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First Committee

6th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Percaya (Indonesia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 86 to 102 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Gerasimovich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*):
Allow me, on behalf of the Belarus delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair and to express our readiness to cooperate with you.

Numerous problems linked to international security continue to occupy centre stage, often assuming new forms. This year was rich in events directly linked to issues of stability and security throughout the world. Sadly, we have been witness to an escalation in armed conflict and an exacerbation of the humanitarian situation in one of the world's most vulnerable regions. We believe that conflicts cannot be settled by introducing unilateral sanctions or violating territorial integrity and State sovereignty.

The central element of international efforts continues to be the theme of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Before the end of the review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we need to carry out serious work to implement the action plan on nuclear disarmament approved in the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference (see NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). That is necessary in order to ensure that that we can make significant progress at the 2015 Review Conference in enhancing the effectiveness of the NPT and achieving its goals.

The speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would undoubtedly help to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime and be a major contribution towards achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament. There is no alternative to a legally binding document completely banning nuclear testing.

The Republic of Belarus favours revitalizing and re-energizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which is a unique multilateral disarmament mechanism. We do not think that the disarmament negotiating process should be pursued outside the United Nations framework.

In that connection, we want talks on the items on the Conference's agenda, above all on developing a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear devices, to be conducted exclusively within the Conference. This also applies to other issues in the Conference's work that are priorities for us, such as the conclusion of an international agreement on assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons and also a ban on the development and production of new kinds of weapons of mass destruction and new systems thereof.

The issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is inextricably linked to issues of export control and preventing nuclear, chemical and biological materials from falling into the hands of terrorist organizations and other criminal elements. In that connection,

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Belarus supports efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), with a comprehensive, all-encompassing approach to issues of counteracting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

One way to enhance the effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) is for Member States to prepare national action plans outlining their priorities and plans for implementing the key provisions of the resolution. This year Belarus, together with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Office for Disarmament Affairs has put together its own national framework document — a road map — on additional measures regarding the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), focusing on the theme of export control and biological security. Going forward, we intend to expand it to include the strengthening of physical protection and the registration and storage of nuclear materials.

We welcome the efforts of the United Nations to combat the illegal and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The 2012 United Nations Conference to Review Progress in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the subsequent adoption of its outcome documents (see A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annexes I and II) gives us hope that this issue will remain one of the priorities of the Organization. As a contribution towards the implementation of this instrument at the regional level, I wish to note the OSCE/United Nations Development Programme project in Belarus called “Capacity-Building of SALW Stockpile Management and Security”, which Belarus has been successfully implementing with the financial support of donors from among the OSCE member States.

The uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons poses a serious threat to peace and security, helping to inflame and prolong armed conflicts, organized crime and international terrorism. The United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, held last July, confirmed the scale and gravity of this problem. Despite existing differences between the States parties on the issue of developing an international mechanism in the area of the arms trade, Belarus is ready for further work to that end, on the understanding that such a document would be aimed at tackling the most urgent problems linked to the transfers of conventional weapons.

Belarus sets great store by developing and universalizing the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which is a unique negotiating platform for producer countries and countries possessing specific kinds of weapons and munitions, as well as for countries that have been victims of the use of munitions and armaments. As Chair of the meeting on the Protocol V of the Convention, on Explosive Remnants of War, Belarus, with the help of the Convention’s Implementation Support Unit, has distributed an official letter to the foreign ministers of those countries that have yet to accede to this Protocol. In the context of the implementation of an Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and its annexed Protocols, approved at the Fourth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, Belarus is working to universalize the Convention and its annexed protocols throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States. Our plans include the holding of seminars at the regional and subregional level with a view to raising awareness among States of the Convention and its protocols.

Belarus stresses the need for the comprehensive consideration of issues of international information security, which recently have become particularly acute and relevant, especially considering that this theme has not been addressed at the international level in legal documents. Belarus plays an active part in the activities of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, which resumed its work this year. We trust that upon concluding its work the Group will submit a report with specific recommendations on further steps by the international community in this sphere. We think that the best way to settle this issue could be developing a relevant treaty within the United Nations.

Mr. Alia (Benin) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation and in my personal capacity, I wish to extend my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chair of the First Committee. I should also like to extend to the members of the Bureau my sincere congratulations and assure them of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of their duties. I also wish to pay tribute to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her tireless efforts in championing the cause of disarmament.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered at the 2nd meeting by the representatives of Nigeria and the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of African States and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively, and would like to make some observations at the national level.

The growth of insecurity and of threats to international peace and security highlights the need for the international community to take action to make tangible, significant progress in the field of disarmament. We commend the fact that 2012 has seen the United Nations give greater attention to questions regarding weapons. Important meetings devoted to disarmament were held, with, in many cases, commitments undertaken and progress made.

In that respect I should like to note, *inter alia*, the success of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 27 August to 7 September. I pay tribute to Ambassador Joy Ogwu and reiterate my compliments to her entire team on achieving a success that is a real cause for satisfaction for the developing States.

It is our wish that the commitments undertaken be honoured so that the developing countries, in particular the African States, can respond more effectively to the challenges of the struggle against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the effects of which are hobbling the continent's ability to confront the imperatives of development and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Benin's ardent wish is that the goodwill and spirit of consensus that helped the Conference to succeed may become permanent so as to enable us to give the world an effective arms trade treaty. My delegation supports the proposal to resume negotiations as early as the start of 2013, with the basis for discussion being the President's text of 26 July 2012, which constitutes a certain step forward in the process of drafting a treaty.

Despite having made some headway, we must recognize that huge challenges lie ahead. The dialogue on disarmament continues to flag. The work of the United Nations organs responsible for issues of disarmament is deadlocked or, at best, has produced meagre results that fall far short of the legitimate expectations of the developing States. The question of

nuclear non-proliferation remains unresolved, and there has been no follow-up on many of the commitments undertaken at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Washington, D.C., and Seoul Nuclear Security Summits.

The Disarmament Commission continues to conclude its discussion cycles without being able to formulate recommendations on the subjects on its agenda. The differences within the Conference on Disarmament prevent agreement on a programme of work that would allow that multilateral negotiating body to resume its substantive work, or on negotiations on a treaty for a complete halt to the production of fissile materials.

Yet the risks linked to insecurity are huge and varied. Besides nuclear accidents, such as that at Fukushima, they include the potential theft of fissile materials and sabotage of nuclear facilities, the risk of theft of nuclear devices, particularly weapons bearing nuclear explosives, the possibility of armed terrorist groups constructing rudimentary nuclear weapons using stolen nuclear material, and the risk of production of a so-called dirty bomb using radioactive material associated with a dispersion device or an explosive.

That is why Benin thinks that the First Committee needs to find ways either to break the deadlock in the Disarmament Commission or to move forward, using other means, on negotiations for the adoption of a fissile material cut-off treaty. My delegation believes that it is urgent to make disarmament one of the top priorities, and in that respect it calls on everyone to acknowledge the threat posed to all by nuclear insecurity.

The ties between disarmament and development are clear. Benin encourages the United Nations to continue working for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development (A/CONF.130/39, sect. II), pursuant to resolution 66/30. Benin thinks that nuclear security and the fight against nuclear proliferation should be a key pillar of the international community's actions with a view to establishing a safer world where resources can be devoted to sustainable social development.

Efforts will need to focus on the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. To that end, we will have to do more to ensure universal adherence to and scrupulous respect for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we will have to work for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on all continents.

Benin hopes that the international community will continue to update the multilateral disarmament instruments and further strengthen its action against nuclear proliferation, while at the same time not impinging on the legitimate right of States to use nuclear energy for strictly civilian purposes. That is why my delegation supports strengthening the capacity-building work of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which will have to be the organ under whose authority all nuclear facilities should be placed.

Mr. Pedersen (Norway): Norway would like to see a strong and effective United Nations in the field of disarmament. Civilians are continuing to suffer as a result of armed conflict. Vulnerable, poor and marginalized population groups are often victims of armed violence and organized crime.

We have a responsibility to eliminate the weapons that cannot be used under international humanitarian law and to prevent irresponsible and illegal arms transfers. We cannot continue to fail to fulfil this responsibility because of deadlocks and procedural obstacles.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions demonstrate that it is possible to negotiate multilateral instruments that have an immediate humanitarian effect on the ground and that strengthen the protection of civilians. That is possible when there is a common sense of purpose across traditional groupings, when our work builds on the facts and realities on the ground, and when the representatives of States recognize, acknowledge and make use of the undisputed expertise and competence of humanitarian organizations.

Norway was pleased and honoured to be elected President of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which took place in Oslo in September. Close to 120 States and international organizations and, of course, civil society took an active part. We were particularly pleased that 30 States that have not yet signed the Convention chose to participate, thereby signalling their interest in the issue. My delegation is also pleased to note the strong support that has been expressed for the Convention during this general debate.

Norway considers the Convention on Cluster Munitions to be a highly effective international instrument with two equally important pillars: one corrective pillar embodied in the operational articles on clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance, and one preventive pillar articulated in article 1 by the prohibition on any use at any time, as well as in the obligation to destroy stockpiles.

Since the Convention was negotiated, we have observed how effective the stigmatization effect has been. That said, we are deeply concerned about past and recent allegations of use, and States parties must remain vigilant in our joint condemnation of any such use and in our efforts to clarify what has actually taken place. Norway urges all States to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions and our common efforts to enhance the protection of civilians and strengthen international humanitarian law.

Norway is among those that remain very disappointed that we did not succeed in adopting an arms trade treaty this summer. The General Assembly has previously recognized that the absence of commonly agreed international standards for the transfer of conventional arms contributes to conflict, displacement, crime and terrorism, thereby also undermining peace, reconciliation, safety and stability.

The negative humanitarian consequences of unregulated arms transfers are severe. Armed violence kills approximately 2,000 people daily. We are disappointed that States could not agree that we should be obliged to deny arms exports in cases where there is a significant risk that the arms in question could be used to undermine peace and stability or violate international humanitarian law or human rights law.

There may be a new opportunity to continue and finalize our deliberations next year. If, however, the new arms trade treaty conference is also conducted according to the rules of procedure that entail a requirement for consensus, we run the risk of repeating what happened in July.

We have seen the consensus format watering down or paralysing important disarmament processes time and time again. The consensus requirement means that small minorities are able to prevent the adoption of international measures that could make a difference for civilians and vulnerable groups. It continues to constitute the key reason why the United Nations disarmament machinery remains inadequate in facing

the increasing challenges posed by the use of inhumane and indiscriminate arms and by arms proliferation.

While Norway welcomes the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and not least the very able leadership of Ambassador Joy Ogwu, it is a fact that stringent consensus rules prevent us from further strengthening that instrument.

Forty-two years after the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force, we are still, as we all know, living in a world with nuclear weapons. All countries have a responsibility to engage in nuclear disarmament. In this context, the current state of our multilateral disarmament instruments is a challenge to us all. There is a pressing need to develop new ideas and approaches if we are to achieve our common goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The draft resolution put forward by Austria, Norway and Mexico is an invitation to respond to that need.

The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT did achieve concrete results in the form of the action plan. But only implementation of the action plan can bring us from diplomatic achievement to actual results. We are therefore pleased to note that the five permanent members of the Security Council are meeting on a regular basis to fulfil their obligations under the NPT action plan, and we look forward to seeing concrete and bold steps to this end by the nuclear-weapon States.

One important item in the NPT action plan is the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be held by the end of this year in Helsinki. More than half of the world's countries have freely joined zones of this kind, and that underpins the simple fact that security is strengthened by not maintaining a category of devastating weapons that must never be used again.

Throughout the history of the United Nations, we have seen the humanitarian perspective gain strength in international politics and in relation to arms control. However, nuclear weapons have rarely been seen in that light. That may be about to change.

In March 2013, Norway will hold a conference in Oslo focusing on the impact of nuclear detonations,

whatever their cause. The conference will create an arena to discuss immediate humanitarian effects, long-term impacts and consequences, and the actual state of preparedness to provide adequate humanitarian response in the case of a nuclear detonation. We look forward to welcoming all States and relevant humanitarian actors that recognize the need to discuss the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons to Oslo in March next year.

We must all do our part to implement and further strengthen non-proliferation obligations. That includes implementing the comprehensive safeguards and the additional protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA must be fully equipped to carry out its crucial non-proliferation efforts.

Norway shares the view expressed by the European Union in relation to the proliferation challenges posed by Iran, Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We urge those three countries to cooperate fully with the international community to allay our legitimate concerns.

Norway participated in the successful Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul in March, confirming our commitment to nuclear security. We look forward to continuing that important process. We also need to ensure that our verification systems are robust enough to provide the necessary confidence in the integrity of both non-proliferation and disarmament processes, based on the principles of verifiability, irreversibility and transparency. We believe that the IAEA has an important role to play in that connection.

Bilaterally, the United Kingdom and Norway have cooperated at the expert level for a number of years on exploring technical and procedural challenges associated with a possible future nuclear disarmament verification regime. The purpose of that cooperation is to demonstrate that nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States can collaborate on nuclear disarmament.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has already created a very strong disarmament and non-proliferation norm. Syria's admission that it possesses a stockpile of chemical weapons has caused great concern and shows that the threat of chemical weapons is still very real. Norway urges Syria to act responsibly in relation to those abhorrent weapons, not to use them under any circumstances and to keep them secure.

Norway fully subscribes to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and would like to see even more ambitious steps on nuclear disarmament. We believe it is time to look at how we can make use of the General Assembly in our efforts to make progress on this issue. Norway joins other Member States in calling for a resolution at this year's session of the First Committee that will enable us to advance our multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We seek substantive progress on this issue as an alternative to the current status quo. States Members of the United Nations have an obligation to ensure that our multilateral institutions are equipped to deliver what is expected of them. That is the responsibility we should bring with us to the First Committee.

Mr. Al-Abri (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Sultanate of Oman, I am pleased to offer you, Sir, and your friendly country of Indonesia my sincere congratulations on your election as Chair of the First Committee during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My delegation is confident that your long experience and diplomatic skills and your conduct of its work will lead to positive results. Allow me also to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. I also wish to express my appreciation to your predecessor, the Chair of the Committee at the sixty-sixth session, and to his colleagues for their outstanding work.

My delegation welcomes the appointment of Ms. Angela Kane as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs — the successor to Ambassador Sergio Duarte — and wishes her success in her work. I express to her my thanks for her comprehensive introductory statement.

My delegation also aligns itself with the statements delivered at the 2nd meeting by the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement on behalf of the Movement and by the Chairman of the Group of Arab States on behalf of that Group.

A series of meetings and high-level international conferences have been held for more than three decades in order to make progress in nuclear disarmament talks and to reduce nuclear proliferation. As we affirm our supportive position for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we hope that what was reached at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in New York in May, will be translated into practical reality.

My country looks forward to the conference to be held in Helsinki towards the end of 2012, and hopes that it will be able to agree to declare the Middle East region a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Here, we welcome the holding of the Review Conference this year hoping that the Helsinki conference will be able to declare the Middle East region a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, like other zones established in many other parts of the world.

However, we should take into account the legitimate right of States to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this context, my country calls on Israel to respond to international appeals to ratify the NPT and to allow the IAEA to inspect and supervise all of its nuclear facilities and to report on them. Regarding the Iranian nuclear file, the Sultanate of Oman encourages all parties to recognize the necessity of continuing negotiations and dialogue in order to find a peaceful solution that will maintain security and stability in that important region of the world and preserve the right of Iran to benefit from nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, as well as to assuage the fears of the international community.

My delegation welcomes the developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and considers that to be an opportunity for Member States after a period of stagnation and lack of optimism. My country believes that those developments should be exploited well in order to make real progress in the traditional agenda on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation through the work of the Committee.

The lack of progress in nuclear disarmament talks and non-proliferation over the past three decades has encouraged some countries to seek to obtain such weapons under the pretext of protecting their independence and national security. That endeavour was due to the failure of the major Powers to reach a formula or agreement that would give serious indications of the credibility of their intentions.

We consider the call of the United States Administration for a world free of nuclear weapons to represent a real opportunity to give strong impetus to the international disarmament agenda and the beginning of a new era for the achievement of a world free of nuclear

weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as treaties to reduce and limit these weapons.

It has been over 40 years since the signing of the NPT, and yet to this day some countries have not acceded to it. That indicates a defect in the nuclear non-proliferation system. My country calls upon those countries again to demonstrate the necessary political will and to adhere to this Treaty as soon as possible and without delay. My country reaffirms, at the same time, the legitimate right of all States, without exception, to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes according to the provisions of the Treaty, taking into account international standards and controls through the guarantees and safeguards of the IAEA.

The Sultanate of Oman reaffirms once again its call for a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as other Arab countries have done, and is confident that the achievement of this goal will help to create a positive atmosphere of cooperation among the countries of the region and will provide the basis for confidence and trust and for a reduction of the arms race, as well as spread a climate of confidence and peace that will reflect positively on the entire world and on international peace and security.

The establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is of great importance, and an achievement worth the support and backing of the international community. In support of that proposal, my country calls on Israel to accede to the NPT and to subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive monitoring system, in accordance with the safeguards agreement of the IAEA, in order to implement the deal of 1995. That deal included the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East that linked, in an objective way, the indefinite extension of the Treaty, on the one hand, and the establishment of a region free of weapons of mass destruction, on the other, and the accession of Israel to it. Unfortunately, there has been no progress in that regard so far.

The success of the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, held in May 2010, and its adoption of the Final Document (see NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol.I)) are true expressions of the political will of the international community to move forward on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and confirmation of the Treaty's universality, so the world can enjoy security, stability

and prosperity. That will not happen unless tangible progress is made in the implementation of the three basic pillars of the Treaty — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — in addition to the application of the resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

My delegation expresses the hope that the work plans approved by the Review Conference will lead to an acceleration of progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and on promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which in turn will contribute fundamentally to sustainable development and to ensuring the necessary energy for developing countries.

My delegation is pleased to commend the convening on 1 October of the high-level meeting on “Fifteen years of the Chemical Weapons Convention: Celebrating success. Committing to the future”. It was held as a side event of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly by invitation of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, with the participation of the Secretary-General.

My country confirms its full commitment to the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It has since enacted many laws and regulations to combat this phenomenon.

My delegation would like to mention the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty held at Headquarters in July 2012. Unfortunately, it did not achieve the consensus needed to conclude the arms trade treaty, but there is still hope that discussions will be completed in the coming period. That will require States to reconsider their positions on the many defects that emerged and led to that result.

In conclusion, my delegation calls upon all Member States to fulfil the commitment they have undertaken through treaties and conventions related to disarmament, especially on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. My delegation hopes that the deliberations and decisions of this Committee under your leadership, Mr. Chairman, will contribute to meeting the aspirations of all peoples of the world for security, peace and stability.

Mr. Jimenez (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Nicaraguan delegation is pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee

at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We have confidence that, with your experience and your good work, we will obtain excellent results. My delegation also wishes to express its full support so that together we can achieve success in this Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Our delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Iran at the 2nd meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We also support the statement made at the same meeting by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

We reiterate that our greatest concern and challenge is achieving general and complete nuclear disarmament, because that is the only way that we can establish a world free of nuclear weapons, a world that is not a constant threat to humankind and to mother Earth. Nicaragua urges the international community to continue to move towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, which includes not only nuclear weapons but also other, conventional weapons of mass destruction, the use of which contravenes the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. It is crucial to establish peace on Earth and to give the 7 billion human beings who inhabit this planet, our mother Earth, the opportunity to survive destructive trends that are promoted by a dominant economic model and to develop in an environment where they can fulfil their enormous spiritual and material capabilities. Otherwise we will not be able to achieve a better future.

Nicaragua has always advocated that we approve, assess and study the resolutions and declarations on this topic so that we can move decisively towards the limitation of the arms race and the quest for measures that chart a course towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and towards general and complete disarmament under a system of transparent and effective international control.

Tests of any kind of nuclear weapon are unacceptable to Nicaragua, and we appeal urgently for the elimination of all nuclear testing. Populations in many parts of the world continue to experience the terrible consequences for human beings and the environment caused by the more than 2,000 nuclear tests that have been carried out since 1945.

We have also learned that nuclear-power stations can represent an attack against nature and the

environment, and in the case of accidents, such as that which occurred in Japan two years ago, can even claim human lives. That is why we urge the more advanced countries not to abuse the capabilities that they have developed in nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

It is unjustifiable and unacceptable that in today's world more and more money is spent on means to develop and test nuclear weapons and less on promoting the life and development of human beings. While millions of people are experiencing the effects of the financial and economic crisis and millions of children have nothing to eat, military spending increases at a dizzying rate. In the past 10 years, those expenditures have risen by more than 50 per cent, reaching \$1.521 trillion today. Every year, more than 8 million small arms and light weapons are produced and more than 16 billion pieces of ammunition, which means that there are two and a half munitions for every person on this planet.

It is calculated that half a million people die every year due to small arms and light weapons. But the indirect damage is even greater. It includes social violence, the forced displacement of people, interruptions in access to health and educational systems, a decline in economic activity, expenditure of governmental resources, both economic and human, and damage to social structures. In the final analysis, it is an obstacle to the human, economic and social development of peoples.

That is why we welcome the consensus reached on the outcome documents of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (see A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annex). We also reiterate that international assistance and cooperation are indispensable if the Programme of Action is to succeed.

Nicaragua, in keeping with its interest in general and complete disarmament, has been active in United Nations conferences and in other international forums. It is the political will of the Government of Nicaragua to continue to support bilateral, regional and multilateral initiatives undertaken by States that would make it possible to adopt agreements that ban nuclear proliferation and nuclear testing, primarily in outer space and on the seabed, and that would also ban the use of chemical, bacteriological and toxin weapons that are excessively harmful or have indiscriminate effects, cluster munitions and the illicit trade in weapons. We

also support the need to establish in the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons.

Nicaragua is a regional leader in comprehensive demining action. In compliance with article 7 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and pursuant to our successful implementation of the national demining programme, which was finalized in June 2010 with the destruction and removal of 313,405 anti-personnel mines, our territory has been declared free of anti-personnel mines and Central America a mine-free region.

Nicaragua also participated actively in the negotiating process that made possible the consensus of the majority of States to adopt and sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2008. It subsequently ratified the Convention and deposited its instrument of ratification in 2009, thus expressing the political will of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. In May 2011, we sent to the United Nations and to the Organization of American States the annual report under article 7 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We also share the vision that universal, regional and subregional agreements in the area of arms control and disarmament are necessary political and legal factors for promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts.

Nicaragua will follow up on the process for a future arms trade treaty, and we hope that on adoption, such a treaty will be balanced, non-discriminatory, strong and robust, negotiated in an open and transparent manner on the basis of consensus.

It is no secret that the lack of progress that we have seen in the United Nations disarmament machinery is due to the lack of political will on the part of some States to make real progress, especially with regard to nuclear disarmament. With other delegations, we support the proposal to finally hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We consider very relevant the proposal submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement on an action plan that would establish a specific timeline for the gradual reduction of nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination and prohibition by 2025 at the latest. We also support the position reaffirmed by the Non-Aligned Movement at its Sixteenth Summit, recently held in Iran, which highlights nuclear disarmament as the greatest priority in the field of disarmament.

It is an essential objective of the United Nations to demilitarize the world. We must eradicate the war against humanity. We cannot continue to allow military alliances that, instead of being committed to peace, are committed to war, with the sole goal of controlling the planet. We all have to respect and follow international law and the Charter of the United Nations as the only way to preserve international peace and security.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We look forward to a productive and fruitful session under your able leadership. You can count on my delegation's full support and cooperation in discharging your responsibilities.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made at the 2nd meeting by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, I should like to highlight a few points in my national capacity.

As a responsible member of the international community, Bangladesh attaches the utmost importance to general and complete disarmament as a means to ensure international peace and security. Our contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security through participation in United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts have been widely recognized. We are also signatories to all major multilateral disarmament treaties, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We are dismayed to see the near dead-lock in the global, multilateral disarmament diplomacy led by the United Nations. The lack of progress is evident in negotiations on both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

In July this year, the negotiations on the arms trade treaty ended without a treaty having been concluded. The cost of that failure is enormous. The illegal trade in and the illegitimate use of conventional weapons continue to fuel violence and fan existing conflicts, thus exacting heavy human and humanitarian costs that affect the lives and livelihood of civilians in many regions.

The United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, held in July, presented a seminal opportunity to stop the menace of the illegal trade in conventional weapons. We failed to seize that opportunity to put an end to the miseries of our peoples by not agreeing on a treaty. We hope that a supplementary conference on the treaty will soon be convened. We believe that further negotiations based on the draft treaty text submitted by the President of the July Conference (A/CONF.217/CRP.1) will produce a legally binding treaty to regulate global trade in conventional arms.

In our view, the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use poses the greatest threat to humanity. Our position is predicated on the belief that, as long as some countries continue to possess nuclear weapons, the possibility of their use, either by design or accident, endangers the safety and security of the globe. We therefore believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee for a peaceful and secure world. Pending that ultimate goal, non-nuclear-weapon States have the legitimate right to receive security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. However, the commitments to negative security assurances made by nuclear-weapon States have not been adequate to dispel the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States, mainly owing to the non-binding nature of such commitments.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and accession to their protocols may be useful interim steps towards securing negative security assurances. It is, however, obvious that setting up nuclear-weapon-free zones may not be feasible in every region, including in South Asia. In any case, the use or non-use of nuclear weapons against any country is a problem of a global nature rather than a regional one. Bangladesh therefore continues to stress the need for commencing negotiations on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument for negative security assurances as a matter of priority.

The security policy of Bangladesh does not include a provision for nuclear weapons. We therefore strongly support the global agenda of nuclear disarmament achieved within the framework of the three clearly defined and mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Over the years, while significant progress has been achieved regarding nuclear non-proliferation — that is, in limiting the horizontal

proliferation of nuclear weapons — the nuclear disarmament goal of the NPT remains unrealized. Bangladesh therefore reiterates the call for adopting a balanced approach while addressing the three pillars of the NPT.

We also believe that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards can help to address the key development challenges of many countries. In that regard Bangladesh, with the assistance of and under the strict supervision of the IAEA, has been working on the civil and peaceful uses of nuclear technology, especially in the agriculture, energy and health sectors. Bangladesh was the first annex 2 South Asian nation to join the CTBT. The universalization and entry into force of the CTBT at an early date is crucial for attaining our goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has met in vain for the past decade and a half. After the successful negotiation of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, also known as the Limited Test-Ban Treaty, in 1963, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1970 and, more recently, the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1992, the forum has increasingly stagnated. The last time the Conference agreed to negotiate was in 1996 — that time for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly but has yet to enter into force. Ever since, the so-called single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community has been unable to undertake substantive work, mostly as a result of the vested interests of a few member States and procedural difficulties, such as the consensus-based decision-making process within the CD. In 2009 a programme of work was approved, but the CD failed to implement it. Pragmatic interventions are necessary to ensure that the CD maintains its legitimacy and credibility by breaking out of its current stalemate and engaging in substantive work.

Bangladesh has acceded to most of the CCW protocols. Bangladesh also remains committed to the Biological Weapons Convention regime and attaches importance to the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention, with a focus on confidence-building measures. As a State party to the Ottawa Convention, Bangladesh calls for putting an end to the inhuman and unauthorized use of anti-personnel landmines.

Bangladesh considers outer space to be a common heritage of mankind and calls upon the major space-faring nations to avert the weaponization of outer space. We believe that the CD should make progress in that critical area by building on the constructive work done so far.

Pursuing disarmament through multilateral engagement has historically been difficult. As the challenges of disarmament and international security become increasingly complex and intertwined, we must learn to make multilateralism work, so as to create a more secure world. It is our sincere hope that our collective endeavour here in the First Committee will contribute to revitalizing the United Nations disarmament machinery and sustaining international peace and security through effective arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mr. Vidal (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I should also like to congratulate all the members of the Bureau. You can count on the full support of the delegation of Uruguay. Uruguay aligns itself with the statement made at the Committee's 3rd meeting by the Permanent Representative of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Uruguay is committed to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which are truly weapons of mass destruction in the Latin American and Caribbean region. We welcome the fact that the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place this year, made significant progress in being able to forge an outcome document by consensus (A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annex I). Nonetheless Uruguay continues to advocate the adoption of an international legally binding instrument that would allow only responsible trade in conventional weapons and would prevent its diversion to the illicit market.

We regret the fact that the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, which was held in New York from 2 to 27 July, ended without reaching an agreement, and we hope that the First Committee we will have a far-reaching debate on that issue at this session. Uruguay will maintain its firm commitment to continuing to work on the basis of what we achieved at

the July Conference, so that in 2013 we can finally adopt a treaty on the arms trade that will contain the highest international standards, including the humanitarian aspects.

Uruguay, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, is committed to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Uruguay's participation in the multilateral framework is best embodied by its implementation of a foreign policy that favours and promotes the need to make progress in universal, multilateral, non-discriminatory and transparent negotiations, where all countries would participate, regardless of their size and power, with a view to achieving general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

Now that the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has ended, we await the firm commitment of all States for the success of the next session of the Preparatory Committee, which will take place in Geneva in 2013. We hope that the Preparatory Committee process, leading up to the 2015 NPT Review Conference, will make specific progress towards nuclear disarmament.

We need to implement complementary instruments to the NPT, and we should begin, as soon as possible, negotiations that would facilitate the ultimate objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world. As for complementary instruments, Uruguay wishes to emphasize once again the crucial importance of a swift entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that respect, we urge annex 2 States of the Treaty to promptly ratify the Treaty, and we call upon States once again to maintain their moratoriums on nuclear testing, as well as the testing of other explosive devices of that nature.

With respect to pending negotiations, Uruguay would like to appeal to the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations without delay on a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty to ban the production of fissile material for the production of nuclear weapons. At the same time, my country urges that we begin, without conditions, to negotiate a legally binding agreement on negative security assurances. In that respect I should like to recall the proposal made by Uruguay at the eighth NPT Review Conference.

Uruguay recognizes the role and important work that is being carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in promoting security and in combating the illicit trade in nuclear and radioactive material. In that context, we are pleased that our country chaired the fifty-sixth session of the General Conference of the IAEA.

Uruguay is aware of the existence of many disarmament initiatives that come from various countries and groups of countries and discussion forums, all of which are extremely valuable, since they all share a concern for the ultimate objective, which is nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe it would be beneficial to coordinate the existing initiatives, see them in context, and take advantage of synergies to chart the course ahead of us, so that all those ideas might lead in a constructive way to a well-circumscribed timeline for the ultimate goal, which is a world free of nuclear weapons.

As a member country of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which made Latin America and the Caribbean the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area of the world, Uruguay has always advocated the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world. We celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco by highlighting the contribution that has been made by nuclear-weapon-free zones to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. My country urges nuclear-weapon States, and other States that are mentioned in the relevant protocols to the treaties establishing those zones but that have not signed or ratified the relevant protocol, to do so as quickly as possible and at the same time to alter or withdraw without condition any unilateral interpretations and reservations, in particular those made by nuclear States, that affect denuclearization.

Likewise, Uruguay urges all the parties involved to comply with the commitment to hold a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in application of the 1995 resolution.

The strengthening of the general and complete disarmament regime under strict and effective international control requires the effective implementation of the conventions that call for the prohibition or elimination of other weapons of mass destruction.

Uruguay acknowledges the value of the Conference on Disarmament as a truly multilateral forum for the international community to negotiate disarmament, as well as the important role that is played by substantive negotiations on the priority disarmament issues. Given the fact that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to implement a programme of work that addresses the aspirations and needs of the international community, it is crucial to ensure that the quintessential multilateral negotiating body complies with its mandate.

In that respect Uruguay believes that one possible way to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament is to broaden its membership to include those States that have expressed a legitimate interest in being part of that body. Our country has expressed its desire to be part of the Conference, as have other States, which have been calling, since 1982, for the expansion of that body.

I should like to conclude by saying that it is our responsibility to exhaust all means as we continue to move forward towards the objective of achieving disarmament and stopping proliferation, in accordance with the Charter, the highest instrument we have, in order to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Khitchadeth (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Lao delegation, to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee this year. My congratulations also go to the members of the Bureau. I assure you of our full support and cooperation as you discharge your responsibilities. My delegation also associates itself with the statement made at the Committee's 2nd meeting by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and that made at the 3rd meeting by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. However, I should also like to make further remarks in my national capacity.

In the past year, there have been some promising developments and achievements in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The successful 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) resulted in the 22-point action plan for nuclear disarmament for follow-up actions in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). The Lao People's Democratic Republic also welcomes the successful

conclusion of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference from 30 April to 11 May 2012 in Vienna and calls for the full implementation of the 2010 action plan on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which has 183 signatories, including 157 States parties. That is another significant instrument aimed at promoting nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Achieving universal adherence to the Treaty and accelerating its early entry into force are therefore important matters and should be pursued without further delay. In that regard, the Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomes the launch of the sixth CTBT Ministerial Meeting in New York on 27 September, which seeks to facilitate the entry into force of the Treaty. In that context, my delegation welcomes the recent ratification of the CTBT by Indonesia, the Central African Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, Guatemala and Guinea, and we are hoping to have more States sign and ratify the CTBT at an early date.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones has made a significant contribution to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as enhancing regional and global peace and security. The Lao People's Democratic Republic supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, we wish to re-emphasize that it is essential that the nuclear-weapon States formally recognize those zones and provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States in the zones.

We also wish to re-emphasize the full implementation of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, and we encourage the nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol annexed to the Treaty as soon as possible.

The year 2012 marked another important landmark, the fifteenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), and the establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The Lao People's Democratic

Republic welcomes the upcoming third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to be convened at The Hague in April 2013, which will review the implementation of the CWC worldwide.

Another positive development is in the area of small arms and light weapons. We welcome the outcome document adopted by consensus at the second United Nations Review Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annex I), held in New York from 27 August to 7 September 2012.

While focusing on the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation, we cannot afford to ignore the challenges posed by conventional weapons, particularly cluster munitions, which constitute a threat to peace, human security, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, poverty eradication and socioeconomic development. As one of the countries most affected by cluster munitions, the Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomes the third year of the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the recent growing number of States that have ratified the Convention, which has now reached 77 countries.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic, as a State party to the CCM, has committed to implementing the provisions of the Convention by destroying and clearing the contamination caused by cluster munitions in the country. Meanwhile we support efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention. In that regard, we welcome the successful outcome of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention in September in Oslo, which measured progress in implementing the Convention, particularly the 2010 Vientiane Action Plan. The Lao People's Democratic Republic also welcomes the offer by Zambia to host the fourth meeting of the States parties to the Convention in 2013 and looks forward to working closely with Zambia to ensure the success of that meeting.

Despite such progress, a number of difficulties remain. The continuation of the stalemate in the disarmament machinery means that progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has progressed at a very slow pace. Expenditure on armaments has skyrocketed, while members of the human race are

struggling in extreme poverty. In that regard, the Lao People's Democratic Republic wishes to stress the need for strong political will and collective efforts to overcome such difficulties, and we reiterate the importance of a multilateral approach to achieving the ultimate goal of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic strongly believes that political will and flexibility on the part of Member States are vital for progressive development in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation as well as for success in overcoming the challenges posed to the international community. It requires much effort from every country, working closely together to achieve the common goals, so that the world can be free from all such threats. My delegation remains committed to constructive engagement so as to contribute to the success of the work of the Committee.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should, first of all, like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of this Committee. We have faith in your extensive experience and your proven leadership, and we are sure they will be extremely beneficial to our work. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Guatemala aligns itself with the statement made at the Committee's 3rd meeting by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and that made by the representative of Chile at the 2nd meeting on behalf of the member countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, respectively. Nonetheless, we would like to add, from our national perspective, some of our own comments to those statements.

The new challenges that the world faces today with respect to international peace and security have shown that it is more urgent than ever to make progress on the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons, an objective that, for our delegation, is the ultimate goal to which we all should aspire. Nuclear disarmament is the only sensible path towards a safer world. Nothing will contribute as much to eliminating the risk of proliferation and the use of those weapons as the total elimination of such weapons, and we therefore support any initiative aimed at that goal.

Guatemala believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and nuclear

disarmament regime, and as a State party to the Treaty, we promote its universality and urge full compliance with each of its provisions. We stress that compliance with that Treaty is a legal obligation and that all States are committed to showing clear signs of their adherence to the spirit and letter of that international legal instrument. The three pillars of the NPT — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — are closely interrelated and are mutually reinforcing.

Furthermore, we believe that it is crucial to maintain a moratorium on nuclear testing until the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) enters into force. We would like to take advantage of this opportunity to affirm our support for that Treaty, which we signed on 20 September 1999 and ratified on 12 January 2012.

Guatemala is proud to be a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first inhabited zone of the planet free of nuclear weapons and has served as an example and inspiration for other denuclearized regions. Having managed to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, we must make sure now that that zone does not run the risk of a nuclear threat.

With respect to conventional weapons, we would like to refer to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its follow-up mechanisms, and we welcome the success of the latest Review Conference, which took place from 27 August to 7 September. For Guatemala, the Programme of Action is a priority, and it was therefore extremely important that we achieved a positive result at that Conference. We believe that we have achieved not only a positive result but also a balanced document that reaffirms our commitment to the Programme of Action and allows us to chart a course towards the future. As many delegations have said in this Conference Room, we would have liked to have seen included various elements that did not stay in following the negotiations, and we would also have strengthened certain elements — for example the operative paragraphs on munitions, their parts and components, as well as references to armed violence.

We hope that in future those elements will be accepted and included. We believe that we managed to achieve what was proposed at the beginning of

the Review Conference, namely, a text that reaffirms the genuine commitment of States to the Programme of Action and to the millions of people who suffer as a result of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Guatemala knows full well that the lack of common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons has a devastating effect on our societies. That is why Guatemala has always strongly promoted a legally binding arms trade treaty. We have supported and sponsored all the General Assembly resolutions on that topic, because we feel that a treaty of that nature would be an important mechanism that would significantly reduce the human cost of the proliferation of such weapons at the global level.

We therefore regret the fact that the Diplomatic Conference held on the topic last July ended without an agreement. Nonetheless, we continue to recognize the need to tackle the problems related to the unregulated trade of conventional weapons or their diversion to the illicit market, bearing in mind that that danger could exacerbate instability, international terrorism and transnational organized crime. That is why we fully support the initiative to convene a final conference on the topic in 2013, with a view to concluding what we started in July. For our delegation, it is extremely important that we continue to fight for a legally binding instrument with the highest common standards for the transfer of conventional weapons, and we will continue to participate actively in negotiations to that end.

Mr. Kogda (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your appointment as Chair of our Committee. Congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. My delegation aligns itself with the statements made at the Committee's 2nd meeting by the representatives of Nigeria and Iran on behalf of the Group of African States and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

Peace and security are vital factors in the well-being and prosperity of populations. That is why they remain the top priorities of the United Nations and the international community. How to secure greater peace and security for humanity if the international community cannot build a global consensus on the process of global disarmament and the arms trade is the big question we face today.

Humanity faces the permanent threat of weapons of all kinds, in particular weapons of mass destruction, and we all know about their devastating effects. The danger they pose, including risks linked to the access to such weapons and their possession by non-authorized groups, reminds us yet again of the overriding necessity to work together to combat their proliferation. My delegation is pleased that the international community has woken up to that situation, as evidenced by the holding from 28 September to 1 October here at United Nations Headquarters of two High-level Meetings on nuclear terrorism and on chemical weapons, respectively. Their conclusions call for common actions against those threats.

In particular when it comes to nuclear weapons, initiatives undertaken in recent years at the bilateral and multilateral levels have galvanized great hopes for nuclear disarmament. In particular we are talking here about the agreements to reduce nuclear arsenals concluded in 1991 and 2010 by the United States and Russia and by the consensus adoption in 2010 of an outcome document with a plan of action during the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (see NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). At the regional level, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world has also made a big contribution to enhancing global disarmament efforts and deserves to be pursued.

When it comes to other weapons of mass destruction, we must continue our efforts effectively to implement the relevant conventions. With regard to chemical weapons, the results so far have been encouraging, with the accession of 188 States parties and the destruction of 75 per cent of available stockpiles under international oversight. My delegation therefore calls on States that have still to do so to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention with a view to achieving its universalization. The 2013 Review Conference will be a chance to assign new missions to the secretariat of the Convention but also to step up international cooperation with a view to addressing the threat of a resurgence of those weapons and their acquisition by terrorist groups. When it comes to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction the absence of a verification structure remains a weakness that must be remedied.

The efforts of the international community in the field of international peace and security cannot achieve tangible results unless the multilateral negotiating forums on disarmament are able to meet regularly and make progress. Sadly, that has not been the case for the Conference on Disarmament or the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and their lethargy requires that new initiatives be developed to break the deadlock there.

Among the many threats that continue to undermine international peace and security is the proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. In many parts of the world, and in particular in Africa, the abuse of such weapons has contributed to destabilizing States and continues to be a grave threat to peace and security. The large loss of human life and the humanitarian tragedies affecting above all children, women and the elderly are a direct consequence of the abusive use of small arms and light weapons.

To counter that scourge, the international community, in particular the United Nations, worked to achieve the adoption in 2001 of a United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. My delegation commends the outcome document adopted at the second Review Conference from 27 August to 7 September (A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annex I). The implementation of the recommendations therein will undoubtedly allow us to make progress in the years to come.

Despite the political and economic considerations and the differences of opinion on certain aspects of the Treaty, the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, held from 2 to 27 July, nevertheless had the merit of giving the various stakeholders the chance to discuss and recognize the necessity to regulate the arms trade. There is therefore still hope for the adoption of that treaty in the near future. While supporting the draft resolution on convening a new negotiating session in 2013, we call on States to shoulder their responsibilities so that the negotiating process will finally be crowned with success.

I cannot conclude without paying tribute to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa based in Togo, the training, actions and advisory work of which has helped our region move forward. Burkina Faso believes that without peace and security there can be no development.

That is why it calls for active solidarity on the part of the international community to build a world of peace, security and development. My country will continue to play its part by remaining involved in the various mediation activities in West Africa and maintaining our contribution to peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Molnar (Hungary): At the outset, let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming your very important post and in assuring you of my delegation's full support. Hungary fully associates itself with the statement delivered by observer of the European Union. I wish, however, to make a few remarks from Hungary's perspective.

May I start by reiterating our concern at the growing number of countries and non-State actors that either have or are seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. That trend threatens our vision of creating a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We hope that the consensus reached at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and the smooth conduct of work during the first session of the Preparatory Committee in May for the 2015 Review Conference will pave the way for the success of the new review cycle.

Hungary, currently serving as the Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), fully supports and recognizes the important role of the Agency in improving nuclear safety and security worldwide. We commend the initiative of the Director General of the IAEA to organize a conference in Vienna in July 2013 entitled "International Conference on Nuclear Security: Enhancing Global Efforts", which will be open to all States. As a country with an active peaceful nuclear programme and with plans for further expansion of its programme, Hungary has a keen interest in ensuring nuclear safety and security and in mitigating the risks of nuclear terrorism.

The Seoul Nuclear Security Summit held last March was an important milestone in our endeavours to strengthen the control of weapons of mass destruction in general and nuclear security in particular. We fully subscribe to the call of the Seoul Summit for the enhancement by all the States concerned of the security of nuclear material within their borders. In accordance with our announcement at the Summit, Hungary is

ready to offer, in collaboration with the IAEA, practical training courses in the field of the physical protection of nuclear facilities and materials.

Given the number of State signatories, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) represents a nearly universal norm. However, after 15 years the entry into force of the Treaty still remains a key target of our endeavours. We therefore call on those States that have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so without delay and without precondition. In that regard, we consider the selection of the new article XIV coordinators to be very important, and we hope that they will continue in the footsteps of their predecessors and will make further progress in the universalization of the CTBT.

I now turn to non-nuclear issues. The seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), held in Geneva last December, successfully reached agreement on its Final Document (BWC/CONF.VII/7), which contains a new sustained agenda for the intersessional process until 2016 and other decisions facilitating the implementation and strengthening of the Convention. Hungary, following the practice of previous years, has prepared a draft resolution on the BWC reflecting in a balanced way the developments achieved at the seventh Review Conference. We hope that, as has been the case so far every year, the draft resolution will again be adopted by consensus.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have played, and will continue to play, a vital role in the field of security and disarmament. Hungary has always been a dedicated supporter of the chemical-weapons disarmament process. Indeed, 15 years ago Hungary's ratification facilitated the entry into force of the Convention. We commemorated the achievements of the past at the high-level meeting in New York last week, noting, however, that despite considerable progress in the destruction of declared stockpiles, there is still much to be accomplished. We hope that, as a result of the upcoming third Review Conference, substantial progress will be made in the implementation of the Convention.

Hungary takes its disarmament obligations seriously and makes sure that they are translated into concrete action. Accordingly, I am glad to recall that earlier this year the Hungarian National Assembly unanimously ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We note with regret that last November the fourth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, meeting in Geneva, failed to adopt a new additional protocol on cluster munitions. We expect the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to continue discussions on such an instrument with a view to alleviating the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions.

Finally, Hungary will be the first of the six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in 2013. It can be safely stated that the CD has been and still is at an impasse with regard to moving forward. Consequently, we will follow the debates about the Conference's future here in the First Committee very closely. This session's debates will assist us in shaping our approach towards our presidency of the CD, which can, in any case, be characterized as down to earth and realistic. We will conduct consultations here in New York as well as in Geneva and will make every effort to come up with a proposal at the beginning of next year that accurately reflects what members of the Conference can collectively agree to. That, we believe, is the task of the incoming President, and we remain hopeful that the outcome of our collective undertaking will bring about positive results.

Mr. Niyozaliev (Kyrgyzstan): First of all, Sir, let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. We believe that under your able and skilful leadership our deliberations will reach a successful conclusion. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. We assure you of our full cooperation and support in the discharge of your important duty.

Today, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) faces extraordinary challenges. However, this is also a time when there are a number of new opportunities to make progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals. In welcoming the positive atmosphere that prevailed at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for

the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, my delegation hopes that the forthcoming Preparatory Committee sessions will contribute to strengthening the review process, as envisaged by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and help to set the stage for an even more successful Review Conference in 2015.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference was especially noteworthy for its innovative adoption of an action plan in which we now have 64 specific benchmarks against which to assess implementation of the Final Document (see NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol.I)). My delegation looks forward to the reports by States parties to the Treaty, and especially those of the nuclear-weapon States with respect to the concrete actions that they have taken, and plan to take, to reduce all categories of nuclear weapons in a transparent and irreversible fashion.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the expeditious ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which my country ratified in 2003, and we therefore urge all States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT, particularly those States listed in annex 2, whose ratification is necessary, to do so without further delay, with the aim of bringing the Treaty into effect. Kyrgyzstan regards international safeguards and the physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities as the first line of defence against nuclear terrorism. As such, the Kyrgyz Republic strongly endorses the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts to strengthen the international safeguards system.

My country also supports the measures taken to reinforce the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in order to address the proliferation challenges posed by non-State actors, and it welcomes the practical actions identified in the communiqués of the 2010 and 2012 Nuclear Security Summits. While urging countries to fully comply with resolution 1540 (2004), the Kyrgyz Republic — with the support of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — is elaborating a national plan of action for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

Fully recognizing the dangers that the possession of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups would pose, the Kyrgyz Republic signed the

International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. In that respect, we commend the Secretary-General for convening the high-level meeting on countering nuclear terrorism, with a focus on strengthening the legal framework, on 28 September in New York.

One of the most promising approaches to disarmament and non-proliferation has been the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Kyrgyz Republic takes pride in the entry into force of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia in 2009. The Central Asian region made its choice to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In that context, my delegation looks forward to the Middle East following the same path and creating a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in that region, pursuant to the decision taken at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The convening of the conference on that topic in Finland this year will certainly be a disarmament milestone and will contribute to the establishment of peace in a region where tensions are heightened.

The Kyrgyz Republic signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction in 1993 and 2004, respectively, as important components of the global system to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We call for wider adherence to and effective implementation of those Conventions.

The Kyrgyz Republic looks forward to the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which continues to make only minimal progress in its work, thus delaying negotiations on a number of key issues, such as nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances. Moreover, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has also failed to produce any final documents or recommendations since 1999. We urge the member States of those bodies to exert greater and more flexible efforts and political will to overcome the deadlock and put the disarmament machinery back on track.

We have taken many steps and measures to ban the illicit traffic in conventional weapons, and Kyrgyzstan welcomes the recent adoption of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annex I). Although we are disappointed that the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty concluded last July in New York without agreement on a treaty text, we hope for further dedicated work aimed at adopting a strong and robust arms trade treaty.

Let me also draw attention to another vital but often-neglected issue, the role of education and training as tools to promote disarmament and non-proliferation. Although not generally thought of as a nuclear challenge, one might argue that among the greatest threats we face today in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation are the complacency and ignorance of otherwise well-educated citizens and many of their elected officials. While that low level of knowledge is deplorable, it is also understandable given the general absence of opportunities to study the subject. Few high schools have curriculums that expose students to issues of weapons proliferation and the strategies for their control. The possibilities for university and graduate training are also in short supply. In short, at a time when there is a pressing need for new thinking about disarmament and non-proliferation matters, there are few venues available for training the next generation of specialists, or even for introducing our future leaders to the subjects.

In that regard, the 34 recommendations contained in the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/57/124), issued in 2002, are particularly relevant and merit greater attention by all States Members of the United Nations. In the implementation of those recommendations, the support of the United Nations and its Member States is certainly crucial. We appreciate the leadership shown by Japan, among other NPT States parties, in continuing to raise the issue of education and training in the NPT context, and we look forward to working with other interested member States in developing practical steps to promote the full implementation of the measures called for by the United Nations study.

In conclusion, we reiterate that we look forward to cooperating with you, Sir, and with all delegations in

order to obtain good results in our work and to achieve general and complete disarmament and security for all our peoples, as well as stability and peace throughout the world.

Mr. Owono Menguele (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, I should like to begin by adding my voice to those of previous speakers who have congratulated you, Sir, and through you the other members of the Bureau, on your election. Your personal experience and common sense will be enough to guarantee the success of our deliberations. I assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your duties.

Our Committee's work should allow us to address the major challenges in the area of disarmament and international security, the importance of which to the international community has been noted by various delegations that have spoken before us. My delegation fully understands all the concerns expressed by the representatives of Member States, and we align ourselves with the statements made, respectively, by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Committee's 2nd meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at the 4th meeting on behalf of the Group of African States.

It is clear that the security challenges linked to disarmament are many in number and will continue to prompt very serious concern, if they are not properly addressed. Nuclear weapons pose an existential risk to humankind, and the regime that has been set up to control them is incomplete. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons does not provide an exhaustive solution to all of the challenges that those weapons pose.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has still not entered into force, and negotiations have not begun either on a fissile material treaty or on negative security guarantees. The multilateral nuclear disarmament processes are deadlocked, while measures taken unilaterally and bilaterally do not properly resolve the matter of fissile material and the continued deployment of thousands of weapons and the programmes to modernize those weapons.

In the area of non-proliferation, the past year has not provided us with developments that could help us to resolve the pending issues in the short term. In the

area of conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and the explosive remnants of war continue to kill and maim and fuel armed violence. Instruments established to tackle the challenges raised by those weapons still need to be strengthened, universalized and implemented more effectively. Furthermore, the failure of the diplomatic conference to adopt a treaty on the arms trade has not made matters any easier.

While there are more and more challenges in that area, the institutions involved in disarmament do not seem able to respond to expectations. The results of those shortcomings are significant and are already making themselves felt. They will intensify in future, if a solution is not found.

Cameroon, which is resolutely engaged in the efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation, feels that the list of challenges in that area is growing longer. It is therefore urgent to make progress in the solutions that we devise for those problems, which, in turn, requires developments at many levels. My delegation believes it is important to use cross-cutting approaches and to forge more interregional alliances, while relying on devices that have yielded good results in the past, and to work towards long-term global perspectives that would incorporate national security interests in a broader context of security and stability.

We expect that the First Committee will be able to reflect the progress made recently on various fronts and help us in formulating responses to future challenges. We hope that 2012 will be a true starting point on the path towards a more functional and more effective multilateral disarmament.

Mr. Ulibarri (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election to lead the work of this Committee. Our delegation is ready to offer all the necessary support for the successful execution of your endeavours. I should also like to congratulate your country on having recently ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, one of the fundamental pillars of disarmament and non-proliferation. We also congratulate the delegations of Guinea and Guatemala on having done the same. I thank Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen, Permanent Representative of Finland, and his team for the work accomplished at the previous session of the Committee.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made at the Committee's 3rd meeting by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and wishes to make a few comments in our national capacity.

Multilateralism is the only way to achieve general and complete disarmament; it is the basic principle of every global negotiation on disarmament and non-proliferation. In that context, we celebrate the focus of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the theme "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means". Preventive diplomacy, mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes are imperative for the coexistence of peoples, nations and States. For Costa Rica, they are also daily practice and serve as the central objectives of our foreign policy. They are grounded in our respect for diversity, our dedication to tolerance and our commitment to legality and the rule of law. In that connection, my country is honoured to participate in the group of Friends of Mediation, led by Finland and Turkey, and we note with enthusiasm the renewed momentum that the theme has received within the United Nations.

Multilateralism must also be consistent. We cannot demand that others fulfil their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without recognizing those treaties ourselves. Both treaties in their entirety form part of an infrastructure of mutual trust that has no room for partial commitment. We must encourage the fulfilment of all of the obligations that stem from those treaties, condemn every attempt to shatter mutual trust and avoid horizontal as well as vertical proliferation.

Those objectives, which are always difficult, are further complicated by the stagnation in the Conference on Disarmament, in which some States exploit shortcomings in the structure and working methods of the Conference to abandon previously established commitments. Costa Rica insists, along with other delegations, that the Conference extend its membership to other Members of our Organization. For example, we believe that it is an unjustifiable irony that a State such as ours, which has achieved total disarmament and embodies the ideals pursued by the Conference, cannot participate in that forum. The same applies to other States Members of the United Nations.

Multilateralism is not built on force. The reduction and regulation of arms and armed forces are fundamental in order to promote international peace and security. Nonetheless, in 2011, global military spending totalled \$1.74 trillion. In the light of Article 26 of the Charter, my country urges States to redirect as many resources as possible from military spending towards investments in development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The best way to advance peace and security is to strengthen institutions, democracy and the rule of law and to create opportunities, so that a regime of collective prosperity exists alongside that of collective security. In Latin America and the Caribbean, we are aware of the relevance of that dual track, as our region suffers from the impact of armed violence, which is facilitated by access to small arms and light weapons and ammunition. The adoption of the outcome document at the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annex I), which took place last September, was a step in the right direction. We recognize the leadership of Ambassador Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria, who made it possible to harmonize positions and to arrive at an outcome document by consensus. Even though it does not include everything to which we aspired, it is still an important step.

Multilateralism is built day by day with good faith and commitment. The lack of consensus in reaching an arms trade treaty was a blow to peace and to human rights. However, we have a new opportunity to move forward. Costa Rica, as a member of the group of authors, will submit a draft resolution to convene a new diplomatic conference in March next year. Working on the basis of the 26 July text, we must finish and strengthen the work that we were so close to completing in July this year.

Multilateralism must also have a strong humanitarian foundation. The Convention on Cluster Munitions, while not yet universal, is a clear example of the fact that it is possible to place human beings at the heart of our concerns. With that Convention we have applied a new dynamic to negotiations on disarmament and arms control. Its humanitarian perspective refers not only to the protection of civilians but also to prevention, victim assistance, access to international

cooperation for the application of the Convention, as well as education in the area of risk reduction.

Costa Rica expresses its strong support for the initiative of Chile and Peru to convert Latin America and the Caribbean into the first cluster-munitions-free zone. We congratulate Peru on having ratified the Convention on 26 September, and we welcome the Chilean initiative to convene a seminar in 2013 to promote the ratification of the Convention and the establishment of cluster-munitions-free zones. We also commend Zambia for providing the venue for the fourth meeting of States parties to the Convention, which will take place in Lusaka next year.

In the fight against arms proliferation, which affects peace and international security, we have embarked on a new dynamic in the development of international humanitarian law. Let us not squander this opportunity, and let us work together with optimism and commitment in our efforts to respond to the threats that we face, relying on multilateralism and the respect for human lives. As States Members of the United Nations we have sufficient reason to strive to achieve, as was demanded in 1917 by United States President Woodrow Wilson, that our international order be not based on “organized rivalries but on organized common peace”.

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee. We have every confidence that your able leadership will steer the work of the Committee towards the achievement of tangible results. We would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their elections and look forward to working with all delegations to further the Committee’s work in a substantive manner. We align ourselves with the statements made at the Committee’s 2nd and 3rd meetings, respectively, by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

We are all aware that over the past decade there has been limited or little substantive progress on nuclear disarmament. The global community expects that we will all fulfil our respective duties and obligations to make the world peaceful and safe for all people and regions. In the absence of a comprehensive and non-discriminatory nuclear-weapons convention, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

(NPT) remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament machinery.

As the starting point for the 2015 Review Conference, the first session of the NPT Preparatory Committee this year bears great importance. It has played its role in enhancing the momentum to enable advancement on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, the good objective of the NPT is diluted when nuclear-weapon States back-pedal on their commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, even though the NPT has existed for more than three decades. To this day we are still unable to answer the international call to undertake complete disarmament and achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

The disarmament machinery is at an impasse. There has been slim progress on the agreed action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference (see NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). The lack of political will is manifested by the stagnation and inability of the United Nations disarmament machinery to make actual progress. Indonesia hopes that we will seek to make tangible progress on the subjects of negotiating a nuclear weapons convention for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in accordance with the Shannon Mandate.

We should do our utmost to break the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The impasse in the disarmament machinery can best be addressed, in our view, through a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is imperative that the CD resume its original function as the world's single multilateral body for negotiating disarmament treaties. There must be political will to address the trust deficit in order to revitalize the Conference and strengthen its mechanism. Indonesia remains optimistic that we can move our agenda forward.

With regard to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, our commitment to strengthen and expand nuclear-weapon-free zones should not waver. Political will is imperative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Indonesia continues to encourage countries to find ways to establish such a zone, as such an arrangement is of significant importance in achieving sustainable peace in the Middle East. We remain hopeful that a conference to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons

will be held this year, as mandated by the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Aquino (Peru), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

In our region, while ASEAN countries already have a robust nuclear-weapon-free zone, Indonesia continues to strive for the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone by all nuclear-weapon States. I commend ASEAN members and the nuclear-weapon States for their constructive engagement in finalizing the negotiations on the revised Protocol. In that regard, we call upon ASEAN countries to play their important role and to continue to be proactive, so that nuclear-weapon States can sign the revised Protocol at the earliest opportunity.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones have a close connection with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). There is no doubt that the promotion of the CTBT is vital to advancing our agenda. Let me therefore reiterate that our support remains consistent for the earliest entry into force of the CTBT. Indonesia has been a strong supporter of the CTBT and, at the national level, gave it a further vote of confidence by ratifying it on 6 December 2011. Indonesia welcomes the increasing number of signatories and State parties to the CTBT, now standing at 157 countries. Eight more ratifications by annex 2 countries and the Treaty will come into force.

Indonesia wishes to continue to promote the noble goals of the CTBT. At the regional level we will continue to promote concrete collaboration between the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the ASEAN secretariat, with a view to utilizing the verification mechanism embedded in the CTBT through the Bangkok Treaty. Also, Indonesia is integrating the importance of national implementation of the CTBT on the part of its States parties into the proposed National Legislation Implementation Kit on Nuclear Security that we initiated at the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul earlier this year.

Our commitment to the non-proliferation agenda should be advanced in other areas of weapons of mass destruction. Despite the slim progress towards complete nuclear disarmament, we are witnessing today the banning of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, thanks to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). Since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons

Convention in 1997, the Convention has historically contributed to steady and universal progress in the destruction of declared chemical-weapon stockpiles.

As one of the Non-Aligned Movement CWC States parties, Indonesia would like to urge possessor States parties to take every necessary measure to expedite destruction of their stocks, as the final extended deadline for destruction had lapsed in April 2012. We remain concerned by States parties that have not complied with that obligation of the CWC, as that would endanger the credibility and integrity of the Convention. We look forward to the convening of the CWC Review Conference in 2013.

In the area of the total elimination of biological weapons, Indonesia welcomes the successful Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. There are many recommendations from that Review Conference that should be implemented in order to advance our agenda in the areas of biosecurity and biosafety. Indonesia would like to see more collaboration between the Implementation Support Unit and the World Health Organization in that area, which in the end will enhance the national capacities of States on biosecurity and biosafety.

On the issue of conventional weapons, this year we have witnessed the important deliberations on an arms trade treaty (ATT) and the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Our position regarding a future ATT must be in line with our Law on the Defence Industry, which was enacted on 2 October. The Government is obligated to ensure that, when it imports arms from exporting countries, no political conditionality will attach to such transfers of arms. The Government also has the obligation to avoid arms trades that have the potential to become politicized and embargoed. Such transfers should not in any way undermine or limit the capability and capacity of the Government of Indonesia to use force in situations of international or internal armed conflicts.

On the second Review Conference on the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, we welcome the adoption of the plan of action on small arms and light weapons (A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4,

annex I). We should redouble our efforts to tackle the illicit trade in and use of small arms and light weapons, which continues to pose a threat to peace and security at the national, regional and international levels. It is paramount for the global community to carry out its appropriate role in fully implementing the plan of action and working together to achieve the objectives of the plan of action.

Before I conclude, allow me to address the issue of information security, which has been on the agenda of the United Nations since 1998. We need to launch further dialogue among States to discuss norms on the use of information and communication technologies in order to protect critical national and international infrastructures. We need to find possibilities for elaborating common terms and definitions relevant to past discussions in the Governmental Group of Experts. In that context, confidence-building and risk-reduction measures to address the implications for information and communication technologies are vital.

Finally, Indonesia stresses that all of us must play our active roles to ensure that the political momentum generated last year does not dissipate. It is in our best interests to contribute constructively during this session of the Committee. Together we will be able to discharge the Committee's responsibility to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security.

Mr. Al Kabi (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. Percaya on his election as Chair of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other Bureau members and wish them every success in their mission. On behalf of the delegation of the State of Qatar, I assure them of our full cooperation in order to achieve success in the work of this Committee. I align myself with the statements made at the Committee's 2nd meeting by the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Arab Group, and by representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

International concern has risen over the growing risk over past decades of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The selective and unfair way of dealing with the issue has led to the stockpiling of terrifying amounts of nuclear weapons, in addition to the development of new deadly weapons in many countries, without regard for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Middle East continues to be a clear example of the lack of effectiveness of the NPT

in achieving security for the parties, as the Middle East is the only region that has not witnessed international efforts aimed at effectively freeing it from nuclear weapons. In that regard, we call upon all stakeholders to participate in the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction to be held at the end of this year.

Contrary to what some people may think, and despite the international efforts that have been made in recent years and the holding of numerous conferences and forums in the United Nations — which have unanimously agreed on the need to reduce military spending in order to maintain regional and international stability — the past 10 years have witnessed an unprecedented rise in global military spending, particularly with respect to the acquisition of conventional arms. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, military spending increased by 4.5 per cent during the period 2001-2009. That illustrates the alarming pace of the armaments race in many parts of the world, including in areas that are not under any military threat. Worse still, the international economic and financial crisis has not discouraged the developed countries and countries with emerging economies from increasing their budgets for the purchase of weapons. As indicated by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 16 members of the Group of 20 raised their level of military spending during the period 2008-2010.

The declarations and statements made by some countries expressing their intention to reduce military spending are not sufficient in themselves; they must be translated into reality. Yet, reality shows that many developed and developing countries, as well as countries with emerging economies, have reduced their levels of spending on other sectors, including education, health and infrastructure, while leaving the military sector immune from any budget cuts.

Building a world of peace and security is contingent on the fact that Member States meet their commitments to disarmament and provide the United Nations with the financial resources necessary to carry out its functions related to the promotion of a culture of peace throughout the world. While the total budget allocated to the United Nations and its agencies is nearly \$30 billion annually, the rate of global military spending reached \$1.74 trillion in 2011, up from \$1.3 trillion in 2010. These figures clearly indicate that the declarations made by Member States and the reality on the ground

do not jibe with their commitments to disarmament. The only beneficiaries of that situation are the firms that produce weapons, while the victim remains peace and security throughout the world.

In the light of the foregoing, it seems that the goal of building a world of stability and security and of renouncing violence will remain elusive so long as the majority of Member States prefer the sense of false security that the further accumulation of weapons may bring, over real safety, which is guaranteed by the promotion of a culture of peace, brotherliness and cooperation among peoples. If militarism brings geopolitical superiority, peace brings economic prosperity and stability.

The Chair returned to the Chair.

Another challenge in the field of disarmament is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the failure to review the problem in a professional manner, as the international community turns a blind eye to the responsibility of the countries of origin, which export millions of such weapons without restrictions or adequate control of such exports. A further matter of deep concern to us is the proliferation of landmines and cluster munitions, such as those planted by Israel in southern Lebanon, which continue to kill and maim civilians. We therefore signed the Wellington Declaration on cluster munitions, which was adopted in February 2008, before the Dublin Conference of May 2008.

The State of Qatar is keen to strengthen the NPT and to activate its three Pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, we stress the inviolability of the right of States parties to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and that no obstacles should be put in the way of non-nuclear States parties to the Treaty in their quest to develop nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes. We reiterate our call for a settlement of the dispute over the Iranian nuclear issue through peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The State of Qatar is also active in promoting disarmament machinery through continuous coordination with regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council, in order to strengthen regional cooperation in the field of disarmament, including through the tightening of controls on exports and the strengthening

of the capacity to control borders in the region, in cooperation with the defence and security services and the observance of environmental norms in disarmament, because those regional bodies are effective and play a complementary role to the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Likewise, the State of Qatar participates positively and actively in the deliberations that take place within the United Nations on disarmament in order to enhance consensus within the bodies concerned and activate their work. The State of Qatar also stresses the importance of taking effective measures to contribute to strengthening international peace and security, taking into account the principles of the right of States to acquire the means for self-defence, as well as the sovereignty of States and non-interference in their internal affairs, with due consideration to the specificity of each region with regard to security and defence.

Finally, we emphasize the need to recognize the primacy of nuclear disarmament on the disarmament agenda and the need for Member States to exercise flexibility and political will in order to reach our common goals.

Mr. Šćepanović (Montenegro): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your election and to assure you of the full support of the Montenegrin delegation for your efforts to bring this session to a successful conclusion. Montenegro fully aligns itself with the European Union statement. In addition, I should like to stress certain points that are of particular importance to my country.

As we have seen all too often in previous years, the past year has again brought some positive and some not-so-positive developments in the area of disarmament and international security. I am sure I do not speak only for myself when I say that the overall state of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation is not at the level that we desire.

Even with the limited progress throughout the years and the longer-than-expected existence of various kinds of weaponry, mainly weapons of mass destruction, hopes and expectations are still high that sooner rather than later we will achieve our ultimate goal, which is a safer world for all, one that we all subscribed to in the United Nations Charter, where weapons of mass destruction will have no place. Much work still remains ahead of us. We can spare no time. There have been

many lost opportunities. Nevertheless, there are reasons for optimism on which we need to build.

First, in the sphere of nuclear weapons and non-proliferation, after a successful 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we welcome the positive atmosphere and the solid outcome of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference as a step in the right direction for the new review cycle. The efforts on the part of the two major nuclear Powers within the 2010 New START agreement are commendable and deserve our recognition.

Notwithstanding the progress made so far, a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is still far from our reach. Concrete and more effective steps are necessary across all three pillars of the NPT. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to constitute a serious threat to international peace and security. Fully cognizant of that fact, the Government of Montenegro, in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and with the participation of experts from the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), organized a round table on the implementation of that resolution. The main objective of the meeting was to familiarize and prepare national institutions for the drafting of national action plans on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). My country expressed readiness and the political will immediately to initiate the process and to gather the relevant actors to start working on our action plan, with the aim of ensuring our full compliance and the most effective implementation of the action plan.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty must continue to be our priority, as well as strengthening adherence to the Additional Protocol and the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As another crucial opportunity and critical first step, we look forward to the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction to be held later this year. Montenegro welcomes the efforts of the facilitator and the Finnish Government in that regard.

Another reason for great concern is the continuing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

Montenegro strongly supports the ongoing efforts to break the deadlock in the CD, so that substantive work and negotiations, already running very late, can begin on a fissile material cut-off treaty and other important instruments. We also remain very interested in the expansion of the membership of the CD.

We are all well aware of the severe negative and destructive effects of the irresponsible and poorly regulated global trade in conventional arms. As a stark reminder, 2,000 people throughout the globe are killed each day as a result of armed violence, which is fuelled by illicit conventional arms, mainly small arms and light weapons. Even though we were unable to reach agreement on the arms trade treaty (ATT) last July, Montenegro is of the view that significant progress was made and that we came very close to the finishing point. Joining with the more than 90 other countries, Montenegro added its voice to the message that we must conclude the ATT so that we can finally establish the highest possible standards for regulating the international arms trade. We cannot lose momentum, and we must renew and redouble our efforts to achieve a robust treaty. The draft text submitted by the President on 26 July should be used as the basis for our future work to conclude the ATT, which we hope will commence early next year.

On the other hand, Montenegro welcomes the adoption by consensus of a substantive outcome document at the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annex I). Let me recall that in July this year Montenegro submitted its first national report on the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, and my country remains dedicated to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the Programme of Action.

Montenegro reaffirms its attachment to the universalization and full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention

on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; the Convention on Cluster Munitions; and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects.

With particular regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Government of Montenegro and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have organized the thirteenth Annual Workshop to Coordinate Assistance and Protection Under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is being held, as we speak, in Montenegro, from 10 to 12 October. Participants from many different countries and continents will have the opportunity to review relevant OPCW activities during the past year, exchange ideas regarding challenges relating to the implementation of article X, and discuss issues related to the preparedness of the OPCW to respond to a chemical-weapons incident. With regard to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, I am pleased to inform the Committee that the amended Protocol II of the Convention entered into force in June 2012 in Montenegro.

We must, to the best of our ability, use the opportunities presented to us, so that significant strides can be made on our long path towards a safer and more secure world. We need to galvanize our efforts and recommit ourselves to the principles of effective multilateralism, compromise and mutual trust in order to revitalize the United Nations disarmament machinery and strengthen the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Montenegro, for its part, is firmly dedicated to playing an active role and constructively contributing to that end. The Montenegrin delegation looks forward to engaging on issues that are on the agenda of the First Committee and is open to pragmatic cooperation in all fields.

I reiterate, Mr. Chair, our support for your efforts to bring this session to its fruitful conclusion.

The Chair: I now call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Regrettably, we have listened to our colleague, the representative of Norway, repeating baseless allegations that have also been circulated by others to

serve a political agenda aimed at impacting the political choices of my country.

In that respect and as an example only, I should like to remind our colleague that his country, Norway, itself provided Israel, without the knowledge of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with heavy water, which helped Israel to produce nuclear weapons and thereby introduced Israeli nuclear weapons to the Middle East region, thus threatening the peace and security of the peoples of the region. What is really worrying is the fact that the representative of Norway does not call on Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State. It is the only nuclear Power in our region.

The representative of Norway does not call on Israel to place its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA either. One might wonder whether the representative of Norway really is keen on having the 2012 Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction succeed, in implementation of the resolution on the Middle East of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the resolution of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

My country is of the view that all weapons of mass destruction — including nuclear weapons, of course — and not only chemical weapons, are abhorrent.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.