting to €6.3 million since 2006 have become a key vehicle in promoting universal adherence to the Convention and in advancing national implementation in countries around the world. We work closely with States parties on building and sustaining confidence in compliance, supporting national implementation and the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, promoting universality among the States not yet party to the Convention, and taking into account developments in science and technology. We call on all States not yet party to the BTWC to join it without delay.

At the same time, assistance provided through voluntary contributions, such as EU Council decisions, should not be seen as a substitute for activities to be carried out within the framework of formal BWC meetings. We are of the opinion that the discussions on an intersessional programme during the eighth Review Conference of the Parties, as well as the wealth of working papers and proposals put forward in that context, represent a good starting point for the next meeting of States parties with a view to reaching consensus of the establishment of a substantive intersessional programme of work.

The repeated ballistic-missile launches of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, conducted outside the existing transparency and pre-notification schemes in clear violation of multiple Security Council resolutions, represent a grave threat to regional and international peace and security, as well as the international non-proliferation regime. We condemn in the strongest terms the nuclear tests and multiple ballistic-missile launches of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and express our grave concern over the recent missile launches of intercontinental range in particular. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately halt its launches and to fully comply with all its international obligations. We express concern about the prospect of increasing proliferation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea towards others and are determined to act to counter such activities.

We underscore the importance that Iran abide by all provisions of resolution 2231 (2015), which calls on Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic-missile technology. We take very seriously the recent launches by Iran and call on Iran to refrain from activities that may deepen mistrust, such as ballistic-missile tests, which are inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015) and destabilize the region. At their meeting on 16 October, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of EU member States adopted a statement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The full text of the statement is available in the room for the convenience of delegations. We are concerned over the destabilizing role of missile proliferation in the Middle East, including Syria.

All 28 EU member States have subscribed to The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We call on all States, in particular

those with significant activities in the area of ballistic missiles and space-launch vehicles, to adhere to the Code as soon as possible. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary and continues to play a crucial role. The EU strongly supports the work of the international export-control regimes, such as the MTCR, the Australia Group, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement. All 28 EU member States are interested in participating in the work of the international export-control regimes, and we invite others to support their membership.

The EU warmly welcomes last year's comprehensive review process of resolution 1540 (2004), whose centrality, importance and authority were reaffirmed by resolution 2325 (2016). Continued vigilance by all States is required to prevent and to deter non-State actors from obtaining weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Throughout this year, many Member States have acknowledged the twentieth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) through events reaffirming the solemn objective enshrined therein: "...for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons...".

While the courageous work of the women and men of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has been extraordinary, the harsh reality finds that the CWC and the international norm against the use of chemical weapons remain under assault through the continued use of chemical weapons by State and non-State actors. Let us be clear: the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, is a threat to all of us, everywhere.

Following previous reports by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), it is undeniable that the Syrian regime has repeatedly used chemical weapons in violation of the CWC and resolution 2118 (2013). The barbarism did not end there, as, on 4 April, the Syrian regime again used sarin gas in an attack on Khan Shaykhun, killing an estimated 100 children, women and men and injuring many more. The OPCW fact-finding mission concluded indisputably that sarin or a sarin-like substance was used in that attack. All those responsible for such heinous acts must be held accountable. While the international community awaits the results of the findings of the JIM, the United States strongly supports the renewal of the Mechanism and

lauds the highly professional manner in which the JIM and the fact-finding mission conduct their work.

This year also saw the use of chemical weapons at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on 13 February in the assassination of North Korean national Kim Jong-nam. That heinous act of using VX, one of the most dangerous nerve agents in the world, defies all human decency and the norms of the civilized world against the use of chemical weapons. All of those involved in perpetrating that deadly attack must be held accountable.

The events of this past year make it clear that the international community must do more to ensure the integrity and viability of the CWC and to preserve the international laws, norms and standards against the use of chemical weapons. We must continue to collectively condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by any State or non-State actor and to hold all those who would use such weapons accountable. Anything less would be irresponsible.

Historically, biological weapons have also been used, and terrorist groups, individuals and States continue to pursue them. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is our most important tool to prevent the use of disease as a weapon of war but, to do so, it must be implemented effectively. Unfortunately, at the eighth Review Conference States parties to the BWC squandered the opportunity to adopt a stronger intersessional programme. Many delegations, including the United States, came to the Review Conference with proposals for such a programme and a willingness to find an acceptable way forward. Regrettably, we did not succeed in that objective.

Nonetheless, the United States was reassured by the shared commitment to the Convention, to minimizing risks from weaponized pathogens and to solidifying the global norm against the use of disease as a weapon. The increase in the membership of the treaty is also heartening, and we welcome Samoa as the 179th State party.

Although States parties could not agree on a new work programme at the Review Conference, they assigned the December meeting of States parties the task of reaching an agreement on such a programme. We welcome the efforts of Chairman-designate Indian Ambassador Gill to prepare for a successful meeting, which, in our view, would provide for more focused expert work on oversight of science and technology,

national implementation, capacity-building and preparedness for, and response to, outbreaks of disease. Our cross-regional consultations indicate that many would support such a result as a step forward. We call on all States parties to support such a work programme at the upcoming meeting of States parties.

Finally, adequate funding for work with regard to the BWC is essential. We welcome the recent payment of substantial overdue assessments. However, many debts are still outstanding, and those debts, in combination with structural financial problems, will make it very difficult to pay the Implementation Support Unit salaries at the beginning of the year. Both issues need urgent attention.

Ms. Wood (Australia): It is regrettable that, as we approach the conclusion of this twentieth-anniversary year of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), repeated violations of the Convention continue to test our resolve to defend this key international norm of behaviour. The ongoing use of chemical weapons in Syria, with its tragic consequences for innocent civilians and the outstanding issues related to Syria's declaration of its chemical weapons programme, remain the greatest immediate challenge to the Convention and to the OPCW.

We call on all Member States to strongly support the work of the OPCW fact-finding mission and of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) in investigating the use of chemical weapons in Syria and in identifying the perpetrators. Impunity for such heinous crimes is not an option. In that regard, there is a vital need for the Security Council to renew the JIM mandate.

The reported deadly use of the nerve agent VX at a busy international airport in Malaysia is also cause for alarm. We must remain vigilant and refuse to tolerate the re-emergence of chemical weapons in any guise, at any time, in any place by any State or non-State actor.

Despite those challenges, the resilience of the Convention and the proven value of multilateral approaches to disarmament continue to give us confidence. The verified destruction of Russia's declared chemical-weapon stockpile is a major milestone for the OPCW and its member States in achieving our goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

We must continue to work in a collaborative manner to adjust policies and regulations so that they reflect constantly evolving new threats and technologies in the field of weapons of mass destruction, including through robust export controls. The Australia Group brings together 42 countries committed to harmonizing export controls to prevent rogue States and terrorists from obtaining what they need to build chemical and biological weapons. Through the regular meetings of the Group, which we chair, participating countries continue to collaborate on new ways to curb chemical and biological weapons. However, to succeed in that task we need the help of all countries. That is why members of the Australia Group work closely with non-members, including those in our region, to share best practices and to address how to strengthen our collective efforts to prevent the spread and use of those odious weapons.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) not only underpins the international norms against biological weapons but also facilitates global efforts to promote the peaceful uses of the life sciences. We welcome the recent accession to the BWC of our regional partner, Samoa, which becomes the 179th State party to the Convention. We also welcome the briefing by Ambassador Molnár of Hungary earlier in this session (see A/C.1/72/PV.14). We are grateful for the heroic efforts that he made in 2016 to mobilize States parties to the BWC to support a more substantive work agenda across the breadth of BWC-related issues. We regret that States parties could not find agreement on such issues. Australia will work constructively with other States parties to explore ways of strengthening the BWC intersessional process at the upcoming meeting of States parties.

Australia is also a strong supporter of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons and was pleased to have hosted the Mechanism's first skills-training course in the southern hemisphere at this time last year. We hope all Member States can support the ongoing development of the Mechanism.

Resolution 1540 (2004) remains central to the efforts of Member States to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorists and non-State actors. We urge all Member States to fulfil their obligations under the resolution and welcome Bolivia's ongoing efforts as Chair of the Security

Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

The Chair: I call on the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.23.

Mr. Gill (India): India associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.14). I shall read out an abridged version of my statement, with the full text thereof being posted on PaperSmart.

The two Conventions — on chemical and on biological weapons — are worthy examples of non-discriminatory treaties in the field of disarmament for the total elimination of specific types of weapons of mass destruction. In our view, the success of the Conventions can serve as a model for the future elimination of nuclear weapons.

India remains committed to improving the effectiveness of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and to strengthening its implementation, including through legally binding measures. We continue to stress the importance of its universalization, and therefore welcome the recent accession by Samoa to the BWC, taking the number of States parties up to a notable 179 States. India has contributed financially towards the BWC's sponsorship programme, including this year, and hopes that the implementation of the programme will contribute to the universalization of the Convention. We have also regularly submitted our confidence-building measures, with the latest having been submitted this year.

Advances in biotechnology, genetic engineering and life sciences, especially in the past two decades, their dual-use nature and easier access to them, have increased the threat of proliferation and the hostile use of biological-warfare agents. The possibility that non-State actors, including terrorists, could acquire and use biological-warfare agents and toxins has added a new dimension to that danger. Against that backdrop, India actively participated in the eighth BWC Review Conference, held in November 2016, and presented joint working papers, with France, on measures to strengthen assistance under article VII of the Convention, and with the United States, on strengthening the implementation of article III of the Convention. As part of a broader outreach, India had also hosted a regional workshop,

in cooperation with United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the European Union, in New Delhi in August 2016.

We were disappointed that the Conference could not achieve a result commensurate with the challenge. Nevertheless, it is heartening that there is a clear desire to move ahead, and, in my capacity as Chair of the 2017 meeting of States parties, I look forward to the constructive engagement of all States parties during our annual meeting in December so that we can deliver successfully on the mandate given to the meeting by the eighth Review Conference. We thank Ambassador Molnár of Hungary for his tireless efforts at the Review Conference.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) completes 20 years of its existence this year, and we congratulate Ambassador Fernando Arias González of Spain on his election by the Executive Council as the next Director-General of the OPCW. The success of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is the result of the collaborative efforts of the States parties, the chemical industry, the community of scientists and civil society, working in tandem with the OPCW. The non-discriminatory principles enshrined in the Convention, the commitment of the States parties and the competence of the Technical Secretariat have all combined to almost completely rid the world of existing chemical-weapon stockpiles.

We welcome the destruction by the Russian Federation of its declared stockpile of chemical weapons, and that it did so three years before the deadline. We also welcome the international efforts that paved the way for the successful removal of the remaining Category 2 chemical-weapon stockpiles from Libya for their destruction abroad.

India has the second largest number of declared facilities in the world and receives one of the highest number of OPCW inspections. The provisions of the CWC should be implemented in a manner that does not hinder legitimate activities, especially in countries such as mine, with its large and growing chemical industry.

Our consistent position has been that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, under any circumstances cannot be justified and that the perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable. We are deeply concerned at the reported use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We hope that the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative

Mechanism will take forward the findings of the fact-finding mission in Syria and identify the perpetrators.

In conclusion, under this cluster, India will present its draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.23, entitled “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction”, which has enjoyed strong support since it was first introduced in 2002. We hope that, as in previous years, the First Committee will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The prohibition of weapons of mass destruction has been enshrined as a constitutional rule in Paraguay. Furthermore, my country respects and complies with the commitments established under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). We are a party to both those Conventions.

The Republic of Paraguay urge all States to refrain from any action that runs counter to the aim and purpose of those treaties and their universalization. The delegation of Paraguay welcomes the accession of Liberia, Nepal, Guinea and Samoa to the BWC.

Paraguay reaffirms its belief that the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction and their elimination are sine qua non conditions to the promotion of international peace and security. We therefore reiterate our condemnation of the use of weapons of mass destruction and our support for the fact-finding and accountability efforts led by the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

At the national level, the Government of Paraguay, in compliance with the law that establishes the control measures in fulfilment of the obligations assumed under the Chemical Weapons Convention enacted in 2015, has formed a national advisory council to the OPCW, which develops the implementation framework of the law regarding the execution of national and international verifications of the OPCW in Paraguay. As for the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, the Government of Paraguay also established a national commission for the prevention and response to biological emergencies.

The delegation of Paraguay underscores the importance of international cooperation in obtaining detection equipment and in training security personnel to respond quickly to possible cases of both chemical and biological emergencies. In particular, we highlight the recent visit of the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to Paraguay and await the follow-up visit of the Committee this year to contribute to the implementation of national mechanisms and public policies to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors.

Mr. Denktaş (Turkey): The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is an alarming threat to international security. The risk of the proliferation of such weapons to terrorists is an additional concern. The use of chemical weapons in our day breaks a very important and long-standing norm against the use of such weapons. Be it in Syria or elsewhere, by States or by non-State actors, this is a crime against humanity, a violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and an affront to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

As we celebrate the Convention’s twentieth anniversary, Turkey attaches great significance to the CWC. Banning the use of toxic chemicals as weapons, the CWC requires that States parties chemically disarm by destroying any stockpiles of chemical weapons and any facilities that produce them. States parties have also agreed to create a verification regime for certain toxic chemicals and their precursors in order to make sure that such chemicals are used only for purposes not prohibited.

In Syria, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has stated in numerous reports that, despite all its efforts, it is not able to verify the regime’s declarations and that there remain gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in them. We are seriously concerned by such reports. We all recall the attribution of responsibility by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) for the chemical weapons attacks in three cases to Syrian armed forces and in one case to Da’esh. More recently, the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic confirmed the use of sarin in a chemical weapons attack on Khan Shaykhun in April and the exposure of victims to sulphur mustard in Um-Housh in September 2016.

The findings of the JIM confirm that the Syrian regime has failed to fulfil its obligations and continued to use chemical weapons against the Syrian people. We strongly condemn those attacks. We must ensure that there is no impunity for such horrific actions. We cannot allow that to become the new normal.

Turkey supports the work of the Fact-finding Mission and the JIM, and we will maintain that level of support as we look forward to the timely renewal of the mandate of the Mechanism and its continuing investigations into further outstanding allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria. The continued work of the two bodies is also important in ensuring deterrence against the use of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere.

The use of a nerve agent in an airport in Malaysia was also alarming.

One positive development in that field is in Libya, where there is progress on the destruction of its chemical stockpiles. That is a positive and important development for Libya's stability and a good example of the implementation of the CWC. We commend the OPCW for its work on that file.

Another important component of the global system against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). Turkey does not possess any weapons covered under the BWC. We actively support efforts for the universalization of the Convention and welcome Samoa's accession to it. We call on all States not party to the BWC to join the Convention without further delay.

While we are not satisfied with the outcome of the eighth BWC Review Conference, we look forward to the forthcoming meeting of States parties as an opportunity to look at ways to strengthen the Convention and to ensure its relevance.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba firmly supports and strictly complies with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Our country does not possess, nor does it intend to possess, any kind of weapon of mass destruction. It strongly supports the total and complete prohibition and elimination

of those weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Cuba firmly rejects the use of any weapon of mass destruction, by any actor, under any circumstance. In that regard, we reiterate that the only absolute guarantee for preventing the acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction, including by terrorists, is their total prohibition and elimination.

On its twentieth anniversary, we highlight the work carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and we emphasize the importance of guaranteeing the balance of its pillars in future and of acting upon outstanding issues. The destruction of all categories of chemical weapons in the shortest possible time under international control would constitute the greatest contribution to prevent such weapons of mass destruction from being used. In that regard, we welcome the complete and verified destruction of the declared chemical weapons of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, we reaffirm that the promotion of the economic and technological development of the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, particularly the least developed, continues to be a pending issue and should be a priority of the OPCW. We call for the timely adoption of an action plan to guarantee the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article XI of the Convention, on international cooperation and assistance.

We encourage States parties to the BWC to make every effort to reach consensus on the intersessional process at the next annual meeting of States parties, in accordance with the special mandate granted by the eighth Review Conference to the annual meeting. However, we reiterate that the only truly effective and sustainable way to strengthen the BWC in a comprehensive and balanced manner and to ensure its strict implementation is through the adoption of a legally binding protocol that includes a verification mechanism. Cuba underscores that the full, effective and non-discriminatory application of article X of the Biological Weapons Convention on international cooperation for peaceful purposes continues to be a pending, urgent and priority task.

Cuba rejects and demands the immediate removal of the limitations and restrictions that impede the widest possible exchange, particularly for developing countries, of materials, equipment and technology

for chemical and biological activities in line with the provisions of the relevant international conventions on the matter. A clear example of that is the commercial and financial economic blockade that has been applied against Cuba for almost 60 years.

The General Assembly and existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction play the main role in disarmament and non-proliferation issues. No measure adopted by the Security Council nor any selective or discriminatory initiative promoted by groups of countries outside the multilateral framework can undermine that role.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered under this agenda item by the representatives of Yemen and Indonesia, who spoke on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/72/PV.14).

The Middle East is experiencing tension and instability, and, over four decades, Egypt has suffered successive wars that have been imposed on it. However, my country has shown good faith by acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and by fulfilling all obligations thereunder. Egypt has also joined the consensus on the resolution to indefinitely extend the Treaty, which is the bedrock of international security. Since the agreement on the extension includes a decision on establishing a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction that has yet to be implemented, the international community should take serious steps to redress that security imbalance in the Middle East.

There is also the fact that one State continues to undermine the efforts to rid the region of nuclear weapons. Israel is the only country in the region that has not ratified any of the three relevant treaties and conventions, namely, the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We reiterate that the accession of Israel to the NPT as a non-nuclear State would contribute to the universalization of the Treaty and to confidence-building and would be a historic step towards establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It would also contribute to peace and security in the region and demonstrate the credibility of the non-proliferation and disarmament machinery.

Egypt condemns the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction by any party under any

circumstances. By endorsing all resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, Egypt has also shown its credibility in dealing with any violations related to the use of weapons of mass destruction by any party. Egypt continues to support the efforts of the Security Council under resolution 1540 (2004) to guard against the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists or non-State actors. Egypt hopes to resolutely address its concerns with regard to ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons so as to achieve balanced and comprehensive security in the region and to address the imbalances whose continuation will lead only to further tension, an arms race and instability. An example of Egypt's credibility towards the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction is the fact that we continue to call for a negotiation conference on freeing the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction in order to achieve balanced security without double standards.

It is important to recall that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament identified by consensus the priority of eliminating weapons of mass destruction worldwide, while giving priority to nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we note that achieving implementation of the NPT is a historic step towards establishing a balance between nuclear weapons as the most dangerous category of weapons of mass destruction and other weapons of mass destruction that have been banned under international instruments that legally bind the parties concerned.

During this session of the First Committee, we have listened carefully to the statements of nuclear States and countries that are under the umbrella of nuclear States. We would like to point out that there are inconsistencies in the positions of those States when they say that the security environment is not conducive to nuclear disarmament or to the elimination of nuclear weapons and that such disarmament and destruction of weapons should take place progressively, while, at the same time, calling for immediate progress in preventing the proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction. Egypt therefore calls on such countries to review their positions. They should understand that values and principles are indivisible and that the security of some States is not more important than that of other States. Indeed, they should call for disarmament in the same way as they call for non-proliferation by other States.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.14).

I would like to begin with an issue of paramount importance. On Friday, 13 October, the highest Government authorities of my country, along with those of France and the United Kingdom, reaffirmed their commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and to its full implementation by all sides. Preserving the JCPOA is in our shared national interest. The nuclear deal was the culmination of 13 years of diplomacy and was a major step towards ensuring that Iran's nuclear programme was not diverted for military purposes. At the same time, as we work to preserve the JCPOA, we share concerns about Iran's ballistic-missile programme and regional activities that also affect our European security interests.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is the first international convention on weapons of mass destruction to be signed that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. It therefore has a special place in the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Efforts towards complete universalization need to go hand in hand with further progress in the process of implementing the BWC, which, as such, needs to be ensured at both the national and the international levels.

The implementation of the BWC needs to be accompanied, supported, safeguarded and reviewed by an adequate and effective intersessional work programme that not only monitors developments in the fields of relevance to the Convention but also provides opportunities to develop suitable recommendations for States parties to consider and to act upon at their annual meetings and review conferences. Unfortunately, the most recent review conference was unproductive in that regard. It is now the responsibility of States parties to the Convention to fulfil the mandate given to the meeting of States parties in December, which is to reach consensus on an intersessional programme.

At the same time, States bear a particular responsibility for increasing confidence in compliance through sound national implementation, transparency and constructive cooperation at the national and international levels. Peer review exercises, confidence-building measures, the Wiesbaden process and partnership programmes, such as the German biosecurity programme, are useful tools in

that regard. In the case of suspected use of biological weapons, adequate verification would be necessary. It is therefore crucial to strengthen the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, as it is the only effective mechanism in place that could be used to respond in such a situation.

With regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), I would like to stress that, on the one hand, there is reason to express satisfaction, while, on the other hand, there are issues about which we all should be seriously concerned. There are grounds for satisfaction because nearly all declared stockpiles of the current 192 States members of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have been eliminated. Only a couple of weeks ago, Russia announced that it had completed the destruction of its declared chemical-weapon stockpile. Many States parties, including Germany, have provided substantial financial assistance to make that happen. The destruction of the remaining Libyan chemical weapons in Germany will be completed within the planned time frame, that is, by the beginning of December 2017. All such steps bring us closer to the ultimate goal of achieving a world free of chemical weapons.

On the other hand, there are also issues about which we all should be seriously concerned. Unfortunately, we have to ask ourselves if the time has come to admit that the taboo against using chemical weapons is being eroded before our very eyes. Over the past couple of years, chemical weapons have been used multiple times in Iraq, and in particular in Syria, which has seen by far the largest number of victims. We also witnessed the use of chemical weapons in Malaysia in one case.

With regard to Syria, let me be very clear. We are not talking about some technical issues and a couple of isolated cases of alleged use. We are talking about grave concerns with respect to Syria's declaration which, after five years, still cannot be verified as accurate and complete. We urgently ask Syria to fully clarify such inconsistencies.

At the same time, there have been many proven cases of chemical-weapon use in Syria. We all still remember the terrifying pictures from Khan Shaykhun at the beginning of April this year. As responsible parties to the CWC, we owe it to the victims of chemical weapons to identify and to hold accountable those responsible. It is therefore of the utmost importance

that the Security Council extend the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) without further delay. The JIM must be able to continue its investigations of cases where chemical weapons were used in Syria.

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement within the thematic discussion on weapons of mass destruction delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.14). We join others in voicing our grave concerns over the resurgence of the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction involving chemical, biological and radioactive materials.

Bangladesh reaffirms its adherence to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) on the twentieth anniversary of its entry into force. We deeply appreciate the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We commend the completion of the full destruction of chemical weapons declared by the Russian Federation, as confirmed by the Director-General of the OPCW. We also welcome the progress reported with regard to the destruction of Libya's remaining chemical weapons outside its territory, pursuant to OPCW Executive Council decisions.

However, Bangladesh reiterates its concern over the reported use of sarin as a chemical weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic earlier this year. In line with the OPCW Executive Council, we also express concern over the fact that, according to statements by the Government of Malaysia, a chemical weapon was used in a widely reported fatal incident in February 2017. Bangladesh remains firmly committed to the complete cessation of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

The Bangladesh National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention has long been in place. The OPCW has conducted a number of inspections of Bangladesh's declared chemical-industry facilities that use certain dual-use chemicals.

Bangladesh welcomes the consensus of the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), held last

year, along with the decisions taken on all provisions of the Convention. We hope that the outstanding issues under the purview of the Convention will be duly addressed at the annual meetings of the States parties, including at the next meeting in December 2017. We look forward to a decisive and consensual outcome on the intersessional process in the lead-up to the next review conference.

We reaffirm our support for resuming and concluding negotiations on a legally binding instrument that would address the existing gaps in effective verification of compliance with the BWC. We also underscore the importance of the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article X of the Convention by enhancing international cooperation, assistance and exchange with regard to toxins, biological agents, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. Bangladesh recognizes the need to further strengthen the BWC Implementation Support Unit in order for it to effectively respond to the various capacity-building needs of States parties, especially those in resource-constrained settings. Bangladesh commends Liberia, Nepal, Guinea and Samoa for ratifying or acceding to the Convention and urges the Member States that have not done so to follow suit.

Bangladesh has followed with interest the review of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), leading to the adoption of resolution 2325 (2016). We continue to underscore the need to enhance the capacity of the relevant panel of experts to effectively respond to the requests of Member States for technical assistance. We urge the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy next year to remain seized with and to give additional attention to enhancing Member State capacity to prevent the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and related materials by terrorists. We reiterate that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction constitutes an important guarantee that such weapons will not be acquired by non-State actors.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): This year, we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). The international community can proudly say that 192 countries are now States parties. However, even as we celebrate that important benchmark, we must also acknowledge that 2017 was tarnished by the use of chemical weapons in Syria, Iraq and Malaysia.

The world was indeed shocked by the 4 April attack on Khan Shaykhun in Syria, which took the lives of at least 83 persons, including many children. Prime Minister Trudeau said then that President Al-Assad's use of chemical weapons and the crimes that the Syrian regime has committed against its own people cannot be ignored and that such gruesome attacks must not be allowed to continue with impunity. Canada condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons under any circumstance, anywhere, by anyone, and demands that those responsible be held accountable. We must preserve and reinforce the hard-won taboo against the use of chemical weapons.

Earlier this year, Canada's Minister for Foreign Affairs announced an additional financial contribution to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for the investigation of chemical-weapon use in Syria. The new funding was in fact unveiled the same day that the report of the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic confirmed the use of sarin in Khan Shaykhun. Canada's additional contribution further underscores our deep commitment to the OPCW and its dedication, its professionalism and its impartiality in working to rid the world of chemical weapons.

Now that the fact-finding mission has concluded its work on Khan Shaykhun, the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) must seek to identify those responsible for the attack. Canada notes the concerns expressed by the heads of the Mechanism over the pressure exerted on the JIM by some Governments. We expect all States to respect the Joint Investigative Mechanism's impartial and evidence-based inquiry.

(spoke in French)

We request that all States respect their obligations under the CWC and international humanitarian law and cease all activities that would violate those obligations. Furthermore, we request the Syrian regime to declare in full the scope of its chemical-weapon programme, to respect the CWC and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), to eliminate all ongoing ambiguities contained in its declaration and to destroy any remaining facilities that produce chemical weapons.

The commitment undertaken by Canada to eliminate chemical weapons goes beyond speeches. Since 2012, Canada has contributed more than \$30 million towards work to eliminate chemical weapons in Libya and in

Syria, to support special missions and contingency operations in Syria and to strengthen the OPCW's Rapid Response and Assistance Mission.

(spoke in English)

Canada looks forward to further improving the operation of the CWC during next year's review conference. We welcome the opportunity to review the role of the OPCW and to bolster international efforts to fully destroy the world's remaining chemical-weapon stockpiles and to prevent their further proliferation.

In conclusion, I would like to express Canada's frustration at the outcome of the eighth Review Conference of the BWC. It is critical that a decision that results in a much stronger Convention by 2021 be made at the upcoming meeting of States parties. In the interim, we will continue to do all we can to mitigate the significant threats posed by biological weapons and biological terrorism.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Ecuador aligns itself with the statement delivered during this thematic debate by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.14).

The Constitution of Ecuador prohibits the development, production, use and threat of use of all weapons of mass destruction. In accordance with that principle, Ecuador condemns any use, by whomsoever and wherever, of chemical, bacteriological or toxin weapons, since such use is a war crime that violates international humanitarian law. In this context, my country believes that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) are essential pillars of the international disarmament architecture. We therefore urge all States not yet party to those two instruments to subscribe to them and to eliminate such cruel and indiscriminate weapons from their arsenals.

Ecuador welcomes the Russian Federation's completion of the destruction of its chemical-weapon stockpiles. That achievement is an important milestone in the implementation of the CWC, marking the twentieth anniversary of its entry into force.

Ecuador takes note of the outcomes of the BWC Review Conference held in Geneva in November 2016. We regret the fact that the Conference did not reach agreement with a view to strengthening capacities for implementing the Convention.

The possible acquisition of chemical or biological weapons by terrorist groups is a cause for particular concern. Ecuadorian law severely punishes any development, possession, transport or use of such weapons. We encourage enhanced international cooperation to prevent non-State actors and terrorist groups from acquiring such weapons, their delivery mechanisms or the technology required for their production.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Ecuador's support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). If the OPCW is to fully perform its role under the Convention, all States must refrain from politicizing its activities so that it can discharge its mandate in an impartial and transparent way, free from interference or pressure. We also call on the authors of draft resolutions relating to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention to bear in mind the universal nature of those instruments and to avoid controversial proposals on which there is no general agreement so as to ensure that all Member States can adopt them by consensus.

Mrs. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union. I will add some remarks in my national capacity, a more extensive version of which will be published online.

Over the past year, the strategic context has deteriorated significantly as proliferation crises have worsened. In North Korea, the international community faces the most serious proliferation crisis of the twenty-first century. North Korea's nuclear programme, which the regime pursues at all costs, is closely linked to its ballistic missile programme, which has significantly advanced with the recent launch of two intercontinental ballistic missiles. Those facts show that the regime seeks to acquire nuclear weapons that can reach not only Asia and Oceania, but also North America and Europe. That threat now concerns us all and requires a strong response to preserve the non-proliferation regime and to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table.

On 13 October, the highest authorities of my country, together with those of Germany and the United Kingdom, reaffirmed their commitment to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its full implementation by all parties. Preserving the Plan of Action is in our shared security

interests. The Vienna agreement, the culmination of 13 years of diplomacy, was a major step towards ensuring that Iran's nuclear programme should not be diverted for military purposes. While we work to preserve the Plan of Action, we share the concerns regarding Iran's ballistic missile programme and its regional activities because they also affect our security interests.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq continues. Last year, the Joint Investigation Mechanism (JIM) concluded that the Syrian security and armed forces were responsible for three chlorine attacks and that Da'esh was responsible for a mustard gas attack. Since then, the attack in Khan Shaykhun in April killed nearly 100 people, this time with sarin gas. The responsibility of the Syrian regime for the latter attack, condemned by France, was confirmed by the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. We now await the important conclusions of the JIM.

Major uncertainties also remain regarding the continuation of the Syrian chemical programme. Successive reports of the OPCW have still not confirmed that the Syrian declaration is complete and in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which also poses the risk of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorist groups. Those particularly worrisome developments will be reflected in the CWC resolution this year.

Thirteen years since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), its implementation has advanced in all sectors in all regions of the world, but the threat has evolved, requiring a strengthened role for the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and of its expert capabilities. Moreover, ensuring the security of materials, including radioactive substances, remains a priority. That is the aim of France's initiative, backed by 28 other partners at the most recent Nuclear Security Summit, as well as the Franco-German biennial resolution (resolution 71/66) on that matter, adopted by consensus last year.

The issue of delivery systems of weapons of mass destruction is also central, as recalled in several resolutions of the Security Council. It is therefore urgent to step up our efforts to strengthen multilateral arrangements, including The Hague Code of Conduct, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Proliferation Security Initiative.

While the outcome of the eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention held in 2016 was

disappointing, despite the outstanding leadership of Ambassador Molnár, which we commend yet again, the December meeting of States parties in Geneva must lead us to restore a positive momentum for cooperation and to agree on an effective intersessional work programme.

We cannot run the risk of long-term weakening of the biological non-proliferation regime and compliance with it, especially in the light of the rapid developments in science and technology. Working to improve transparency and build trust, in the spirit of the voluntary peer review mechanism that we propose, and facilitating cooperation and assistance through the mutual sharing of experiences, together we should support the Secretary-General's mechanism for investigation, which in our view remains essential.

Joint commitment is needed to overcome the political deadlock. In support of India as Chair, France will continue to put forward proposals to that end.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): Japan actively takes part in international initiatives for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation with regard to weapons of mass destruction in the form of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as missiles as a means of delivery and associated technologies and materials. On this occasion, I would like to share Japan's perspective on chemical and biological weapons.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We emphasize the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and of the OPCW as its implementing body. The use of chemical weapons cannot be allowed by anyone under any circumstances for any reason.

Despite the strong condemnation of the international community, the use of chemical weapons in Syria poses a serious challenge to the global norms prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. In that regard, Japan fully supports the work of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). It is of great importance to promote cooperation on identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons and on bringing them to justice. We look forward to the report of the JIM and are ready to work constructively in order to hold the perpetrators accountable.

It is essential to strengthen efforts to accelerate the implementation of national measures, which serve as a fundamental tool for preventing the re-emergence and

the proliferation of chemical weapons. Moreover, the increased threat posed by non-State actors, including terrorists, is becoming an imminent issue. We must prevent, without fail, chemical weapons and toxic chemicals from falling into the wrong hands.

Japan also believes that it is important to redouble our efforts towards the universalization of the CWC. We have provided expertise and technical assistance to facilitate States not yet parties joining the Convention. We encourage the remaining four States that have not joined the Convention to reconsider their positions and to facilitate their respective internal processes with a view to early accession.

Japan takes its obligations under the CWC seriously and has invested a significant amount of human and financial resources to fulfil its obligations, one of which is to destroy abandoned chemical weapons in China. It is true that the abandoned-chemical-weapons project entails various challenges and uncertainties. Nevertheless, the project has been making consistent progress.

Significant progress has already been achieved and approximately 49,000 abandoned chemical weapons have been destroyed. Let me also stress that progress in the abandoned-chemical-weapons project has been made possible with the valuable on-site joint efforts of Japan and China, within which each country bears the respective responsibilities. I would like to underline that, without such constructive bilateral cooperation and close coordination, that unprecedented and difficult project could not have been carried out. Japan reaffirms its commitment to continuing its greatest possible efforts to advance the project.

Along with the CWC, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has also played a vital role in international peace and security. Japan is resolved to align itself with States parties and is fully committed to strengthening the BWC. In order to strengthen the Convention, we would like to focus on the revitalization of the intersessional process based on the discussions during the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the BWC, held last November. In that regard, Japan continues to stress the importance of awareness-raising, education and outreach among scientists, collaboration with international organizations and confidence-building measures.

At the same time, the universalization of the BWC has become increasingly important in order to enhance

international security. In that context, Japan welcomes the recent accession of Samoa and strongly encourages other States to join the Convention soon. Japan, together with relevant international organizations, academia and research institutes, is ready to provide cooperation and assistance related to the BWC for the States parties in need.

We believe that we succeed in reinforcing the BWC effectively through practical and pragmatic approaches, building on a common understanding and effective action.

Mr. Parnohadinigrat (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.14) but would also like to make a statement in its national capacity.

Indonesia attaches the utmost importance to the conventions on chemical and biological weapons. We believe that the instruments are important components of the international security architecture.

As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), we believe that the Convention remains the most effective instrument in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Indonesia is firmly committed to the full and effective implementation of its obligations under the Convention.

To share our current progress in that area, the Indonesian Government recently established a national authority on the CWC through the enactment of presidential decree No. 19/2017. The board of the national authority consists of relevant stakeholders that work in conjunction to support, plan, enforce, observe and evaluate the use of chemical substances for peaceful purposes. The national authority will also work to enhance cooperation with international organizations and States parties to the Convention, particularly with regard to assistance and cooperation, which are the most important elements within the pillars of the Convention.

The realization of the objectives and goals of the Convention hinges on the commitment of its States parties to implementing all its provisions. While noting the progress on chemical weapons by possessor States, Indonesia believes that all States parties to the CWC

should fulfil their obligations in accordance with the provisions of the Convention without further delay.

Recalling that the universalization of the Convention will significantly lower the risk of proliferation and use of chemical weapons by both State and non-State actors, Indonesia also calls on all States not party to the Convention to join without delay or preconditions. We need to be mindful that the goals and objectives of the Convention can be fully realized only once universality of the Convention is achieved.

On this occasion, we would like to also convey to the General Assembly that Indonesia wishes to become a member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for the period 2018-2020, and we seek the support of Member States present today for our candidature.

Indonesia shares the interest among States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) in strengthening the Convention. We are concerned that the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the BWC failed to produce a substantive outcome, especially with regard to the intersessional process of the review cycle of the BWC. The intersessional process is a crucial part of the overall effort to strengthen the implementation of the Convention. The upcoming Meeting of States Parties, to be held in Geneva on 4-8 December, will therefore seek to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference. Indonesia is committed to working closely with other States parties for the successful commencement of the Meeting of States Parties. The absence of a verification regime under the BWC remains a source of concern. Indonesia calls for the development of a verification mechanism under the BWC framework.

Indonesia is keen to strengthen the Convention in order to preserve the internal cohesion within the Biological Weapons Convention. For that purpose, we need to ensure that all initiatives to strengthen the Convention are established on the basis of agreed modalities. Any degree of preclusion from any modality of the BWC and the establishment of linkages with external instruments, where such instruments are created by a process outside the BWC, would certainly create unnecessary polarities within the BWC membership. It is therefore our duty to prevent that

from happening, as it would hamper the effectiveness of the Convention.

Another key area of the BWC that needs to be strengthened is international cooperation and assistance and exchanges on toxins, biological agent equipment and technology for peaceful purposes without any discrimination. In that regard, article X of the Convention recalls that States parties have a legal obligation to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes and not to impede the economic and technological development of States parties.

Mrs. Andamo (Thailand): At the outset, allow me to align the Kingdom of Thailand with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.14).

Global security can be achieved only through the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. In order to prosper, people must feel safe and not live their lives in fear. In recent years, the world has witnessed many incidents that point to the growing threat of biological and chemical weapons. Thailand reiterates its condemnation of the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances. The recent affirmation of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere is deeply saddening.

Preventing the proliferation of such weapons requires the concerted effort and unwavering commitment of the international community, and Thailand recognizes our fundamental responsibility to that end. Consequently, we are committed to fulfilling our obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Thailand also welcomes the recent progress made by Libya on its removal of all chemical-weapon precursors and by Russia on its recent completion of the destruction of chemical stockpiles. Those are a testament to the commitment of States parties towards disarmament through multilateralism.

Inspection and verification are essential to the effective and transparent implementation of those instruments concerning weapons of mass destruction. We therefore attach great importance to the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), particularly the reports of the OPCW-United

Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, the OPCW's progress reports and those of its Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. In July, we joined hands with the OPCW to host a regional dialogue on promoting global peace and prosperity through chemical safety and security, celebrating 20 years of the CWC and the OPCW. In the same vein, Thailand deems verification to be critical to the realization of the goals of the Biological Weapons Convention. We need accountability when it comes to the management of such harmful materials, and we support the call for a verification mechanism under the BWC.

At the national level, Thailand seeks to bolster accountability by ensuring that competent laws and regulations are updated and remain relevant. Recently, many existing pieces of legislation on the control of biological agents and materials, such as the Pathogens and Animal Toxins Act and the Communicable Diseases Act, were revised. We also have a biological weapons working group — a mechanism that we have found to be extremely useful for coordination across the relevant authorities. In addition, Thailand recognizes the importance of international cooperation in BWC implementation. We enjoy collaboration with many international initiatives, including the World Health Organization and the Global Health Security Agenda. Such entities can provide valuable support in the areas of public health, biosafety and biosecurity.

Furthermore, Thailand continues to implement its obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In September, we co-hosted a South-East Asia workshop with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific on resolution 1540 (2004) to strengthen regional understanding and cooperation. For Thailand, resolution 1540 (2004) connects the different non-proliferation regimes, highlighting once again the coordination needed to achieve global security.

As we move forward in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a spirit of partnership in non-proliferation and disarmament can help us to accomplish our shared goal of security, well-being and sustainable development for all.

Mr. Wang Chang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC).

Over the past two decades, the Chemical Weapons Convention has made a significant contribution to the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons, and has played an important role in maintaining international peace and security.

China notes the recent complete destruction of Russia's chemical weapons stockpiles, which constitutes an important step towards achieving the objective of the Convention, and wishes to express its congratulations in that regard. That being said, chemical weapons stockpiles, particularly abandoned chemical weapons, remain and the risk of chemical terrorism is increasing. There is still a long way to go until we achieve the goal of a world free from chemical weapons.

Over the past year, China has continued to earnestly and strictly implement the CWC, and has made a positive contribution to promoting the universality and effectiveness of the Convention. The Chinese national authority that is responsible for compliance held a commemorative event to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the CWC, recalling its achievements and outlining future work. Meanwhile, China attaches great importance to publicizing the Convention, and has further raised the awareness of the business community and the general public of the Convention's implementation. China has submitted declarations, in a timely and accurate manner, of all categories to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and has received more than 480 on-site inspections to date. China has also actively promoted international cooperation, inter alia, by hosting training courses to assist other States in improving their capabilities for implementing the Convention.

To date, large quantities of the chemical weapons abandoned by Japan in China still pose a grave threat to and harm people's lives and property, as well as ecological and environmental safety in China. Abandoned Japanese chemical weapons have been discovered on Chinese territory at more than 90 locations in 18 provinces. The largest burial site of abandoned Japanese chemical weapons ever discovered is located at Harbaling in Jilin province, in which it is estimated that over 330,000 items of abandoned Japanese chemical weapons are buried. However, the number of abandoned items of Japanese chemical weapons that have so far been recovered stands at only approximately 60,000, of which around 48,000 have been destroyed. Abandoned Japanese chemical

weapons are of much greater harm to people and to the environment than chemical weapons stockpiles.

The destruction of abandoned Japanese chemical weapons has a stake in the realization of the core objective of the Convention and remains an international legal obligation for Japan. China and Japan jointly invited an Executive Council delegation of the OPCW to visit the abandoned Japanese chemical weapons at the Harbaling destruction facility in June, which helped the relevant parties gain an in-depth knowledge of the urgent need to destroy the abandoned Japanese chemical weapons, as well as of their perniciousness. China regrets the fact that Japan failed to completely destroy its abandoned chemical weapons by the deadline stipulated in the Convention, and urges Japan to continue to scale up its efforts to fully destroy its abandoned chemical weapons thoroughly, safely and as soon as possible.

The issue of Syrian chemical weapons has been ongoing for a number of years and has become a major factor affecting peace and stability in Syria, the Middle East and beyond. China firmly opposes the use of chemical weapons for any purpose, by any country, group or individual and under any circumstance. China believes that a comprehensive, objective and fair investigation into the issue of the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria should be carried out by the OPCW and the relevant United Nations agencies so as to reach a conclusion that is based on solid evidence and that can stand the test of time and be substantiated by facts. China calls on the relevant parties to jointly promote a proper resolution to the issue of Syrian chemical weapons in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation from the broader context.

At present, biosecurity challenges, such as the threat of biological weapons, bioterrorism and epidemics of communicable diseases, are interlinked and are becoming increasingly prominent. All countries are part of a community with a shared future in dealing with biosecurity. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) is an important platform for maintaining international biosecurity and for strengthening global biosecurity governance. At its eighth Review Conference last year, the States parties conducted in-depth discussions on how to advance compliance. However, regrettably, a consensus could not be reached on substantive issues.

China believes that the priority for this year's meeting of States parties of the BWC should be to pursue consensus, while accommodating the concerns of all parties, with a view to establishing the method of work of the current intersessional process and comprehensively enhancing the effectiveness of the BWC. China has also proposed two initiatives: a template for a code of conduct for biological scientists and the establishment of a non-proliferation export control and international cooperation regime within the framework of the BWCjhu so as to further promote the BWC process.

China has comprehensively and strictly implemented the BWC, steadily promoted top-down structures for domestic biosecurity, further enhanced relevant legislation and regulations, and deepened international cooperation and exchanges in the area of biosecurity. In late October, the Wuhan Institute of Virology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences will hold an international workshop on biosafety, laboratory management and experimental techniques in order to promote awareness and capacity-building in biosecurity within the belt and road region and to jointly address biosecurity challenges.

During the Second World War, certain countries used chemical and biological weapons in violation of international law, claiming millions of casualties among Chinese military personnel and civilians. That inhumane historical tragedy continues to remind us of our important responsibility and mission to promote the multilateral arms control process and world peace. China is willing to make joint efforts with all parties to maintain the multilateral arms control process and to continue to promote the complete elimination of chemical and biological weapons.

Mr. Kawalowski (Poland): In the debate on other weapons of mass destruction, Poland traditionally attaches particular importance to the issues related to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We remain strongly committed to the idea of a world free of chemical weapons, and support the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in that regard.

It is even more important this year to take into account the anniversary context of our discussions, as the Committee could see, *inter alia*, last week during the exhibition prepared by Poland on the twentieth anniversary of the CWC and the OPCW. Over the past

20 years, there have, of course, been many successes with regard to the implementation of the Convention worldwide. One hundred and ninety-two States have joined the Convention, which makes it one of the most universal international treaties. Progress in eliminating chemical weapons is indisputable, with the recent remarkable example of Russia's full destruction of its chemical weapons, as confirmed by the OPCW Director-General.

Unfortunately, despite many successes, the world of today is still witnessing threats and challenges related to chemical weapons. Unfortunately, the use of chemical weapons is a reality. Chemical terrorism is an actual threat. The elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles is an unfinished business and the Convention's universalization has not yet been fully achieved.

In other words, today the bedrock of the Convention — the international norm against the use of chemical weapons — is often fundamentally challenged in many ways. That raises questions over the integrity of the CWC and the credibility of the OPCW. Taking that into account, Poland supports the continued work of the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. The use of sarin as a weapon in Khan Shaykhun and sulfur mustard in Um-Housh in recent months clearly demonstrates the need for the circumstances of those atrocities to be identified and the perpetrators to be held to account.

That is the context in which Poland, as in previous years, has introduced the draft resolution on CWC implementation in the General Assembly. The key goal of those efforts is to ensure the strong, clear and united support of the entire international community for the integrity of the CWC and OPCW efforts. We need to demonstrate unity of purpose towards achieving a world free of chemical weapons. As a result, we are striving to enhance, not weaken, the CWC and the OPCW 20 years after their establishment. From our perspective, that is the only way to defend ourselves against chemical weapons challenges, deter any future perpetrators and hold accountable those responsible.

In that endeavour, Poland conducted an open and transparent negotiation process on draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.26, which started with broad consultations in The Hague early on and was followed by two rounds of discussions in New York. We had to take into account the fact that, due to the complex political context, the

OPCW and other international bodies have not yet been able to address the greatest challenges to the credibility of the Convention. The General Assembly and its First Committee cannot shy away from that reality.

Again during this year's work, Poland again faced fundamentally divergent views of Member States that were contradictory and mutually excluding. Finding a middle ground proved to be challenging. As sole sponsor, Poland therefore had to take on the full responsibility of reflecting the current status of the Convention's implementation, building on the ongoing work of the OPCW in The Hague and in New York. We have positively reflected on important issues, but also remained frank when it came to key challenges to the Convention. Poland has done its utmost to provide both a factual and an actual text. We are fully aware of the dynamic and changing situation, and we will not stop our efforts to address it when necessary.

In conclusion, let me express our gratitude to all the delegations that participated in extensive consultations on the draft resolution in The Hague and in New York. Those discussions affirmed the existence of an overall political interest in and support in all regions for the implementation of all pillars of the Convention, as well as concern related to the use of chemical weapons. That is exactly what we need while discussing OPCW transformation and preparing for the Review Conference next year. Poland hopes that its efforts will be taken into account and that the text of the draft resolution will be accepted by the Assembly at this demanding time.

Mr. Gaffey (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

My delegation shares the strong view that weapons of mass destruction have no place anywhere in our world. Their toxic presence lends nothing to the already fragile, tense and complex regional relationships. We regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the newly adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as key instruments in the international community's efforts to achieve a world free of all

weapons of mass destruction. We call on States that have not yet joined those international instruments to accede to them and to complete their universalization at the earliest opportunity.

We would like to voice our support for the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the twentieth anniversary of its establishment and the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We join other States in expressing our condemnation of the affirmed use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Armed Forces and non-State actors in Syria, as confirmed by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. We highlight in particular our support for the Joint Investigative Mechanism, the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Declaration Assessment Team, and we stress the importance of full compliance with the CWC and its declaration and verification regime.

The development and use of chemical weapons—long prohibited by international law—goes against the very purpose of peace upon which the United Nations was founded. Indeed, the development and use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons by anyone, anywhere, anytime and under any circumstance is absolutely unacceptable. We believe that any weakening of that norm is dangerous.

Ireland is of the firm belief that the widespread condemnation of those who breach their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention must be matched by action, and that to safeguard against impunity, those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity should be referred to the International Criminal Court to face the appropriate consequences. We welcome the recent announcement by the Russian Federation of the verified destruction of its remaining chemical weapons—a development that brings us closer to the goal of a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

Ireland is committed in its support for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. While regretting the outcome of last year's Review Conference, it serves to strengthen our commitment to the Convention and our resolve to reach an agreement at the upcoming meeting of States parties on both the substantive and procedural aspects of a new programme of work.

Given the interconnected nature of our world, multilateral tools and regimes are more important than ever, especially as our work on non-proliferation is also

about addressing the means of delivery of the weapon. In that regard, we are deeply concerned about the illegal ballistic and nuclear testing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which we have condemned unreservedly. We call on Iran to strictly implement all provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and to refrain from any activity related to ballistic missiles that are designed to be capable of carrying nuclear weapons. We take this opportunity to underline our support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. It is a key achievement for non-proliferation and an example of what can be achieved through careful diplomacy and negotiation.

Strengthening the non-proliferation regime is a key priority for Ireland, and this week we are pleased to become co-Chair of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), together with Iceland. The MTCR constitutes a key instrument in international efforts to prevent missile proliferation. It has significantly reduced the ability of proliferators to acquire the technology, information and means to develop delivery systems for missiles armed with weapons of mass destruction. My delegation is also a strong supporter of The Hague Code of Conduct, which has many synergies with the MTCR. It has delivered concrete results as the only multilateral, transparent, confidence-building instrument in that arena.

I would like to reiterate our support for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East, with a path for action as set out in 2010. We would welcome hearing from the co-convenors their plans for regaining momentum as we move towards the 2020 NPT Review Conference. While we regret that progress on that crucial issue has stalled, we want to take this opportunity to call on all parties to work together towards the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East in order to achieve what is a common commitment and common goal — contributing to peace and stability for future generations so that they can live in a world that is free from weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): The continued use of chemical weapons in Syria is not only a terrible tragedy for the victims but also an appalling contravention of the global norm against their use. Despite near universal condemnation, those attacks have not ceased, and we have again seen the use of the nerve agent sarin. The United Kingdom condemns any use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere.

Almost a year ago, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism clearly identified that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces had used chlorine in three separate attacks in 2014 and 2015, and that Da'esh had used sulfur mustard in an attack in 2015. It is to our great regret that the Security Council has still not been able to take action in response to those findings. A draft resolution condemning those attacks was vetoed by Russia and China. Accountability for those crimes still eludes us.

In the meantime, attacks have continued in Syria. The OPCW has confirmed the use of the nerve agent sarin in the town of Khan Shaykhun on 4 April, resulting in approximately 100 deaths. More recently, it has identified the presence of sarin in samples from nearby Ltamenah, where an attack had been reported just a few days before the one in Khan Shaykhun. It is no surprise that outstanding issues remain with regard to Syria's declaration regarding the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). The OPCW confirmed earlier this month that there continued to be serious gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in Syria's CWC declaration.

After four years, the Syrian Government has still failed to offer full cooperation with the OPCW. The OPCW has detected the presence of chemical weapons agents at locations where, according to Syria's account of its programme, there should not have been any trace. The OPCW has detected the presence of agents of which there is no mention in Syria's declaration. It is vital that international investigations into the Syrian declaration and the perpetrators of attacks continue, and that the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism be renewed.

The use by Da'esh of sulfur mustard is similarly abhorrent. Confirmation by the OPCW of chemical weapons use by non-State actors in Iraq and Syria underlines the total disregard of such groups for the rule of international law and norms of behaviour. We welcome the ongoing efforts to tackle the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors through the full implementation of the Convention and the strengthening of existing mechanisms.

This year marks 20 years since the CWC came into force in 1997. We urge the remaining four United Nations Member States not yet party to the Convention to join

without delay. We strongly support the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction as the cornerstone of the international ban on biological weapons; key priorities are its universalization and more effective implementation by all States parties. Transparency and confidence-building measures, cooperation and assistance and practical steps to reinforce the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons are essential tools to strengthen the Convention. As the eighth Review Conference was unable to achieve consensus on a substantive programme of work for the intersessional period, and as we approach the next meeting of States parties in December, we call on all States parties to redouble their efforts to promote and secure agreement on a strengthened future intersessional process.

The proliferation of ballistic missiles, in tandem with the illicit development of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), poses a grave danger to regional and global peace and security. As we said in an earlier statement, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued reckless development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes poses a grave threat to international peace and security. The United Kingdom remains fully committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and I refer the Committee to the statement made by the leaders of France, Germany and the United Kingdom on 13 October.

Iran's ballistic missile programme remains sanctioned. This year, Iran has conducted a number of launches, including of medium-range ballistic missiles and a space launch vehicle. That is inconsistent with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and contributes to regional instability. We urge Iran to refrain from such activity. We all must do more to ensure that resolution 2231 (2015) is rigorously enforced. We urge all partners to report any evidence that Iran is conducting activity contrary to that resolution to the Security Council.

Events this year have again shown that the ballistic missile threat is real and growing. We need a strong multilateral response. The Missile Technology Control Regime and The Hague Code of Conduct are the two principal instruments in the field of ballistic missile proliferation, and the United Kingdom welcomes their important work. We must continue to support the regimes and to ensure the effective implementation of their provisions in order to help to prevent the

proliferation of WMDs and their delivery systems — an obligation for all Member States under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). To increase the effectiveness of those regimes, we call on those United Nations Member States that are not currently members to consider acceding or adhering to them.

Finally, I wish to highlight resolution 1540 (2004) and the central role that it plays in preventing nuclear, chemical and biological material from falling into the hands of terrorists. Last year's comprehensive review and the adoption of Security Council resolution 2325 (2016) were the most significant revision of the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) in its 13-year history and a welcome example of Council consensus on non-proliferation issues. We must continue to support its effective implementation if we are to tackle the threat that terrorists pose.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): The conventions prohibiting biological and chemical weapons — the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) — are two important pillars of the international security architecture. They have made significant contributions to the goal of general and complete disarmament by comprehensively banning two entire categories of weapons of mass destruction.

Pakistan remains committed to the full and effective implementation of the BWC. We have instituted comprehensive legislative, regulatory and administrative measures, including codes of conduct to regulate life sciences in Pakistan, to enhance biosafety and biosecurity regulations, and to strengthen our export controls on biological agents and toxins, bringing them up to par with the best international standards.

We value the BWC's contribution to global security and its potential for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of life sciences. Our priorities include the universalization of the Convention and the full, effective and balanced implementation of all its articles, in particular article X. Pakistan participated actively in the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention last year. We were pleased to have assisted the President as a friend

of the Chair on the future intersessional programme and the Implementation Support Unit, and also as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Review Conference.

The Review Conference comprehensively reviewed all articles of the Convention. We were disappointed that consensus could not be reached on a robust programme for substantive discussions during the intersessional period. We will remain engaged with the BWC process and support the strengthening of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner. Pakistan believes that the most credible and sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a legally binding protocol that also addresses verification and implementation of all articles of the Convention. The Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons is an important operational tool for investigation. However, neither that mechanism nor the voluntary confidence-building measures can substitute for the need for a dedicated verification mechanism for the Convention. In view of the difference of opinion among States parties over the need for a legally binding protocol, my delegation will continue to participate constructively in all discussions in pursuit of progress where consensus is possible and by focusing on areas that unite us.

Pakistan remains fully committed to the CWC and continues to actively and constructively participate in the work of the OPCW, which celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year. Pakistan condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. Those responsible for such deplorable acts must be identified and held accountable. It is important to strengthen the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to deal with ongoing and future challenges, together with the priority of the complete destruction of declared and abandoned chemical weapons. Decision-making by consensus on CWC-related issues, including at the United Nations and the OPCW, must be restored.

We attach high priority to the CWC's provisions relating to international cooperation and assistance, as well as peaceful uses of chemical technology. We believe that the effective implementation of article XI will result in stronger support to achieve the overall goals of the Convention.

Pakistan continues to conduct basic and advanced regional and international assistance and protection courses in Islamabad on a regular basis. This year, we also organized a series of events, including an advanced chemical-safety management symposium and workshops on comprehensive chemical safety, security best practices for industry and chemical supply chain safety and security.

Pakistan shares the concern that, along with the threat of the possible production and use of chemical and biological weapons by States, there is also the danger of their acquisition by non-State actors. We have taken a series of measures to counter that risk. Pakistan's comprehensive reports to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) provide a detailed matrix on all those procedures, mechanisms and legislations, as well as on their enforcement. We also supported the Russian proposal for the development of an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism in the Conference on Disarmament.

As a mainstream partner in the global non-proliferation efforts, Pakistan has established a strong export-control regime that is harmonized with international regimes, including the Australia Group. Our comprehensive export-control regime and its effective implementation have been appreciated by many of our partners.

Mr. Abbani (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my country's association with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/72/PV.14) regarding other types of weapons of mass destruction.

The total elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction is an urgent priority. Securing the universality of the treaties on such weapons is therefore extremely important to safeguarding global peace, security and stability and to establishing a world free of such weapons and of the threats that they represent.

We express our great satisfaction at the results attained in the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which is the sole international instrument banning a complete category of weapons of mass destruction while seeking to develop the peaceful use of chemical materials. In that respect, Algeria commends the Russian Federation for completing the destruction of its chemical weapons

stockpile ahead of schedule. Algeria calls on the other parties concerned to speed up the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles during the periods agreed upon. We categorically reject any use of chemical weapons by any party and for any reason. My country also underlines the importance of developing and strengthening international cooperation in chemical activities for peaceful purposes, in particular with regard to lifting restraints and facilitating the transfer of technology and chemical material to developing countries in order to help expand their economies.

With respect to the Biological Weapons Convention, Algeria reiterates the importance of the full implementation of all its articles in order to achieve its objectives. At the same time, we call for strengthening the Convention by concluding an international legally binding instrument that addresses all its articles in a comprehensive and balanced manner and without discrimination in order to develop an effective verification mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the Convention. My country regrets that the most recent Review Conference was not able to achieve satisfactory results with regard to the implementation of the Convention.

Algeria also stresses the importance of making every effort to prevent the emergence of any other kind of weapon of mass destruction or new systems thereof. That could be done through the revitalization of the role of the Conference on Disarmament, and in particular by making recommendations pertaining to negotiations on new types of weapons of mass destruction, in particular the known ones, such as radiological and phosphorus-based weapons.

My country supports the establishment of zones free of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world as part of efforts aimed at disarmament, non-proliferation and the strengthening of regional and international stability, peace and security. In that context, Algeria expresses its deep concern about the failure to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and about the lack of any progress on that pivotal issue. We call on all parties involved to redouble their efforts to establish such a zone, which would indeed make a substantial contribution towards promoting peace, security and stability in the region and the whole world.

Mr. Hanje (Netherlands): The Netherlands associates itself with the statement delivered by the

observer of the European Union. In addition, my country would like to underline the following issues.

The Netherlands is dismayed at the fact that this year we are once again forced to take up the issue of the Syrian chemical-weapons programme. However, there are several reasons why we must continue to address it.

First, there is the issue of the Syrian declaration to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Despite two years of intensive consultations, a large number of questions surrounding the accuracy and the completeness of that declaration are still outstanding. The recent update of the Director-General of the OPCW on the progress that the Declaration Assessment Team has made since the last report shows hardly any progress at all. It is incumbent upon Syria to resolve that issue and to show the international community in a convincing manner that it has fully declared its entire chemical weapons programme in full and that the programme has been completely and irreversibly dismantled.

Secondly, during the past three years, there have been multiple allegations of the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria. The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigate Mechanism (JIM), established by Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), concluded in its third report (S/2016/738) that Syria was responsible for two attacks with chemical weapons on its own population and that Da'esh was responsible for one. The use is therefore no longer alleged; it is confirmed. Syria is a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and has clearly breached its obligations under the Convention and acted in contravention of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

The fourth JIM report will not revisit its earlier conclusions. It will only finalize its assessment of the three cases that it did not have time to finish previously. It is clear that the international community must react firmly to such heinous acts, and we call on the members of the Security Council to respond decisively to that violation of international law and the Council's own resolution 2118 (2013).

In the light of what I have mentioned, the Netherlands favours the inclusion of firm language on that issue in the draft resolution on the implementation of the CWC (A/C.1/72/L.26). Moreover, recent reports on the possible use of sarin, in Lataminah on 30 March,

five days before the Khan Shaykhun attack, stress the urgent need for renewal, without delay, of the JIM mandate to identify the perpetrators of confirmed breaches of international laws banning chemical weapons. Work continuity and appropriate logistical conditions must be assured. Finally, we call on the four States that remain outside the Convention to accede without delay.

We had high hopes in the run-up to the eighth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). Unfortunately, our expectations were not met. However, we have a chance to redeem ourselves in December. Making sure that the Conference achieves ambitious and lasting results is more important than ever. State actors and non-State actors have not refrained from using chemical weapons, and with rapid technological advancements the development of biological arms is becoming more easily achievable every day.

The Netherlands attaches great value to further strengthening the BWC. We focus on promoting universal adherence to the BWC by striving to achieve universal membership, effective national implementation and increased confidence among States parties; making sure that current developments in the field of science and technology have a central place in the deliberations of the BWC; strengthening the intersessional process by giving States parties the power to take binding decisions during that process; and expanding the Implementation Support Unit (ISU); just by adding two staff members, its capacity has already been greatly enhanced.

In conclusion, the Netherlands calls on the ISU, the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant institutions to increase their cooperation and coordination in order to enhance the global capacity to prevent and to combat outbreaks of contagious diseases. The 2014 Ebola outbreak illustrated that need, and positive steps in addressing such a need must be encouraged.

The CWC and the BWC are two indispensable instruments in the international efforts against the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, biological and chemical — in our collective pursuit of a safer world.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) as core pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Those two Conventions have continued to underpin our collective efforts to put in practice banning biological and chemical weapons and associated substances.

I will first talk about our efforts related to chemical weapons. On 29 April, we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC and the founding of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Over the past two decades, about 95 per cent of all chemical weapons declared by States parties have been destroyed, which is a remarkable achievement. With Russia and the United States scheduled to complete the destruction of their remaining stockpiles by the end of 2020 and 2023, respectively, we now stand closer to the complete elimination of chemical weapons.

However, despite our efforts, we are facing formidable tasks ahead. The use of chemical weapons in Syria is an issue of the utmost gravity and must be addressed with urgency. Two reports of the OPCW Fact-finding Mission confirmed the use of a mustard agent in September 2016 in Um-Housh and that of sarin gas or a sarin-like substance in Khan Shaykhun in April. The Republic of Korea strongly condemns those heinous crimes and urges the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to conduct a thorough investigation so that those behind any use of chemical weapons are brought to justice.

The third and fourth reports of the JIM in 2016 (see documents S/2016/738 and S/2016/888, respectively) confirmed the use of toxic chemicals as weapons by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. We emphasize that the prevention of the acquisition and use of chemical weapons by non-State actors should be a top priority for the OPCW, and look forward to the OPCW's early adoption of the draft decision on addressing the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, which we are co-sponsoring.

We are also keenly aware of the fact that, despite the CWC being one of the most universal disarmament treaties, North Korea and three countries still remain outside the Convention. We will continue to support efforts for the full universalization of the CWC, as well as the success of the fourth Review Conference in 2018.

Similarly, the Republic of Korea has been consistent in its support for reinforcing the BWC regime, based on each State's robust implementation of its obligations under the Convention. We strongly believe that strong confidence-building measures, sufficient capacity-building and assistance, as well as adequate consideration of the impact of relevant technological developments, are essential aspects.

First, the Republic of Korea engages in effective actions, such as submitting reports on confidence-building measures, enacting domestic legislation and building operational capacities.

Secondly, we are committed to international cooperation and assistance efforts for capacity-building, from the construction of medical facilities to the provision of technical assistance and medical staff training, in cooperation with the Korea International Cooperation Agency. The Republic of Korea also actively participates in various multilateral capacity-building programmes, including the Global Health Security Agenda and the Global Partnership.

Thirdly, in the light of the rapid development of science and technology, combined with their wide availability and inherent dual-use nature, the international regime against biological weapons needs to adapt itself to meet the emerging challenges in a pragmatic and realistic way. We share the view that the establishment of a more structured and sustainable science and technology review process is needed in order to introduce a more current, and thereby relevant, technical foundation of the Convention.

It was regrettable that last year we were not able to adopt by consensus the final document of the eighth Review Conference, which would have contributed to further strengthening those essential aspects of the BWC. Given the importance of the Convention itself and its impact on multilateral disarmament efforts, we must achieve substantial outcomes at the upcoming meeting of States parties in December. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the BWC and to the success of the 2017 meeting of States parties.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.49.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): I have asked for the floor to briefly introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.49, on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological

(Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BWC).

Following the practice of previous years and after extensive open-ended informal consultations, Hungary has submitted the draft resolution on the BWC. In addition to the technical changes, such as welcoming the increase in the number of States parties to the Convention, this year's draft resolution notes the decisions taken by the Review Conference on the assistance and cooperation database, the sponsorship programme and the Implementation Support Unit, as well as the mandate given to the next meeting of States parties, which is to be held in Geneva in December, to try to reach consensus on an intersessional process. The draft resolution also notes the importance of financial issues and encourages States parties to consider ways of addressing those issues at the next opportunity.

Hungary wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the draft resolution. Our goal, as it is every year, is to have the draft resolution adopted by consensus.

Mr. Aung (Myanmar): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.14).

Today, the world is seriously threatened by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). In addition to the threat posed by nuclear weapons, we are not completely safe from the danger of chemical and biological weapons, as they are considered to be the most proliferated weapons of mass destruction. Despite their legal and treaty implementation regimes, the acquisition or use of chemical or biological weapons by terrorists or non-State actors remains critical.

Myanmar firmly believes that the Biological Weapons Convention is an important element of the international legal architecture related to WMDs. Myanmar recognizes the successful completion of the eighth Review Conference with the adoption of the final declaration, in which future implementations have been set out for achieving the objectives of the Convention by means of their more effective realization.

Myanmar welcomes the decision of the Conference to hold annual meetings starting at the end of 2017, in order to seek progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process. For the sake of the effectiveness

of the Convention, we hope that the consideration to formulate the verification system will be at the top of the priority list for future multilateral negotiations.

As a State party, Myanmar reiterates the importance of universalization. The objectives of the Convention cannot be fully realized if one State remains outside the Convention. We urge those that have not yet done so to sign and to ratify the Convention without delay.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC) is the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of WMD, providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. That achievement has to be maintained through its full implementation.

It is inspiring to note that almost 96 per cent of the declared chemical weapons have been destroyed under the verification of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). At the same time, we should not tolerate the use of such horrible weapons by any State or non-State actor. We hope that we will enable the observation of the principles of transparency and inclusiveness in the implementation of the CWC regime in the upcoming fourth Review Conference in 2018.

Allow me to turn to our national efforts on the implementation of the CWC. Myanmar ratified the Convention in 2015. While upholding the principles and objectives of the CWC, Myanmar has submitted its initial annual declaration for anticipated activities for 2015, 2016 and 2017, along with its annual report on its national programmes related to protective purposes, to the OPCW. Furthermore, we already provided information on Myanmar's national implementation, in accordance with article VII, in July 2017.

I take this opportunity to inform the Committee that Myanmar is now planning to host a stakeholder forum for States parties in Asia on the adoption of national implementing legislation in order to support the States parties to the CWC of the Asia region in regard to their national legislation.

While supporting the European Union Centres of Excellence on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation (CBRN), Myanmar formed a national CBRN team on 25 June 2013 with the aim of collecting practical information on the

proposed objectives, to mitigate the CBRN risks and to respond to emergency preparedness. Myanmar is now developing a CBRN action plan, in cooperation with related international and national CBRN team members and CBRN national working group members.

In our view, chemical and biological weapons are inhumane. Any violation of near-universal treaty obligations poses direct challenges to the integrity of the respective legal instruments and to human civilization. Violations of any kind should never be condoned.

Mr. Al Towaiya (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/72/PV.14).

The decreasing risk of the outbreak of a comprehensive nuclear war have not made the world more secure and stable. The production and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to be a matter of concern for most countries around the world. Nuclear weapons alone are no longer the main source of concern, as chemical and biological weapons have joined the list.

My country believes that making any progress on issues related to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) will hinge significantly on the progress made in addressing global and regional tensions, and on the extent to which multilateralism contributes to achieving that goal. The lack of sincere determination to prevent the proliferation of WMD technologies may lead non-State actors to access such technologies one day. The Sultanate of Oman therefore believes that the acquisition of all types of WMDs by non-State actors is one of the largest threats to international security and stability.

It is not surprising that the Middle East region continues to experience such an unprecedented level of frustration as a result of the recurring failure to implement the agreement on a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In that context, my delegation reaffirms the importance of implementing the 1995 resolution on ridding the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction.

My country recognizes the critical importance of the treaties on weapons of mass destruction of all kinds, and other efforts towards the elimination of

such weapons. History has proven that conventions on arms control and disarmament are not the result of trust among countries. Rather, they are a means to build trust wherever it is absent. That is why my country has acceded to conventions on WMDs.

In conclusion, I have the honour to note that the Sultanate of Oman is committed to peace and disarmament at the global level, and to security at the international level, with full respect for international law, human rights and the Charter of the United Nations. It is our hope that the current session of the First Committee will culminate in a successful outcome.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain fully supports the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

The marking of the twentieth anniversary of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on 29 April highlighted the important role of that organization in disarmament and non-proliferation. The Chemical Weapons Convention is one of the major multilateral achievements in disarmament in that it bans an entire category of weapons, and is a robust verification mechanism in force since 1997.

However, the evidence of the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq poses an extraordinary challenge for that organization and calls for the full support of the Committee for its work. Spain condemns the use of any chemical substance as a weapon, by anyone and in any situation, and reiterates its concern at the conclusions of the reports provided by the Joint United Nations-OPCW Investigation Mechanism (JIM) on the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons, established under resolution 2235 (2015), whose latest report (see S/2016/888) assigns responsibility to the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and Da'esh for chemical attacks, in flagrant violation of resolution 2118 (2013), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the most basic international humanitarian law.

At the same time, the confirmation by the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic of the use of sarin, an agent of chemical warfare, in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April deserves the strongest rejection and condemnation of Spain, as do the conclusions on the use of mustard gas in Um-Housh in September 2016. The work of the JIM experts will again be key in attributing responsibilities and in preventing those and other crimes from going unpunished. It is important to extend their mandate so that they can make progress

in their work so as to create the deterrent effect that we all want. The Security Council must assume its responsibility and respond firmly to the conclusions reached by the JIM.

Spain highly appreciates the high-level meetings between the Syrian authorities and the OPCW in order to make progress on the declaration of Syria's chemical weapons programme. We demand full cooperation from the Syrian authorities so that this round of negotiation will produce positive results that will allow us to confirm the complete and irreversible destruction of its chemical arsenal. Finally, Spain hopes that the OPCW can strengthen its capabilities and those of its member States to deal with the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors.

One of the greatest priorities of concern is to ensure that non-State actors, including terrorist groups, do not have access to weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Spain welcomes the conclusions and recommendations contained in the comprehensive review of resolution 1540 (2004) carried out by the Security Council. The process concluded with the adoption of resolution 2325 (2016) by the Security Council in December. The resolution seeks to strengthen the instruments of application, assistance and coordination so as to ensure the greater involvement of civil society in working to achieve the goals of resolution 1540 (2004). In that regard, Spain calls on all Member States to develop instruments to establish and to strengthen their regulatory and institutional framework in that fight. We regret that no decisions have been made on an intersessional work programme, which is in detriment to an active and effective convention.

Spain will continue improving its national implementation of the Convention. In that regard, Spain remains fully committed to continuing its progress on all articles of the Convention, and in particular, on issues related to export control, the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, advances in science and technology, codes of conduct for scientists and facilities, and international cooperation. In relation to the latter point, Spain will pursue its programme of biosafety and biosecurity voluntary visits, which facilitates cooperation, country by country, for mutual benefit and the benefit of the Convention.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): Nepal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.14).

Nepal is a staunch supporter of disarmament and non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction. Their existence poses existential threats to humankind. Nepal therefore reaffirms its principled position that universal peace and security can be ensured only through the time-bound, general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction.

Nepal is free from all types of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery system. It does not produce, manufacture, possess, import or export any weapons of mass destruction, nor does it intend to do so. The use of weapons of mass destruction by whomsoever in any circumstances against innocent people is a crime. As a State party to the Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC), Nepal has been careful in regulating the cross-border movement of chemical goods. The existing legal mechanisms of Nepal have successfully governed the import and export of dual-use chemicals. Nepal expresses its satisfaction over the effective operation and verification mechanism of the CWC, as well as the promotion of the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. We also welcome the completed verified destruction of chemical weapons by the Russian Federation.

Nepal ratified the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) in November 2016. We are committed to the national implementation of the BWC in compliance with the provisions of the Convention. There is an urgent need for a universal, non-discriminatory and legally binding mechanism to tackle the issue of biological threats. Moreover, the lack of a verification mechanism has hampered the effective implementation of the Convention. Nepal recognizes the importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations with a view to adopting a legally binding protocol that addresses all articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

In conformity with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), Nepal has undertaken legal and policy reforms to support its full implementation. In November 2016, in partnership with the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal organized a high-level round table on the implementation of the resolution. That event was part of the Kathmandu process — a process of dialogue to enhance openness,

transparency and confidence-building to promote peace and disarmament in the Asia-Pacific region. Nepal reaffirms the importance of such regional dialogues to foster understanding, cooperation and confidence-building in the field of peace and disarmament in the region and beyond.

Despite their unwavering commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, many countries still lack adequate technical and financial resources, as well as enforcement capabilities, to comply with the provisions of the various disarmament-related treaties and resolutions. Many others are unable to fulfil their periodic reporting obligations due to a lack of capacity. Their capacity-building to fully implement the treaties and conventions would greatly strengthen the international mechanisms against weapons of mass destruction. That fact underscores the importance of international cooperation and support. Nepal therefore calls for the promotion of international cooperation to strengthen the institutional capacity of countries to support disarmament and non-proliferation. International cooperation is also required — for example, as set forth in the provisions of the CWC and BWC — to promote the peaceful use of dual-use materials for the benefit of humankind.

The Government of Nepal has designated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the coordinating governmental agency to fulfil Nepal's obligations under treaties and conventions on the critical issues of disarmament to which Nepal is a party. In 1997, the Government established the national authority for disarmament affairs, with the head of the international organization and international law division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as its convenor. Nepal is committed to implementing disarmament-related international treaties, conventions and programmes of action to which the country is a party.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Nepal's unwavering commitment to the general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. I also reassure you, Mr. Chair, of my delegation's full cooperation for the successful steering of the Committee.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

I will read out a shortened version of my statement. The full version will be posted on the United Nations website.

We remain fully committed to effective multilateral action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The existence of non-proliferation programmes and networks, the difficulty of securing sensitive materials, the risk posed by terrorists gaining access to them and the establishment of effective export controls remain major challenges. Such challenges remind us of the importance of achieving the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). We call on all States not yet party to ratify or to accede to them without delay and without conditions.

Italy remains strongly committed to supporting the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). As events in Syria tragically remind us, regrettably, chemical weapons have been used in recent years. We reiterate our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, anytime and under any circumstance. However, condemnation is not enough; accountability is essential. In that regard, we firmly support the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. We also urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to extend full cooperation to the OPCW to resolve all outstanding issues related to its initial and subsequent declarations.

We also attach great importance to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. After the unsatisfactory outcome of last year's Review Conference, despite the tireless efforts of the Hungarian presidency, we look forward to the upcoming meeting of States parties as a valuable opportunity to provide the BWC with the necessary tools. Among those tools, a strong intersessional work programme is crucial.

We reiterate with utmost determination Italy's strong condemnation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches and view them as clear violations of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The frequency of those missile tests and the continuing development of relevant technologies are a growing source of serious concern. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's missile and nuclear programmes represent a severe threat to the global non-proliferation policy, as well as to international peace and security. In our current capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), Italy supports efforts

worldwide to properly implement the set of restrictive measures adopted by the Security Council.

We highly value the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and believe that the international community should continue to take every action to ensure that it remains a success story. We welcome the confirmation by the International Atomic Energy Agency of Iran's continued compliance with the provisions of the JCPOA. At the same time, we attach importance to the full and complete implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). In our capacity as facilitator, we are committed to helping the smooth implementation of that resolution.

Italy remains deeply concerned about the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors, particularly in relation to terrorist acts. We reiterate our support for the full implementation of all relevant international instruments, starting with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We welcome the successful outcome of the comprehensive review of that instrument.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Argentina reaffirms its commitment to the prohibition of the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer and use of chemical weapons and their total elimination, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. Argentina also supports its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation and encourages its universalization.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is one of the most successful universal disarmament instruments of all time. Some 192 countries — equal to 98 per cent of the world's population — are parties. We hope that, by 2023, all declared chemical weapons arsenals will have been destroyed.

Argentina reiterates the importance of the agreement reached in December 2011, providing a framework for the finalization of the destruction of the remaining chemical arsenals while preserving the integrity of the Convention and the credibility of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Argentina calls on States possessing chemical weapons to meet their obligations under the Convention and to destroy their arsenals within the agreed time frame. In that connection, Argentina is pleased to note the

Russian Federation's announcement on 27 September of the total elimination of its chemical arsenal.

Argentina firmly reiterates its full condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and chemical substances as weapons by any actor in any circumstance. Their use constitutes a crime against humanity, the catastrophic consequences of which must be prevented by eliminating them completely. In recent years, Argentina has noted with grave concern the allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq, and recently expressed its profound concern over the use of the VX nerve agent at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in February.

Argentina strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, as confirmed by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. Argentina awaits the next report, which the Mechanism will submit in the next few days, with the conclusions of the investigations on the Um-Housh episodes in September 2016 and in Khan Shaykun in April.

Argentina is grateful for the contribution of the OPCW Technical Secretariat towards guaranteeing the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention, including those related to international verification of compliance, while serving as a forum for consultation and cooperation among Member States. Argentina is firmly committed to supporting international cooperation activities, for example, by offering support in capacity-building to other national authorities in our region, sending Argentinian cross-sectoral teams, training foreign experts in Argentina and developing specific training courses and joint bilateral projects, *inter alia*.

In that connection, Argentina, together with the OPCW, is conducting various training and capacity-building activities in Buenos Aires, such as our advanced assistance and protection course. Furthermore, this year in Buenos Aires we also held the second regional course on security in chemical laboratories, together with the OPCW and the National Industrial Technology Institute. Argentina has participated for two years in the industry segment of the OPCW Associate Programme, receiving fellows from plants in the Argentine chemical industry.

In 2013, our Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Education signed a memorandum of understanding establishing the Argentine National Project on

Education on the Responsible and Safe Use of Chemical Science and Technologies in order to incorporate minimum levels of contact in university courses. In 2015, a similar instrument was signed with the Ministry of Defence and a memorandum with the Ministry of Security. The project sparked the interest of the OPCW, leading to an invitation to the Executive Secretary of the National Argentine Authority to present the Argentine experience in many forums.

Regarding the upcoming fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2018, Argentina would like to see productive debates and discussions. We also reaffirm the key importance of the Biological Weapons Convention and renew our commitment to pursue active and constructive cooperation in moving forward toward the full implementation and universalization of the Convention.

In connection with the eighth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention, Argentina regrets the inability to reach an agreement and takes note of what was achieved. Therefore, and in order to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention, Argentina believes that, at the next Meeting of States Parties, it will be essential to agree to move forward on substance and in the process during the lead-up to the next Review Conference.

Finally, there are many painful cases in which international terrorism has provided evidence of destructive capacities. Through its legal nature and scope, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) therefore represents the clearest response that the United Nations can provide to the problem of weapons of mass destruction and access to them by non-State actors.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker in the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction for this afternoon.

I now call on delegations that have requested the right of reply. In this connection, I remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to ten minutes, and the second intervention to five.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would first like to speak in exercise of my right of reply to the representatives of France, Ireland and Italy, who made groundless remarks against the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear deterrents.

Those countries should rightly know that our self-defence nuclear deterrence is a powerful and reliable guarantee of our sovereignty, right to existence and protection against hostile forces. I have told the representatives of France in previous meetings that, if the French think that nuclear weapons are very dangerous to the peace and security of the world, they should dismantle their nuclear arsenals and enter the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

Secondly, my delegation totally rejects the groundless criticism and lies put forward by the representatives of some countries, including the United States, as political provocations towards our country. It is a consistent policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not to produce, develop or stockpile chemical weapons. The argument full of lies made by the representatives of the United States and other countries is just a groundless plot to purposefully run down the image of our country. The decision to join international treaties falls under the sovereignty of my country.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): I would like to exercise a cooperative right of reply with regard to the danger of abandoned chemical weapons, as raised by the representative of China.

As I mentioned in my statement, Japan reaffirms its sincere and firm commitment to exerting the greatest possible efforts for the early and complete destruction of abandoned chemical weapons, with the appropriate and sincere cooperation of China, based on the destruction plan beyond the year 2016. While China plays an important role in the prevention of accidents related to abandoned chemical weapons, the Government of Japan has taken measures, such as publishing and distributing brochures to Chinese citizens, to raise their awareness.

Japan has dealt and will deal with accidents related to abandoned chemical weapons in a timely and faithful manner by means of promptly dispatching investigation teams, experts for repacking the chemicals and medical professional teams.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country condemns in the strongest terms and rejects any use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. That is a crime against

humanity, which we fully condemn and which is unethical and unjustified in any circumstance.

My country has met all its commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention. It achieved unprecedented progress in the history of the organization by putting an irreversible end to the Syrian chemical programme in record time, as confirmed in the statement issued by the head of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and submitted to the Security Council in June 2016 (see S/2016/530).

What is significant is the fact that the terrorist groups in Syria receive, prepare and produce toxic chemical materials for use against civilians and military personnel in my country, with the support of the intelligence agencies of States Members of this international Organization that are known to everyone. Those terrorist groups use chemical materials against civilians and military personnel in my country. Some countries that still sponsor those terrorist groups continue to order them to use toxic chemical materials so that they can fabricate lies and falsely accuse the Syrian Government. The most recent example to date was in Khan Shaykhun, which was a cheap attempt by some countries to blackmail the Syrian Government in international forums.

The Syrian Arab Republic has sent more than 124 letters to the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the Joint Investigative Mechanism, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and other committees on counter-terrorism. That was four months before the first chemical attack on the town of Khan Al-Assal in March 2013. In all those letters we expressed fears that the States that support terrorism would give chemical weapons to terrorist groups and then claim that Syria was using them. Unfortunately, that is exactly what has taken place.

We note that on many occasions the statements delivered by the representatives of the United States delegation have been full of contradictions in form and substance. Regarding the form, the statement delivered by our colleague from the United States did not include any reference to terrorism and the use of chemical weapons by terrorists during their terrorist activities in Iraq and Syria, as confirmed in the reports issued by the Security Council and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague. Moreover, our colleague never mentioned the

fact that the various Administrations of his country had used nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in Japan, Viet Nam, Iraq and elsewhere. The list of those countries is long. Regarding the substance, our colleague believes in everything that the Government of his country fabricates and considers it sacred, unquestionable and above any international resolution. Consequently, the United States representative concluded that Syria had used of chemical weapons. In that regard, let me make the following observations.

First, the United States Government should listen to the conclusions of the investigation lead by the Joint Investigative Mechanism. Secondly, if the United States Government insists on imposing its opinion on the international community, it would be better for it to call for the OPCW to be closed down. Thirdly, the United States is the country that most frequently violates international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Let us consider what it did in Viet Nam, Cambodia, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela.

The United States and its allies have rejected a visit by the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic to Al-Shayrat airbase and the town of Khan Shaykhun in order to obscure and to cover up the crimes that it committed there by attacking Al-Shayrat airbase without justification or investigation.

Allow me to provide the Committee with evidence of the United States involvement in moving toxic chemical materials and training armed terrorist groups in mixing and preparing them for use.

First, two female American experts in chemical materials entered Syrian territory. They then left Syria for Turkey on 6 September 2016 after having prepared chemical materials. Those two experts, along with the Al-Nusra Front and Jund al-Aqsa, helped the two terrorist groups to mix chemical materials that they needed to prepare for use.

On 20 August 2017, American military officers transported toxic chemical materials in three refrigerated containers from As-Suwayda and Harabesh in Deir ez-Zor governorate to Al-Azzawi and to other regions in Al-Hasakah governorate. On 22 August, those materials were transferred to Al-Malikiyah and then to the al-Rmeilan airbase, which is currently under the control of American forces. American experts in chemical weapons were also involved in that transfer

of chemical materials. I could continue with this list of examples, but we would need two meetings or more to share all the information that we have on the involvement of American Administrations in the issue.

With regard to the statement made by the representative of the Turkish regime, let me say that his lies are staggering, and that persistent lying is considered to demonstrate a lack of respect for the intelligence of those present. The Turkish regime is involved in all the incidents related to the use of toxic chemical materials in my country. It facilitates the transfer of those materials and, in collusion with other regimes, it orders armed terrorist groups to use them. They then record it on video in order to use it against the Government of my country. Let me tell the Turkish regime that the Syrian people will never forget those crimes and that we will pursue them and hold the perpetrators accountable.

The statement of the Turkish regime's representative is full of fallacies and lies. The Turkish regime violates all its international obligations, especially in terms of disarmament and non-proliferation. The regime violates the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) by providing toxic chemical substances to Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and other affiliated terrorist groups. The Turkish regime allows other terrorist organizations to conduct experiments with chemical substances within its territory, in particular in the city of Gaziantep. That regime also transports foreign terrorist fighters into Syria, as well as providing them with weapons, equipment, ammunition and military intelligence.

My delegation calls once again on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Security Council to make public the outcome of the investigations that we requested concerning the sarin gas that was seized together with 12 terrorists on Turkish soil. I ask the representative of Turkey the following questions before everyone here present. To date, why has his regime refused to provide the international community and the OPCW with information on the sarin gas that was seized in Turkey? What happened to the sarin gas which was seized there? Why did the Turkish regime set free the 12 terrorists who had been caught in the act? If the representative of the Turkish regime would say that those incidents are untrue, then we would ask him to provide us with facts about the investigations that were

stopped by the Turkish regime and were followed by the dismissal of 18 judges and prosecutors, as well as police personnel, who had divulged the smuggling operations and weapons transferred from Turkey into my country. That was done by using the corridors determined by Security Council resolution 2165 (2004) on the delivery of humanitarian assistance across the international borders.

The reports of the Security Council subcommittees are full of facts that expose the Turkish policies that sponsor terrorists who are involved in using chemical weapons in Syria that originate from Turkey.

Mr. Wang Chang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Earlier, my Japanese colleague took the floor once again to emphasize Japan's efforts in and commitment to addressing the issue of abandoned chemical weapons without mentioning the associated difficulties. As a State that fell victim to the use of chemical weapons and a territory on which Japan abandoned such weapons, China wishes to clarify several points.

First, the destruction of Japanese abandoned chemical weapons is in its way a redemption for the heinous crimes perpetrated by Japan during its war of aggression against China. It is a solemn stipulation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), as well as an international obligation for Japan. According to China's incomplete statistics based on historical facts, during the period from 1930 to 1945, the invading Japanese army used chemical weapons against Chinese soldiers and civilians on 1,241 separate occasions in 19 provinces in China, resulting in more than 200,000 casualties. A voluminous amount of documents attests to the fact that the former invading Japanese army also conducted extremely cruel and inhumane chemical weapons experiments on Chinese prisoners of war and civilians. The purpose of revealing the crimes committed by the Japanese aggressors of the time is not to perpetuate hatred but to prevent the recurrence of Japan's crime of using chemical weapons on China's territory in a large-scale, planned and systematic manner, while urging the Japanese side to immediately address the real consequences and potential harm of using chemical weapons.

Secondly, despite the progress that has been made in the process of destroying abandoned chemical weapons, many have yet to be destroyed. As of 31 August, 60,000

abandoned chemical weapon items had been recovered and 48,272 destroyed. However, those items included more than 30,000 barrels containing toxic gas, and a large number of additional dangerous shells containing mustard gas, carbonyl chloride and lewisite, which can be found in multiple locations, also need to be destroyed. In Wenjin, Jilin province, there remain 74 tons of toxic agents, the destruction of which needs to be addressed. Only 12.3 per cent of all Japanese abandoned chemical weapons have been destroyed by Japan if we consider the more than 330,000 items of Japanese abandoned chemical weapons, which were buried in Harbaling, Jilin province.

During the slow process of destroying Japanese abandoned chemical weapons, the Japanese side neither conveyed a convincing level of sincerity or a sense of urgency. With the intention of covering up its crime, the former Japanese invading army abandoned and buried approximately 2 million chemical-weapon components on China's territory at the end of the war. Relative to records concerning information on chemical-weapon production facilities and troop deployment, those pertaining to the location of Japanese abandoned chemical weapons and related information are more important. Those weapons can be found and destroyed in a timely manner only if knowledge as to the location where they are buried is shared.

To date, Japanese abandoned chemical weapons have been accidentally discovered owing only to incidents. As the abandoning State, it is incumbent upon Japan to provide relevant information as soon as possible, but, so far, it has not provided a single, clear and effective record regarding the abandoned barrels. When China allowed Japan to destroy abandoned chemical weapons on China's own territory, China did so despite tremendous pressure and in a gesture of substantial good faith. Moreover, since 2008, China has repeatedly informed Japan of the discovery of large quantities of what are thought to be Japanese abandoned chemical weapons, but the Japanese side has continued to delay its investigations on the pretext of, inter alia, insufficient funding and staffing, which can only lead China to doubt Japan's sincerity.

Thirdly, it is regrettable that Japan failed to meet the targeted goal of destroying Japanese abandoned chemical weapons by late 2016, as set out by the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at its sixty-seventh session. That was the third time since the sessions in

2007 and 2012 that Japan failed to complete its work on schedule. The root cause of its repeated failure to meet deadlines lies in Japan's failure to plan its actions according to the timetable specified by the CWC, to devote sufficient manpower, material and financial resources, and to demonstrate sufficient political will and good faith. In early 2017, with a constructive attitude, China reached an agreement with Japan on a new plan aimed at destroying Japanese abandoned chemical weapons, which was later submitted to the Executive Council of the OPCW for its consideration and adoption at its eighty-fourth session. China hopes that Japan will strictly implement that plan and complete the destruction on time. Meanwhile, China urges Japan to continue to step up its efforts to destroy Japanese abandoned chemical weapons promptly, completely and safely so as to restore China's land.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply to respond to the ridiculous charges by the head of the Damascus regime. That is a regime that has fundamentally and absolutely no credibility. It is a regime that kills its own people and exports and supports terrorism. It is just ridiculous to listen to those charges by the representative of that regime. It is a regime that obstructs the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. It obfuscates and lies at every opportunity. Most Governments represented in this room know exactly what that regime stands for.

Again, I emphasize that it is a regime that has killed its own people with weapons of mass destruction. It talks about having a long list of complaints about the United States; we have an even longer list with regard to that regime and the crimes that it has committed around the world over the years, including the fomenting of terrorism in Lebanon. I could go on and on. Let me just say one last thing to the representative of that regime — the regime must end its chemical weapons attacks against the people of Syria. It will be held accountable. It can count on that. The international community will hold it accountable.

Mr. Canay (Turkey): I shall be very brief as well.

In exercise of our right of reply against the representative of the Syrian regime, we categorically deny the allegations made against Turkey. Turkey fully respects its obligations under the relevant international

conventions and Security Council resolutions. The regime's criminal record on the use of toxic chemicals as weapons has been established by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in various cases. Today, many speakers have recalled those facts. However, the regime's representative twisted the discussions on today's topic by reiterating the same package of lies. Yet there is no room for illusion to hide the regime's criminal responsibility. As we said in our statement, the use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity. If we wish to see an end to that, we must ensure that there is no impunity.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the French regime has tried to impose her country's beliefs and opinions concerning Khan Shaykhun and who was behind that incident. As we have previously said to other representatives, we say to her that if her Government believes that, it is better for France to call for an end to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The French regime provides armed terrorist groups in Syria with weapons, ammunition, equipment and intelligence, including toxic chemical substances. In that regard, I call on the representative of the French regime to read the book entitled *The Road to Damascus*, written by the two authors Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot. The authors asserted that the former Foreign Minister of France, Laurent Fabius, was an accomplice in the use of chemical weapons in eastern Ghouta, Damascus, in August 2013.

Once again, I would recommend to the representative of Britain that his Government allow the Scottish people to exercise their right to self-determination, that it leave its Gibraltar colony, that it solve the worsening problems with the European Union, and above all that it take care of its internal problems and mind its own business. It should first of all apologize to the Iraqi people for invading Iraq in 2003 under the false pretext of the existence of weapons of mass destruction. The British intelligence service has established what is called the White Helmets, the propaganda arm for terrorist organizations. Britain is involved in the transfer of toxic chemical substances and other weapons to the terrorist groups in Syria.

One of the greatest sins is when somebody claims that he is aware of an important issue and starts talking about it while he is totally ignorant about that issue.

That applies to the representative of Canada and other Member States that have claimed to know the reality. The representatives of Canada have spared no opportunity to insult my country on the basis of false accusations. The representatives of Canada have been spreading lies, hate speech and false information about my country. That is not beneficial to such States as Canada. Canada has not called on Israel to join the Convention on Chemical Weapons, which proves the hypocrisy and double standards practised by Canada. It was quite pitiful to note from the statement delivered by the representative of Canada today that she has been hallucinating in the wrong place, because her country does not own the United Nations, unless she thinks that her country's vision is nobler than the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

I will not even bother replying to the representative of Canada. As for the representatives of the European Union (EU) countries, they have been spreading lies and fallacies in their statements. Many countries of the EU have provided terrorist groups, especially Da'esh and Al-Nusra Front, with toxic chemical substances. We call on the EU, if it is serious, to investigate that matter.

Once again, the representative of the United States has tried to avoid the involvement of his country's Administration as an accomplice in the chemical attacks on my country Syria. I call on the representative of the United States to read a book published by his former Foreign Minister, Mrs. Hillary Clinton, which states that his successive Administrations established Al-Qaida, Al-Nusra Front and Da'esh.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): I would like to address differences in perception. I would like to focus on the issue of abandoned chemical weapons and how to deal with them. In accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Japan shall provide all necessary financial and technical experts, as well as other resources for the purpose of destroying abandoned chemical weapons. China shall provide appropriate cooperation for that purpose. As the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons is a joint project, China's cooperation is essential. Even if Japan completes all the tasks on its side, it is difficult to expect progress in the destruction operations without the appropriate and sincere cooperation from China.

The position of the Government of Japan on historical recognition is as stated in the statement of the Prime Minister issued on the seventieth anniversary commemorating the end of the Second World War. The Government of Japan has faithfully committed to the disposal of abandoned chemical weapons. Japan will promote the project for abandoned chemical weapons in accordance with the CWC. I will not repeat what I have said in my statement.

The Chair: We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. The Committee will reconvene tomorrow morning, at 10 a.m., in this conference room to first continue its consideration of the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction to exhaust the list of speakers under that cluster and hear the remaining rights of reply, followed by addressing the cluster on outer space disarmament aspects.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.