



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

First Committee

4th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

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

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: I should like to remind all delegations that the rolling list of speakers for this phase of our work closed yesterday at 6 p.m., in accordance with our programme of work and timetable. I hope all delegations intending to take the floor during the general debate were able to inscribe their names on the list before the deadline.

Delegations are also reminded that the list of speakers will open tomorrow for the thematic discussion segment, which will start next week on Wednesday, 11 October.

The representative of the United Kingdom has requested the floor on a point of order.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): I would like to raise a point of order before we start.

I note the correspondence that was circulated yesterday on behalf of the delegation of Brazil, with regard to the request from the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) to have its Secretary-General included on the panel on international organizations and for that request to be put to a vote tomorrow.

My delegation believes that since the First Committee has avoided voting on procedural matters for many years, it would be unfortunate to start do so

again. At the same time, my delegation feels that it should explain its reservations about OPANAL being represented on the panel on international organizations. It is very simple. We do not believe that OPANAL is an international organization. On its website, OPANAL describes itself as an intergovernmental organization based on a nuclear-weapon-free zone, which it then goes on to describe as a regional disarmament matter.

By way of compromise, we propose that instead of speaking on the panel on international organizations, the representative of OPANAL should speak on the panel on regional disarmament initiatives to be held on 23 October. We hope that this compromise is acceptable and that we can avoid taking a vote. I offer it in a spirit of compromise, with a view to avoiding a vote on procedural issues, which the Committee has not had to do for many years.

Ms. Schneider Calza (Brazil): We note the proposal just made by the representative of the United Kingdom. However, we maintain our request that the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) be a panellist in the exchange of views with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. An intergovernmental organization is an international organization. The fact that its membership is of regional scope does not mean that it is not international, legally speaking. In any case, we are discussing the panel in which the High Representative exchanges views with high-level officials of international organizations. If OPANAL is included on the panel, the Committee may rest assured that it will be taking part at the

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highest possible level, represented by its most high-ranking official.

I would like to point out that we have not requested a vote tomorrow. We have asked that action be taken on our request. We very much hope that it will be by consensus.

The Chair: The Committee will now turn to the list of speakers for today. I urge all delegations taking the floor to kindly keep in mind the suggested time limits for statements. I would like to remind delegations that for this meeting I count on their cooperation today in limiting statements to eight minutes, when speaking in a national capacity, and 13 when speaking on behalf of several delegations. I encourage representatives with longer statements to deliver a summarized version and to provide the full text of their statements on the PaperSmart web portal. I would also like to encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable pace to allow for adequate interpretation.

Mr. Ulyanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to your lofty position, and to wish you success in your work.

I will try to confine myself to eight minutes, although that will be difficult.

The year that has passed since the previous session of the First Committee ended has been marked by a great many noteworthy developments, of which the most high-profile, needless to say, has been the agreement by a large group of States on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (A/CONF.229/2017/8) and its opening for signature. Regrettably, we cannot view it positively. Its content differs substantially from our proposals for ways to build a nuclear-weapon-free world. Nor does it correspond to the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that stipulate that the total destruction of nuclear weapons should be carried out in tandem with the agreement on general and complete disarmament.

We respect the views of proponents of renouncing nuclear weapons as soon as possible. We share the goal of a nuclear-free world, but we realize that it is a long-term goal and that the work to achieve it should be gradual. And when it comes to discussing how and when to introduce a ban on nuclear weapons, that is advisable only at one of the final stages of the nuclear-disarmament process, in order to ensure that the

results are irreversible. Setting such a goal right now is clearly premature. It should be noted that some of the provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in particular articles 4, 17 and 18, raise very serious questions. Those interested in Russia's concerns about the issue can read the full text of this statement, which will be circulated in this room and posted on the QuickFirst web portal.

We would like to reiterate that considering all of this, Russia does not intend to sign or ratify the new Treaty. We call on the members of the international community to stick to the proven approaches to nuclear-disarmament issues that have been developed by consensus in the framework of the NPT. In essence, that means implementing nuclear disarmament in a way that helps to strengthen international security and stability and enhances the security of all States, without exception. That is exactly what the Russian Federation intends to do. I would like to remind the Committee that, for the past 30 years, on a basis of bilateral agreements with the United States and unilaterally, Russia has made a huge contribution to advancing a nuclear-weapon-free world by reducing its nuclear potential by 85 per cent. We are continuing those efforts within the framework of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in order to reach the levels it provides for on warheads, delivery vehicles and launch facilities by 5 February 2018.

Many here probably want to know what happens next. We will find out. For instance, the START treaty, as it stands, allows for the possibility of its extension for another five years. We do not object to studying that option, but for that we need a willing partner. In general, there are a whole range of negative factors that have made the current international environment an extremely unfriendly one for considering options for further reductions in nuclear weapons. One is the ongoing unilateral creation of a global missile defence system, a project that has already gone a long way to poisoning the atmosphere in Europe. The same thing is now happening in Asia, particularly with regard to the installation by the United States of its Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system in the Republic of Korea and its proposed stationing of the Aegis Ashore system in Japan. Russian and Chinese military experts will hold a joint briefing, here at United Nations Headquarters, on 12 October, to discuss the dangerous consequences of the United States efforts to establish a missile defence system on a global scale, and we invite all First Committee delegations to take part.

Making further progress with nuclear disarmament has also been made more difficult because of the growing probability of the placement of weapons in outer space. Together with many other States, Russia is making every effort to prevent that. We made a political commitment to no first placement of weapons in outer space as long ago as 2004, and 17 States are now full participants in that initiative, with Viet Nam joining just recently. For the past few years we have introduced a draft resolution in support of that initiative for the First Committee's consideration. Last year, 45 countries became sponsors of it and 130 States voted in its favour. We call on all States that have not yet done so to sponsor this year's draft resolution (A/C.1/72/L.53), or at least vote in its favour. That applies particularly to States members of the European Union — that is, if they care about the idea of preventing an arms race in outer space. So far they have held back, citing the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes weapons in outer space and of verification mechanisms for ensuring compliance with obligations under it. We find such arguments unconvincing. The fact is that we are not talking here about a legally binding instrument but about a political commitment and a confidence-building measure for which written verification procedures are quite unnecessary.

With regard to a definition of the word “weapons”, that, along with other key provisions, is included in Russia and China's draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. It is still on the table at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and we hope will be addressed soon. Until then, during this session, we and our Chinese partners propose adopting a draft resolution on establishing a United Nations group of governmental experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We hope that it will receive the broadest possible support in the First Committee.

As early as November, we will be at the exact midpoint of the current NPT review cycle. In our opinion, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the upcoming 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons went pretty well. However, the problems of nuclear non-proliferation have not diminished. The nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula is still a serious challenge. Like other countries, we firmly condemn Pyongyang's conduct of nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches in violation of Security Council resolutions. But while we supported the

recent sanctions measures, they are not a panacea. The problem can be settled only by political and diplomatic means. In that regard, Russia and China have jointly put forward a road map for a settlement. Military options are totally unacceptable, and we call on all the parties to refrain from provocations and belligerent rhetoric in the interests of creating conditions more conducive to political and diplomatic efforts.

The agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear programme and its successful implementation represents non-proliferation's greatest achievement. We welcome the fact that Iran is in full compliance with its obligations, as the International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly confirmed. It is essential that all the parties to the agreement approach it exceedingly carefully. We cannot help being disturbed about the fact that tensions related to the JCPOA continue to be ratcheted up quite artificially and based on nothing in particular. We call on all stakeholders to adhere strictly to the agreements.

We are extremely concerned about the fact that, during the first half of the current NPT review cycle, we have not moved one iota closer to convening a conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In fact, we are now at a complete impasse. Russia is attempting to help overcome the deadlock. At the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee, we circulated a working document with concrete proposals for organizing further efforts, and we welcome the similar businesslike approach shown by the Secretariat leadership. During this session we intend to conduct intensive consultations with the countries of the region to try to find ways to break the deadlock.

Finally, today marks exactly six months since the significant incident in which sarin was used in Khan Shaykhun in Syria. Russia immediately demanded a seriously in-depth investigation designed to find and punish those responsible. That has not happened. The Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons did a totally superficial job, with gross departures from the established rules that ignored the basic principles of the chain of custody. All the work was done remotely. The baton has now been passed to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, and we hope that it will correct the Fact-finding Mission's shortcomings,

conduct a genuinely high-quality investigation and thereby confirm the basis for extending its mandate.

In conclusion, I would like to draw the attention of delegations to the fact that a week ago, Russia fully liquidated its chemical arsenal, three years before the deadline.

The Chair: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to the Chair and the other officers of the Committee.

I should like to remind delegations to kindly limit their statements to eight minutes when speaking in a national capacity.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Ambassador Hilale would have liked to make this statement himself but he has been detained in the Peacebuilding Commission meeting on its programme of work, and I will therefore speak to the Committee on his behalf.

At the outset, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, I would like to sincerely congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the work of the Committee, and to assure you of our full cooperation.

The Moroccan delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 26 September, reminds us of the urgent need to end the frenetic nuclear-arms race in which the world is caught up, as it could lead to disaster. It should also encourage us to make every possible effort to prevent forever the apocalypse that could result from the threat and use of nuclear weapons, whether accidental or deliberate. The adoption and signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a major step forward in multilateral nuclear-disarmament efforts since the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 1 (1) on nuclear disarmament. It reminds us how urgent it is to ensure that the nuclear-weapon States make an irreversible commitment to the path of nuclear disarmament in order to prevent the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction and eliminate them once and for all. But while the Treaty should help to build trust and strengthen regional and international peace and security, its universality is still a key prerequisite for its implementation and effectiveness. It will be

crucial for all States Members of the United Nations, whether they are nuclear- or non-nuclear-weapon States, to work together to strengthen our collective security and prevent the devastating effects of the use of nuclear weapons on the environment and on human life.

In the current environment, when multilateralism is running out of steam and political and economic tensions are worsening, we will need to mobilize the entire international community and encourage political will on the part of all States if we are to reach agreement on concrete actions that respect the delicate balance between the principles of disarmament. If nuclear weapons were ever used, their terrible effects would transcend borders. That is why the security of us all depends on peaceful coexistence and the settlement of disputes through dialogue and mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

This year's session is taking place in a global context in which international security is deteriorating and the terrorist threat is growing, as are tensions and concerns about the nuclear-weapon programmes of certain States that the entire international community considers dangerous. The tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held on 20 September, was an opportunity to condemn the conduct of nuclear tests, an irresponsible act of disregard for international law and the value of human life. It was also a time to recall the urgent need for a commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and respect for our collective peace and security.

In April 2000, aware of the growing nuclear threat, the Kingdom of Morocco ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and since then has continued to encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify it. We firmly believe that now more than ever we need a multilateral approach, backed by genuine trust among States, in order to encourage countries that have been reluctant to do so to ratify the CTBT and thereby speed up its entry into force. In that regard, we reiterate our belief that all countries that care about promoting multilateralism and upholding international law should ensure the effective implementation of all provisions of international treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation, in order to build a world of peace and security for us all.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains a key instrument in the

maintenance of international peace and security, although the obligations arising from it are not always respected by all of its States parties. In that regard, we believe it is the duty of all of us to do everything possible to achieve the goals of the NPT, the cornerstone of the global regime for disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In that regard, we appeal to all of its member States to unite in their efforts to address the continuing proliferation challenges and to ensure that all their non-proliferation obligations and sovereign commitments are honoured.

We believe that zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction should be major goals at the regional level. A zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has yet to be established, although that concern has been expressly mentioned in the decisions adopted by the various Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We believe that it is crucial to convene, without further delay, an international conference to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Like many other States, the Kingdom of Morocco feels compelled to denounce the politically charged impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, a unique multilateral body tasked with negotiating multilateral disarmament instruments. The Conference's many years of lethargy contrast starkly with the new security challenges facing the world and jeopardize the international community's ultimate goal of achieving general and complete disarmament.

The Kingdom of Morocco has chaired the Disarmament Commission's Working Group II, on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. At the close of its 2017 session, we welcomed the Commission's adoption, for the first time in 20 years, of 14 recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. The recommendations are a major step forward and should reduce tensions and build confidence, thereby helping to prevent and resolve conflict and achieve sustainable development.

The illicit trade in conventional arms continues to pose a threat to stability in Africa and to fuel terrorism and organized crime. The Kingdom of Morocco believes that regional and subregional cooperation is

crucial for combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The worrisome situation in the Sahel-Saharan region, created by unbridled illicit trafficking of all kinds, including in small arms and light weapons, along with the links between arms-trafficking networks and terrorist groups, has prompted us to increase our efforts to strengthen regional cooperation on the basis of an inclusive approach. In that spirit, the Kingdom of Morocco believes that the Arms Trade Treaty, whose primary goal is to regulate trade in conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, will enhance international peace and security and expand the fight against serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

My country attaches particular importance to sharing information and experience and to strengthening international and regional cooperation in the areas of nuclear security and the fight against the illicit trade in biological, radioactive and nuclear materials. We participate in several international initiatives, including the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit process.

In conclusion, I hope that the entire international community can eliminate nuclear weapons as soon as possible and achieve the noble objective of a world free of that threat. Peace through disarmament is a common good for humankind. We should spare no effort in achieving a world without nuclear weapons, and be less inclined to engage in a nuclear arms race at the expense of fighting poverty, pandemics, climate change and environmental degradation.

Mrs. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation sincerely congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and wishes you every success in your work.

France aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2), and would like to make some additional remarks in its national capacity. The full text of our statement will be available from today.

For the past year, my country has been expressing its concern about the overall worsening of the international security environment, which has become increasingly unpredictable, complex and threatening. It is now even worse, which means that, more than ever, today's multiple challenges must be addressed with greater realism and determination.

Over the past year, the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery has increased. France therefore believes that it is up to all countries represented here today to denounce the irresponsible and provocative strategy employed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. By conducting three nuclear tests since 2016, increasing the number of its ballistic-missile launches, diversifying its means of delivery and expanding their range, the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has demonstrated its determination to acquire operational nuclear weapons. My country has condemned such developments in the strongest terms at the highest levels of Government. Above and beyond its solidarity with the countries of the region, France calls for greater foresight and firmness on the part of the international community.

In the light of the flagrant violations that have occurred of several Security Council resolutions, our duty is to reaffirm the inviolability of the principle of non-proliferation and to firmly bring the regime back to the negotiating table. In addition, France fully supports the sanctions imposed by the Security Council and the European Union. It will also ensure that the review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to give priority to the crisis.

Chemical weapons have been in use in Syria since 2012. The large-scale sarin attack in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April, which killed almost 100 people, reminds us of that fact. For France, there can be no doubt that the Syrian armed security forces were responsible for that attack. In addition, this year's draft resolution on the subject should recall the fundamental principle of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, as established by the Chemical Weapons Convention. The conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2015 demonstrated that dialogue could lead to a solid agreement, which is the key to peace and stability in the Middle East. The Plan of Action is not perfect, nor is its duration unlimited, but it must be protected and fully implemented. However, proliferation issues remain. Repeated launches of missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads violate Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and could destabilize the region. We must meet that challenge together, without jeopardizing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The international community's desire for a safer world for all means that we must focus on reaching a clear and shared understanding of the serious threats,

regional and global contexts and common security interests. Owing largely to a lack of understanding of the strategic environment, the humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament led to the adoption in July of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As the Committee is aware, France did not participate in those negotiations and does not intend to accede to the Treaty. France is not bound by the Treaty and is therefore under no additional obligations.

For France, and many other countries of Europe and Asia in particular, nuclear deterrence continues to play a role in maintaining regional and international security and stability. The new Treaty changes nothing, since the international environment leaves no room for weakness. The Treaty is not just an ineffective measure on the path to nuclear disarmament, it is also full of risk. It weakens the credibility of the non-proliferation regime by establishing a Treaty that is at cross-purposes with the NPT, from which some countries might be tempted to withdraw in the future. The new Treaty also poses a threat to international verification standards, including the comprehensive safeguard agreements and additional protocols of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It could also undermine the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the prospects for its entry into force. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons threatens to tear down rather than to build up. It divides us at a time when unity is required. We therefore encourage each of our partners to assess the gravity and scope of the risks when determining their country's position on the issue.

The excessive politicization of our discussions has touched other legal instruments as well. The outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, held in late 2016, was disappointing, despite the many contributions made. We cannot risk weakening the biological non-proliferation standards and respect for them. We must break the political deadlock and focus on the progress that can be made to restore cooperation within the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention. Such tensions are emphasized when legitimate disarmament forums are criticized and circumvented. Long-term solutions are also needed to deal with the financial difficulties encountered this year.

In the future, we must rise above our political divisions and resume dialogue and cooperation. The next meeting of the NPT Preparatory Committee should enable us to make headway towards the full

implementation of the Treaty's three pillars and to strengthen the authority and integrity of the NPT, particularly its ability to guard against proliferation. As it has shown recently by making major strides in the area of nuclear disarmament, France remains committed to the objective of a world without nuclear weapons, when the situation allows, with undiminished security for all.

In view of that, and in accordance with the NPT, my country will continue working with determination to implement the next steps to nuclear disarmament — the entry into force of the CTBT; the start of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty based on the Shannon Mandate; the active participation of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group to that end; contributions to nuclear-disarmament verification efforts; and the continuation of the P-5 process. These efforts are essential to preventing the risk of a nuclear arms race. That goal includes preserving the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in Europe and encouraging the United States and Russia to continue their efforts to reduce their nuclear arsenals by 2021, when the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty expires.

To guarantee everyone's security, we must also renew our determination to combat the spread of conventional weapons. Every day, weapons trafficking, the spread of small arms and light weapons and the use of improvised explosive devices all claim an increasing number of victims, including civilians. Such weapons fuel terrorism and threaten our societies. In addition, we must do our utmost, with the support of civil society, to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law and make progress on the implementation and universalization of existing instruments.

The Arms Trade Treaty will not fulfil its objectives unless it becomes global. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons must build on the positive outcome of its most recent Review Conference, particularly with regard to lethal autonomous weapons and improvised explosive devices. My country will continue to provide all the assistance required to make progress on those issues.

The Committee can also count on France's unwavering commitment to doing its utmost to ensure that the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in

Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in June 2018 under the presidency of France, will be a success. We will ensure that the preparatory process is substantive, concrete, transparent and inclusive. In that spirit, the president-elect will hold additional informal consultations on 20 October, to which everyone is invited.

In conclusion, in a very challenging environment, France is convinced that greater transregional dialogue is required in order to return to the demanding path of consensus.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, along with the members of the Bureau, on your election to preside over the First Committee at this year's session. Under your able leadership, we are convinced that the Committee's work will be a success.

Indonesia aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Thailand, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Today, as the world faces multiple and simultaneous serious security problems, it is worth emphasizing the Committee's important role. Not only must we uphold the norms created here and in other parts of the disarmament machinery, we must ensure that our undertakings result in overcoming disarmament and international security challenges. As the general debate of the General Assembly reminded us last month, disregard for General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and belligerent rhetoric can be a recipe for fatal miscalculation. Nuclear security doctrines and umbrellas spawn false defence. They invite only proliferation and an arms race. The very existence of nuclear weapons is the root of the problem and should be addressed. Let the world see wisdom, dialogue, peacemaking and disarmament. Let the world eliminate all nuclear weapons for good.

Indonesia calls in particular on the nuclear-weapon States to abide by their commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in a balanced manner across the three Treaty pillars. Indonesia is committed to achieving a successful 2020 NPT review cycle, as reflected in the convening of the NPT Asia-Pacific regional meeting in Jakarta in March, hosted by Indonesia and the Netherlands, as Chair of the NPT Preparatory Committee in May.

The absence of a legally binding security assurances regime presents NPT States parties seeking nuclear materials and the advancement of nuclear-weapon technology for their self-defence with an excuse. Legally binding security assurances would provide an essential benefit to States parties and contribute to progress in both disarmament and non-proliferation.

On 20 September, Indonesia was among the first countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The landmark Treaty arose from an initiative of the First Committee, with the strong support of civil society. Let us now, in conjunction with civil society, intensify our efforts to ensure that the Treaty enters into force as soon as possible. We call on other Member States to adhere to the Treaty and demonstrate their commitment to global peace and stability.

We underscore the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important step towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Indonesia would also like to emphasize the importance of keeping South-East Asia free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We call on the nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the protocol to the Bangkok Treaty at the earliest. ASEAN will submit a draft resolution on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, and we hope for the support of all Member States.

We underscore the positive significance of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and urge the convening of the long-delayed 2012 conference. It is deeply regrettable that the grand bargain, as the basis of the NPT indefinite extension, continues to be ignored.

We urge the annex 2 countries that have not yet signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to act so that the CTBT can enter into force. Unfortunately, the prospect of its entry into force has remained uncertain over the past few decades. We should recall that the CTBT not only serves as a tool for international security and stability, but also allows for the peaceful use of nuclear energy in some areas. The verification regime has enabled States parties and signatory States to obtain available data for civil scientific purposes and humanitarian disaster management efforts.

While there are serious threats to international security, there are also signs of hope. In addition to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, this

year, we have seen consensus recommendations for the objectives and agenda for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The fact that this finally happened, after two decades, shows that where there is a will, there is a way.

Indonesia encourages all parties to faithfully implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and urges the international community to ensure a positive atmosphere for its implementation.

Indonesia is very concerned about the immense loss of lives and property that the illegal supply and illegitimate use of conventional weapons by unauthorized actors has caused. Indonesia fully supports the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Indonesia is also deeply disturbed by developments related to anti-ballistic-missile systems, and the increased threat of the weaponization and militarization of outer space. Outer space is our common heritage and it must be used in a peaceful manner for the benefit and in the interest of humankind. Indonesia supports instituting negotiations on a treaty to ban an arms race in outer space and encourages interim steps to build trust and transparency. Negotiations for any code of conduct on outer space should be open, transparent and inclusive, and such a code should be consistent with the mandates of all relevant United Nations bodies.

Indonesia is also concerned about the threat of cyberattacks and the militarization of cyberspace. The creation of norms to prevent the Internet from being used as a medium for cyberattacks is quite important. Indonesia strongly supports the promotion of the use of the Internet for peaceful and development purposes.

The challenges before us are many and complex, but there are none that cannot be overcome if we uphold the global norms and resolutely demonstrate our political will with a view to promoting multilateralism, mutual respect and strengthened cooperation. For its part, Indonesia remains fully determined to work actively to help enable tangible outcomes in the First Committee.

The full text of our statement is available on the PaperSmart web portal.

Mr. Chandrtri (Thailand): Thailand would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the

First Committee, and to express its appreciation and support to you and the members of the Bureau.

We also recognize the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and her team.

Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

We must ensure that people are at the centre of our work. In support of our common quest to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, our work on disarmament and arms control is now more critical than ever to fostering socioeconomic progress and striving for a just and peaceful society.

The proliferation and illicit transfer of conventional weapons pose a serious threat to our collective security. In that regard, we recognize the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Arms Trade Treaty as robust fundamental multilateral frameworks.

Guided by our strong humanitarian tradition, Thailand was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We have since destroyed all landmines in our stockpiles and focused rigorously on the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims. We have returned more than 84 per cent of safe land to our people. However, unforeseen circumstances have impeded our efforts to completely demine. We have therefore submitted a request this year to extend the deadline for mine clearance.

Global peace and security can be achieved only through the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons may guarantee security for some, but at the expense of others. Yet the risks make collective security an unachievable goal. The historic adoption of the Treaty on the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its opening for signature are significant steps towards that end. Thailand was therefore honoured to be one of the three States to sign and ratify the Treaty on the first day of its opening for signature. The Treaty holds special significance for Thailand, as the depositary State of the Bangkok Treaty, and we will continue to urge nuclear-weapon States to take advantage of its inclusive nature.

We will also continue to support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. Furthermore, Thailand is now finalizing the necessary internal procedures for ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We call on the international community, particularly the remaining annex 2 States that have yet to sign or ratify the Treaty, to do so at the earliest opportunity.

Recent heightened tensions in the Korean peninsula are a matter of grave concern for us and our region. They underscore the critical importance of promoting a global norm against nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapon testing. We reiterate our calls to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and to cease all nuclear and ballistic-missile tests. We also wish to urge all the parties concerned to exercise restraint and work together towards the resumption of the Six-Party Talks and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

We have been implemented the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) for the past few decades. However, much remains to be done. This year we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the CWC's entry into force. Russia's recent completion of the destruction of its chemical stockpiles is another testament to States parties' commitment to realizing the Convention. On the other hand, the BWC, which concluded its eighth Review Conference, still requires a legally binding verification protocol to become a complete Convention.

We also want to stress the important role of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Thailand wishes to commend the active role and dedication of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs on the disarmament agenda. Our note of appreciation also goes to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in their efforts to promote multilateral disarmament issues within the region.

Outer space is the common heritage of humankind and our uses of it must be limited to peaceful ones. Capacity-building and technology-sharing are the only ways whereby we can all reap the benefits of outer space.

In conclusion, the value we attach to disarmament efforts must be based on how they benefit and protect our peoples. There is a vital relationship between disarmament, development and gender. The role of the

private sector and civil society, and our partnership with them, is invaluable and crucial. We must promote collective security and therefore inclusivity in the multilateral arena.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, and our sister Republic of Iraq on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee for this important session. We trust in your ability to successfully lead the work of the Committee in addressing a number of vital issues that are at the forefront of Egypt's concerns. We assure you and the members of the Bureau of the support and cooperation of the Egyptian delegation.

Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Group of African States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

This session is being held in the light of vital developments and unprecedented challenges in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We therefore have a heavy responsibility to review disarmament obligations and commitments and address them comprehensively and objectively so as to ensure that the United Nations shoulders its responsibilities in this vital area, which has a direct effect on the maintenance of international peace and security.

The most important of these challenges and developments are the continued failure to achieve universality for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the implementation of the commitments to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as part and parcel of the indefinite extension of the Treaty. We would like to emphasize that the non-universality of the Treaty, along with the selective approach and double standards that some adopt towards it, are linked to the new challenges that we face today, including the worrisome developments on the Korean peninsula.

In that context, Egypt looks forward to adopting important resolutions at this year's session that will advance progress towards establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Egypt calls on States members to support the draft resolutions introduced by Egypt and the Arab Group in that regard. We welcome the

statements of the majority of delegations over the past two days, in particular concerning their commitment to achieving such a goal.

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to produce an outcome document, owing to objections from three States parties, should compel all the international forums involved in disarmament to redouble their efforts to restore the credibility of the Treaty's non-proliferation regime, which is considered the cornerstone of international security and non-proliferation generally.

We are now at a crossroads as we seek the means to take new measures and steps that will strike a balance between the three pillars of the Treaty and restore its credibility and effectiveness. Although the international community is aware of the dangers posed by possessing nuclear weapons or relying on them as a deterrent in the military doctrines of nuclear States, nuclear-disarmament efforts have so far fallen short of achieving the commitments outlined in article VI of the NPT. International peace and security therefore remain now more than ever subject to the risk of using such nuclear weapons.

There is growing frustration among non-nuclear-weapon States because, in addition to their failure to implement their nuclear-disarmament commitments under article VI, some nuclear-weapon States continue to modernize and upgrade their arsenals, and even to develop new kinds of weapons of mass destruction. In this context, Egypt welcomes the historic decision to adopt the binding Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and considers it an important addition to the system of nuclear disarmament. It is an important step towards banning those weapons, which are the most destructive weapons of mass destruction for humankind. Egypt stresses that the new Treaty does not contradict the NPT. In fact, States that supported the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons were eager to ensure that it included an explicit reference to the centrality of the NPT.

Egypt welcomes the consensus on holding a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and a high-level conference on nuclear disarmament in 2018. We look forward to a positive outcome from these meetings that can revive multilateral efforts to break the impasse in disarmament.

In line with Egypt's principled position on nuclear energy, we strongly object to any attempt to restrict

the inalienable right of countries to the peaceful use of atomic energy and the development of their national capabilities, provided that they implement their commitments pursuant to the comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We would like to express our concern about efforts to restrict technical cooperation activities in the area of peaceful use of atomic energy.

Egypt is keen to support international efforts to combat the illegitimate trade in conventional weapons and prevent terrorist groups or illegitimate armed organizations from acquiring them. However, we reaffirm our reservations about the Arms Trade Treaty, in particular its selectively politicizing nature and gaps, which violate the rights that States are guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations. The Treaty lacks the definitions necessary to enable it to achieve its goals in an effective, non-discriminatory and unpoliticized manner.

At the same time, we underscore Egypt's interest in and support of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We look forward to the success of the next review conference of that mechanism in 2018 and support all efforts by France to ensure its success.

With regard to emerging security threats, we reaffirm Egypt's efforts to preserve the safety of outer space. We underscore the principle that outer space is our common heritage and the principle of the equal use of space for peaceful purposes only. It should not be used for an arms race or to ensure the security of a particular country at others' expense. We must work with the relevant United Nations bodies to promote international cooperation in that domain and advance negotiations on new legal parameters for regulating that important field without an arms race in outer space.

We would also like to mention the increased importance of the safety of information and communications technology. Cybersecurity has become a vital field affecting all aspects of daily life and the safety and stability of the strategic facilities and infrastructure of every State. Developing consensus-based international standards to ensure that this space is not used for destructive purposes that undermine international peace and security is one of the most important issues confronting the United Nations today. Egypt supports the central role of the United Nations

in this regard and the ongoing attempts, despite the obstacles, to identify consensus-based criteria for this.

Finally, I reaffirm our full cooperation with you, Sir, in our efforts to achieve a positive and satisfactory outcome of this session, bringing security for all, under your chairship. We are eager to make the progress we need in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, while maintaining the General Assembly's vital in this domain.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session, and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

(*spoke in English*)

For the first time in decades, there is a renewed universal consensus on the danger of nuclear weapons and their threat of use. Regrettably, however, we are not yet in agreement on the way to prevent such danger and to permanently eliminate its eventual devastating consequences.

On 7 July, Lebanon, along with 122 States, voted in favour of adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a historic agreement to outlaw those ugly weapons of mass destruction and establish a pathway towards their total elimination. Lebanon welcomed the adoption of the Treaty, which builds on and further develops norms already established through the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other conventions related to weapons of mass destruction.

Despite the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Lebanon still believes in the relevance of the NPT as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, in particular with regard to the implementation without further delay of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, Lebanon would like to recall that Israel is the only non-party to the Treaty in the Middle East and that it continues to threaten peace and security in the region by amassing nuclear weapons and refusing to place its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

I am still haunted by my visit to Hiroshima in 2015. It was an unforgettable experience, as I was able to personally witness the horrifying effects and

continuous humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons. I strongly believe that it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to strive to save humankind from a resurgence of such fatal tragedies. Lebanon supports all relevant initiatives on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and advocates for quality education in that regard.

Lebanon welcomes the efforts to increase awareness, through the Committee, of the harm done to civilians by explosive weapons in populated areas, as well as the increase in awareness of the environmental dimension of armed conflicts. Lebanon reiterates its commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and, based on its painful experience as a victim of such weapons since 2006, once again calls for the Convention's universalization.

Lebanon reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and looks forward to the Review Conference next June, as an opportunity to continue building on the achievements of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, particularly with regard to links with the Sustainable Development Goals and gender issues.

In that context, Lebanon welcomes the gender perspective included in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and previously in the Arms Trade Treaty. It reaffirms the need to continue mainstreaming gender perspectives in all disarmament issues. We also reaffirm the importance of continuing to work for the universal, firm and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

There is an obvious and urgent need to consider cybersecurity issues in the First Committee. The Internet is now essentially civilian infrastructure and, as such, it should not be made a target of or medium for attacks. Existing international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, provides solid but perhaps insufficient guidelines on the way forward.

There is also a need to determine the linkages with issues such as nuclear safety, lethal autonomous weapons and the network system through which drones operate. In that context, it is also important to duly

consider the ethical, legal and humanitarian concerns raised by the use of drones. The year 2017 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. Lebanon hopes that it will present an opportunity to move forward in preventing the de-weaponization of outer space and preserving it as a peaceful global domain for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

In conclusion, global military spending has continued to rise, reaching an alarming total worldwide of \$1,686 billion in 2016. We want to emphasize the importance of redirecting such spending to development activities, in accordance with Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, and of promoting and enhancing disarmament education through quality education for peace, such as is advocated in Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security.

Finally, Lebanon reaffirms that peace and security are sustainable only through the promotion of justice, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Mr. Shutenko (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and other members of the Bureau on your election. I look forward to a constructive and results-oriented dialogue during the 2017 session of the First Committee.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). I would now like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Ukraine consistently supports a multilateral approach to the disarmament and international security agenda. While we recognize the difficulties inherent in the implementation of the existing international treaties and in bringing others into force, my country remains fully committed to maintaining and further strengthening the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

We share the view that the potential use of nuclear weapons is the most serious threat that humankind has ever faced. For many years, Ukraine has been consistent in its call for fostering the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and stepping up nuclear-disarmament efforts. My country has

demonstrated a proactive approach by abandoning its nuclear capabilities and acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State. We have also removed all of our stocks of highly enriched uranium and refuse to use this dangerous material.

Ukraine continues to render full support to the effective implementation and universalization of the NPT as a fundamental element of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Regrettably, the credibility and efficiency of some of the key pillars of the NPT have been seriously undermined. I would like to recall that the historic decision of Ukraine to renounce its nuclear weapons was largely based on the clear international security assurances provided in writing in 1994, in particular in the Budapest Memorandum signed by Ukraine, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia. The validity of that document has become even more vital in an era of evolving proliferation threats, as well as efforts to ease the security concerns of States seeking nuclear deterrent capabilities.

The brutal violation of international obligations, including under the Budapest Memorandum, by the nuclear-weapon States has undermined the whole United Nations-based security system. In that regard, we should also recall the obligation of nuclear-weapon States, as outlined in the outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to fully respect their existing commitments with regard to security assurances.

Another appalling case in which international law has been totally ignored, and which is an immense threat to global security, is the situation on the Korean peninsula. Despite numerous Security Council resolutions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues its highly provocative activities. Ukraine advocates conducting an in-depth investigation into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's development of its nuclear and missile programmes in order to expose any possible foreign assistance to Pyongyang in that area.

Furthermore, for the first time in many years, the Chemical Weapons Convention is being blatantly trampled on in Syria. The full implementation and strengthening of the weapons of mass destruction non-proliferation regime should remain a key priority on the global agenda. The possible use of weapons of

mass destruction, including by terrorists, is a clear and ever present danger. We believe that proper fulfilment of the recommendations of the 2016 comprehensive review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) will significantly improve the instruments to reduce that threat.

I would like to mention that the international workshop on promoting the effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in the context of evolving proliferation risks and challenges will be held in Kyiv in November, in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Addressing the enormous destructive power of conventional armaments continues to be extremely important to the international community, especially in the context of regional security. We must tackle the issue of the ongoing illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of conventional arms with the highest level of responsibility.

The Russian military aggression against Ukraine, using regular military forces armed with modern types of weapons, has significantly damaged the existing system of conventional arms control. Russia continues to conduct illegal transfers of military equipment to our territory, both in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, thereby deliberately destabilizing the security not only of the subregion but of all Europe, and totally ignoring the persistent calls of the international community for effective border controls to be re-established.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the International Tracing Instrument, remains among the most important and universal tools for combating this threat.

We also recognize the crucial role of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, in particular, in addressing post-conflict remedial measures to minimize the occurrence, risk and effects of those types of weapons.

My country has been experiencing the tragic humanitarian consequences of foreign military aggression for several years now. The number of severe casualties among civilians, including children, continues to grow rapidly. Explosive remnants of

war, as well as anti-personnel mines, which have an indiscriminate effect, are planted by illegal armed groups of Russian proxies in residential areas and on communication routes between them, in violation of the relevant conventions.

Despite the significant security challenges caused by the hybrid war waged against my country, Ukraine has spared no effort to ensure proper and faithful compliance with its obligations under the aforementioned treaties. At the same time, the full implementation of the CCW and the Mine Ban Treaty requires consolidated and constructive international cooperation and assistance, among other things, rather than simple pressure to abide by the fixed timelines without taking into account the seriousness and gravity of the situation on the ground.

The erosion of the existing world order and the ongoing breaches and unaddressed violations of international law, along with conflicts in various parts of the globe, continue to weaken the global security architecture as a whole. It will be crucial to find practical ways to ensure that the international legal norms related to non-proliferation and arms control do not remain mere words on paper but are properly enforced and fully respected. The international community should be united and act decisively in preventing any attempt and countering every action to endanger the relevant international instruments through aggressive policies, violations of State sovereignty and territorial integrity, or by blocking important decisions to be adopted by the United Nations or its bodies.

Mr. Mati (Italy): First of all, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee at its seventy-second session, and assure you of my delegation's full support.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made previously on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

I will read out an abridged version of my statement. The full text will be available on the PaperSmart web portal.

The opening of this year's session of the First Committee is taking place at a particularly troubling time for the cause of disarmament. We are extremely concerned about the situation in the Korean peninsula. We strongly condemn the nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes and recurrent tests carried out by the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea as serious breaches of multiple Security Council resolutions, a growing challenge to the global non-proliferation regime and a clear threat to international peace and security.

We reiterate our call to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately abandon the development of all its existing nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We urge it to return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as soon as possible, and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Italy will continue to do its part in pursuing a firm and cohesive response from the international community to that challenge. The current crisis on the Korean peninsula adds a sense of urgency to our efforts to take forward our joint disarmament and non-proliferation goals. We remain convinced that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective and long-term results in the field.

Among our recent achievements, Italy greatly values the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and welcomes the IAEA's confirmation of Iran's continued compliance with its provisions. We believe that the international community should continue to make every effort to ensure that the Plan of Action remains a success story.

Italy fully shares the goal of achieving a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. Our deep concern about the potentially catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons underpins our efforts to make effective progress on nuclear disarmament. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It provides the only realistic legal framework for attaining a world without nuclear weapons in a way that promotes international stability, and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. We believe that goal must be pursued in a step-by-step and verifiable way, based on effective measures, in accordance with article VI of the NPT, and on the involvement of all relevant actors in a consensus-based approach.

Among those measures, the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

is crucial. Italy calls on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. Pending the CTBT's entry into force, Italy calls on all States, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions and to refrain from any action that would undermine the objectives and purposes of the Treaty.

Another key priority for Italy remains the immediate commencement within the Conference on Disarmament (CD) of negotiations for a treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The CD could make another key contribution to the fulfilment of our shared goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world by resuming, within the context of an agreed programme of work, its substantive discussions on negative security assurances, with a view to making recommendations addressing all its aspects, including an international legally binding instrument.

We reiterate our support for convening a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, to be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by those States, as decided by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

Italy remains strongly committed to supporting the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We remain gravely concerned about the fact that chemical weapons are still intentionally used to kill and harm people, as events in Syria have dramatically shown.

We reiterate our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, any time and under any circumstances. But condemnation is not enough and accountability is essential. We therefore fully support the activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and Fact-finding Mission.

We attach great importance to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and look forward to the upcoming meeting of States parties as an opportunity to provide the BWC with a strong intersessional work programme.

We are also fully committed to international efforts to address the humanitarian, socioeconomic and security impact of conventional weapons. We look forward to the third Conference to Review Progress Made in the

Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also call for the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty and for the full implementation of its provisions.

We are firmly committed to the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the outer space environment. In that regard, we believe that a set of globally shared principles of responsible behaviour in outer space would be the most appropriate response to the sense of urgency expressed by the international community.

Italy supports developing norms and principles of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, as well as the promotion of confidence-building measures, international cooperation and capacity-building to improve cybersecurity and decrease the risk of disputes among States.

Before concluding, I would like to mention how pleased we are about the United Nations Disarmament Commission's adoption of recommendations on conventional disarmament. We hope that positive result can serve as a source of inspiration for the efforts we should all make to strengthen the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Mr. Fatah (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Maintaining peace is one of the four purposes for which the United Nations was founded. International peace and security have become an integral part of international treaties and instruments related to disarmament. That is why Iraq believes that the process of keeping and maintaining international peace and security is a joint responsibility that we all share and an urgent necessity that must be met. Iraq supports all efforts to strengthen the universality of treaties and conventions pertaining to disarmament.

Full adherence to and compliance with all international conventions related to weapons of mass destruction and their complete elimination represents one of the main pillars offering the international community a genuine guarantee of limits on the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction. My

country's Government strongly believes that it is important to pursue joint international efforts to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in order to guarantee a safer future for future generations. It was for those reasons that my country's delegation voted in favour of resolution 71/258, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations".

Iraq underscores the importance of a multilateral approach to disarmament and non-proliferation. It is a method that embraces democracy, negotiation, effectiveness and consensus, allowing States parties to respect their commitments to international disarmament treaties and abide by their provisions. In that context, Iraq stresses the central role of the Conference on Disarmament as the only multilateral negotiating forum regarding disarmament.

Iraq welcomed the efforts made by the Disarmament Conference to adopt decision CD/2090 on 17 February, under the Romanian presidency, establishing a working group to take forward the work of the Conference. Nonetheless, we were disappointed that the Conference was unable to adopt recommendations on its agenda. We must therefore redouble our efforts to reach an agreement on a balanced and comprehensive agenda that addresses the concerns of all Member States. We must demonstrate the political will and flexibility needed to revive the Conference at this crucial time on the international arena. We face increased regional crises, a growing terrorist threat and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, all of which could threaten international peace and security.

In this context, Iraq underscores the important role played by the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which is the deliberative multilateral body tasked with discussing disarmament issues here at the United Nations. We welcome the Commission's adoption in April, under the Bulgarian presidency, of recommendations on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. At the same time, we are disappointed that the Commission was unable to adopt recommendations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Iraq welcomed the adoption in June by the Open-ended Working Group, under the presidency of Ecuador, of objectives and an agenda for a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Iraq reaffirms the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, in particular in the Middle East, as the fourth pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). They strengthen efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and reinforce international and regional peace and security. In that regard, we are deeply troubled by the failure of efforts to establish a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons. We reiterate that it is important for the States depositaries of the NPT to honour their commitments pursuant to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Any attempt to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East will require certain basic steps, such as the denuclearization of Israel, its adherence to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State, and the placement of its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

As facilitator of article XIV of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Iraq calls on all annex 2 countries to ratify the Treaty at the earliest in order for it to enter into force as a legal instrument that complements and promotes international non-proliferation regime. The aim is to achieve the long-awaited objective of establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction.

The issue of anti-personnel mines, explosive remnants of war and cluster munitions is highly important because of their devastating impact on the environment and economic development. Iraq suffers from the effects of a large number of mines, which claim the lives of civilians and military personnel daily. The problem is further complicated by the criminal strategies used by the terrorist gangs related to Da'esh, which have planted mines and explosive devices throughout Iraq in order to thwart the Iraqi forces' efforts to liberate the affected areas. These weapons also harm civilians and hamper the return of displaced families to their homes. We thank all States and parties that have assisted us in this regard. We underscore the urgent need for every form of help from the international community in order to eliminate the spectre of these lethal weapons that threaten humankind, the economy and the environment.

In conclusion, we wish the Committee every success in its work to achieve the results we all desire and meet the concerns of all Member States.

Mr. Arriola Ramírez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Paraguay.

We would like to congratulate Mr. Bahr Aluloom on his election as Chair, as well as the other members of the Bureau. He has my delegation's cooperation in conducting the Committee's work during this session.

The Republic of Paraguay welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which we signed on 20 September, and would like to highlight the considerable progress that has been made in other areas of disarmament, such as the adoption by the United Nations Disarmament Commission of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, and the establishment of objectives and agenda for a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Committee can rest assured that the delegation of Paraguay is committed to promoting disarmament at the United Nations and making its contribution so that the General Assembly, which represents the highest expression of the democracy of its peoples, on the basis of sovereign equality among States, continues to be the forum for discussions surrounding disarmament all its manifestations.

The national initiatives undertaken by the Government of the Republic of Paraguay have borne fruit on several disarmament-related issues. The Government of Paraguay has strengthened the transparency of its military expenditure and has provided information on its military spending to the United Nations. In addition, in compliance with regional conventions and with the assistance of the Organization, Paraguay periodically destroys surplus and obsolete war material as part of its commitment to the process of controlling and eliminating illicit trafficking in arms and reducing stockpile risk. In Paraguay, firearms and ammunition collected or seized are destroyed rather than sent to secondary markets.

The Republic of Paraguay works closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, whose Executive Director led a visit to Paraguay in March and held meetings with high-ranking officials from the Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security, Prevention of Money Laundering and Customs. During his visit, the Committee emphasized

“Paraguay's efforts to comply with international standards in the fight against terrorism in all its aspects, as well as the implementation of public policies to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors; in particular, in border areas”.

The Committee's mission also underscored the need for Paraguay to have technical assistance and specialized teams for effective implementation, mechanisms and policies preventing every aspect of terrorism and terrorism-related cross-border criminal activity. Consequently, and at the behest of my Government, the Committee is planning a follow-up mission this year during which meetings will be held with the legislative and judicial branches.

With regard to transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space, Paraguay has ratified the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies and has founded the Paraguay Space Agency, made up of public and private institutions. The Agency's goal is to promote and implement policies to develop national outer-space activities and use outer space for peaceful purposes. The Space Agency, whose first President was appointed at the beginning of this year, is developing our national space activities programme.

With regard to security and information and communication technology, Paraguay adopted a national cybersecurity plan in April aimed at strengthening the security of its critical assets and achieving a secure, reliable and resilient cyberspace.

The Republic of Paraguay reiterates its commitment to the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The nuclear disarmament process must be transparent and irreversible, provide effective verification mechanisms and be based on a universal and legally binding framework. The delegation of Paraguay is concerned about policies aimed at improving existing nuclear weapons and developing new nuclear weapons, and reiterates its rejection of the recent nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of international law.

The delegation of Paraguay calls for the development of a programme of work to enable the gradual extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We reaffirm our commitment to the provisions of the Treaty

of Tlatelolco, which bans nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, and urge nuclear-weapon States to withdraw their interpretive statements on the Protocols to the Treaty. The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity, violates international law and international humanitarian law and is inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of our Organization.

The delegation of Paraguay advocates the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, through the implementation of programmes developed with the utmost care so as to limit the damage that the production of nuclear power might do to the environment. States implementing such programmes should do so on the basis of a broad cross-border responsibility and in accordance with international cooperation, risk and damage prevention and due-diligence best practices, ensuring that they respond appropriately to possible cross-border damage.

Finally, with regard to small arms and light weapons, the delegation of Paraguay reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, advocates the adoption of a complementary framework for the Treaty to address the production of conventional weapons and reducing their numbers, and calls on Member States to consider regulations on ammunition for small arms and light weapons.

Ms. Kalamwina (Zambia): My delegation would like to express Zambia's deepest condolences and sympathy to the people of the United States of America regarding the mass shooting in Las Vegas on 2 October.

I now have the honour to congratulate Ambassador Bahr Aluloom on his election as Chair of the Committee on disarmament and international security and to assure him of my delegation's full support and cooperation during the Committee's deliberations.

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Zambia would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its total commitment and support to the concerted efforts of the States Members of the United Nations aimed at general and complete disarmament and achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are clearly the most dangerous weapons on

Earth, with the potential to destroy human life, putting the natural environment and lives of future generations at risk because of their long-lasting catastrophic effects.

The risks of nuclear weapons arise from all of the various aspects of their existence — production, stockpiling and testing. Although they have been used only twice in warfare, more than 15,000 remain in existence in nuclear-weapon States and, in a few instances, in non-nuclear-weapon States, with more than 2,000 nuclear tests having been conducted on land, sea and in laboratories. Despite the existence of a number of multilateral treaties on the elimination of proliferation and testing, through the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty of 1996, little has been achieved in that regard.

Zambia continues to support General Assembly resolution 3472 (XXX) on nuclear-weapon-free zones as a tool for strengthening global nuclear non-proliferation norms and the promotion of international efforts fostering peace and security. Zambia is encouraged by the fact that all African States are States parties to the Treaty of Pelindaba, with a common agenda of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the African continent. In that connection, my delegation calls on regions that have not attained such targets to work to realize nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Turning to the uses of nuclear energy as a public good, as opposed to in weaponry systems, Zambia has continued to support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the strengthening of the Agency's additional protocols, which are designed to uphold the living standards of people through nuclear energy. In that regard, Zambia has engaged stakeholders in generating electricity from nuclear power purely for peaceful purposes.

Regarding the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), to which Zambia is a State party, Zambia is putting in place the measures necessary for its effective implementation. The measures we are implementing include enacting national legislation, developing a national control list, creating mechanisms to enhance inter-agency coordination and cooperative capacity-building. In order to ensure that the ATT can effectively attain its objectives and purpose, we call for its promotion and universalization through subregional actors and other stakeholders.

Zambia fully acknowledges the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In that connection, we are committed to achieving the objectives of the various international, continental and regional instruments designed to address the problem of the proliferation of such weapons, in line with the international community's commitment to taking action against individuals and groups involved in their illicit trade and proliferation by adhering to the main relevant instruments, including the Firearms Protocol, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument, which enables States to identify and trace illicit arms.

My delegation also wishes to raise concerns about the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groupings. Zambia is united with other Member States in combating the possibility of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-State groups. That should accompany the encouragement of all States by the United Nations to strengthen their national anti-proliferation regimes by implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which seeks to keep non-State actors from acquiring nuclear, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction. In that connection, concerted efforts should be made to share information and to assist in building State capacities through greater cooperation among all stakeholders, civil societies and researchers.

My delegation would also like to highlight some concerns about the possibility of an arms race in outer space. All Member States should devise comprehensive policies aimed at preventing such an arms race and measures ensuring that outer space does not become an area of conflict but remains one to be used by all States as a common heritage for the greater good. Zambia is also of the view that initiatives aimed at ensuring no first placement of weapons in outer space should be upheld by all Member States.

In conclusion, we reiterate Zambia's commitment and support to global efforts towards all aspects of complete disarmament with the aim of maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Alfassam (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. Bahr Aluloom on his election as Chair of the First Committee at its seventy-second session, as well as the other members

of the Bureau. We assure him of our full cooperation and support, and believe that under his stewardship, the work of the Committee will be undoubtedly a success.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank his predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Algeria, for his role in steering the work of the Committee successfully and efficiently during the previous session.

My country's delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

The Committee's meetings this year are being held as we witness major developments in the areas of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In that regard, I reaffirm the State of Kuwait's principled and firm position on disarmament and international security, based on respect for international conventions and treaties, in particular those pertaining to disarmament and non-proliferation. Kuwait has always been among the first States to sign and ratify international treaties on non-proliferation, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, in addition to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols.

The State of Kuwait underscores the importance of reaching consensus within the international community in order to ensure the complete and non-selective implementation of all disarmament treaties, in particular the NPT and its three pillars — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Treaty is a crucial instrument governing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons around the world.

Over the past 10 years, the disarmament and non-proliferation system has witnessed ups and downs in the political will of the international community in general, and among the nuclear-weapon States in particular. Nonetheless, recent developments have sparked joint interest in non-proliferation issues in the international sphere. The momentum this year follows long years of stagnation in the area of non-proliferation. We have witnessed success in the

work of the Open-ended Working Group to prepare for a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and in the high-level Security Council meeting in September to discuss nuclear non-proliferation (see S/PV.8053), held just a few days before the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September. In addition, the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty held its tenth session, and we look forward to a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disarmament, to be held in 2018.

The peoples of the Middle East continue to await the day when our region becomes a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was a glimmer of hope for achieving that goal and we still hope to achieve it by continuing our efforts, based on firm principles, to meet the aspirations of our peoples on the issue.

We are concerned about the fact that the nuclear-weapon States continue to shirk their commitments arising from the 1995 NPT Review Conference and the 2010 Action Plan, which remain valid, but we are nevertheless compelled to highlight the need to redouble efforts to hold a conference on a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons as soon as possible, with the participation of all States of the region, including Israel. Israel continues to refuse to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or even to sign the IAEA comprehensive safeguards, so as to avoid declaring the number of its nuclear facilities and allowing the IAEA to inspect them.

Nearly 72 years have passed since the world witnessed the first nuclear test, and we pay tribute to all who have attempted to stop such tests. Nonetheless, we are deeply troubled by the fact that some nuclear-weapon States continue to conduct them. Kuwait reiterates its condemnation of all nuclear tests, which could endanger people's lives and imperil international peace and security.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is conducting nuclear tests and launching ballistic missiles from the Korean peninsula, posing a threat not only to Kuwait but to the entire world. The danger posed by nuclear weapons transcends national and regional borders, extends to cities and villages far beyond, and

could affect the lives of millions of people and the environment. My delegation would therefore like to remind all the relevant parties about the importance of exercising restraint and engaging in diplomatic talks to resolve this issue. North Korea must abandon its nuclear programmes, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, as we underscore our priorities on the issues to be discussed by the Committee, we stress that my country's delegation attaches equal importance to all the topics in this area. We will make further statements as we discuss other Committee items.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session, and all members of the Bureau, and to assure you of the full cooperation of the Senegalese delegation.

Senegal aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Today's debate is focused on the various crises and tensions throughout the world that are increasingly complicating the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation process. Disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and non-proliferation, will remain a distant goal as long as the relevant multilateral negotiations make little headway, despite the adoption on 7 July of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

Nuclear-weapon States must therefore honour their obligations and commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in particular in the current environment, which is marked by a growing terrorist threat and the ever-increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors. We believe that multilateralism remains the most suitable path to complete disarmament in that environment and the only way to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. We therefore implore the nuclear-weapon States to take the steps necessary to eliminate their nuclear warheads.

Ahead of the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons, to be held in 2020, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which chairs the Review Conference's Preparatory Committee, has organized a series of meetings. The first meeting was held in Dakar on 20 and 21 February, on a continent that I would like to point out was declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone under the 1996 Pelindaba Treaty. The meeting enabled African countries to gain greater clarity about their priorities on issues related to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, such as non-proliferation, disarmament and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects, held in June 2016, enabled Member States to review the progress that has been made and identify innovative measures to be taken in the collective and effective fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their proliferation. However, the lack of consensus on the issue of ammunition management in the Programme of Action was denounced by several delegations, including our own. Similarly, the majority of the States parties to the treaty lamented the absence of specific references to the arms trade.

Nonetheless, the States Members of the United Nations reiterated their commitment to fully implementing the Programme of Action and strengthening cooperation and assistance among countries. They have also established a monitoring mechanism for the preparatory cycle for the next Review Conference, to be held in 2018, and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. International cooperation and assistance are required to implement the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, particularly through capacity-building, training and the transfer of technology and equipment to States that request them.

Senegal welcomes the entry into force on 24 December 2014 of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The third Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty was held in Geneva in September. My country is in the process of implementing the Treaty, working to promote its universalization, encourage regional cooperation to benefit by sharing good practices and continuing to include civil society in activities to raise awareness about the Treaty. This is

an opportunity to call on countries that have not yet done so to sign or ratify the ATT without delay so as to facilitate its universalization and implementation. We must also reduce the illicit transfer, circulation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, whose unbridled spread remains a concern to us all.

Another pillar of disarmament and non-proliferation, which is reaching agreement on a treaty to prohibit the further production of fissile material for military purposes, is also at an impasse, despite some progress. The Expert Preparatory Group, tasked with making recommendations on the elements of a fissile material cut-off treaty, must be encouraged in its efforts to reach a consensus. The Group's first meeting was held in August. Meanwhile, measures must be taken to ensure that the fissile material stockpiles in 32 countries do not fall into the wrong hands, and that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force without delay.

Similarly, under the watchful eye of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the inalienable rights of countries to develop research, produce and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must be respected. We also reaffirm the exclusive role played by the Conference on Disarmament, as the only forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations, and of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). For the first time since 1999, a consensus was reached in the UNDC at the end of the 2015-2017 triennium on the recommendations of Working Group II on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

With regard to other weapons of mass destruction, we call for the signing and ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Finally, my country welcomes the invaluable contribution made by non-governmental organizations in the area of disarmament. We reaffirm our belief that they should be given their rightful place, including in our discussions.

In conclusion, I would like to share the words of Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, who in his recent address to the General Assembly during its general debate said,

"Preceding generations had the wisdom to understand that isolationism and belligerency are a dead end. Out of the ruins of war, they built the foundations of peace; but it is a peace that is always

a work in progress. Whenever its foundations falter, all humankind is threatened. The wisdom of our predecessors demands that we work together to safeguard peace, in the name of our shared humanity, which brings us together and assigns us a shared destiny.” (A/72/PV.10, p. 9)

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate Mr. Bahr Aluloom his election as Chair of the First Committee at this session, and the other members of the Bureau. They may rest assured that my delegation will support the work of the First Committee.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

The start of this session of the First Committee has been marked by the recent historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty reaffirms the firm commitment of the majority of the States of the international community to promoting nuclear disarmament, which is a primary objective. Similarly, it acknowledges the threat that such weapons pose to collective security, as well as the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of their use for current and future generations.

We therefore reiterate our firm commitment to nuclear disarmament. On 20 September, Guatemala signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That instrument is a fundamental step towards nuclear disarmament and a significant contribution to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Guatemala rejects assertions that the Treaty is counterproductive and creates political divisions. We firmly believe that it complements the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and strengthens its three fundamental pillars. In addition, recent developments have shown that it has become increasingly urgent and essential to work to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament is the only sensible path to a safer world. Nothing would help to eliminate the risk of proliferation and use of weapons more than the total elimination of them.

Guatemala reaffirms the existence and validity of the rules of the NPT, as well as the commitments we have been making, in particular in the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It is true that the new challenges that a new environment presents have led to divergent

views about the steps to be taken. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the Treaty was adopted as the cornerstone of disarmament and arms control. Guatemala promotes the universality of the NPT and the full observance of all of its provisions. We emphasize that its implementation is a legal obligation and that all States parties are committed to giving clear indications that they adhere to its letter and spirit. We view that international legal instrument as the best foundation on which to make progress in building a safer world.

The Chair resumed the Chair.

Guatemala is also proud to be a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first densely inhabited nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world and has served as an example and an inspiration for creating other denuclearized regions. Having built a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, we must ensure that there is no risk of a nuclear threat. It is therefore important to ensure that our region serves as an example to be followed in other areas of the world.

With the aim and hope of improving the situation in my country, one of the main priorities on my Government’s agenda is citizen security, which has been jeopardized by armed violence throughout history. That scourge is strengthened by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which threatens the protection and physical and moral integrity of our people, and hinders the creation of an environment conducive to development and unity. We are deeply committed to disarmament in all its aspects. Our commitment was also demonstrated when we signed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 June 2013 and deposited the instrument of ratification on 12 July 2016. Its mandate for implementation entered into force on 10 October 2016.

It should be noted that our delegation has participated actively in the conferences of the States parties to the ATT in order to contribute to decision-making that promotes its effectiveness. We have also taken steps to promote its universalization. Guatemala is pleased to have been selected as one of the countries for the voluntary trust fund project, which we firmly believe will help advance the national implementation of this important instrument through technical and financial cooperation.

Guatemala is a peaceful nation, committed to the effective, realistic and sensible regulation of the arms trade. Our country has suffered the terrible

consequences of weak international regulations that do not reflect the challenges that many countries such as ours face. Let us demand that the security of our peoples and the shared responsibility of the global community be the terms of reference for preventing violent individuals, terrorists and, above all, transnational criminal organizations from having access to firearms. We take this opportunity to reiterate our firm support for the ATT and our unequivocal commitment to its full implementation and, in the near future, its universalization.

Let me also take this opportunity to vigorously condemn the acts of provocation and destabilization committed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. They undermine international peace and security, increase regional and global tensions and impede peaceful dialogue on the path to denuclearization. It is clear that all such threats and acts of provocation are violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

The international community is faced with the major challenge of taking bolder steps to achieve nuclear disarmament. Above all, that will require clear political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States and a set of concrete, timely and verifiable actions that will enable us to abandon the rhetoric that claims that progress is being made, even as nuclear weapons continue to exist in very large numbers and to be modernized.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau, and wish you every success in your endeavours. I assure you and the other participating delegations that the State of Qatar will cooperate with you to ensure the success of the Committee's work.

My country also aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

The challenges that our collective security system is facing demonstrate the urgent need to redouble international efforts related to security and disarmament in the light of an increasing number of conflicts, the spread of terrorism and the proliferation of arms and the consequent risk of the use of weapons of mass destruction, especially should they fall into the hands of terrorist groups or non-State actors. We appreciate the substantial and valuable contributions

of various international instruments, initiatives and declarations to safeguarding the world from those risks and challenges, and especially in establishing a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. However, the growing dangers to the international community should impel all of us to take greater responsibility for promoting cooperation and to redouble our efforts to counter such dangers.

The nuclear threat is of great concern to the international community, and eliminating nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction throughout the world is urgent. Considering that four decades have already passed since the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, all States must continue to work to rid the world of that grave threat, in accordance with article VI of the NPT and the relevant steps contained in the outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Despite the positive outcome achieved in the area of nuclear disarmament and its impact on peace, security and stability throughout the world, the Middle East is still lacking security and stability. My delegation is very concerned about the lack of progress in eliminating nuclear weapons from the Middle East, and about the non-implementation of the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review Conference. That is in addition to the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference, the 2010 Action Plan and the failure of the 2015 Review Conference.

The State of Qatar believes that investing in conflict prevention can assure us of the international security to which we all aspire. It saves financial and human resources that would otherwise be spent on armaments, and puts an end to the arms races that result from increased international tensions and conflicts, a source of concern to everybody, thanks to their growing regional and international effects. In this context, the world understands better than ever that an absence of dialogue deepens the lack of trust among the relevant parties to conflicts and leads to further arms increases and instability in the world.

We therefore reiterate our belief that international security will be achieved only if we promote collective conflict prevention and settle disputes and conflicts in accordance with Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations. Needless to say, conflict prevention

represents a cornerstone of Qatar's policy. We actively contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts through mediation and consultation with the relevant United Nations organs.

Electronic information security and cybersecurity are major challenges for the international community. The world has witnessed serious violations of the electronic systems of States and private institutions. In his opening statement this year to the General Assembly (see A/72/PV.3), the Secretary-General stated that electronic warfare has become a reality that cannot be ignored. It is increasingly capable of disrupting relations among States and destroying infrastructures and modern lifestyles. In this regard, the delegation of the State of Qatar would like to express its support for the findings of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security related to enhancing international multilateral cooperation in order to strengthen information security and ensure national interests on the international information network, which will strengthen States' capacities against any subversive attacks on their facilities or influence their interests through the international information network.

My delegation reaffirms that the lack of dedicated international legislation and institutions for regulating such a vital and endangered domain, particularly by punishing those who commit cross-border electronic piracy, is a source of concern to the international community. Strict and clear measures are needed in order to hold those perpetrators fully responsible by law for such crimes, and the time has come for the international community to take serious steps. The State of Qatar reiterates its readiness to participate in any joint international effort to free humankind from the misuse of scientific advancements in the area of cybersecurity.

Qatar has been eager to adopt firm policies on disarmament and non-proliferation issues because we firmly believe that achieving international peace and security is a responsibility shared by Member States through a multilateral framework, which is the only way to address the issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security in general, and saving humankind from weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in particular. The State of Qatar renews its commitment to cooperating on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations. We will contribute to

international efforts to eliminate those weapons. We have honoured all our commitments under the international disarmament agreements to which Qatar is party. We have also hosted and financed a number of events organized by relevant international organizations.

At the national level, since its establishment in 2004 the Qatar National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons has provided advice for competent Government agencies on all issues related to arms embargoes in order to achieve the objectives of the relevant international conventions to which Qatar is party. We are keen to consolidate peaceful values and raise awareness among future generations of the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. The Qatar National Committee has launched an annual programme for school and university students on the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. The Doha Regional Centre for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Training, which was established in 2012, provides services and training programmes at the national, regional and international levels related to issues pertaining to conventions on weapons of mass destruction.

The State of Qatar reaffirms its position that the Conference on Disarmament is the only acceptable negotiating forum for discussing disarmament issues. The Conference has adopted a comprehensive and balanced programme of work to meet the aspirations of the international community on disarmament, including conducting negotiations to prevent arms race in the outer space and other related issues.

In conclusion, achieving security and stability in the world is a joint responsibility that cannot be achieved unless we all work to fulfil our disarmament commitments.

Mr. Muhammad Bande (Nigeria): The delegation of Nigeria congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at this session, and the other members of the Bureau. Our work will benefit from your tremendous experience, expertise and commitment, and we therefore want to assure you of our full support and cooperation. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum, for his leadership and laudable efforts.

My delegation welcomes the remarks made by the President of the General Assembly and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Nigeria aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2), and would like to make the following statement in its national capacity.

At the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, my delegation joined other member States in highlighting the daunting challenges confronting our world. Sadly, little has changed to provide confidence and reduce the enormous challenges to global peace and security. We are, in fact, facing more challenges and quandaries, all of which reinforce how important it is to redouble our efforts and work diligently for global peace and security. In that regard, building the right momentum and multilateral approach involves concerted efforts and a new plan of action.

In the context of threats to international peace and security, my delegation continues to highlight the astronomical sizes of global defence budgets, including the enormous resources that nuclear-weapon States devote to the maintenance and upgrading of their nuclear arsenal systems by, as well as the unfettered access that unauthorized non-State actors have to a wide-ranging collection of conventional weapons.

Today we see the dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, all around us. From Africa to the Middle East, across Europe to the Americas and Asia, the carnage has become phenomenal and unprecedented, especially the immense bloodshed produced in innocent populations by terrorists, insurgents, criminals and gang members. We have witnessed cities and communities destroyed or deserted, with heavy losses of precious lives and property, tolls taken on livelihoods and waves of forced mass migration. In most cases, that mindless aggression is largely enabled and effectively supported by arms illicitly procured or transferred by non-State entities. Such weapons are used indiscriminately by terrorists and other bandits to unleash mayhem and massacre innocent civilians, including women and children.

The *raison d'être* for the overwhelming support and adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty in 2014 was the need to present a common front to robustly respond to the threat posed to international peace and security by the non-regulation of conventional weapons. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the

outcome of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held last month in Geneva. We must continue to do the right thing by standing with States parties and other signatories to the Treaty. The recent acts of terrorism and the increase in insurgent groups across many regions of the world, including in my country, have given us an opportunity to take a second look at our positions and obligations, and where we stand as nations.

While small arms and light weapons in the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists and other armed groups have continued to decimate lives indiscriminately, nuclear weapons still remain the ultimate agents of mass destruction, and their total elimination should be the ultimate objective of all disarmament processes within the broad spectrum of goals being pursued by the United Nations. To that end, my delegation heartily welcomes the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was opened for signature on 20 September. The delegation of Nigeria remains proud to have participated actively in the process leading to its adoption and to have been one of the first countries to sign the Treaty. Our commitment was guided by our principled position on the denuclearization of the world. We are also mindful of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons. To that end, my delegation wishes to restate its opposition to the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and to the development of new types of weapons.

Nuclear test explosions not only send a disturbing signal to the global political environment, they also have devastating effects on our environment through the spread of radioactive materials in the atmosphere. We all have a duty to protect the environment by respecting the moratorium on nuclear testing as we work to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In that regard, my delegation welcomes the tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, which took place on 20 September, and calls on those countries that have not signed or ratified the CTBT, in particular the annex 2 States, to do so without further delay.

With regard to the recent happenings on the Korean peninsula, my delegation is worried about the continuing nuclear tests being conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. My delegation reiterates its earlier call for a concerted effort on the part of all States Members of the United Nations to bring on board

representatives of all regions of the world to weigh in and engage the regime of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with the overall goal of ensuring the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

As a State party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, Nigeria welcomes the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. The Treaty serves as a shield for the continent of Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of nuclear weapons. As a measure to ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation further calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate that measure in the remaining parts of the world, including in the Middle East.

The members of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) have again been reminded of the need to reflect on whether the current stalemate is serving the purposes and objective of its establishment. Notwithstanding the Conference's past considerations and actions, there is no doubt that its long-standing inability to agree to act on concrete issues has adversely affected its reputation and credibility. It is our fervent hope that the members of the CD will hasten to do what should be done and fulfil its objectives.

In spite of the difficulties encountered in the multilateral disarmament machinery, my delegation remains committed to its objectives as the only collection of mechanisms designed to fulfil the ethos and objectives of disarmament and international security. We remain hopeful that good judgment will prevail so as to ensure our understanding of the need to act concertedly and decisively to address the issues of grave concern to humankind.

In the course of the plenary meetings, the delegation of Nigeria will submit three draft resolutions on behalf of the Group of African States, for which we seek the full support of all delegations. Their titles are "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty", "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa" and "Prohibition of the Dumping of Radioactive Wastes".

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairship of this important and challenging Committee. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation and look forward to closely working with you, your team and all our colleagues to carry out our common tasks.

As the only country ever to have experienced nuclear devastation during a war, Japan has always promoted nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly by raising awareness across borders and generations, based on the reality of the atomic bombings and their humanitarian consequences.

We believe that nuclear disarmament and national security are fully connected. It is neither feasible nor effective to pursue disarmament without regard for existing international security concerns. Disarmament improves the regional and global security environment, while also enhancing confidence among States. Our common question now, therefore, is how to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and improve our security environment at the same time. All States should redouble their efforts towards that goal. Today I would like to articulate Japan's views on that point.

First of all, in order to promote nuclear disarmament, it is essential to rebuild cooperation and trust among nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. Secondly, there are various approaches to realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. It is therefore essential that we concentrate on revitalizing practical and concrete measures for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation rather than on criticizing approaches. In that regard, I would like to illustrate the practical measures that Japan believes are effective and relevant in the current circumstances.

First, we again call on the nuclear-weapon States to take further concrete disarmament measures, ahead of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, by implementing the agreed steps outlined in the final documents of previous Review Conferences. Among other things, Japan underscores the importance of transparency and risk reduction. Efforts to increase the level of transparency in nuclear arsenals must be strengthened, particularly by providing more frequent and further detailed reports with numerical data on nuclear forces. We also urge all non-nuclear-weapon States and States possessing nuclear weapons to take appropriate measures, including by reducing the risk of the accidental use of nuclear weapons.

Secondly, Japan regards a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as the most practical building blocks for nuclear disarmament. We welcome

the first session of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group and are convinced that the Group will add value to the work already carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, with a view to the immediate commencement of negotiations.

Thirdly, although the CTBT has yet to enter into force, the universalization of the Treaty has been progressing. Japan is determined to continue its efforts with a view to contributing to its entry into force. In that regard, we welcome the outcome of the tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in New York last month.

Fourthly, the principle of verifiability, along with transparency and irreversibility, must be applied to all nuclear-disarmament processes. Japan welcomes the group of governmental experts on nuclear-disarmament verification to be established next year in the United Nations. We also commend the efforts of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. Those initiatives have become solid platforms where both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States can work together to deepen their understanding about the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

The nuclear and missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea represent a grave and unprecedented challenge to the international community. Japan condemns in the strongest terms the repeated nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the nuclear test conducted on 3 September and the two ballistic-missile launches over Japan on 29 August and 15 September. They flagrantly violate and demonstrate disregard for the relevant Security Council resolutions and other commitments.

Japan strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately cease its nuclear- and ballistic-related activities, refrain from conducting further provocative actions, and abandon all nuclear weapons and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. The international community must remain united in reinforcing all possible measures against that security threat. With that in mind, Japan will again submit to the Committee its draft resolution entitled "United

action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". We hope that it will garner even more wide-ranging support from Member States than it has in previous years.

During the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, Japan announced the establishment of the Eminent Persons Group for Substantial Progress on Nuclear Disarmament. The first meeting of that Group will be held in Hiroshima on 27 and 28 November. Participants will include a wide range of experts from nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear weapon States. We expect productive results.

Aside from nuclear-weapon issues, Japan has been committed to pursuing other disarmament efforts, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and other emerging issues, including cyberwarfare and nuclear terrorism.

Japan welcomes the successful outcome of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), held in Geneva this September. Japan has assumed the presidency of the fourth Conference of States Parties, which is scheduled to take place in Japan from 20 to 24 August 2018. As President, Japan is determined to pursue effective and robust implementation of the Treaty, and to promote transparency, confidence-building and universalization. We look forward to cooperating with all existing and potential States parties, as well as with civil society and industry, to reach our common goal of regulating the international trade in conventional arms and reducing human suffering. Japan will submit to the Committee two important draft resolutions entitled "The Arms Trade Treaty" and "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", which define what we believe are highly important measures, since the ATT and small arms and light weapons are interrelated. We expect them to have wide support among Member States.

In conclusion, it is true that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not been able to overcome a serious deadlock for more than two decades. We must make every effort to begin negotiations in the CD, while taking advantage of a series of substantive and in-depth discussions from the Working Group on the Way Ahead this year. Strong political will, combined

with high-level political attention, will be required if we are to resume real work in the CD.

Lastly, let me stress three words, which I believe are very important here in the First Committee — rebuild, revitalize and reinforce.

The Chair: I shall now call on those delegations that have requested the floor to exercise their right of reply. In this connection, I should like to remind all delegations that the first statement is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I will be as brief as possible.

I would first like to respond to the groundless condemnation and disapproval of the nuclear-deterrence and self-defence policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I believe that some countries do not understand the true nature of the Korean peninsula and are intentionally aggravating the situation there as they follow the policies of the United States.

We have already made it clear in previous meetings that our nuclear programme is designed to deter nuclear threats and attacks by the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States emerged as a result of the hostile United States policy and nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Unless the United States ends that policy and ceases its nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we will not stray even an inch from the path to increasing our nuclear capability in order to safeguard our country's sovereignty, right to exist and vital interests.

The speakers today have continued to express their consternation about the situation on the Korean peninsula but are unable, or have failed, to take issue with the United States over its hostile policy and nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which are the root cause of the problem. From a moral perspective, those representatives are not in a position to address the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. If they want to see genuine peace and security in the world, they should understand the worsening situation on the Korean peninsula for what it is and adopt their own views on it.

Secondly, to respond to the representative of France, we know that France is a nuclear-weapon State.

It has an arsenal of nuclear weapons. If France believes that nuclear weapons are so dangerous and that they threaten international peace and security, it should in good faith set the example of a nuclear-weapon State that eliminates its nuclear weapons.

My delegation categorically rejects the provocative allegations made by the representative of Japan with regard to our nuclear deterrence. The Japanese are in no position to criticize the nuclear-deterrence policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Under the United States nuclear umbrella, Japan allows nuclear submarines and nuclear-powered aircraft carriers on its territory. Japan has become an advanced logistics base for the United States. Japan also has a stockpile of over 40 tons of nuclear-weapons-grade plutonium and 1.2 tons of high-grade uranium, which can be used to make more than 6,000 nuclear weapons and produce nuclear-weapon technology whenever Japan sees fit to do so. Japan is working hard to become a military giant by citing nuclear and missile threats from the north and using them as a pretext, creating an international environment that promotes the invasion of other countries.

Japan uses our nuclear and ballistic-missile launch tests as an absurd deception to hide the fact it is expanding its military might and furthering its aspirations to reintegrate the Asian continent. Japan must bear in mind that today Asia is not viewed as it once was. Japan must issue a sincere apology for its past crimes against humanity, and abandon its military and nuclear ambitions.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): In her statement today, the representative of France attempted to impose her country's views and convictions, stating that her country had, beyond any doubt, reached a conclusion about who was behind the incident in Khan Shaykhun. We tell her, as we told other representatives yesterday (see A/C.1/72/PV.3), that if this is her country's belief, it would be best for France to call for the dissolution of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and to cease making efforts and spending money on its activities.

My country condemns France's erroneous, misleading and fierce campaign, and its fabricated allegations about the incident in Khan Shaykhun. They prove without any doubt that France is involved in that crime as a full partner in the aggression against Syria, and that it has strong ties to armed terrorist groups in

Syria, above all the Al-Nusra Front, Da'esh and other related terrorist groups. France's behaviour clearly contradicts what its representative said today in her statement about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. France supplies terrorist groups in Syria with weapons, munitions, equipment and intelligence, including toxic chemical substances. In that regard, I would like to ask the representative of France to read the book *The Road to Damascus*, by Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot, which asserts the involvement of the former French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius in the incident related to chemical weapons use in eastern Ghouta, in rural Damascus, in August 2013.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to respond to some comments made earlier today.

The representative of the Russian Federation raised the issue of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system. As many in the room know, we have been very clear from the beginning that the deployment of that system in no way threatens the strategic nuclear forces of either China or Russia. We have made that clear on many occasions. We have had conversations with the representatives of both countries about the fact that the system does not, in any way, threaten their strategic forces. I just wanted to make sure that was on the record again.

My Russian colleague also addressed the issue of North Korea and the proposal that it and China had put forward, the so-called freeze-for-freeze programme. As I have also told them many times, we do not accept that proposal because it creates a false equivalency between, on the one hand, two countries conducting very routine military exercises and, on the other hand, the actions of a country that has violated countless Security Council resolutions. We reject any such equivalency.

To respond to the comments made by the representative of the North Korean regime, once again, we have heard the stale talking points. I would recommend that he try to find different talking points and a new narrative because no one is buying what the regime is trying to sell to the international community. From the beginning, we have said that we pose absolutely no threat to North Korea. The nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches, which are a source of deep concern for us and for the international community, are not an issue between the United States and North Korea. They

are an issue between the international community and North Korea. North Korea must stop trying to paint it as a bilateral issue.

The widespread condemnation of the regime for its nuclear-weapon tests and ballistic-missile launches is very clear, and we have seen it in a number of forums. We all hope that, at some point, the regime will end its provocative rhetoric and attacks and realize that if it wants to eventually get back into the good graces of the international community, it must take steps to denuclearize the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): First of all, Japan cannot accept the groundless points made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea forces Japan to take appropriate defensive measures. North Korea has conducted many ballistic-missile launches without notice, which pose a threat to Japan's security and safety, its territory and exclusive economic zone. The actions taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are very clear. In addition, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has seen that many countries have condemned its countless violations of Security Council resolutions. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to thoroughly and completely comply with those resolutions.

Secondly, with regard to the defence budget, our policy is strictly one of defence. Our budget and position on defence are both transparent. We always explain why we take certain measures.

Finally, with regard to the plutonium issue, Japan is very transparent. The International Atomic Energy Agency concluded that all nuclear materials held by Japan, including plutonium, continue to be used for peaceful activities under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. The Japanese Government maintains the principle of not possessing plutonium without specific purposes. It uses plutonium in light-water reactors. Moreover, as part of our voluntary efforts, Japan has been publishing information on its plutonium management, which is more detailed than required by international guidelines.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The representative of the United States made a provocative statement with regard to our country, by stating that it poses no threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States regime has been threatening our country with nuclear weapons

for over 70 years. How else could violent remarks such as pouring “fire and fury” and “total destruction”, which come straight from the leader of the world’s largest nuclear-weapon Power, be interpreted, if not as a threat?

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea seeks to possess nuclear weapons primarily because of the United States. Our country must strengthen and develop its nuclear capability. For all intents and purposes, our nuclear capability serves as a deterrent to end nuclear threats by a nuclear-weapon regime and prevent a military invasion. Our ultimate goal is to establish a balance of power with the United States. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea will solemnly defend its peace and security with its powerful policy of nuclear deterrence, and thereby help to safeguard international peace and security.

The representative of Japan made some provocative allegations. Japan is in no position to criticize nuclear tests and ballistic-missile rocket launches by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Mr. Wood (United States): I apologize for taking the floor again but I would like to be clear about where the threats are coming from. I think that we have all heard and read many newspaper articles after each missile launch about the regime’s intention to hit

the United States, using an intercontinental ballistic missile with a nuclear weapon. Those are the claims that have been made. There are photos of the regime’s leader applauding and embracing his colleagues for how close they believe they have come to hitting the United States with a nuclear weapon. It is a regime that is destabilizing not only the Korean peninsula and the region but also the United States and other countries within its reach.

We must send a very clear message to the regime that we will not be provoked or accept such threats and provocations, and that the path to peace is to take steps, as it committed to doing, in order to help denuclearize the Korean peninsula. We have seen no sign of a willingness to do that. The provocative threats continue. I would like to again make it very clear that my Government will do its absolute utmost, given its iron-clad commitment to protecting not only our people and military forces but also our allies in Asia. We must be very clear about that.

My last comment is that this rogue regime must stop making provocations and threats, because we will defend our interests. We will not allow it to continue to threaten the planet with nuclear weapons.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.