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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands)

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

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chair: The Committee will now begin the second phase of its work, namely thematic discussions on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items.

We will first have a high-level exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in this field. As announced at the organizational meeting, this high-level exchange will focus on the sub-theme “Increasing capacities to address weapons of mass destruction”. The concept paper on this topic, prepared and circulated by the Secretariat, is available on QuickFirst and has also been circulated in the conference room today to facilitate our discussion.

I now warmly welcome our panellists: Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary-General and Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; Mr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; Mr. Michael Møller, Secretary-

General of the Conference on Disarmament; Mr. Hamid Ali Rao, Deputy Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; and Ms. Tracy Brown, Acting Personal Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

I will first give our panellists the floor to make their statements. Thereafter, we will change to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions. I will urge our panellists to kindly keep their statements concise, to ensure that we have adequate time for an interactive discussion on the subject of discussion. Each panellist will have a time limit of 10 minutes.

I now invite the Under-Secretary-General and Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to address the Committee.

Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary-General and Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs: First of all, I would like to thank our panellists: Mr. Lassina Zerbo, Mr. Michael Moller, Ambassador Rao and Ms. Tracy Brown for joining us today. I am grateful to Lassina, Michael and Ambassador Rao in particular for coming all the way to New York despite their busy schedules.

I want to address three points today. The first concerns the expanding role of the United Nations in addressing the challenges posed by weapons of mass destruction, and the importance of our partnerships with partner organizations. The second is the need to engage the wider public and to expand the discussion on issues related to weapons of mass destruction.

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The third point is the crucial importance of sustained political and financial support from Member States.

We are facing the reality that, like all other international organizations, the United Nations is being asked to do more today than ever before. This is particularly true with respect to our work on weapons of mass destruction. The most recent and high-profile example of how this mandate has evolved can be seen in our work to address the challenges involving chemical weapons and the use of other toxic chemicals as a weapon in Syria. As the members of the First Committee know, the Secretary-General just launched the third mission in three years. The first was the Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, in 2013. That was followed by the mission led by Ms. Sigrid Kaag to verify Syria's destruction of chemical material and facilities. And last month the Secretary-General appointed Ms. Virginia Gamba and two gentlemen to lead the Joint Investigative Mechanism on chemical weapon use in Syria.

The intensity of that work — the third mission in three years — shows the strength of the commitment of the international community, particularly the Security Council, to the issue. It also illustrates how much we can do when we have unity of purpose in the Security Council in solving security challenges and other conflict-related issues. That is why the Secretary-General places high importance on ensuring that the Mechanism will do its work in a most professional, objective and impartial manner. And that is why we are working very hard with our partner organizations, including the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), INTERPOL and the World Health Organization. The capacity of the Mechanism will benefit from the chemical expertise that OPCW has to complement other technical expertise in the fields of law enforcement and medicine and probably military ordnance analysis. Therefore the success of the mission will bode very well for the implementation of our mandates in the various areas related to weapons of mass destruction.

Moreover, with the accession of Syria to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we are one step closer to universal adherence to the Convention. With the Director-General of OPCW, and with the Secretary-General as the depositary of the treaty, we will continue to make our best efforts to achieve universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Likewise, we are also

teaming up with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), under the leadership of Lassina Zerbo, to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its universality. I want to emphasize the importance of our teamwork towards that goal. We will not spare any efforts in that regard.

Two other examples of our cooperative work with our partner organizations relate to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to ensure that no material related weapons of mass destruction ends up in the hands of terrorists or other extremists. That requires very close coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), INTERPOL and other organizations to share lessons learned, best practices and other resources. Close coordination is taking place through the work of the Nuclear Security Summit, which will be wrapped up in another year. However, the coordinated plan of action worked out by the United Nations, IAEA and INTERPOL will continue to guide our work into the future.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention the importance of Geneva as a hub for international disarmament efforts. It is the home of the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and, very soon, the Arms Trade Treaty.

The second issue I would like to touch on today is the need to improve outreach and public education on weapons of mass destruction. Today, my office will launch the United Nations Poster for Peace contest. Submissions will be closed on 24 January 2016. We chose that date because it will mark the seventieth anniversary of the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the elimination of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction (resolution 1(I)). The winners will be announced on 5 March, which will mark the forty-sixth anniversary of the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

There are three parts to the puzzle when we are looking at how to complete our work on nuclear disarmament. The first is the need for true leadership from nuclear-weapon States; the second is meaningful cooperation on the part of all States and the third is world public opinion and investment. Our poster campaign will try to expand on that possibility, and we will also use it to link up with the CTBTO's campaign

leading up to its twentieth anniversary, sometime early next year. Another example is our Women Scholarship for Peace programme, which is being run by our office in Vienna, along with the CTBTO and the University for Peace in Costa Rica.

The last point I would like to make is the importance of continued financial and political support of Member States and other sources. The crucial importance of sustained support of that nature cannot be overemphasized. The speed and generosity that States have shown in their support for both the launch and the implementation of the Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria is a very good example that we would like to see emulated in other areas of our work. We hope that such strong and swift backing can be repeated for other items on the disarmament agenda, both old and new.

I would like to close by emphasizing the unflinching commitment of the United Nations to disarmament. I also want to assure the Committee of our tireless efforts in that regard and our readiness to welcome opportunities to work more closely with our partners all over the world and, ultimately, to achieve our shared goals.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

Mr. Zerbo (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and to express my appreciation to my good friend Mr. Kim, the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his cooperation and for the importance he attaches to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the overall framework of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in New York. I would also like to thank the other speakers this morning for sharing the stage with us.

I want to touch on four points today. The first, unsurprisingly, is the value of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The second is the action needed and building on the lessons of the past. Thirdly, I want to touch on the support of the States, the positive spirit of the 1990s and the need to reignite that spirit. Lastly, I would like to talk about the importance of going outside the business-as-usual approach that we have seen in the past couple of years.

I want to tackle those points through strategic partnerships with other international organizations, as I just mentioned with regard to my friend Mr. Kim in his capacity as the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. All of this must be done through capacity-building. We must build on the next generation, because it is they who will not only lead the disarmament process but will probably see it through. We will plant the seed and then see how it grows.

Achieving the theme under discussion today is relevant because, when it comes to achieving the objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we can say that that achievement would greatly increase the capacity of the international community to address the proliferation of nuclear weapons and advance the prospects for their eventual elimination. In the years since the CTBT opened for signature, it has played a crucial role in reducing nuclear danger by moving the world away from the usual testing that had gone on since the Second World War. Since the Treaty opened for signature, only one country in this millennium has violated the moratorium on nuclear testing.

So what are the actions needed, and what are the lessons learned from the past?

The achievement I just mentioned must not overshadow the magnitude of the challenges that lie ahead. We must still work to secure the future of the Treaty as a firm, legal barrier against any return to nuclear testing and the nuclear arms race. Nuclear weapons and testing have had a dangerous and destabilizing impact on global security and have exacted a terrible cost on human health and the environment. We must remember the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and indeed of the Marshall Islands and Semipalatinsk.

Many delegations in the First Committee have in their national statements addressed the urgency of the entry into force of the CTBT. More than \$1 billion has been invested in establishing the most sophisticated and far-reaching verification regime ever conceived. Significant national security decisions have been made in good faith, in the expectation that the Treaty will become legally binding and enforceable under international law.

The end of the Cold War enabled highly motivated diplomats and scientists to reach objectives in the areas of multilateral arms control and disarmament that once seemed impossible. Quite simply, we need countries

to reinject and reignite that spirit and to finish the job. Diplomats in Geneva have spent years and years conceiving and designing an international monitoring system through the Preparatory Commission in Vienna, which would exist, it was assumed, for only three years. We are now getting close to 20 years, still waiting for the CTBT's entry into force. It is the leadership of the Member States that we are waiting for.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are highly challenging endeavours that require bold ideas and sound execution. Global security challenges require global solutions and the active engagement of stakeholders in all corners of the world. Equally important is building capacities among the next generation of experts, who will have the responsibility of carrying nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation forward. In aiming for the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, we need to pick the low-hanging fruit. Securing a nuclear-test ban is achievable if States are determined to forge effective multilateral collaboration.

I now move to my point concerning ending the attitude of business as usual. At the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, we have done our part to provide States with trust and confidence in the Treaty and its verification regime as an effective measure for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. But as I said, it is up to the Member States to make the next move. In that regard, I would like to quote the representative of Mongolia, who said in the general debate:

“With the Provisional Technical Secretariat making progress on the necessary infrastructure development for the verification regime, it will be up to the States parties to put their intentions into practice.” (*A/C.1/70/PV.5, p.21*)

It is time to rise to the occasion and prove that the international community can summon the political will to make good on the promise of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Møller (Conference on Disarmament): It is an honour to address the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventieth session and to be part of today's high-level panel with my colleagues from the disarmament community. I would like to start by thanking the Chair, His Excellency Mr. Karel van

Oosterom, and the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for their kind invitation.

In my capacity as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), I obviously feel a strong connection with the theme of this panel, as the topic forms the core agenda of the Conference. At the same time, I feel frustrated with the limited progress that the disarmament community, and in particular the Conference on Disarmament, has made in the past two decades. Next year, it will be 20 years since the Conference concluded the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT was the last treaty to be negotiated by the Conference, and, as my colleague Mr. Zerbo has just reminded us, it has yet to enter into force. Since the CTBT, the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to initiate negotiations on any of its agenda items and is not fulfilling its mandate as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament.

The ongoing stalemate in the Conference is damaging not only to its image but to the United Nations and the disarmament community as a whole. More importantly, it is an affront to the millions of people around the world who are looking to the United Nations for action on this primordial issue, which directly affects their lives. If the Conference on Disarmament continues to be blocked, it will turn into a relic of the Cold War, unable to adapt to the security challenges of today's world. In the absence of progress, Member States will increasingly opt for other forums to negotiate disarmament treaties, and the public will lose what little confidence might be left in the international disarmament machinery, endangering the Conference's very existence.

Looking at the current state of affairs, and in particular the events of this year, there is unfortunately little reason for optimism when it comes to multilateral disarmament. In addition to the ongoing stalemate in the Conference, the inability of this year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach a consensus on a substantive outcome is a grim reminder of the urgent need for positive action. In that context, allow me to reiterate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's reminder to the Conference on Disarmament in January, in which he impressed on us the fact that the need for progress in multilateral disarmament is greater than ever.

The Conference on Disarmament can and should play a pivotal role in generating much-needed progress in multilateral disarmament as a whole. I would like to elaborate on how I think the Conference can heed the Secretary-General's call. Some of the ideas I put forward to the Conference in May 2014 are based on my strong belief in its value as the only standing forum for multilateral disarmament and in our shared responsibility for enabling it to fulfil its mission. Should the Conference on Disarmament be abolished, it would be difficult to reinvent it in the current political climate. Today, the need for a functioning Conference on Disarmament is actually stronger than ever. If it is to remain the key component of the disarmament machinery, it needs strengthening and modernization, which are long overdue.

First, although there is no consensus among CD members on starting negotiations on any of its four core agenda items, there are areas of agreement and common ground within each issue, and I continue to believe that a consensus can emerge during negotiations. The Conference could, for instance, consider negotiations on areas of common ground with a view to producing framework conventions to which substantive protocols may be subsequently negotiated and added. That approach proved viable and sustainable with the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which, with its five Protocols, is a living example of that approach.

In that context, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the in-depth, comprehensive and structured discussions that took place in the Conference this year and last under the respective schedule of activities. Those discussions have enabled the Conference to continue and deepen its deliberations on matters of substance, despite the long years of impasse, helping to make Member States' positions clearer and better understood. Such discussions could and should serve as common ground for a start to negotiations.

Secondly, in order to move forward, the Conference on Disarmament does not need to aim exclusively at negotiating legally binding instruments, even if that is the ideal goal and expectation of us all. There can also be merit in exploring issues for which voluntary, politically binding regimes may be negotiated and eventually evolve into legally binding disarmament instruments.

Thirdly, the working methods of the Conference on Disarmament are seen by many delegations as being a

large part, if not at the root, of its protracted stalemate. The attempts this year to establish a subsidiary body on this issue were unsuccessful, but I continue to believe that such a review would provide an opportunity to look critically at current practices, codify some of the best practices that have emerged and guide the Conference forward.

The rule of consensus, central to the Conference, has evolved into a restrictive interpretation, tantamount to unanimity, leading to the current blockage. I absolutely disagree with that interpretation and would like to strongly encourage Member States to understand and interpret consensus for what it in fact is — a collective or common understanding that leaves room for some divergence of views on the details. Recent developments in other international organizations that had been blocked by a similar restrictive interpretation of consensus have shown that progress can be made when a less stifling interpretation can be agreed on.

Fourthly, the 2013 Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations provided an excellent opportunity for broad and rich discussion of the issues, and many delegations have referred that experience as a useful model that should continue to inspire the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The establishment of an open-ended working group by the General Assembly this year would provide another excellent opportunity for exchanging ideas, building momentum and, hopefully, helping to overcome the deadlock.

The issue of membership remains high on the Conference's agenda. Since 1982, 27 States have asked to become members, and a decision on their accession is much needed if we are to make the Conference more inclusive, enhance its legitimacy and thus increase trust in it. I am not alone in my desire for expansion, and some Member States are even calling for universal membership.

In that regard, I would also like to take this opportunity to stress the need for the Conference on Disarmament to engage with civil society. It is time for members to adapt procedures in the CD to what is being done in other disarmament meetings and more broadly in the United Nations to involve civil society. To that end, in March I organized an informal civil society forum that provided a venue for a rich interactive discussion with civil society organizations from around the globe and was well received by all participants. The

aim of the forum was to demonstrate how civil society's expertise and insights can enrich the Conference's work and thus encourage its members to start including civil society in its work in a more sustained and structured way. At the request of both members of the CD and representatives of civil society, I am planning a similar event in 2016 to address specific technical topics, with experts from academia and research institutions.

Finally, I am convinced that it is high time to look at some of the issues beyond the core items on the Conference's agenda that need urgent attention and can be attended to despite the current overall deadlock. For instance, some CD member States have proposed that we address the issue of cybersecurity and cyberweapons.

I would like to turn briefly to an issue that many of us in Geneva are following closely and with concern — the future of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). For the past 35 years, the Institute has supported the disarmament community with its policy-relevant work across the entire disarmament agenda. It remains a thought leader on a number of emerging issues, making an indispensable intellectual contribution to disarmament discussions in Geneva and helping to stimulate new thinking. With its convening power, autonomy and impartiality, UNIDIR provides unique support to the diplomatic community in Geneva and beyond. At a time when other parts of the disarmament machinery are seen by many as underperforming, UNIDIR continues to deliver as it should, and its projects are very much in demand. In short, the Institute punches far above its weight.

It is therefore of great concern that UNIDIR continues to be plagued by financial difficulties, and putting in place a sustainable, stable and secure source of institutional funding can no longer be postponed. I am therefore grateful to the French delegation for its efforts to secure consensus adoption of this year's draft resolution on UNIDIR, which would chart a two-step approach to putting the Institute on a sounder financial basis. We need to hear the voices of independent researchers and experts in the various disciplines relevant to disarmament and security to help us anticipate the new security challenges and threats and to adequately address them before they become critical.

I would also like to update the Committee on the disarmament work in Geneva outside the Conference on Disarmament. The States parties to the Biological

Weapons Convention continue to strengthen the Convention and — together with the Implementation Support Unit, which is based in Geneva and is attached to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs — continue to carry out important work in promoting and implementing the Convention.

In the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the recent examination of lethal autonomous weapons systems, popularly known as killer robots, has provided an insight into the future conduct of warfare. Their development is moving apace in a number of countries, and some preventive treaty-making would be more than in order now. The 121 States parties to the CCW Convention will continue their discussions in 2016, but everyone needs to participate. I call especially on developing countries to join the work, and I encourage the States parties to seize the opportunity at the fifth Review Conference, in 2016 in Geneva, to agree on negotiating a protocol that will address this new issue. Like many others, I am not looking forward to a world where autonomous machines decide who lives or dies.

In closing, I would like to make a few points concerning the interaction between the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament. The General Assembly has a primary role in setting the agenda of the Conference, as clearly set out in the rules of procedure. The resolutions passed by this Committee each year are intended to form the basis for the discussions in the Conference, in particular by taking into account the new and emerging security challenges.

Secondly, the General Assembly plays a significant role in the process of standard-setting, and its moral and political weight should be used to move the Conference on Disarmament forward as a key part of the disarmament machinery. The Conference does not exist in isolation, and the consequences of its inability to agree go far beyond the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The work of the Conference is an integral part of the broader efforts to build a safer and more secure world in which countries and communities can prosper. The new Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16, remind us of the fundamental importance of peace and security towards this objective.

However, the Conference on Disarmament sometimes needs to be reminded of that fact and of its task. This year's General Assembly session provides another opportunity to do so, and I therefore strongly

urge the Committee to forcefully take this opportunity to push for a much more robust implementation of our common responsibilities in the field of disarmament.

The Chair: I wish to remind the speakers that we have 10 minutes for each speaker on today's panel. The Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament has just taken two minutes from the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, so we are still within our intended time frame.

I now give the floor to the Deputy Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Mr. Rao (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): At the outset, Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the First Committee.

The theme of today's meeting, "Increasing capacities to address weapons of mass destruction", is quite familiar to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), given the extraordinary arc of experience we have acquired over the past year and beyond. As Committee members are aware, we have mobilized new capacities for the historic mission to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons, and we had to do so without compromising existing capacities for our ongoing activities.

Members may recall that by this time last year, with the support of more than 30 of our member States and of the United Nations, we had successfully overseen the removal of chemical weapons from Syria. We had also verified the destruction of 98.8 per cent of Syria's chemical arsenal, only one year after the OPCW Executive Council directed us to do so. Since then, we have focused on three areas of activity in relation to Syria: clarifying Syria's initial declaration, coordinating destruction of 12 chemical weapon production facilities, and establishing the facts in relation to allegations of use of toxic chemicals as a weapon.

Although these processes are continuing, they have yielded tangible results. The OPCW Declaration Assessment Team earlier this month issued a report identifying several issues that we hope engagement with Syrian authorities will help to resolve. Ten of the 12 production facilities have now been destroyed, with the remaining two to follow suit before the end of this month. And the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission

has issued findings confirming the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in northern Syria. The Security Council adopted resolution 2235 (2015) in August, which authorized the creation of an OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify the perpetrators or sponsors of these and other attacks in Syria. Arrangements for the Mechanism are now well advanced, and they will involve a component based in The Hague.

Never before has the OPCW operated at such an active tempo under such intense international scrutiny. And we have had to do so at a time of transition for the organization, as we seek to recalibrate our priorities and our operational posture for the post-chemical-weapons destruction phase — for that phase is rapidly approaching. With more than 90 per cent of declared stockpiles destroyed, we are well on track to achieving complete eradication of all declared stockpiles by 2023. As we recalibrate, we need to consider two factors.

First, much destruction-related work remains to be done. Abandoned chemical weapons may well pose a challenge beyond 2023, and old chemical weapons will continue to be discovered. We must also plan for the possibility of new members declaring a stockpile. Clearly, therefore, there will continue to be a need for applied chemical demilitarization knowledge.

Secondly, the threat horizon has changed dramatically. While the likelihood of States using chemical weapons against one another has been all but removed, non-State actors have sought not only to acquire such weapons, but also to use them. Although the OPCW has no specific counter-terrorism mandate, it is nonetheless bound to prevent the use of chemical weapons by any actor, under any circumstances. For what we are tackling now is not a potential threat, but very credible allegations of actual use. Persistent reports of chemical weapons being used in Syria and Iraq by Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham are a pressing case in point.

Taken together, these two factors have several implications for the OPCW's future responsiveness and effectiveness. We cannot afford to allow skills and expertise within the OPCW to be eroded as our inspectorate shrinks. We need to strengthen the links in our global implementation chain by growing capacity among all States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We also need to think imaginatively about how we address chemical terrorism, especially where

there are shortfalls in current global non-proliferation norms. And we need to be able to mobilize resources and solicit in-kind contributions for special and contingency operations, as we did with the mission to destroy Syria's chemical weapons.

Over the past year, since we first addressed the issue of capacity-building at this forum, the OPCW has further developed its approach to all four of these issues. I will expand a little on each of them here before concluding my remarks.

On technical capability, as our inspectors and analysts complete their seven-year tenure or retire, it is imperative that we have in place a mechanism for retaining their expertise. To this end, we have sought to rehire inspectors as we build up a knowledge-management process that draws on resources within, and beyond, the organization.

On universality and implementation, with the addition of two new member States over recent months — Myanmar and Angola — we have expanded our reach. And we have redoubled our efforts to persuade Egypt, Israel, North Korea and South Sudan to consider their relationship to what is now a long-standing and nearly universal global norm. But we remain only too aware of the fact that universality must be qualitative as well as quantitative. More than 50 of our States parties, for example, still do not have implementing legislation in place, not to mention effective enforcement capacity. The Convention must be a treaty in deed as well as word, and it is through more targeted outreach and assistance activities that we are seeking to tighten the non-proliferation regime.

On the non-State-actor threat, the Open-ended Working Group on Terrorism of the OPCW has met three times this year, and earlier this month it established a sub-group to develop recommendations on how the organization could further contribute to global anti-terrorism efforts. To stimulate discussion, the Technical Secretariat has issued papers on the legal accountability of non-State actors under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and on measures for preventing and ensuring effective responses to the hostile use of toxic chemicals. At the same time, the OPCW continues to cooperate with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force through its Working Group on Preventing and Responding to WMD Attacks. Earlier this year, that Working Group, which the OPCW co-chairs with the International Atomic Energy Agency,

began a project on inter-agency inter-operability and external communication in the event of a chemical and/or biological weapons attack.

On resources for contingency operations, as I have mentioned, we are making arrangements to support the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria. We are also discussing options for financing ongoing activities in Syria with our States parties so that such activities do not affect the regular budget in what is, and will likely remain, a tight fiscal environment.

What all of those four issues point to is the imperative to maintain the effectiveness of the OPCW's verification regime. That regime will remain a standard-bearer for disarmament efforts further afield. We need to grow it, and we need to do so in a way that is pruned to deliver the capacity we need for the problems we are facing, now and in the future. Those problems will increasingly relate to the much more complex and much less visible task of preventing chemical weapons from re-emerging. Their solutions will need to factor in advances in science, technology and communications that are occurring all too rapidly. And they will need to address actors that do not recognize international humanitarian norms and law. All of our capacity-building efforts aimed at curbing and eliminating weapons of mass destruction must be designed and undertaken with that in mind.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, let me acknowledge the presence in the room of Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, the Permanent Representative of Jamaica and the previous Chair of this Committee. As so many of the representatives last week expressed their appreciation for his work, my I ask for a warm round of applause for his successful work as Chair during the last session.

The Committee will now hear from the Acting Personal Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Ms. Brown (International Atomic Energy Agency): Since its establishment in 1957, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has worked tirelessly to fulfil its mandate to advance the contribution of atomic energy to peace while guarding against its misuse.

In his statement marking the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda last month, Director General Amano welcomed the explicit recognition given by States Members of

the United Nations to the importance of science and technology for development. The Agency supports the peaceful uses of nuclear technology by its member States in areas such as energy, human health, food production, water management and environmental protection. The Agency also works with member States to ensure that such technology is used safely and securely, and that safeguards are in place to guard against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Our role and methods have evolved over time as we continue adapting to new challenges.

With regard to nuclear non-proliferation, it is through the implementation of safeguards that the IAEA is able to independently verify the correctness and completeness of the declarations made by States about their nuclear programmes. Safeguards are meant to provide credible assurances that States are fulfilling their international obligations. They also serve to detect early any misuse of nuclear material or technology, thereby alerting the world to potential proliferation. Safeguards are therefore a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Safeguards agreements are currently in force with 182 States, of which 174 are non-nuclear-weapon States with comprehensive safeguards agreements under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, 12 non-nuclear-weapon States have yet to conclude and bring into force NPT safeguards agreements with the Agency. For those States, the Agency cannot draw any safeguards conclusions. The Agency continues to urge all remaining NPT States parties to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements as soon as possible.

The number of States with additional protocols in force now stands at 126. That is encouraging. The additional protocols significantly increase the Agency's ability to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States with comprehensive agreements in force. For that reason, the Agency encourages all States to bring additional protocols into force as soon as possible.

The global nuclear landscape continues to change. More countries are considering, or already preparing to build, new nuclear power plants. More nuclear facilities and material have been placed under safeguards. The new nuclear facilities have become more sophisticated, resulting in more complex verification challenges. That global trend is expected to continue.

Since their inception, safeguards have continually evolved, taking into account changes in technology.

The Agency has engaged extensively with its member States on the conceptualization and development of safeguards implementation at the State level. The State-level concept involves implementing safeguards in a manner that considers a State's nuclear and nuclear-related activities and capabilities as a whole. It does not entail the introduction of any additional rights or obligations on the part of either States or the Agency, nor does it involve any modification in the interpretation of existing rights and obligations. It is applicable to all States within the scope of each individual State's safeguards agreement. The Agency also stands ready to contribute to the verification of the dismantlement of nuclear weapons programmes and, upon request, to international verification of nuclear arms control and disarmament agreements.

Let me now turn to nuclear security. Since 1995, the Agency's member States have reported nearly 2,800 incidents involving radioactive material escaping regulatory control. A relatively small amount of radioactive material could be combined with conventional explosives to produce a dirty bomb. Such a weapon could be capable of killing many people, contaminating large urban areas and sparking mass panic. Responsibility for ensuring nuclear security lies with national Governments. But the central role of the Agency in helping to strengthen the global nuclear security framework is widely recognized, particularly its coordination of international activities to help States develop sustainable nuclear security capacity.

The Agency also promotes a security culture within member States, helping them to protect nuclear and other radioactive material and associated facilities under their control from malicious acts. In particular, the Agency helps States draft tailor-made Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plans. Other services provided by the Agency include developing guidance and standards, providing legal and legislative assistance and advice and training on topics such as physical protection, nuclear forensics and radiation detection and response.

The most important area of unfinished business in nuclear security is the need to bring into force the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, which was adopted 10 years ago. Bringing the Amendment into force will expand the coverage of the Convention to include the protection of nuclear material in domestic use, storage and transit and the protection of nuclear facilities against acts of

sabotage. The Amendment will enter into force when it is ratified by two thirds of the States parties to the Convention. There has been significant progress, but ratification is needed by 14 more countries.

Protecting nuclear material is not an issue just for countries that use nuclear power. Any country, in any part of the world, could find itself used as a transit point or could become the target of an attack. All countries that have not yet done so are encouraged to ratify the Amendment as a matter of urgency. The next high-level IAEA international conference on nuclear security will take place in December 2016 and will be an important opportunity to review progress made and to discuss the way ahead.

It should also be noted that the Agency works actively with other United Nations entities, as was mentioned by my fellow panelists, including the Group of Experts established under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and through the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, to help Member States to build the capacity to prevent terrorists and other non-State actors from accessing nuclear and radiological material and to build preparedness and response mechanisms for dealing with radiation emergencies.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the Agency remains committed to delivering concrete and substantive results in those areas. By helping States benefit from peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, by implementing credible verification and by promoting effective nuclear security, the Agency makes a tangible contribution to international peace and security.

The Chair: In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion with our panelists through an informal question and answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 10:50 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The Chair: The Committee will now proceed with its scheduled thematic discussions, which will run from 19 October to 2 November, for a total of 12 meetings. In accordance with established practice, our discussions during this segment will focus on specific issues grouped under the following seven agreed clusters: nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction,

outer space (disarmament aspects), conventional weapons, regional disarmament and security, other disarmament measures and international security, and disarmament machinery.

Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations that the time limit for statements during the thematic segment is five minutes when speaking in the national capacity and seven minutes for statements on behalf of several delegations. Delegations taking the floor are encouraged to use that opportunity to introduce draft resolutions and decisions. Delegations are also reminded that the deadline for submitting drafts to the secretariat for processing is tomorrow, 20 October, at 6 p.m.

The Committee will now take up the cluster on nuclear weapons. I have been informed that the President of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is on a flight, as we speak, and that she will be available to address the Committee via video link only on Wednesday, 21 October. We will therefore hear first from the representative of Austria on behalf of the Humanitarian Initiative and thereafter follow the remainder of our rolling list of speakers.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): I have the honour to present the summary of findings of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which took place on 8 and 9 December 2014. A total of 158 States, the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, civil society organizations and academia participated in the Conference, which began with messages from the United Nations Secretary-General, Pope Francis and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Testimonies given by hibakusha and victims of the effects of nuclear testing exemplified the unspeakable suffering caused to ordinary civilians by nuclear weapons.

The Vienna Conference built upon the fact-based discussions of the previous conferences in Oslo and Nayarit, Mexico. The key conclusions from the substantive sessions included the following.

First, the impact of nuclear weapon detonation, irrespective of the cause, would not be constrained by national borders. It could have regional and even global consequences, causing destruction, death and displacement, as well as profound and long-term damage to the environment, climate, human health

and well-being, socioeconomic development and social order. It could even threaten the survival of humankind.

Second, the scope, scale and interrelationship of the humanitarian consequences caused by nuclear weapon detonations are catastrophic and more complex than commonly understood. Those consequences can be large scale and potentially irreversible.

Third, the use and testing of nuclear weapons have demonstrated devastating immediate, mid-term and long-term effects. Nuclear testing in several parts of the world has left a legacy of serious health and environmental consequences. Radioactive contamination from those tests disproportionately affects women and children. It contaminates food supplies and continues to be measurable in the atmosphere to this day.

Fourth, as long as nuclear weapons exist, the possibility of a nuclear weapon explosion remains. Even if the probability is considered low, given the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation, the risk is unacceptable. The risks of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional use of nuclear weapons are evident. Due to the vulnerability of nuclear command-and-control networks to human error and cyberattacks, the maintaining of nuclear arsenals on high levels of alert, forward deployment and the modernization of these weapons, the risks increase over time. The dangers of access to nuclear weapons and related materials by non-State actors, particularly terrorist groups, persist.

Fifth, there are many circumstances in which nuclear weapons could be used, in view of international conflicts and tensions and against the background of the current security doctrines of States that possess nuclear weapons. As nuclear deterrence entails preparation for nuclear war, the risk of nuclear weapon use is real. Opportunities to reduce risk must be taken now, such as de-alerting and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. Limiting the role of nuclear weapons to deterrence does not remove the possibility of their use. Nor does it address the risks stemming from accidental use. The only assurance against the risk of a nuclear weapon detonation is the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Sixth, no State or international body could address in an adequate manner an immediate humanitarian emergency or the long-term consequences caused by nuclear weapon detonation in a populated area, nor could they provide adequate assistance to those affected.

Such capacity is unlikely ever to exist. Coordinated preparedness may nevertheless be useful in mitigating the effects, including of a terrorist event involving the explosion of an improvised nuclear device. The imperative of prevention as the only guarantee against the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use was highlighted.

Seventh, looking at nuclear weapons from a number of different legal angles, it is clear that there is no comprehensive legal norm that universally prohibits their possession, transfer, production and use. International environmental law remains applicable in armed conflict and can pertain to nuclear weapons; however, it does not specifically regulate these arms. Likewise, international health regulations could cover the effects of nuclear weapons. The new evidence that has emerged in the last two years about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons casts further doubt on whether these weapons could ever be used in conformity with international humanitarian law — as was the case with torture, which defeats humanity and is now unacceptable to all. The suffering caused by nuclear weapon use is not only a legal matter; it necessitates moral appraisal.

Eighth, the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation event and the risks associated with the mere existence of these weapons raise profound ethical and moral questions on a level that transcends legal discussions and interpretations.

Mr. Isnomo (Indonesia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM). I am reading the shortened version of the statement; the full version is available on the First Committee website.

The Movement reaffirms its principled position on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority, and remains extremely concerned about the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. Despite the long-standing calls for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, reiterated at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament in 2013, the situation in the realm of nuclear disarmament continues to be characterized by impasse. The Movement is deeply concerned by this dismal state of affairs. NAM reiterates its deep concern over the lack of progress by the nuclear-weapon States toward accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear

arsenals, in accordance with their relevant multilateral legal obligations and their unequivocal undertakings in 2000 and 2010.

Compliance by the nuclear-weapon States with their nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is imperative and must not be delayed any further. Furthermore, the nuclear-weapon States must accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. The Movement also calls on the nuclear-weapon States to immediately cease their plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

The international community has waited far too long for the realization of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It has become obvious that the existing approach adopted by nuclear-weapon States — the so-called step-by-step approach — has failed to make concrete and systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Forward movement on nuclear disarmament cannot be held hostage to progress on non-proliferation or the perceived notions of strategic stability.

The Movement underscores the importance of resolution 69/58, entitled “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament”, which provides a concrete pathway for realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament. The Movement is confident that the full implementation of that resolution will ensure tangible progress on nuclear disarmament. NAM urges the early commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention pursuant to resolution 69/58. NAM recalls the Assembly’s decision to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level conference to review progress made in that regard and emphasizes the need for early and appropriate preparation to ensure a successful conference.

NAM welcomes the General Assembly’s second observance of the commemoration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and further welcomes the reaffirmation by participating ministers that nuclear disarmament continues to be a priority of the international community. NAM reaffirms the importance of humanitarian considerations in the

context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons and in promoting the goal of nuclear disarmament.

NAM welcomes the growing focus on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including at the three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna. The broad participation at those Conferences reflects the fact that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are a fundamental and global concern. The Movement expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long-term catastrophic consequences for human health, the environment and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations.

In that context, we reaffirm the need for all States to comply at all times with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. Any use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity. At the same time, NAM underscores that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again is the only absolute guarantee against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from their use.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, NAM reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances as a matter of high priority. The Movement reaffirms its principled position on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. NAM believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and essential for strengthening international peace and security. Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, NAM emphasizes that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

NAM States parties to the NPT welcome the accession of the State of Palestine to the Treaty as its 191st State party. NAM States parties to the NPT regret the failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference, in 2015, to reach consensus on a final outcome document

despite the efforts made by NAM delegations. This failure should serve as a stimulus to work harder towards achieving nuclear disarmament, the ultimate objective of the NPT.

Recalling the opposition expressed by the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada at the concluding session of the 2015 Review Conference, NAM States parties express their disappointment that, as a result of that opposition, consensus on new measures regarding the process to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was not achieved. That could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole. NAM States parties to the NPT re-emphasize the special responsibility of the States that co-sponsored the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East in the implementation of that resolution. NAM States parties to the NPT are concerned that the persistent failure to implement that resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT Review Conferences, undermines the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT and therefore disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, given that the indefinite extension of the Treaty agreed at the 1995 Review Conference is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and does not entail the right to possess nuclear weapons indefinitely.

The Movement would like to stress that it remains ready to engage constructively with all countries to work actively to help fulfil the collective vision of a world free of all nuclear weapons. However, this vision can be realized only if the required political will and action are clearly demonstrated by all.

This year, the Movement will again table an updated draft version of the resolution entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament". NAM seeks the support of all Member States and urges them to vote in favour of this draft resolution.

Mrs. Carrión (Uruguay): Uruguay has the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in its capacity as pro tempore President.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your election; we are looking forward to successful meetings under your leadership.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, UNASUR joins the efforts of the international community in moving towards the negotiation of a universal and legally binding multilateral instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons, considering that their total elimination is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and that their very existence diminishes the security of all States, including those who possess them. While nuclear weapons exist, there will be a real risk of their use and proliferation. Nuclear disarmament is the only credible way to consolidate the non-proliferation regime. Priority should be given to the negotiation of a convention on nuclear disarmament that would completely ban such weapons.

UNASUR expresses its deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use and takes this opportunity to congratulate Mexico for holding in Nayarit the Second International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. UNASUR also recalls the third such conference, held in Austria in December 2014, and the issuance of the Humanitarian Pledge, whereby 119 States pledged to pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

UNASUR welcomes the annual commemoration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, aimed at mobilizing international efforts to attain the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

UNASUR welcomes with appreciation the decision of the General Assembly to hold a high-level conference no later than 2018 to identify measures and actions to eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible term, and reaffirms its decision to join the efforts of the international community towards the urgent commencement of negotiations of a legally binding multilateral instrument prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons within a multilaterally agreed time frame.

UNASUR reiterates its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the balanced implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is UNASUR's view, however, that the disarmament pillar has suffered from a serious implementation deficit. In that regard, UNASUR regrets

the failure to adopt an agreed outcome document at the NPT Review Conference, due to the lack of consensus on the issue of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The States of UNASUR also express their deep regret at the failure to implement the agreement made during the 2010 NPT Review Conference to hold an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. UNASUR strongly believes that such a zone will be a significant contribution to the peace process in the Middle East and the world and therefore continues to reiterate its call for this conference to be held as soon as possible, with the active participation of all States in the region, as agreed by the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

UNASUR is very proud of the formal proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace on 29 January 2014, on the occasion of the second summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Cuba. That was a historic decision aimed at uprooting the use or threat of use of force in our region. As members of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, the States of UNASUR urge all nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all interpretative declarations to the Protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which will help to eliminate the risk of the use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

It is a legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States, including all UNASUR members, that nuclear-weapon States provide unequivocal and legally binding guarantees not to use or threaten to use those weapons. Therefore, we call for work in the negotiation and adoption, in the shortest time possible, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. UNASUR also calls upon nuclear-weapon States to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their doctrines, security policies and military strategies, in order to reach the complete elimination of these lethal weapons, regardless of their type or location.

Our countries will continue to support the efforts aimed at reviving the work of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. There is an urgent need to begin

the negotiations of new international legal instruments governing fundamental issues for disarmament and non-proliferation. We reaffirm the need for all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), particularly those listed in annex 2, to do it as soon as possible as a sign of their political will and their commitment to international peace and security. We therefore welcome the ratification of the CTBT by Angola. Pending the Treaty's entry into force, the member States of UNASUR reiterate the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear testing.

The States members of UNASUR would also like to avail themselves of this important occasion to underline the essential contribution of the International Atomic Energy Agency in common efforts to establish a more secure world. We would also like to underline the importance of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials — the only binational organization of safeguards in the world, which is an initiative of two of our member States.

In conclusion, UNASUR wishes to reiterate its call for a world free of nuclear weapons, so that humankind can direct resources devoted to the maintenance and modernization of nuclear arsenals to the social and economic development of the peoples of the world.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

As States that subscribe fully to the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, we welcome the opportunity to contribute to today's discussion on nuclear weapons at this historic seventieth session of the First Committee. We do so mindful of the fact that 70 years ago the world witnessed the horrific bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and with them the devastating humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We are also reminded that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and of the threat they pose to humankind has been a fundamental goal of the United Nations since its founding. Sadly, however, it remains an elusive goal. We reiterate our firm view that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Paradoxically, these weapons are of no use in addressing contemporary security threats. They serve

no purpose in combating transnational organized crime, preventing terrorism or violent extremism and curbing cyberwarfare. Rather, they breed a climate of insecurity that heightens the risks of proliferation. Moreover, their existence and threatened use cedes the moral high ground to rogue States and non-State actors that seek a convenient argument to excuse their own excesses.

CARICOM States have been ardent supporters of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We are committed to its full and effective implementation and to its universality. Indeed, we view the near-universality of the NPT, with 191 States parties, as a powerful reflection of our collective commitment to eliminating the spread and use of nuclear weapons. We continue to call on the small number of States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty and place their facilities under the comprehensive safeguards developed by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

CARICOM laments the fact that 45 years after the entry into force of the NPT and 25 years after its indefinite extension, the international community is still unable to undertake negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament. We have witnessed the growing discord that continues to stymie efforts to meet our shared nuclear disarmament obligations. This was most recently evidenced by the inability of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach agreement on a final outcome document.

There is a growing and palpable sense of dissatisfaction among most non-nuclear-weapon States with the failure of the nuclear-weapon States to live up to their obligations to implement the nuclear disarmament provisions contained in article VI of the Treaty. This sense of frustration is further exacerbated by the fact that one of the key demands by non-nuclear-weapon States parties — concerning the pledge that non-nuclear-weapon States would not be the target of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States — has still not been placed in a legally binding form. Instead, nuclear modernization programmes continue apace and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence persists, thereby providing pernicious and malign incentives for proliferation.

We reject the faulty logic that underpins the Cold War deterrence framework. We agree with those that note that any peace created by deterrence is akin to a peace that exists between two persons pointing guns

at each other's heads with their fingers on the triggers. This scenario reflects an unstable, tense peace that is fraught with danger and prone to miscalculation. We cannot continue to ignore these realities, which undermine the efficacy of the NPT. It is past time for us to pursue a legal undertaking to advance the effective measures called for in article VI of the Treaty. We must start the discussions as a matter of urgency. We therefore welcome the initiative for the convening of an open-ended working group to negotiate concrete, effective, legal measures to advance our common nuclear disarmament goals.

CARICOM States have joined efforts to place humanitarian concerns at the forefront of the discourse and action on nuclear weapons, including their inclusion on the agenda of the First Committee. As small island developing States, we view the prospect of a nuclear detonation, whether by design or accident, as an existential horror that could decimate the entire region. We reiterate the endorsement by our Heads of State and Government at the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in January of the pledge made at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, in December 2014, to fill the legal gap related to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. In that connection, we underscore the pressing need for the negotiation and adoption of a universal and legally binding instrument prohibiting the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

CARICOM's commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is embodied in the participation of all its member States in the Treaty of Tlatelolco. It is a source of immense satisfaction to CARICOM States that that Treaty enjoys universal adherence throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Building on this, Heads of State and Government of CELAC reaffirmed and designated the region as a zone of peace in January 2014. We reaffirm that nuclear-weapon-free zones must be respected by all States, without any reservations and limitations.

CARICOM States believe that a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would go a long way towards reducing tensions in the region. We therefore reiterate our call for the full implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

The elimination of the testing of nuclear weapons remains a critical element in the overall process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. To that end, we urge ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the eight remaining annex 2 States to enable its entry into force. Pending that, all States should continue to abide by a moratorium on testing.

A ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is an important objective for an effective disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We are therefore pleased to receive the report of the Group of Governmental Experts with recommendations on steps to advance the negotiations of a fissile material cut-off treaty (see A/70/81), and we call for negotiations to begin at the earliest opportunity.

CARICOM States recognize and underscore the right of all States to peaceful uses of nuclear technology in accordance with article IV of the NPT. At the same time, we insist that this right must be exercised in full compliance with the safeguard provisions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The role of the IAEA in providing the necessary monitoring and verification should be fully respected and strengthened. CARICOM attaches considerable importance to the work of the IAEA in the promotion of safeguard applications for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. The strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities remains important to us.

CARICOM States are particularly committed to the issue of nuclear safety. The trans-shipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea and the concomitant threat to the environment and economic sustainability of small island developing States of the region remain of grave concern. While we are cognizant of the mechanisms in place to enhance cooperation in the area of nuclear radiation, transport and waste safety, we are mindful that emergency preparedness and response mechanisms are limited in their capacity to respond adequately and effectively to a nuclear accident or incident.

On a final note, I am aware that CARICOM countries have already conveyed their congratulations to you, Sir, and the members of your Bureau on your election. Allow me, however, to add my own words of congratulations and to reiterate our support for your chairmanship throughout this session.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and my own country, South Africa — and to introduce the draft resolution of the NAC entitled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments” (A/C.1/70/L.41).

As mentioned in the NAC statement during the general debate (see A/C.1/70/PV.2), the only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. In that context, we underscore the vital importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for the achievement of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as it remains the only international instrument that contains the legal commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

This year, the NAC draft resolution focuses on a number of issues related to nuclear disarmament that are of paramount importance for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons. The draft resolution reiterates the grave concern at the danger to humanity posed by nuclear weapons. It also reiterates deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and the resolve to seek a safer world for all and to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

In that context, it welcomes the compelling evidence presented at the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which detailed the catastrophic consequences that would result from nuclear weapons detonations, including the research findings regarding the strongly disproportionate and gendered impact of exposure to ionizing radiation for women and girls. The draft resolution further calls upon Member States, in their relevant deliberations, decisions and actions, to give due prominence to the humanitarian imperatives that underpin nuclear disarmament and to the urgency of achieving this goal.

The draft resolution reiterates that each article of the NPT is binding on all States parties in all circumstances, and that all States parties should be held fully accountable with respect to strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty. It also calls upon all States parties to comply fully with commitments and obligations made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It further emphasizes the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, and acknowledges the evidence presented at the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which has significant implications for the assessment of nuclear weapons under the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law.

The draft resolution recalls the reaffirmation of the continued validity of the practical steps agreed to in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, including the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI of the Treaty. It also recalls the commitment made by the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate concrete progress on the measures leading to nuclear disarmament, and calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to take all steps necessary to accelerate the fulfilment of their commitments.

The draft resolution calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitment to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, regional and multilateral measures. It also urges all States possessing nuclear weapons to decrease the operational readiness of these weapons systems in a verifiable and transparent manner with a view to ensuring that all nuclear weapons are removed from high-alert status. It encourages the nuclear-weapon States and those party to the regional alliances that include nuclear-weapon States to make concrete reductions in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military concepts, doctrines and policies, including collective security doctrines, pending their total elimination.

It further underlines the recognition by States parties to the NPT of the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in the constraining by the nuclear-weapon States of the development and qualitative improvement of their nuclear weapons and their ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons, and calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to take steps in that regard.

The draft resolution encourages additional steps by all nuclear-weapon States, in accordance with their

previous commitments and obligations on nuclear disarmament, to ensure the irreversible removal of all fissile material designated by each nuclear-weapon State as no longer required for military purposes. It also calls upon all States to support, within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the development of appropriate nuclear disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding verification arrangements, thereby ensuring that such material remains permanently outside military programmes in a verifiable manner.

It calls upon all States parties to the NPT to work towards the full implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is inextricably linked to the indefinite extension of the Treaty. It further expresses disappointment and deep concern at the lack of a substantive outcome of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, including on the process to establish the Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as set out in the 1995 Middle East resolution, which remains valid until fully implemented.

The draft stresses the fundamental role of the NPT in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and calls upon all State parties to promote the universality of the Treaty. It urges India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States promptly and without conditions and to place all their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. It urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its commitments under the Six-Party Talks, including those contained in the September 2005 joint statement, to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, to return at an early date to the NPT and to adhere to its IAEA safeguards agreement, with a view to achieving the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner, and reaffirms the Assembly's firm support for the Six-Party Talks.

It also urges all States to work together to overcome obstacles within the international disarmament machinery that are inhibiting efforts to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament in a multilateral context and urges the Conference on Disarmament to commence without delay substantive work that advances the agenda of nuclear disarmament, particularly through multilateral negotiations. It calls upon the nuclear-

weapon States to implement their nuclear disarmament commitments in a manner that enables the State parties to regularly monitor progress, including through a standard detailed reporting format, thereby enhancing confidence and trust not only among the nuclear-weapon States, but also between the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States.

The draft resolution also urges States to pursue multilateral negotiations without delay, in good faith, on effective measures for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world, in keeping with the spirit and purpose of General Assembly resolution I (I) of 24 January 1946, and article VI of the NPT. To that end, it urges Member States to explore options and support efforts to identify, elaborate and negotiate the legally binding, effective measures required for nuclear disarmament.

Since the NAC resolution seeks to uphold previous commitments and obligations that were agreed to by consensus, we believe it was drafted in a manner that all States should be able to support. We therefore encourage all States to show their commitment to nuclear disarmament by supporting this draft resolution.

Mr. Lomónaco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Year after year, Mexico has the honour of being the first delegation to take the floor in its national capacity in the thematic debate on nuclear weapons. This is in recognition of its historic commitment to nuclear disarmament, one of the highest priorities of my country. My delegation traditionally uses this debate to condemn the existence of over 16,000 nuclear weapons, to challenge their status as the basis of some countries' security and to reiterate its unstinting commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons.

Today such statements are as relevant and valid as ever. However, this session of the General Assembly is different. On the one hand, we are meeting under the symbolic weight of the seventieth anniversary of the beginning of the nuclear era, of the establishment of the United Nations and of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We are also meeting under the shadow of the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was held just a few months ago.

At the same time, as we meet we are encouraged by the undeniable success of the Humanitarian Initiative, which by placing itself at the centre of all debates on the existence and elimination of nuclear weapons, with

the support of almost 80 per cent of the membership, has changed the parameters of the discussion and has created unprecedented momentum for the adoption of effective and concrete measures that make possible a qualitative leap towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Therefore, at this meeting I would like to focus my delegation's statement on responding to some of the arguments we have heard that attempt to explain the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and, above all, to justify those who show themselves in favour of a world free of nuclear weapons but are opposed to any initiative that implies progress.

The first argument is that the existence of nuclear weapons has prevented a nuclear war. The deterrence doctrine starts with the presumption that the existence of nuclear weapons is necessary to guarantee the security of nuclear-weapon possessors or those under the umbrella of their protection. However, it is obvious that the security of non-nuclear-weapon States or of States that are not sheltered under their umbrella is totally irrelevant for the defenders of this doctrine. It is therefore at the very least arrogant to seek to impose this doctrine on non-nuclear-weapon States.

Just a few weeks ago Pope Francis reminded us here at the United Nations that

“A system of ethics and laws based on the threat of mutual destruction, and possibly the destruction of all humankind, is a contradiction in terms and an affront to the entire edifice of the United Nations, which would become a group of nations united by fear and distrust” (*A/70/PV.3, p. 5*).

As has been shown by various disasters at the point of occurrence, if a nuclear war has been avoided, that has been in spite of, and not thanks to, nuclear weapons.

The second argument is that the current security climate is not propitious for general and complete disarmament. As in the case of those who are addicted to tobacco, there will never be a good time to stop smoking and there will always be a reason to postpone the painful decision. Indeed, prevailing tensions are alarming. The scaling-up of rhetoric, with echoes of the Cold War, is, frankly, of concern. But for the rest of the world, the argument is precisely the opposite. It is the growing tensions between nuclear weapon States that justify and give urgency to renewed action to totally eliminate nuclear weapons. Enough of the excuses.

The third argument holds that there is no legal vacuum. Those who argue that there is no legal vacuum are the same who promoted a nuclear-test-ban treaty and who are now pushing for a fissile material cut-off treaty. Both instruments fill a legal vacuum. The decision of the International Court of Justice highlights the absence of a legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. It therefore recognizes the existence of a legal void. Ultimately, it cannot be argued that there is no legal vacuum and at the same time propose instruments to fill a legal vacuum.

The fourth argument is that negotiating a disarmament instrument undermines, distracts from or runs counter to the NPT. Those who argue this seem to forget their obligation to hold negotiations on effective measures for a treaty on general and complete disarmament, pursuant to article VI of the Treaty. The NPT is an indispensable regime, and it must remain valid even after the objective of limiting all nuclear weapons has been achieved. The adoption of a nuclear-test-ban treaty and the eventual negotiation of a treaty to reduce fissile material or of a nuclear disarmament treaty are mutually complementary measures that are fully consistent with the NPT.

We cannot understand the failure to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda without taking a moment to assess existing instruments and forums available to us. I am referring, on the one hand, to the strange interpretations that some have of article VI of the NPT and, on the other hand, the disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in particular. The CD is a product of the Cold War and a bipolar world. It bases its decision-making on the rule of consensus, which, justified as protection of national security, guarantees the daily exercise of the veto. That practice, as we saw in this body just last week, is used even, for example, to prevent the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean from participating on a panel, as if the national security of some nuclear-weapon State depended on that.

The institutional arrangement of the CD is not accidental. Like the Security Council in its time, the CD was designed to generate results only when the two super-Powers agreed. While in the debates in recent years we have focused on the paralysis of the last two decades, the reality is that the CD fulfilled its mandate only at the end of the Cold War, during the short honeymoon period following the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Despite the evolution of the United Nations system, the CD remains a body with restricted membership that excludes two thirds of the United Nations membership, including the great majority of members of the Non-Aligned Movement and even emerging Powers in Western and Eastern Europe. As if that were not enough, the CD is the sole enclave within the United Nations that is free of civil society's scrutiny and therefore free of the legal and moral obligation to report. Although that may have been acceptable at one time, it cannot be explained, nor can it be acceptable, in the very different world in which we now live.

The world changed, and changed radically. The Cold War is behind us, the balance of power is now multipolar, and nuclear weapons have proliferated beyond the five nuclear-weapon States. The Humanitarian Initiative has generated new momentum and has given a voice back to scores of countries that have waited in frustration for 45 years for the nuclear-weapon States to do their part under the arrangement known as the grand bargain. In summary, the disarmament machinery no longer reflects a contemporary international community that calls for inclusive and democratic participation in all debates or negotiations on the existence and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Therefore, my delegation, with the support and the commitment of a growing number of sponsors, has submitted draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.13, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations". By this draft resolution, the General Assembly—the universal body par excellence—would establish an inclusive working group, by definition open to the participation of all Member States. This initiative has created controversy precisely because it seeks to avoid the errors of the past and to avoid replicating in the General Assembly a modus operandi that is outdated and flawed and because its goal to create a platform to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda in a concrete and effective manner. In other words, in contrast to others, it seeks to practice what it preaches.

Finally, the time has come for us to translate rhetoric into concrete actions, to channel frustration into initiatives that will enable us to take significant steps forward and to move from complaining to adopting effective nuclear disarmament measures. For that reason Mexico participates, along with a group of like-minded and equally committed countries, as a sponsor of two draft resolutions, one on the Humanitarian Pledge and another on the ethical dimension for a world free of

nuclear weapons, As we have done with regard to other scourges facing humanity, we must recover our moral compass. All too often we forget that the United Nations was founded on the basis of the good of humankind and not national interests.

Our commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki imposes on us the obligation to ensure that this will not be just another session of the General Assembly. We cannot allow inertia, procedural gimmicks or the interests of a few to interfere. The best legacy for future generations and the greatest tribute to the victims of nuclear attacks and tests is to build a peaceful and safe international security system that is premised on the force of ethics and international law, and not on the threat of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Laggner (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland welcomes the agreement between Iran and the E3+3 as a historic achievement for nuclear non-proliferation. We have already witnessed similar progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. Those experiences should remind us that disarmament and non-proliferation successes benefitting all involved parties, as well as the international community as a whole, can and must be sought through patient diplomacy and compromises both at the bilateral level and in multilateral forums.

However, we now see a worrisome trend of polarization in the field of nuclear disarmament. The 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) revealed rigid positions, insufficient willingness to compromise and promotion of national security interests to the detriment of global security concerns. This last point is illustrated in particular by the increase in and qualitative improvements of the arsenals of nuclear-arms States, as well as by the recent repeated threats to use them. Such developments run counter to a number of key commitments, to the legitimate security interests of non-nuclear-weapon States and to the principle of undiminished security for all.

In such a context, standing still is not a solution and movement backward would be unacceptable. Steps must be taken to ensure that nuclear disarmament is taken forward.

First, disarmament measures set out in the final documents of earlier review conferences, including the 2010 action plan, remain valid and must be fully

implemented. Their realization must be accelerated, and we call on the nuclear-weapon States to live up to their obligations and responsibilities. We also call on the nuclear-weapon States not party to the NPT to join the multilateral efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals.

For certain key issues, progress will require the active contribution of all States. This is particularly true with regard to concluding a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the report issued this year by the Group of Governmental Experts (see A/70/81) and hope that it will spur new efforts to launch negotiations in this area.

Secondly, the fact-based discussions conducted over the past few years on the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons have enabled us to deepen our collective understanding of their real consequences. Those consequences should not only be at the centre of our deliberations, they should also be a unifying factor in taking nuclear disarmament forward. Those discussions have indicated not only that a nuclear detonation would constitute a humanitarian disaster of a magnitude such that we would not have an adequate response to it, but also that the probability of a nuclear weapons detonation has been underestimated. Hence, it should be a priority to reduce the risks of the use of nuclear weapons because of a miscalculation or error. The troubling information recently made available about a number of disturbing close calls or accidents reminds us of the permanent risk posed by nuclear weapons and the need to address this matter.

The emergence of new threats associated with nuclear weapons also needs to be better understood. These include the potential vulnerability of command and early warning networks to cyberattacks or technical malfunctions related to the use of information and communication technologies. Nuclear-weapon States can and should take concrete and effective actions, such as those proposed by the Global Zero Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction, to reduce the operational readiness of their weapons systems. Such measures would strengthen confidence and reduce risks associated with accidental nuclear launches and detonations.

Thirdly, we must recognize that legal gaps exist, for nuclear arms remain the one weapon of mass destruction not yet prohibited and eliminated, and that we are still lacking instruments that can establish a nuclear-weapon-free world. Member States should

advance discussions to fill those gaps, including through effective measures necessary to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. There is a legal obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. We should advance those discussions in an inclusive way to ensure constructive engagement by all. Several options have been put forward to fill in the legal gaps, and it would be appropriate to examine those elements, as well as certain concrete measures — for example, risk reduction — in the framework of a structured process. As several have already proposed, an open-ended working group could constitute an appropriate platform. My country stands ready to contribute actively to an inclusive process to identify and elaborate concrete measures leading to nuclear disarmament.

As we commemorate this year the seventieth anniversary of the use of nuclear weapons on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we should ensure that such weapons are never used again under any circumstances and that all efforts under way are pursued and accelerated so as to achieve the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): On 5 April 2009, in Prague, President Obama stated the United States commitment “to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons” and to take concrete steps to that end. He committed to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in the United States national security strategy. Since then, the United States concluded a Nuclear Posture Review in 2010, and the United States and the Russian Federation have concluded and brought into force the New Strategic Arms Reduction (START) Treaty. In Berlin in June 2013, President Obama announced that the United States was ready to seek further negotiated cuts with Russia to reduce our deployed strategic nuclear weapons by as much as one third below the levels of the New START Treaty and to work with our NATO allies to seek bold reductions in the United States and Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons.

History shows that a practical and full-spectrum approach to disarmament has proven to be the most effective means to reduce nuclear dangers and make progress on nuclear disarmament. The United States will continue to pursue every avenue available, but the hard truth is that the final goal of disarmament will not be realized overnight or in a single negotiation. We know there are some who have called for alternate, immediate,

wholesale approaches to nuclear disarmament. But an outright ban now on nuclear weapons will not get rid of nuclear weapons overnight. Achieving a world without nuclear weapons will require both strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and working toward nuclear disarmament.

We understand the deep concern about the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, a concern that underpins our own nuclear disarmament efforts. Our pragmatic, sustained approach to nuclear disarmament has borne fruit, resulting in major reductions in the role and number of nuclear weapons and in fissile material stocks and infrastructure. The United States and the Russian Federation continue to successfully implement the New START Treaty, the most comprehensive nuclear arms control agreement in more than 20 years. United States- and Russian-deployed nuclear weapons have already reached their lowest levels since the 1950s. As we reported to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last May, the United States stockpile has been reduced by 85 per cent from its high point in 1967, during the Cold War.

We remain ready to negotiate with Russia further reductions of all nuclear weapons, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons. That will require a willing partner and conditions conducive to progress. As we consider arms control priorities, we will continue to consult closely with our allies and partners every step of the way. Their security is non-negotiable.

The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review was an important step. It reduced further the role of nuclear weapons in the United States national security strategy and made clear that the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. The Nuclear Posture Review emphasized the firm United States commitment to maintaining a safe, secure and effective nuclear stockpile as long as nuclear weapons exist. That includes making needed investments to modernize what remains of the aging and unsustainable Cold War-era nuclear infrastructure. The production complex that used to produce plutonium and highly enriched uranium for weapons is now permanently shut down, devoted solely to managing the legacy of past production.

It is important to underscore that the United States is neither developing new nuclear weapons nor pursuing any new nuclear missions. Our stockpile stewardship management activities are intended only to sustain existing designs, modernize their safety, security and use-control features, and modernize facilities. A modern complex will actually reduce the need to maintain retired warheads as a hedge against problems with deployed warheads. In addition to stockpile stewardship and management activities, investments in more modern facilities also benefit a range of activities in nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear security and emergency response.

The United States is also working actively to reduce its holdings of fissile material stocks that have been removed permanently from nuclear weapons programmes. We have down-blended more than 146 metric tons of United States highly enriched uranium — enough material for more than 5,800 nuclear weapons. More than 50 metric tons of this material was down-blended under monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Another success story is the recently completed 1993 United States-Russia Highly Enriched Uranium Purchase Agreement, under which 500 metric tons of Russian weapons-origin highly enriched uranium, enough for approximately 20,000 warheads, was down-blended to low enriched uranium and used for peaceful purposes as fuel in United States nuclear power reactors.

We also continue to work to build support for ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, making the case to our citizens and legislators that the Treaty will serve to enhance our collective security. Unfortunately, we have not seen progress across the board in recent years. The United States continues to be dismayed by the deadlock that has prevented the Conference on Disarmament from negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty — long on the disarmament agenda and long overdue. A treaty dealing with the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons is an essential step for global nuclear disarmament and is the next logical multilateral step to cap nuclear arsenals worldwide. We welcome the results of the work of the fissile material cut-off treaty Group of Governmental Experts, in which the United States participated, and the substantive discussion that ensued. We hope that a detailed examination of the Group's final report (see A/70/81) will advance the prospects for fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations.

The United States continues to implement the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which remains a consensus-based, long-term road map for strengthening all three pillars of the NPT. The United States remains committed to continuing our work to carry forward recommendations outlined in the sections of the proposed final document of the 2015 Review Conference covering the Treaty's core pillars. We will continue to work with others to strengthen International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and to resolve non-compliance with non-proliferation obligations and Security Council resolutions. Unresolved non-compliance presents a fundamental challenge to all NPT parties and puts at risk the many security benefits that derive from the NPT.

We know that much remains on our agenda, but every day the path to a world without nuclear weapons shortens. We have made real progress, and we know what we need to do to move further down that path. The United States is committed to fulfilling our obligations and working with the international community to take the next steps. Of course, all Member States have a role to play in disarmament, and we look forward to working with them to achieve that ultimate goal.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Sweden, Switzerland and my own country, Chile, to address the issue of de-alerting, or decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems. Our countries have been calling since 2007 for practical steps to address the significant number of nuclear weapons remaining on high alert. We remain deeply concerned that, notwithstanding the low level of transparency on this issue, experts estimate that hundreds of missiles carrying roughly 1,800 warheads are ready to be launched within a matter of minutes.

Reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons has been recognized as a concrete measure contributing to progress on nuclear disarmament, for example as one of the 13 practical steps agreed at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and as part of action 5 in the action plan agreed at the NPT Review Conference in 2010. It is also a key element in risk reduction, given that high alert levels significantly multiply the risks posed by nuclear weapons, including those of accidental, erroneous or precipitous launch. In addition, de-alerting can contribute to diminishing the

role and significance of nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines and policies.

In the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference, the nuclear-weapon States undertook to consider the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems. That interest has not diminished. Rather, since 2010 the focus on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has led to a widely shared understanding that the risks associated with nuclear weapons are higher than previously understood. This further underlines the unacceptable risks associated with high levels of alert.

The evidence presented in the context of the Humanitarian Initiative and at the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna conferences has served to highlight the urgent necessity of achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which would provide the only guarantee against the eventuality of their use. Pending that achievement, nuclear-weapon States must constructively engage on the issue of de-alerting and take urgent, concrete action to reduce further the operational status of nuclear weapons systems, thereby diminishing risks and advancing the security of us all.

Various experts and commissions have discussed a wide range of possible practical steps, including technical measures to reduce readiness or storing warheads separately from their delivery system. Our group also put forward a number of recommendations in Working Paper No. 21, which we submitted to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The paper proposed a number of practical de-alerting measures. In addition, it called on nuclear-weapon States to implement measures with regard to nuclear doctrines, postures and force structures so as to enable further reductions in the level of alert of nuclear weapons, and recommended further measures towards confidence-building, risk reduction and transparency. To similar effect, we would note the report of the Global Zero Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction, which was released at an event during the NPT Review Conference, sponsored by New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland.

Although our group is not running a resolution on de-alerting at the Assembly's seventieth session, we will certainly be doing so in the future, as well as more generally pursuing the recommendations of our working paper in all other relevant forums, including

at the next NPT review cycle and in any relevant body established by the General Assembly.

Mr. Abbani (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is honoured to make this statement on nuclear disarmament as part of the work of the First Committee.

I wish to express Algeria's support for the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and for the statement to be delivered by the representative of Oman on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Algeria wishes to reaffirm its steady position that nuclear disarmament must be a main priority if we are to establish peace, security and stability in the world. That can be achieved only through the total elimination of these weapons and of the threat posed by them.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was signed more than 45 years ago, at the end of the Cold War. However, nuclear weapons continue to exist and to represent the main threat with regard to the annihilation of humankind. Although the Treaty has enabled us to contain these weapons by limiting possession to a only certain number of countries, we regret the limited progress made under this regime. Despite article VI of the Treaty and the obligations and the commitments undertaken at the Review Conferences, we still consider that these weapons constitute a threat, and they remain the military underpinning of those countries' security policy.

We need a legally binding international instrument with negative security assurances. However, we continue to be of the view that the total elimination of these weapons is the ultimate goal and that we must ensure that we will have a comprehensive treaty that will prohibit their acquisition, stockpiling and production, in accordance with resolution 68/32 and the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Algeria reaffirms its full commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, which is one of the pillars of the multilateral system of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for many States. We insist that these treaties must be universal and all countries that are not yet parties must participate to ensure international peace and security. That is why we welcome the accession of the State of Palestine to the Treaty, which broadens its universality.

We regret, however, the lack of consensus among the State parties to the Treaty following the 2015 NPT Review Conference, despite intensive consultations. Once again we lost the opportunity to make concrete progress on nuclear disarmament. Therefore, we must redouble our collective efforts to achieve the objectives we have set ourselves, specifically with regard to the security challenges facing the world today. We are particularly attached to ensuring that we achieve nuclear disarmament, which is part of the essential efforts we must make to rid ourselves of these weapons. Nuclear non-proliferation is therefore an obligation of all State parties to the Treaty.

Regarding using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, we encourage States to do so pursuant to provisions of the Treaty to ensure their social and economic development particularly the least developed countries.

Finally, we support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world. They are a factor of peace and stability at the regional and international levels. Thus, Algeria was one of the first African States to ratify the Pelindaba Treaty, which created a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. We are gravely concerned about the large obstacles that continue to stymie the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone, despite the adoption 20 years ago of the relevant resolution at the 1995 Review Conference. We regret the lack of tangible progress in this area. We believe a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East relates to one of the three pillars of the Treaty.

We believe that we must rid the world of the threat presented by nuclear weapons, and therefore we must redouble our efforts. We support the premises of the Humanitarian Initiative. We believe that the momentum it has built up will enable us to enrich our collective approach to deal with the difficulties, and that will eventually enable us to achieve non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

Finally, I would like to point out that the text of this statement in extenso will be available on the website. I have delivered an abridged version.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): France is strongly committed to nuclear disarmament, an essential aspect of broader efforts to strengthen international peace and security. As the President of the French Republic recalled last February, France is

a Power of peace that does not intend to give up on the goal of disarmament, including nuclear disarmament. It shares the long-term goal of the complete elimination of nuclear arms when the strategic context will allow it.

It is along these lines that France continues to implement its policies. It will do so in a steadfast and transparent way, taking into account the strategic context of disarmament. This last point is essential. The prospects for nuclear disarmament can move forward only by ensuring undiminished security for all and ensuring that there are no new arms races. This is why the framework of general and complete disarmament remains important. It supposes that progress can be accomplished in all areas of disarmament — biological, chemical and conventional — as well as in easing regional tensions and in working to strengthen collective security in all its dimensions.

In this context, France will continue to attach priority to resolving proliferation crises. From this perspective, the conclusion of a long-term agreement on the Iranian nuclear question on 14 July in Vienna was good news. France — which has been fully involved in these negotiations for over 10 years and over the past few months has spared no efforts in the search for a peaceful solution — welcomes this diplomatic success. However, France also remains vigilant. We are only at the start of a long process of restoring trust, and only the full implementation of the Vienna agreement throughout its duration will make it possible to guarantee the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

Furthermore, progress achieved on the Iranian nuclear question should not make us forget that North Korea has pursued its nuclear programme in violation of its international obligations, in particular Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013). France is particularly concerned by North Korea's repeated threats to conduct major new provocations. This requires a reaction from the international community. North Korea should reject the path of confrontation and make a sincere demonstration of its willingness to re-establish dialogue with the international community by taking concrete steps with a view towards the full, verifiable and irreversible abandonment of its nuclear and ballistic programme.

The debate on nuclear disarmament today demonstrates a great diversity of approach. We understand the frustration and the impatience of some

who consider that nuclear disarmament is not going fast or far enough. However, nuclear disarmament is neither an incantation nor an invitation. As facts demonstrate, disarmament is not decreed; it is built. It is therefore essential to anchor progress in disarmament in an approach that is gradual, based on successive concrete and pragmatic steps. On this point, let us be attentive so as not to draw the wrong conclusions from the lack of progress at the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last spring.

First, to be effective, progress on the path towards nuclear disarmament should continue to be part of a solid framework based on institutions stemming from the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the major treaties. In the first ranks of this normative structure is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which should remain the cornerstone of our efforts. Its status as a nuclear-weapon State accords France particular responsibilities. France has assumed these responsibilities fully and unequivocally. It is attached in particular to implementing all its obligations under the Treaty, making sure not to weaken this structure that is key for the security of all.

Secondly, disarmament cannot be based solely on a legal approach. The serious consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are known. For decades they have been the focus of important studies. Even so, the specificity of nuclear weapons compared to other weapons of mass destruction should be taken into account. Chemical and biological weapons cannot be the basis of a policy of deterrence. The French doctrine is and continues to be strictly defensive, with its only goal that of protecting France's vital interests, and the use of nuclear weapons is conceivable only in extreme circumstances of legitimate defense. French deterrence is in line with its obligations and respect for international law.

France translates its commitments into actions because it considers that disarmament can make progress only through realistic and pragmatic steps. Hence, it has taken initiatives on many effective and ambitious disarmament measures based on the principle of strict sufficiency, which we have always observed. Reduced by half, the nuclear arsenal of France has only 300 nuclear weapons today. With regard to their delivery vehicles, the ground-to-ground method has been abandoned and we have reduced by one third the volume of our strategic forces and ocean-based and air-

delivery forces. These measures for dismantling and converting these weapons to conventional use were noted last spring by my colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament during two visits, to Luxeuil and the Plateau d'Albion, which we organized as part of the transparency efforts announced by the President of the French Republic. On two occasions the alert level of French nuclear forces was reduced to adapt to the change in the threats to our vital interest.

The Chair: I apologize to the representative of France and ask for her kind cooperation, in the interests of all of us, in adhering to the agreed time limits.

Ms. Guitton ((France) (*spoke in French*): I will abbreviate the end of my statement.

In coordination with the United Kingdom, we were the first nuclear-weapon State to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which contributes to limiting the qualitative development of weapons. In 1988 we irreversibly dismantled our nuclear test site, and we are to date the only nuclear Power to have done that. Furthermore, we unilaterally dismantled our facilities for the production of fissile materials and ended the production of enriched plutonium for nuclear weapons. All these measures are irreversible.

We have not only spoken about disarmament. We have actually done it to the extent necessary. France will continue to take the initiative and mobilize efforts on the international scene. We will continue with our efforts for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible, and we invite all States that have not yet done so to ratify it soon. This is the clear message of the Final Declaration adopted this year under article XIV of the Treaty. France remains committed to a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices — the fissile material cut-off treaty. The topic today has reached sufficient maturity so that negotiations can be launched quite quickly, and in that regard we welcome the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, whose report was adopted by consensus last spring.

France is well aware of expectations of non-nuclear-weapon States. Their aspirations for guarantees of security are legitimate. As the President of the French Republic underscored on 19 February and reiterated for the first time at that level, the security assurances given at the Conference on Disarmament in 1995 and which

the Security Council took note of in its resolution 984 (1995) remain fully valid. Furthermore, France, which has confirmed its commitments regarding the implementation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in several parts of the world, continues to support a regional approach to disarmament.

There can be progress in disarmament only if there is political will shared by all. In that spirit, France has, since 2009, maintained active consultations with the other four nuclear-weapon States. The successive P5 conferences that we have held every year demonstrate our determination to work together to implement our obligations, in particular with regard to the NPT action plan agreed in 2010. This year, France is coordinating the P5 with our partners. We intend to establish and implement a positive agenda and to intensify our exchanges, which remain essential for strengthening mutual trust and transparency and moving towards nuclear disarmament.

The Chair: I wish to remind delegations to kindly limit their interventions to five minutes when speaking in their national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are foreign policy priorities for Austria. We are of the firm conviction that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must be pursued together. Some States continue to insist on the importance of nuclear weapons for their own security, while stressing the unacceptability of such weapons for other States. We fully subscribe to the words of the Secretary-General that “there are no right hands for the wrong weapons”.

Austria has been closely involved for many years in several efforts and initiatives to promote progress on both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We are particularly encouraged by the strong international momentum generated and the increased focus on the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons. The facts, findings and evidence presented in the course of the Humanitarian Initiative have shown the catastrophic consequences and associated risks of such weapons, providing a powerful set of arguments for disarmament and non-proliferation alike. The humanitarian focus is therefore maybe the best hope for shoring up support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and for creating and maintaining a strong nuclear disarmament

and non-proliferation regime. It should be seen as a wake-up call and as an issue that unites the international community to take urgent and determined action to move away from reliance on nuclear weapons.

In that spirit, Austria has the pleasure to introduce two new draft resolutions to this First Committee, the first of which is on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/70/L.37).

Between 2012 and 2015 several cross-regional statements on the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament were delivered, either in the context of NPT meetings or in First Committee meetings. The support for those statements increased continuously over those years. Austria and the other sponsors consider it important to raise the key concerns and arguments expressed in the joint statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons through a draft resolution with the aim of generating the broadest support possible. The draft resolution is based entirely on the latest joint statement, as delivered by Federal Minister Kurz of Austria on behalf of 159 countries at the 2015 NPT Review Conference in New York.

In particular, the draft resolution stresses that it is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons never be used again under any circumstances. It emphasises that the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination. The draft resolution stresses that the catastrophic effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, cannot be adequately addressed. It calls upon all States, in their shared responsibility, to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, to prevent their vertical and horizontal proliferation and to achieve nuclear disarmament. Finally, it urges States to exert all efforts to totally eliminate the threat of such weapons of mass destruction. Austria and the other sponsors would like to invite all States to support this draft resolution and to consider sponsorship.

Let me also comment briefly on the concerns that have been expressed about some elements of this draft resolution. In its preambular part, the draft resolution recalls all of the humanitarian statements that have been delivered in the past years. In addition, paragraph 4 expresses the firm belief that awareness of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches and efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. Those elements are included explicitly

so as to underscore the inclusive spirit of this draft resolution, also so as to reach out to those States that did not support the joint statement on behalf of 159 States. Moreover, several States have said that they cannot agree with the notion that it is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons never be used again under any circumstances. Preventing any such use is undoubtedly in the interest of humanity, and that reference is not intended as a legal statement.

With regard to the other draft resolution, which deals with the Humanitarian Pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/70/L.38), Austria, as host of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, drew a set of conclusions and issued a national commitment, the Austrian pledge. To date, 119 countries have formally endorsed and/or associated themselves with that commitment. The draft resolution is therefore based totally on the Humanitarian Pledge.

In particular, the draft resolution stresses the importance of presenting the evidence on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons to all relevant forums, as that evidence should be at the centre of all deliberations and the implementation of obligations and commitments with regard to nuclear disarmament. It urges all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under article VI of the Treaty, and calls upon all States to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap regarding the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve that goal. The draft resolution requests that all States possessing nuclear weapons, pending the total elimination of their nuclear-weapons arsenals, take concrete interim measures to reduce the risks posed by nuclear weapons. Finally, it calls upon all relevant stakeholders to cooperate in efforts to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks.

I would like to address briefly the point raised by some delegations regarding the legal gap. Unlike the case of other weapons of mass destruction, there is as yet no universal and comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons. The NPT prohibits the possession of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear-weapon States. It currently does not prohibit nuclear weapons for the nuclear-weapon States and some States outside the NPT regime. The nuclear-weapon-State status under the NPT

is, however, neither unconditional nor is it intended to be granted for the indefinite future.

The step-by-step approach also recognizes a legal gap that impacts efforts to achieve the objective of article VI. Prohibiting nuclear tests and the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons should be ways to fill the legal gap. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not entered into force, despite overwhelming international support and a fully functioning and proven verification regime. The prohibition of fissile material has lost much of its relevance, however, with some States in question having taken advantage of the almost 20 years of dysfunction in the Conference on Disarmament to stock up on fissile material, which therefore diminishes the disarmament value of any future treaty.

At the same time, long-term programmes to modernize nuclear weapons are under way in NPT nuclear-weapon States and States outside the NPT. Those developments are highly disturbing and are incompatible with the object and purpose of the NPT and the related disarmament obligations and commitments, and they run counter to the professed objective of a world without nuclear weapons. For those reasons, additional measures and efforts are necessary in order to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. That is why we consider it evident that there is a legal gap with regard to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and that we need to cooperate with all stakeholders to fill that gap.

One way to do that is to explore in detail and with determination effective legal measures to achieve nuclear disarmament, in particular new legal provisions and norms to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. For that reason, Austria fully supports and is a sponsor of the draft resolution entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations" (A/70/C.1/L.13). Another way to address the problem is to underscore the ethical responsibility of all States to act with urgency and determination to take effective measures for the elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons. For that reason, my country also fully supports and co-sponsors the draft resolution entitled "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapons-free world" (A/70/C.1/L.40).

Mr. Mendonça e Moura (Portugal): Seventy years after the devastating use of nuclear weapons — the only use so far — we still live in a world haunted by

the threat of such use, which seriously endangers the life prospects for present and future generations, as well as the prospects for our global environment and international and national efforts to achieve sustainable development. Ensuring a safer world free of those and other weapons of mass destruction will require all our vigilance and tenacious collective work.

The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any nuclear detonation would indeed dramatically challenge humankind's way of life and ultimately put its very survival at risk. That is why Portugal fully shares the frustration and dismay felt by many at the slow pace — and that is putting it mildly — of effective nuclear disarmament.

We have followed with great interest the relevant international approaches aimed at increasing awareness of and alertness to the catastrophic implications of any use, whether intentional or accidental, of nuclear weapons. We also believe that we should highlight those approaches in every discussion of nuclear disarmament and every effort to achieve it.

Portugal concurs with the view that, to be effective and comprehensive, nuclear disarmament requires that we put together a truly cooperative and collective set of conditions, including broad international mechanisms ensuring verification and irreversibility. But as we stated last year, that should not be construed as justification for delaying or, even worse, justifying the absence of any concrete steps on nuclear disarmament. “Step by step” means one step at a time, but it does imply taking steps.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and international non-proliferation endeavours. It also constitutes a crucial international legal framework for the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We share the deep disappointment of many over the inability of the recent NPT Review Conference to achieve a consensus on a final outcome. We believe that the small advances arrived at during the Conference's month-long discussions should, nevertheless, be used as a basis for the work on the next review cycle of negotiations.

Being party to a treaty requires implementing it fully and faithfully. In that regard, we regret the persistent instances of non-compliance with the

non-proliferation pillar of the Treaty. Portugal urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide fully by its international obligations, including the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We all also urge the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with the 2011 resolution of the IAEA Board of Governors. Only the clarification of the outstanding issues relating to the Syrian and North Korean nuclear programmes can assure the international community of their peaceful nature. On the other hand, we feel very encouraged by the remarkable achievements on the issue of Iran's nuclear programme.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is key to the advancement of the goals of nuclear non-proliferation, as we affirmed during the Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which took place on 29 September. We urge all States that have yet to ratify the Treaty to do so as soon as possible and, meanwhile, to observe a moratorium on nuclear-test explosions.

Despite the fact that negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty have not yet begun, the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on recommendations that could facilitate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (see A/70/81) deserves our full support, and we would like to commend its conclusions and see the start of effective and multilateral negotiations.

I will conclude by reaffirming that Portugal strongly supports the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We believe that it is crucial to remain seized of the issue of implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, guided by the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Ms. Sehayek-Soroka (Israel): I will be giving a shortened version of my statement, the full text of which will be posted on the QuickFirst portal.

Israel has a policy of responsibility and restraint in the nuclear domain consonant with the underlying goals and principles of non-proliferation. Accordingly, and wherever possible, we join and subscribe to international frameworks and standards for nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. In that context, Israel signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996 and

has been an active contributor to developing all of the elements of the Treaty's verification regime.

Israel shares the concern that radioactive and nuclear materials might be used to commit acts of terrorism and believes that preventing such threats from materializing requires vigilance and efforts to ensure that such materials remain safe and secure. In response to that threat, Israel signed the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and ratified the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, including its 2005 Amendment, which many States have yet to join. In addition, Israel is a partner nation of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which it views as a major element in the international effort to promote global and regional nuclear security.

Israel endorses the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We participate actively in the IAEA's illicit trafficking database and in its Nuclear Security Guidance Committee.

Israel values the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and recognizes its contribution to non-proliferation and international peace and security. At the same time, however, it is also clear that the NPT has shortcomings, reflected, *inter alia*, in the fact that the Treaty is not fully able to address the deliberate advancement of clandestine military nuclear programmes by States with little or no regard for their international legal obligations. Nowhere is that more apparent than in the Middle East, which is home to four of the five historical cases of NPT non-compliance — that is, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya. Moreover, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which represents the fifth case of non-compliance, is heavily implicated in proliferation in the Middle East. Despite its merits, the Treaty has not prevented those States parties from committing substantial violations of their obligations and has proved inadequate for remedying those violations once they have been discovered.

Iran, which remains the most significant threat to the Middle East and beyond, even after the agreement reached this year between it and the P5+1, is an illuminating case in point. The NPT proved inadequate when it came to preventing Iran from advancing its nuclear programme under acts of concealment and duplicity. When those violations were eventually

discovered, the NPT lacked the tools to recognize and address them properly. The Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference did not even mention Iran and its violations of the Treaty, despite numerous Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors resolutions to that effect.

The universality of the NPT cannot be a goal in itself and cannot guarantee compliance with its obligations, nor can it assure the global community that States parties will be sincere and forthcoming in implementing their obligations. While Treaty membership can help to promote a more stable security environment and enhance mutual assurances, the effectiveness of the Treaty depends greatly on the prevailing regional circumstances. It requires a robust basis of trust, mutual recognition, cooperation and peaceful relations and an environment in which States earnestly aspire to cooperate and build a shared vision of long-lasting security together.

In its approach and policies in the field of regional security and arms control, Israel has always endorsed a pragmatic and realistic attitude, rooted in its belief that the security concerns of all countries of a region should be taken into account and realistically addressed through a direct regional dialogue. Such engagement must be firmly based in a regional context if it is to be realistic and meaningful. Peaceful relations, reconciliation, good-neighbourliness, open borders and trust among regional parties cannot be ignored. They are key milestones on the road to the eventual establishment of a mutually verifiable zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It is misleading to imagine that that goal can be achieved through shortcuts and detours and without attending to the core security challenges that our region faces.

International experience has shown that such a zone can only emanate from within a region, through direct negotiations and consensus-building. The Middle East, with all its complexities and challenges, is certainly no exception, and that is especially true in these trying times. The process is inherently incremental and must be closely tied both to the fundamental circumstances and the security landscape.

Regrettably, the countries of the Middle East currently have no regional forum where they can all communicate directly with one another and conduct a dialogue on the core issues affecting their individual

and collective security. At the same time, it is clear that one-sided resolutions adopted in international forums are no substitute for direct, comprehensive regional security dialogue and cooperation. In fact, they hinder rather than assist regional progress, politicizing the issues when they should be addressed professionally. They divert the focus from the real proliferation challenges and stifle any budding efforts to build trust, harmony and cooperation —

The Chair: I apologize to the representative of Israel and ask her to kindly cooperate in all our interests by adhering to the agreed time limit.

Ms. Sehayek-Soroka (Israel): Of course. I will be finished in a moment.

Israel, for its part, has expressed its commitment to sincere and open dialogue with its neighbours on all regional security-related issues many times. Accordingly, in 2013 and 2014, we participated at a senior and authoritative diplomatic level in five rounds of multilateral consultations convened in Switzerland by Mr. Jaako Laajava, Finland's Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy. While Israel demonstrated its sincere commitment to a process of direct dialogue and confidence-building in the region, our Arab neighbours showed themselves, unfortunately, to be committed to divisive draft resolutions such as one on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, introduced in the First Committee, and one entitled "Israeli nuclear capabilities", which was once again overwhelmingly rejected only a few weeks ago by the fifty-ninth General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Israel regrets the Arab Group's choice of a path of confrontation, rather than one of conciliation. Efforts to adopt such resolutions serve only short-sighted political interests and hamper the prospects for a better security environment in the Middle East. We continue to believe that a direct dialogue addressing the broad range of security challenges between the regional parties is fundamental to any meaningful consensus-oriented discussion on the matter. Israel, for its part, will continue to seek such meaningful regional discussion, with the potential for leading to a more peaceful and secure Middle East.

The Chair: I shall now call on those representatives who have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I should like to remind all delegations of the allotted time limits.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is taking the floor to exercise its right of reply to a statement made earlier by the representative of France.

The French delegation is apparently confused about who is responsible for the continuing tension on the Korean peninsula, who is the real perpetrator of provocations and who is really pursuing a path of confrontation there. France is apparently still unaware of how the Democratic People's Republic of Korea came to possess nuclear weapons, a subject that my delegation has explained a number of times. If the United States had not threatened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear weapons, the nuclear issue would not have been created on the Korean peninsula in the first place, and from the beginning, the possession of nuclear weapons was not our choice.

In the General Assembly earlier this month, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made it clear that the solution for achieving a durable peace on the Korean peninsula lies in replacing the existing Korean Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty (see A/70/PV.24). Just two days ago, the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued a statement urging the United States to respond to its calls to sign a peace treaty. We are prompted by the need to defuse the danger of a war caused by potential threats to the Korean peninsula and to create a climate conducive to a durable peace. Although an agreement was reached in August between North and South Korea on defusing the escalating tension, there is no guarantee that that agreement will be observed and implemented as desired. That is because the South Korean authorities have no prerogative of command over the armed forces in their country and are not in a position to reject any joint military drills spearheaded by the United States.

So far, negotiations for resolving the issue on the Korean peninsula have shown that nothing can be settled without the conclusion of a peace treaty. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea once discussed the issue of denuclearization at the Six-Party Talks by taking into consideration the assertion of the countries concerned that that issue should be discussed before anything else. However, all those discussions proved futile, and even when an agreement was reached, it was not implemented. That is mainly because the United States has persistently pursued its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its military provocations, such as large-scale joint military

exercises. The fear that resulted from the introduction into South Korea of the means for launching nuclear strikes has periodically chilled all negotiations. The United States should roll back its hostile policies towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and respond to our call to conclude a peace treaty, with a view to ensuring lasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I would like to respond to the comments of the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As I believe I said last week (see A/C.1/70/PV.5), the United States has not threatened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear weapons. We have made that clear over and over again. The North knows what it has to do. It needs to come into compliance with its international obligations, and it needs to move forward with the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We have made it very clear that any exercise that we have conducted with the Government of South Korea has been advertised well in advance and does not pose a threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We therefore call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take the steps necessary for it to get back into the good graces of the international community. Until then, the United States will continue to call on the North to do what it needs to do. Again, just to reiterate and make it clear to everyone, the United States does not and will not recognize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a nuclear-weapon State.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I will be very brief. I would just

like to elaborate on how we can bring about peace on the Korean peninsula. There are two ways. The first is the Cold War way, whereby the Democratic People's Republic of Korea bolsters its capability for self-defence through its nuclear deterrent so as to cope with the increased nuclear threat from the United States. It is true that, thanks to the nuclear deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, war has been averted on the Korean peninsula, which is technically still in a state of ceasefire.

The second way is for the United States to roll back its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and respond to our call to conclude a peace treaty that can ensure genuine and lasting peace on the Korean peninsula. The issue of replacing the Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty is the issue on which the United States should first make a bold decision, resulting in a principled agreement between it and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

If confidence-building between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States can help remove the sources of tension and war on the peninsula, it will eventually be possible to put an end to the nuclear arms race and consolidate peace. However, if the United States rejects the possibility of a peace treaty or makes it conditional, that will be clear proof to the world that it has no intention of rolling back its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.