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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Percaya (Indonesia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 86 to 102 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items

The Chair: This afternoon the Committee will continue its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items, with a view to concluding this segment of our work today.

We again have a very long list of speakers. I therefore urge all delegations taking the floor to kindly adhere to the agreed time limit of 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity, or 15 minutes when speaking on behalf of a Group. That will enable the Committee to make the most efficient use of its time today, which is the last day of the general debate segment.

Once we have exhausted the list of speakers, we shall have the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous session.

Mr. Gujubo (Ethiopia): I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau upon your elections, and I express my appreciation of the manner in which you have been guiding our deliberations.

I pledge my delegation's full support for the successful conclusion of the work of the Committee.

I also take this opportunity to thank Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her opening remarks on 9 October.

Ethiopia associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group, and by the representative of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Today, nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms pose serious threats to international peace and security. The threats that they present are multifaceted and complex, and require effective and urgent responses by all States. In that regard, States need to respect and implement the provisions of international treaties and conventions that they are party to.

My delegation reiterates its unwavering support for the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and calls upon those States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as a matter of urgency.

Africa has been a nuclear-weapon-free zone since July 2009, when the Treaty of Pelindaba entered into force. That was a concrete contribution by Africa to the global effort to control and halt the spread of nuclear weapons.

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty seeks to ensure that nuclear weapons are not developed, produced, stockpiled, tested, acquired or stationed in Africa, including its island States. The Treaty furthermore prohibits research on nuclear weapons, the

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dumping of radioactive waste, and armed attacks by Treaty parties on nuclear installations in the African zone. However, the Treaty supports the use of nuclear energy and nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes.

With regard to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, we believe that they can make significant contributions, not only to achieving regional and international security but also to strengthening the course of action for total nuclear disarmament. In that connection, the Treaty on the African nuclear-weapon-free zone remains a fundamental legal basis for creating a zone of peace and cooperation on the continent, and helps to serve as an effective confidence-building measure for nuclear-non-proliferation and disarmament efforts at the global level.

In that regard, Ethiopia welcomes the successful progress towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, particularly the entry into force of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the successful 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and this year's first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference.

Ethiopia has already shown its unwavering determination to fight terrorism arising from any fundamentalist groups and anti-peace elements, supported and sponsored by outside States and non-State actors in our region. That was one of the major factors that convinced Ethiopia to work very closely at the regional and international levels to withstand and curb the threat of terrorism and the illicit trafficking of all kinds of weapons. In that respect, we believe that the efforts to ratify the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism are crucial.

Ethiopia attaches great importance to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That is why we remain committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone worldwide. We are convinced that it is the responsibility of all peace-loving nations to ensure that the dangers such weapons pose to humankind are eliminated from the face of the Earth. Ethiopia, recognizing its responsibility, has taken appropriate measures to ensure that radiation protection and nuclear regulatory control are conducted in accordance with the applicable domestic and international laws.

The illegal transfer of conventional weapons of all kinds is a source of serious concern to my country. Therefore, the need to take concrete actions to conclude a legally binding and effective treaty on the illicit trade and transfer of such weapons, in particular the risk of weapons transfer to non-State actors, is indeed urgent. In that regard, Member States are bound to respect Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which obliges all States to refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery.

Ethiopia, like many other developing countries, has continued to suffer from the adverse effects of illicit conventional weapons, in particular from the spread and transfer of small arms and light weapons. Indeed, the proliferation of uncontrolled conventional weapons has aggravated unstable and fragile peace situations in developing countries by fuelling armed conflicts and civil strife. In our subregion, the efforts of regional States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to preserve peace and security, as well as to ensure development and prosperity for the people of the region, have constantly been undermined by those weapons.

Ethiopia stresses the need for 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, considering it to be the main framework for addressing the issue of the illicit trade of those weapons. We also stress that international assistance and cooperation are essential inputs for the implementation of the Programme.

We also believe that the early conclusion of an arms trade treaty (ATT) is a critical component of the efforts to prevent and substantially halt the proliferation and uncontrolled trade of conventional weapons. We underline the need for a balanced, non-discriminatory, universal, effective and equitable ATT.

The Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction is the international agreement that bans anti-personnel landmines, and is instrumental in dealing with the suffering that such mines continue to cause to humankind. We support the effective implementation of the Convention, to which Ethiopia is a party.

As has been mentioned by many representatives who have already spoken, the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, we underline the necessity to start negotiations as soon as possible, within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

In conclusion, we call upon all concerned States to concretely demonstrate the necessary political will by fulfilling their commitment to put an end to the nuclear-weapons arms race and significantly reduce other weapons of mass destruction and dangerous conventional arms, to achieve the desired goal of complete disarmament.

Ethiopia, on its part, remains committed to continuing to participate fully and constructively on all disarmament issues to realize a better, more secure and peaceful world.

Mr. Hasan (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to be able to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are sure that your wisdom and ability will lead to success in tackling the Committee's work.

We support the statements made on behalf of the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement.

The international community is aware of the undeniable importance of holding this year an international conference to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in implementation of the resolution of the last Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. My delegation reaffirms the importance of preparing the 2012 conference well, in accordance with the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We also reaffirm the importance of the participation of all Middle East countries concerned, also in accordance with the outcome document.

Moreover, we affirm that the principle of making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone in no way diminishes the right of all countries to obtain nuclear technologies for peaceful uses, under conditions of complete transparency and respect for International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. In that context, the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in cooperation with the Arab League States and Gulf

States, is to seek to strengthen security and stability in the region.

We also reaffirm our consistent position of working resolutely to make the Middle East region, including the Gulf region, a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We ask Israel to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and place its nuclear facilities under the system of international inspection and the IAEA safeguards system, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

We also stress the importance of the Islamic Republic of Iran upholding its commitments and maintaining full cooperation with the IAEA and full transparency.

World peace and security and stability cannot be built while there exist weapons of mass destruction and nuclear arms, which undermine it. Humankind must do away with these lethal weapons by reducing their production, ensuring their non-proliferation and moving gradually from partial disarmament to complete disarmament.

Therein lies the importance of the United Nations work in this area, and particularly the work of the Committee, which is charged with disarmament and international security. The international community hopes to do away with nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, so that our world may be free of their destructive forces.

It is important for the international community to give priority to nuclear safety and security, with the greatest transparency in applying international standards for nuclear energy, so that the use of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes raises no suspicions. It is the inalienable right of all States to possess nuclear technologies for producing nuclear energy and for other peaceful uses. It is especially important for developing countries in order to produce renewable and clean energy, as long as they respect the IAEA safeguards system and international law.

In spite of the obstacles to disarmament and non-proliferation, the international community must work to build a world that is safer and more stable, by creating conditions favourable to the elimination of nuclear weapons, in order to strengthen international peace and security.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, Mr. Chair, I congratulate you on the well-deserved confidence shown in you with your election. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau, and I congratulate Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, on her important and constructive role.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered at the Committee's 2nd meeting by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation reaffirms its total support for efforts to build an international community that is free of the use of force, or the threat of the use of force, whether nuclear or conventional: a world governed in reality by the purposes and principles of the Charter, which stipulates that there shall be justice and equality in relations between peoples and nations. We assert our readiness to participate in any serious and genuine international efforts to realize those noble objectives.

The maintenance of national security is a right provided for in the Charter for all countries; it is not to be used by some to justify manipulating the principles of nuclear non-proliferation and applying double standards that present obstacles to it.

Our world faces various challenges, especially the spread of weapons of mass destruction — nuclear weapons in particular — whether the spread be vertical or horizontal. The danger is increased by some States' threat to use such weapons in order to realize political objectives and gain advantages.

Four decades since the conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is now important that the nuclear States comply with it, in accordance with article VI, in order to rid the world of this real danger.

The continued arming of Israel by some major Powers with all forms and types of weapons of mass destruction, and their provision of the latest conventional weapons technologies and the means to manufacture and store such weapons locally, are adverse activities. They do not help build peace or establish in the Middle East a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, which everyone hopes will be the successful outcome of this year's conference on the establishment of such a zone.

Some nuclear-weapon States have provided Israel with advanced nuclear technology over decades. Those States continue to protect the Israeli nuclear exception in a manner that is contrary to their NPT obligations, under articles I and II. That, as is well known, has now enabled Israel to manufacture and produce nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery in a manner that threatens the peace and security of the entire Middle East, and indeed beyond the Middle East.

In that respect, it is worth raising a warning about the international silence over the Israeli position, which has now moved clearly from the policy of nuclear ambiguity that prevailed since the beginning of the 1960s, based on an understanding between Israel and the United States to openly declare that it possesses nuclear weapons and threaten to use them. There is a silence that only shows that some countries are conspiring with Israel and protecting it from the effects of renouncing its international responsibilities. That has indeed threatened the system set out in the NPT.

My country expresses its deep concern at the fact that the NPT Review Conferences have so far failed to draw up a timeline for the nuclear-weapon States to get rid of their nuclear arsenals. Many of the practical measures in the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference are quite limited; they are not enough to attain that purpose.

We emphasize that the 2010 Review Conference recommendation on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, based on the resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, makes it incumbent on the international community to work diligently towards that end. It can do that by putting pressure on Israel to adhere to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party, similar to all other Member States of the region, and to subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) guarantees, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and the 2009 IAEA General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17, in addition to other relevant resolutions and decisions, and thus contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Most countries aspire to the convening and success of the conference — proposed for the end of the year in Helsinki, Finland — on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. However, Israel's statement to the General Conference of the IAEA last

month proves that it intends to renounce the resolutions of the last NPT Review Conference, which will lead to the failure of the Helsinki conference.

Everyone knows that Israel is the only party in our region that possesses nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. We appeal to the Secretary-General, the countries that sponsored the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the permanent members of the Security Council, as well as all nuclear-weapon States, to respect their commitments and put pressure on Israel to participate in the Helsinki conference and to adhere to the NPT as a non-nuclear party.

The Conference on Disarmament remains the only forum for considering disarmament issues. It is important to respect its rules of procedure and regulations, which constitute the necessary basis for the success of any unanimously agreed action. The Conference must adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of action that includes the establishment of subcommittees to negotiate a schedule for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, based on a compulsory, unconditional time frame. That must be in addition to negotiating the drawing up of a legally binding instrument providing negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States, assuring them of the non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them; a ban on an arms race in outer space; and an end to the production of fissile materials.

My country regards it as the inalienable right of all States parties to the NPT, in accordance with article IV, to acquire nuclear technology and use it for peaceful purposes, in cooperation with the IAEA, which should carry out its activities of helping Member States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. My country categorically opposes any attempt to interpret the relevant texts in the Treaty in a manner that will detract from, or restrict, that right.

The reality of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons shows that some Powers, big and small alike, producers and non-producers, are active in the transfer of small arms and light weapons to terrorist groups, non-State parties and illegitimate armed groups and mercenaries, in order to destabilize the peace and stability of specific countries, in pursuance of the political and economic interests of the States involved.

My country, Syria, is witnessing painful activities as a result of terrorist actions by terrorist armed groups, extremist armed mercenaries and jihadist

groups that use criminal methods, previously unknown in our country, based on fatwas. There is an attempt to demonize others by extremist inciters residing in Arab, regional and other countries that are well known to everyone. Suicide groups use cars, explosive belts and all forms of small arms and light weapons to attack their targets — human beings and infrastructure — in order to spread the culture of death, destruction and fear among the citizens and push towards sectarian and civil war, in order to invite foreign intervention under the pretext of the protection of civilians.

The terrorist actions against Syria could not be implemented without outside finance and support, be it through money, arms or people, or political support and information coverage of the activities of the armed groups involved. It is indeed regrettable that some Arab, regional and other countries openly provide those facilities to armed terrorist groups in order to carry out terrorist activities inside Syria. Moreover, those countries have openly pledged to provide support, arms, money and training to the terrorists, including those who are part of Al-Qaida, in order to realize their foreign interventionist objectives in Syria.

We call on Member States to assume their responsibility to abide by international conventions, charters and agreements, and stop smuggling weapons of any kind, and all other material, whether for military action or otherwise.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): Since this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor, let me join others in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee, and assure you of our full support as you lead our work during the coming weeks.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, the statement delivered by Sweden on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition and the statement delivered by Switzerland on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. I would like to add the following remarks.

Ireland has always adopted a position of complete and unequivocal opposition to nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains our only bulwark against the danger of those weapons. While the overwhelming majority of non-nuclear-weapon States continue to fulfil their obligations under the Treaty, we are today confronted by serious proliferation challenges in Iran, which must dispel the many concerns expressed by the international

community about its nuclear programme, and also in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Meanwhile, progress in implementing the Treaty's disarmament agenda has been far too slow. For that reason, my country will support efforts in this and other multilateral disarmament forums to make progress on nuclear disarmament.

The ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by all nuclear-capable States that have not yet ratified it would represent an important confidence-building gesture along the road to complete disarmament. We call on all States, particularly those whose ratification is needed if the Treaty is to enter into force, to ratify it without any further delay.

We believe that the proposed Helsinki conference on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East offers an opportunity for a meaningful discussion of that important topic. We urge all States of the region to attend and engage constructively with each other on progress towards a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We know that the discussions will be difficult, and that the path may be long, but the prize, for the security of the region and the world, will surely be worth the time and effort.

We must recognize that any use of nuclear weapons would have calamitous consequences for humankind for generations to come. For that reason, my delegation would like to see the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament explored in more detail as the present NPT review cycle progresses.

We welcome the fact that the number of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions has increased to over 75. That reflects the global recognition that the humanitarian cost of those weapons is simply too high. We call on all States, including the world's largest possessors and manufacturers, to adhere to the Convention without reservation or delay.

Next year we will hold the third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. As an active participant in and Vice-Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group preparing the issues to be considered at the Review Conference, Ireland looks forward to developing new ideas on the Convention's implementation and its universality. We have already made enormous progress towards ridding the world of an entire class of weapons of mass destruction, but our

efforts will not be complete until the Convention has been universally accepted.

In that context also, I must again recall the revelations made earlier this year in relation to Syrian chemical weapons. Ireland urges Syria never to use those weapons in any circumstances, and to arrange for their verified destruction as quickly as possible.

Like many others, we were greatly disappointed that it was not possible to conclude an arms trade treaty (ATT) earlier this year. We are nonetheless encouraged by the progress that was made under the skilful presidency of Ambassador García Moritán. We are determined to maintain the momentum generated in July, and therefore support, on the basis of the President's draft, plans to convene a final conference next March to conclude our unfinished business.

However, let us be clear that talks on an ATT cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely without result. If consensus cannot be achieved next March, we must be ready to consider other options in order to ensure that this critically important new instrument can be adopted without further delay.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, I again wish you every success in your task, and pledge our commitment to support you in completing the Committee's important work.

Mr. De Araujo (Timor-Leste): On behalf of Timor-Leste's delegation, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee for this session. My delegation assures you and the other members of the Bureau of our full support. We are confident that under your able leadership, and with your depth of experience, the Committee will achieve tangible results.

Timor-Leste associates itself with the statement delivered at the Committee's 2nd meeting by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

From its own perspective, Timor-Leste is committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and continues to support the conclusion of an arms trade treaty regulating and controlling conventional arms and the trade in them.

Timor-Leste is pleased to see the several substantial and positive achievements on disarmament and international security measures, policies and realization

in the past year. In that regard, we welcome the entry into force of the New START agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation, and the recent ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by Ghana, Guinea, Guatemala, Trinidad and Tobago, and Indonesia.

At the regional level, Timor-Leste welcomes the commitment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to preserve South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and recognizes its efforts in promoting and strengthening the implementation of the relevant treaty as the region's contribution to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Timor-Leste also welcomes the agreement of the ASEAN leaders to establish an ASEAN institute of peace and reconciliation as part of its ASEAN political-security community.

This year Timor-Leste commemorates 10 years as an independent nation. In the spirit of multilateralism it has made efforts to contribute to the vision of a world free from the scourge of armed conflicts and even the threat of armed conflicts, and therefore has acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; 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 addition, Timor-Leste has acceded to Protocol I to the Geneva Convention, which is the Protocol relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, and to Protocol II, relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts. Moreover, Timor-Leste has concluded its comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Timor-Leste is also a signatory to the CTBT.

Timor-Leste continues to support the Committee as a fundamental body addressing international security and disarmament issues. Global peace and security is the keystone for the construction of global economic prosperity. Local threats to peace and security become global threats in this increasingly interconnected world, and therefore should be managed by the international community promptly and effectively through multilateral mechanisms, in forums such as this.

Before I conclude, my delegation recalls the Fukushima Daiichi disaster as another crucial lesson exemplifying the overwhelming danger of nuclear power to human health and the environment. It exemplifies the need to work towards renewable energy and energy efficiency as the keys to ensuring the safety of people and protecting the environment for a sustainable future.

Together we prevent threats; together we improve the life of people; and together we contribute to a safe world.

Mr. Saidou (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election. You can count on the unfailing support and cooperation of the Niger delegation in carrying out your difficult but uplifting mission.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made at the Committee's 4th meeting by the representatives of Nigeria, and that made at the 2nd meeting by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

For many years, little progress has been made in disarmament, at least in certain areas, which justifies the scepticism of many delegations as to the real will of the international community to achieve the overall objective of general and complete disarmament. My point is illustrated by the impasse in the work of the Disarmament Commission and the failure in July of the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty.

However, my country is still convinced that these difficulties can be overcome and that the Disarmament Commission can still negotiate instruments capable of contributing to international peace and security.

Reason for satisfaction and hope, however, emerged with the second Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which adopted a final outcome document by consensus.

As the Committee knows, the problem of controlling and preventing the flow of illicit arms is a major concern for the Sahel countries, including the Niger, which several times faced armed rebellions in 1990 and 2000. Furthermore, in addition to such already harmful events, we have faced other, more dangerous threats, including those presented by terrorist groups and traffickers of all kinds. That is why the Niger, more

than any other State, sees a need for the international community to adopt a legally binding instrument on the arms trade. My delegation expresses its readiness to support any draft resolution to that effect.

I take this opportunity to thank all the bilateral and multilateral partners that support my country in its efforts to control and prevent the flow of illicit weapons.

Even legal weapons should be discouraged, because of the undeniable link between disarmament and development. As statistics show, weapons procurement swallows up significant resources that could be used to finance development activities, with consequences for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. Therefore, we should work to devote more resources to development goals, especially in the developing countries.

Mr. Dhital (Nepal): At the outset, Mr. Chair, allow me to congratulate you on your election. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made at the Committee's 2nd meeting by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Nepal believes that disarmament is of crucial importance not only in the maintenance of global peace and security, but also in unleashing valuable resources for useful purposes, particularly for the cause of development, which can provide real freedom and prosperity to all the peoples of the world.

Nepal has consistently advocated general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical weapons, in a time-bound manner.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Nepal strongly believes in the elimination of nuclear weapons to attain nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation once and for all.

While appreciating the declaration of nuclear-weapon-free zones established by international treaties in various parts of the world, we welcome the proposed convening, later this year, of the conference on the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

As the NPT constitutes the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, its review process should take a comprehensive approach to looking into the progress achieved with regard to all three mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty regime: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The eighth NPT Review Conference, in 2010, was successful in breaking ground and adopting a consensus document containing an action plan. It has rekindled hope for global disarmament and non-proliferation. To take the spirit forward, the first Preparatory Committee session for the 2015 Review Conference was successfully held in Vienna in May this year.

The Chemical Weapons Convention, which provides a non-discriminatory, comprehensive and verifiable prohibition of all categories of chemical weapons, is an important instrument towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction. Nepal urges the early elimination of all stockpiles of chemical weapons. We look forward to the third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, to be held next year.

Nepal strongly believes that the promotion of multilateralism, wider confidence-building measures and the pursuit of collective security are prerequisites for achieving the ultimate goal of disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, is in need of revitalization for advancing the multilateral disarmament negotiations to achieve more concrete actions and results. The Conference process calls for political will, creativity and courage to overcome inertia and give momentum to negotiations involving such issues of common concern as the fissile material cut-off treaty and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

International regulation of the trade in conventional arms through a legally binding instrument is a felt need of our time. Regrettably, the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, held in July this year, could not reach agreement on the terms of the treaty. Such a treaty is necessary for accountability and transparency in the transfer of conventional weapons, and for curbing the illicit trade of arms and the diversion of arms into the wrong hands.

Nepal favours the early conclusion of a comprehensive and robust arms trade treaty. In our view, the treaty should adopt the highest possible

common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, while ensuring the right of all States to manufacture, develop, acquire, import, export, transfer and retain conventional arms for their self-defence and security needs.

The proliferation of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has taken the lives of millions and become a cause of sustaining conflicts and exacerbating armed violence in troubled areas of the world, apart from its deep nexus with transnational organized crime. In that connection, we are encouraged by the fact that the recent second Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted a consensus outcome document highlighting the international community's renewed commitment to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade.

Global military expenditure today stands at over \$1.7 trillion, and it is still rising, despite the global financial and economic crisis. It is an irony that so much money is squandered in military expenditures, while the investment in peace, development and international cooperation is only a tiny fraction of that.

Nepal strongly believes that regional mechanisms play an important complementary role in the promotion of the global peace and disarmament agenda.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, located in Kathmandu, is making good endeavours to promote regional discourses on the important agenda of peace and disarmament. The Asia-Pacific region bears unique prospects and challenges in the promotion of global peace. We believe that the Kathmandu process needs to be revitalized to facilitate dialogues and deliberations for fostering understanding, cooperation and confidence-building for the cause of peace in the region. As the Centre's host, Nepal is committed to strengthening it to make it an effective United Nations entity dedicated to the promotion of peace and disarmament at the regional level.

The Centre relies on voluntary contributions by donors for enhancing its activities. In that context, we call for an increased level of support for the Centre from the international community, especially from Member States from the Asia-Pacific region, to carry on its all-important work.

As in previous years, Nepal, along with other countries, will submit a draft resolution on the

Regional Centre at the current session. We appreciate the continued support of all delegations.

In conclusion, we believe that the multilateral approach is best for the advancement of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as for the promotion of peace and security. The First Committee is an inclusive multilateral forum that can play an immensely important role in steering the course of deliberations to broaden understanding, create consensus and build confidence among Member States for the greater cause of peace, security and disarmament.

Ms. Golberg (Canada) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Canadian delegation, Sir, I congratulate you on your assumption of the role of Chair of the First Committee. We hope for a productive session under your leadership and assure you of our full support to that end.

The First Committee meets today almost a year after it took decisions to press the United Nations disarmament machinery to act and called upon the Conference on Disarmament to agree on and implement a programme of work. Those calls were taken seriously, and 2011 saw genuine efforts to return the Conference to work. Regrettably, those efforts were unsuccessful, and the Conference remains stymied and unable to fulfil its important mandate.

In 2011 the General Assembly committed to remain seized of the issue of the revitalization of the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the work of the Conference on Disarmament. In 2012 we must decide if we are prepared to take the steps needed to further address the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and contribute to their reduction and eventual elimination, which will help to prevent them from falling into the hands of non-State actors.

The alternative is to sit idly by as the machinery continues to decline into irrelevancy. We should be prepared to think outside the box to find innovative and practical approaches to multilateral negotiations in order to achieve our objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament.

One means to achieve that goal would be consideration of Canada's draft resolution on the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. The draft resolution, the result of wide, cross-regional consultations, proposes a pragmatic and incremental way to make substantive progress on that

critical issue. It is intended to begin a process towards a treaty, but not to replace the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Rather, it would provide time for substantive work to begin on issues that the Conference is not currently able to tackle, while leaving room for the Conference itself to begin substantive work.

(spoke in English)

Despite the ongoing challenges of the United Nations disarmament machinery, progress has been made on some elements. Canada was pleased to contribute to the success of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention Review Conference, which reinforced the important role the Convention plays in countering the risk of biological weapons proliferation, promoting cooperation and assistance, and addressing the challenges of the rapid developments in biological science. Member States took important decisions to strengthen and improve our implementation of the Convention, including agreeing to a new round of valuable intersessional meetings.

Coming off a successful outcome in 2010, Canada was satisfied that the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the new review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) offered a first opportunity to take stock of our progress thus far and identified what remains to be done prior to 2015. The Preparatory Committee generated positive momentum, but we are very mindful that a positive outcome in 2015 will not be easily achieved. We must therefore all commit ourselves fully to meeting the commitments we made in 2010.

Canada continues to play a key role in international efforts to combat weapons of mass destruction, proliferation and terrorism. At the Nuclear Security Summit held in Seoul in March, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced a renewed commitment of \$367 million through Canada's Global Partnership Program until 2018. By reducing the threat posed by nuclear, radiological, biological or chemical terrorism, the Global Partnership Program plays an important part in the international effort to combat nuclear terrorism and prevent weapons of mass destruction and related materials from falling into the wrong hands.

Just as the struggle against communism was the great struggle of previous generations, terrorism is the great struggle of ours. Canada believes that efforts to impede the illicit flow of arms to criminals, terrorists and human rights abusers are important. While

acting on the need to hinder the irresponsible trade in conventional arms and their diversion to illicit end users or end uses, it is important that we acknowledge and recognize the legitimacy of lawful ownership of firearms by responsible citizens for their personal and recreational use, including sport shooting, hunting and collecting. Furthermore, it is our view that a future arms trade treaty should in no way result in any new burdens being placed on lawful firearms owners in Canada.

Finally, Canada looks forward to further success during next year's third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We welcome the opportunity to review the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and further international efforts to destroy the world's chemical-weapons stockpiles and prevent their proliferation.

It is regrettable that countries continue to engage in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Stopping the proliferation of such weapons is essential to us all. Canada remains deeply concerned about Iran's, Syria's and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's disregard for the international community's common interest in that respect. We continue to call on those States to ensure full compliance with their NPT obligations and to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Iran's continued illegal enrichment of nuclear material and its non-cooperation with IAEA inspectors have a profoundly destabilizing effect on the region and on international security more broadly. Furthermore, its stonewalling of IAEA demands and blatant sanitization of suspect sites underscores our belief that Iran continues to develop nuclear-weapon capabilities. A nuclear Iran would embolden a regime in an already fragile region.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's purported withdrawal from the NPT in 2002 and its testing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, in particular most recently in April, is provocative and unhelpful. It is indeed a sad situation when a country experiencing such dire poverty invests so much in its weapons programmes.

Canada is also disturbed by the uncooperative behaviour of the Syrian Government on nuclear questions, and, despite its having ratified the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the regime's admission to having

chemical and biological weapons. We need to be clear: the use of such weapons, whether against Syrian citizens or so-called external aggressors, is unacceptable. We call on the Syrian Government to ensure that its stockpile of chemical and biological weapons remains secure against any possible use, and to arrange for their verified destruction as soon as possible..

It is Canada's hope that the sixty-seventh session of the First Committee will be a productive one. We stand ready to work with you, Mr. Chair, the other members of the Bureau and all delegations to achieve this important aim.

Mr. Prosor (Israel): At the outset, Mr. Chair, I join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election, and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you steer our deliberations towards a successful outcome. I also congratulate the High Representative, Angela Kane, on being with us in this important meeting.

Israel's perspective and policy in the field of regional security and arms control has always been a pragmatic and realistic approach. It is rooted in its belief that all security concerns of regional members should be taken into account and be addressed within the regional context. The disturbing realities in the Middle East mandate a practical, step-by-step approach, bearing in mind the goal of achieving peaceful relations and reconciliation among all the States in the region. That process is inherently incremental. It can only realistically begin with modest arrangements for confidence- and security-building measures in order to build the stable infrastructure and the necessary trust for more ambitious cooperative security undertakings.

At present no regional dialogue exists in the Middle East, nor is there a forum to develop confidence-building measures and defuse tensions. The Middle East countries have no regional forum in which we can all directly communicate with each other and have a dialogue on core issues that affect our security.

At the beginning of the 1990s the arms control and regional security talks were the appropriate forum to promote confidence and address security issues and challenges in the area. Such a mechanism is lacking today, in that there is no channel for direct discussion between the States in the Middle East. No majority vote and one-sided resolutions in international forums can substitute for a broad regional dialogue and cooperation. Our vision of what we can do in the space

between aspiration and reality begins with the need to establish confidence-building measures and genuine efforts to reduce tensions with our neighbours in the area through greater dialogue.

The region of the Middle East is undergoing historic and significant transformational changes. The current turmoil in the Arab world gives a clear example of how fragile and unstable the region is today. Unfortunately, Israel does not enjoy peace with the region as a whole, and at times we feel that our existence and survival are put into question.

Countries in the area, like Iran, that threaten to wipe Israel off the map, and terrorist organizations, like Hamas and Hizbullah, that do not accept Israel's right to exist, and continuously engage in a massive acquisition of rockets and missiles, still pose fundamental security threats. Any regional security dialogue has to focus on actual threats, like rockets and missiles, which are a vital component of any regional disarmament.

Despite the current situation, Israel engaged positively in July 2011 in the European Union (EU) seminar convened in Brussels "to promote confidence-building and in support of a process aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery in the Middle East". Israel plans to participate in the second EU seminar, which will convene in Brussels early next month.

Israel also participated in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General's Forum in November 2011, in which participants from the Middle East and other interested parties could learn from the experience of other regions, including in the area of confidence-building relevant to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. That stems from our understanding that only direct dialogue between the parties can move us together to a more stable regional security architecture.

Israel attaches great importance to non-proliferation and over the years has demonstrated a consistent policy of responsibility. Israel has made great efforts to abide by and respect global non-proliferation norms, including in the field of export controls and enhanced cooperation regarding the various supplier regimes.

Those efforts constitute an important component of the overall determination to improve the regional security climate. It was in that spirit that Israel signed the Chemical Weapons Convention, in 1993, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons,

in 1995, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in 1996, right before joining the Conference on Disarmament that same year.

In addition, in 2004 Israel adopted the Export and Import Order, which prohibits the export of equipment, technology and services designated for weapons of mass destruction programmes, and establishes a control system for dual-use items in the nuclear, chemical and biological domains.

By adopting the Order, Israel implemented its policy of adherence to the Australia Group and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Israel's export control legislation on missiles and related material reflects Israel's adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime, which is incorporated in the 2008 Defence Export Control Act and in related secondary legislative instruments. Israel is also an implementer de facto of the Wassenaar Arrangement on conventional arms. Israel abides by those regimes without having the benefits of full membership in those groups.

Israel has never challenged the non-proliferation regimes, or adopted a policy to undermine them. However, there are other countries in the Middle East that are not parties to other non-proliferation treaties, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention or the Biological Weapons Convention. In the Middle East, chemical weapons have been used, as well as many conventional weapons and missiles.

In that context, the Syrian chemical weapons threat continues to cause extreme concern to Israel and the region as a whole. Those and other weapons are the weapons that threaten people's immediate sense of security, and they need to be addressed no less than the threat of nuclear proliferation. The volatile situation in Syria is a fresh reminder of the need to work together to secure nuclear and chemical materials and to prevent illicit trafficking and terrorism.

For many years now, the Committee's agenda has included two draft resolutions regarding the Middle East. The first, which this year is in document A/C.1/67/L.1, deals with establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. It has commanded consensus for almost 30 years, and although Israel has substantive reservations regarding certain elements of it, we support the annual endorsement of this visionary goal.

In stark contrast to this spirit of cooperation, the Arab League is putting forward a second draft resolution,

A/C.1/67/L.2, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". This is a contentious draft resolution that seeks to divert attention from the activities of some regional States, like Iran and Syria, which constitute flagrant violations of international obligations undertaken in the disarmament and non-proliferation sphere. Putting forward the draft resolution constitutes an annual declaration by its sponsors that they prefer to continue trying to alienate and isolate Israel, rather than engage Israel in a cooperative manner. The decision of its sponsors to add, in the past two years, a paragraph on the 2012 regional conference raises profound questions regarding the real motivation of the Arab States with regard to this idea.

The Committee would do well to foster and encourage initiatives of a conciliatory nature designed to reduce regional tensions rather than aggravate them. Belligerent draft resolutions do not move us forward. They only reinforce us in our suspicion, and suspicion is the enemy of progress. It is in that context, that we call upon Member States to reject this approach and vote against the draft resolution.

The region of the Middle East embodies and reflects many of the arms control and disarmament challenges faced by the international community. It is no coincidence that four out of the five major violations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have occurred in the Middle East — Iraq under Saddam Hussein, Libya, Syria and Iran — while the fifth case, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has been deeply involved in nuclear proliferation to the Middle East.

The nuclear activities of Iran and Syria are under continuous investigations of the IAEA, long investigations, while both countries withhold cooperation and place every possible difficulty in the way of the IAEA inspections and investigations. Syria has not yet declared the nuclear fuel destined for the nuclear reactor built by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the Dair Alzour site, and its whereabouts in Syria remain, to this very minute, a mystery.

One of the most central threats today in the Middle East is Iran's hostile policies and statements, its pursuit of nuclear weapons, its aggressive development of missile technology and its active involvement in supporting, supplying and training terrorist organizations. Israel has consistently been the target of Iran's vicious anti-Semitic campaign, including statements made even in recent weeks by Iran's President calling for the elimination

and destruction of Israel. It is clear that without halting and reversing the Iranian military nuclear programme it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to promote an international or regional agenda aimed at strengthening the prevailing non-proliferation regime.

Israel has for several years stressed that the prevention of transfers of conventional and non-conventional arms to terrorists and non-State actors should be addressed by the international community as a matter of priority. In that context, Israel welcomes the successful outcome last month of the second Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. Israel attaches great importance to the Programme and views its effective implementation as critical to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and global levels. Such implementation is more relevant than ever. The turbulence in the Middle East poses great challenges, which should prompt the international community to work together to prevent illicit trafficking and terrorism.

In that context, Israel has emphasized its deep concern about the illicit proliferation of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and short-range rockets. In the past year, several sources have claimed that thousands of MANPADS are missing in Libya. Those weapons present a serious threat to civil aviation when they fall into the wrong hands. The international community should allocate the necessary resources to address that grave danger effectively. We must focus on concrete steps — through legal, political and practical measures — to prevent those weapons from reaching terrorists and non-State actors.

Israel supports the arms trade treaty negotiation conference, which is aimed at addressing standards in the international arms trade. It is our hope that further negotiations in the near future will eventually lead to the establishment of a consensual, legally binding instrument.

Israel aspires to achieve peace and security for all the peoples of the Middle East. We hope that the day will come when a regional security framework that encompasses all the countries of the area provides a cooperative, multilateral response to all the security problems of the region.

Let me wish Member States, their representatives here present and the Secretariat fruitful deliberations

during this session, and the full success of the First Committee in its activities, which benefit us all.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election as Chair and to wish success to you as well as to all of us in our hard work.

Tajikistan attaches great importance to the further strengthening of the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, strengthening the process of negotiations for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones

In order to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and ensure regional security, my country, together with the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. We are convinced that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is essential to promoting nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peace and security at the regional and global levels.

In that regard, we believe that the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia is entirely consistent with the efforts of countries of the region to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote regional security, cooperation between States and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In that regard, the early signing by nuclear-weapon States of the Treaty's protocol on negative security assurances is of paramount importance.

We encourage other States and regions to follow the example of our region. We hope that all parties concerned will take practical measures for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and look forward to the successful outcome of the Helsinki conference that is scheduled for December.

It is regrettable that, in July at New York, the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty failed to conclude an international agreement. However, Tajikistan will continue to further support efforts aimed at concluding a new international treaty on the transfer of conventional arms. We believe that an arms trade treaty should be a comprehensive, legally binding instrument that establishes common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

Tajikistan supports the leading role of the United Nations in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and attaches great importance to 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, as the main multilateral mechanism to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We welcome the successful outcome of the second Review Conference, which was held here in New York from 27 August to 7 September.

We also note that the Republic of Tajikistan annually submits reports on exports and imports of conventional arms, including nil reports, under seven categories of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction — the Ottawa Convention — calls on the international community to put an end to the use of anti-personnel mines. Such arms cause much suffering and many casualties, killing and maiming hundreds of people, mostly innocent and defenceless civilians, especially children, and obstruct economic development and reconstruction. Regrettably, the suffering and misery caused by anti-personnel landmines are a heavy burden on the population of my country as well. Tajikistan reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention, in cooperation with all interested parties.

Tajikistan is a strong advocate of a mine-free region of Central Asia, “Central Asia — Free of Mines”, and supports the adoption of practical measures to clear the contaminated land in the region and resolve other issues related to the effects of anti-personnel mines.

Mr. AlAjmi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, Sir, on behalf of the Kuwaiti delegation, to sincerely congratulate you on your election to steer the Committee’s work during the sixty-seventh session, and to assure you of our full cooperation in ensuring the success of your mission.

My country associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement.

The State of Kuwait reiterates its belief in the importance of the United Nations and its noble message, which seeks to maintain international peace and security, despite the multiple and accelerating challenges and difficulties posed by the impending dangers to our

world as a result of the existence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Their proliferation and possession is an indicator of a real danger that can impact not only regional and international peace and stability, but also the very existence of the human race.

The State of Kuwait has therefore signed and ratified, and adheres to, such international conventions and agreements as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, in addition to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and our International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol.

We emphasize the importance of those conventions and agreements in limiting the dangers of the weapons to which I have referred, in particular the NPT, which is considered the cornerstone of multilateral efforts towards disarmament and international peace and security. We also emphasize the need to deal in a balanced manner with the three pillars of the Treaty, particularly the inalienable right of all States to conduct nuclear research and studies, as well as possess nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, consistent with the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system.

As a State that neither manufactures nor stockpiles arms, the State of Kuwait has acceded to those conventions and agreements in the belief that power lies in human resources and in the survival of the human being, not his extinction, to achieve a world free of weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction, and to direct economic and financial resources towards economic, social, humanitarian and political development.

The Middle East region suffers from endemic, chronic challenges that have contributed to blurring the view of its future. That future relies on development and regional and international cooperation, as well as dealing with the stagnant political and economic conditions there owing to the prevailing lack of confidence resulting from Israel’s possession of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and its defiance of resolutions of international legitimacy requiring it to accede to the NPT and to subject all its facilities to the IAEA safeguards system.

In that regard, the State of Kuwait welcomes the preliminary steps to convene the 2012 conference in Helsinki to consider the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in implementation of the resolution of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We hope that the international community will support the efforts to make the conference a success and achieve tangible results, with clear implementation mechanisms and a specific timetable, to establish such a zone.

As for Iran's nuclear programme, my country's delegation supports the ongoing efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully, while guaranteeing the Islamic Republic of Iran and all other States in the region the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, under IAEA supervision and monitoring. We also call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to cooperate fully with international efforts, work on implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions and cooperate with the IAEA and implement its decisions, in order to leave the crisis phase behind and ensure the stability and safety of the Arab Gulf region in particular, and the wider Middle East region in general.

Kuwait welcomes the positive results that led to the consensual adoption of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference to Review the Progress Achieved 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 was held in September in New York. We look forward to international cooperation to implement the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, my country's delegation hopes that the Committee's consultations and deliberations will be marked by transparency and flexibility as it aims for a consensus that will meet the aspirations and expectations of the Member States with regard to international peace and security.

Mr. Makharoblishvili (Georgia): At the outset, I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that, under your competent leadership, we will be able to achieve significant results in our work. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation during the work of the First Committee.

We share the position that nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential risk to humankind and that the regime set up to deal with them remains

incomplete. While being a cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation system, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) still lacks some significant elements to provide a comprehensive response to all the challenges.

Although we welcome as important developments the outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and of this year's session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, held in Vienna this year, as important developments, we realize that we still have significant work to do in order for those outcomes to become concrete results.

We believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty — a vital instrument that contributes to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation — should enter into force in the nearest future. Renewed political commitments to pursue its ratification give us solid grounds for optimism. On its part, Georgia continues to actively cooperate with the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Organization to strengthen the monitoring and verification system.

We are deeply concerned that the international community continues to be unable to start disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, as we witness yet another year of stalemate at that forum. Further prolongation of the already long-standing impasse is absolutely unacceptable, as time is against us. We are afraid that, should this situation continue without solution for another year or two, the international community's confidence in the Conference on Disarmament will start to dwindle fast, thereby degrading the whole process to a state where it is beyond the possibility of being brought back to life. Along with many other delegations, we also believe that at this session the First Committee should take up serious consideration of how the work of the Conference should be pursued.

As many previous speakers have emphasized, the illicit manufacture, accumulation, transfer and flow of small arms and light weapons is still one of the most challenging items on the international security agenda. In that context, Georgia is also delighted that this year's United Nations Conference to Review Progress Achieved 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 was able to agree on an outcome document

that reaffirms Member States' commitment to its implementation. We thank Ambassador Joy Ogwu for her skilful guidance, which led us to that success.

We fully support the position expressed by many delegations that measures to prevent trafficking in conventional weapons can be effective if they are coupled with rigorous transfer controls on the legal arms trade, taking into account criteria such as international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights, as well as the risk of abuse and diversion. That is why Georgia is fully committed to the negotiation of an arms trade treaty. The failure to reach agreement at the negotiations on the treaty last July was disappointing. We have lost some precious time, but Georgia will continue to support the completion of negotiations of a treaty at the final United Nations Conference, in early 2013. We consider the draft submitted by the President of the Conference a good basis for negotiations.

Besides all those well-known and, we believe, well-understood problems, new threats such as cyberattacks have emerged and are evolving rapidly. At present, we doubt that we have sufficient understanding of their potential effects on our interdependent world, and thus lack the instruments to adequately respond to the challenges. We believe that it is the responsibility of the United Nations, and primarily of the First Committee, to contribute to scrutinizing the problem, raising awareness and understanding of this challenge to the international community and providing an essential platform to elaborate mechanisms and instruments to defuse the threat.

Preventing the risk of nuclear terrorism, the need for compliance with obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009) and improving security for highly radioactive sources are among Georgia's main priorities. My country joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and it continues to support consolidating efforts by the international community to combat the illicit acquisition, use or transport of nuclear materials and radioactive substances.

The fact that in recent years there have been several instances of attempted nuclear smuggling via now-occupied Georgian territories further amplifies the sense of danger. Every attempt was prevented by the Georgian law enforcement authorities. Yet, in the absence of an international presence, those occupied territories have become completely opaque, making it impossible to conduct verification activities there,

and thus the risk of nuclear smuggling through those territories has significantly increased.

The existence of so-called white spots in the occupied territories, where international control mechanisms are either very weak or non-existent, creates fertile ground for the illicit transfer and sale of conventional arms, and their accumulation, as well as the illegal transit of weapons of mass destruction and their materials, including nuclear materials.

The example of my country once again proves that, despite numerous initiatives, the world continues to face serious proliferation concerns. Georgia, along with other States, is also deeply troubled that some countries continue to stand in the way of any real progress on international non-proliferation, arms-control and disarmament efforts. The only effective measure to counter that trend would be a strong and unequivocal response by the international community to effectively counter such tendencies.

As I have spoken about the attempts to use the occupied territories of Georgia for smuggling radioactive and nuclear materials, allow me to say a few words on the risk of conventional arms proliferation through those territories. As the Committee is aware, the accumulation of vast amounts of armaments continues in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region of South Ossetia. The foreign military build-up has grown exponentially in the aftermath of the 2008 invasion, in direct contravention of the six-point ceasefire agreement, mediated by France on behalf of the European Union, for the withdrawal of the military forces to the positions held prior to the invasion.

Our neighbour from the north continues its illegal military build-up in the occupied territories; instead of being closed down, the illegal military bases are being reinforced by additional personnel and equipment. An excessive concentration of manpower and offensive equipment in the areas adjacent to the administrative boundaries of those occupied provinces, coinciding with large-scale military manoeuvres — Kavkaz-2012 — has been observed during recent weeks. Those processes were confirmed by the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia.

In addition, as long as international control mechanisms are totally absent in those territories, there are no guarantees whatsoever that arms, including the most dangerous, such as man-portable air defence systems, will not be transferred to various criminal

groups, which would pose a serious threat to not only one particular region but to the whole international community.

We are convinced that, in those circumstances, the time is appropriate for the international community to stand up for the principles enshrined in the Charter. Georgia considers the First Committee a fundamental body to be seized with not only elaborating initiatives and ideas for addressing existing problems in the fields of non-proliferation and disarmament, but also critical issues related to international and national security.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco): I shall deliver only some selected paragraphs of my statement.

(spoke in French)

Allow me first, Sir, to express to you and the other members of the Bureau the sincere congratulations of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco on your elections to lead the work of the First Committee, as well as to assure you of our full cooperation.

The Moroccan delegation associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African and Arab Groups.

Our deliberations are taking place in an international context marked by progress in the control of conventional weapons and the determination to further strengthen international cooperation in order to find adequate responses to new challenges, in contrast to the lethargy of the nuclear disarmament mechanisms.

The commitment of the Kingdom of Morocco to disarmament and non-proliferation is a strategic choice that demonstrates its strong commitment to peace and security and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

As a State party to all multilateral instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, Morocco remains committed to multilateralism for general and complete disarmament, in particular to irreversible, transparent and verifiable nuclear disarmament.

We are convinced that nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction are no guarantee of security or effective stability at the regional and international levels. The safety of all lies, rather, in peaceful coexistence, dialogue and mutual respect.

Morocco, like all countries committed to the promotion of multilateralism and the defence of international law, attaches particular importance to

the effective implementation of all the provisions of international disarmament and non-proliferation treaties to build a world of peace and security for all. To that end, it is our duty to make every effort to achieve the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is still the cornerstone of the global regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is fundamental, in that regard, that every party play its full role and assume its responsibility in implementing the 2010 action plan to consolidate the progress already made.

The uncontrolled movement and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is, beyond the suffering and human disasters caused, a challenge to the stability, security and development of States, particularly in Africa. The lack of regulation and control of the use and transfer of such weapons contributes to their proliferation in areas of tension, especially in Africa.

Morocco considers that regional and subregional cooperation is an essential tool in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms. The alarming situation prevailing in the Sahel-Saharan region due to the growth of illicit trafficking of all kinds of weapons, including small arms, and the connections between existing arms trafficking networks and terrorist groups, encourages, more than ever, increased efforts to strengthen cooperation between the countries of the region on the basis of an inclusive approach.

It is in that spirit that Morocco has strongly supported the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Morocco therefore welcomed the success of the second Review Conference on the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, which once again demonstrated that through dialogue we can achieve the compromises that allow us to advance progressively towards achieving the objectives set collectively.

I should like to share with the Committee Morocco's views on priority actions to be taken to address the major challenges in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The first priority is the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Morocco, which attaches particular importance to this issue, believes that it is crucial to meet the 2012 deadline for the international conference on the matter, which presents a historic opportunity to trigger a process that will rid the region of weapons of mass destruction.

In that context, we welcome the efforts of the facilitator, Mr. Laajava, and the host country, Finland, as well as the consultations that have been held, which we want to intensify in order that the conference may be convened as soon as possible. Morocco stresses the importance of adherence to the NPT and of the conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency by all States of the region of the Middle East, including Israel.

The second priority is the revitalization of the United Nations disarmament mechanisms. Morocco remains deeply convinced of the relevance of the United Nations disarmament and international security machinery. Strengthening its effectiveness depends on the political will of States and respect for obligations and commitments.

For Morocco, the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons depends absolutely on the efficiency of the United Nations disarmament mechanisms. The lethargy of the Conference on Disarmament for more than a decade contrasts with the evolution of the international situation and the new security challenges facing the world, and undermines the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament.

We share the observation of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters that the Conference's problems that seemed to be matters of form were really political in nature. Morocco stresses the importance of the Conference's adopting without delay a balanced programme of work that will allow it to resume its mandate and its role, namely, negotiating on disarmament.

Morocco reiterates its support for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Our delegation is prepared to discuss in a constructive spirit the draft resolutions to be submitted and all other initiatives to reinvigorate the United Nations disarmament mechanisms, including the unblocking of the Conference on Disarmament. Morocco, however, remains firmly attached to the integrity and mandate of the Conference.

The third priority is the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as soon as possible. As a supporter of a complete ban on nuclear testing, my country deplores the delay in the Treaty's entry into force, and reiterates its call on all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty without delay and to respect the moratorium on nuclear testing.

Although it has broad political support, with 183 signatures and 157 ratifications, the CTBT, whose importance was also stressed by the last NPT Review Conference in 2010, has still not entered into force, even though the verification regime required by the Treaty is almost ready.

Morocco is encouraged by new ratifications, in particular that of Indonesia, which is an annex 2 State. We hope that that momentum can produce the necessary effect in other annex 2 countries so that, finally, they can ratify the Treaty and make the nuclear-test-ban irreversible, transparent and verifiable.

The fourth priority is strengthening non-proliferation and nuclear safety and security. It is crucial to work to ensure that non-proliferation obligations and the standards of safety and security established by the competent international institutions are strictly and universally respected. While we adapt to new global challenges, strengthening those standards should not erect barriers to the peaceful use by States of nuclear energy for economic and social development.

The Moroccan delegation welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting on nuclear terrorism on 28 September, on the Secretary-General's initiative. Morocco hopes that the political will expressed at the meeting will result in concrete measures to support the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and strengthen international cooperation in that field.

Morocco welcomed the results of the Nuclear Security Summit held in Seoul, and reiterates that its active participation in a number of multilateral initiatives, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit, demonstrates the importance it attaches to strengthening international and regional cooperation in the matter.

Morocco calls for better synchronization of international efforts to prevent and combat nuclear terrorism, in full compliance with the mandates of the competent bodies.

The fifth priority is regulation of the arms trade. Morocco supported the early conclusion of a robust arms trade treaty, whose primary aim would be to regulate the arms trade in order to prevent illegal transfers, thereby contributing to the consolidation of international peace and security and to the fight against serious violations of human rights or of international humanitarian law.

Morocco regrets the lack of consensus on a treaty at the end of the Conference held in July, despite the efforts of the participants and the President of the Conference. Nevertheless, the President's draft of 26 July reflects progress that should be the basis for continuing our collective efforts to achieve consensus. My delegation supports the proposal to continue negotiations on the draft within the framework of a conference to be convened in 2013, with the same rules of procedure, in a transparent and inclusive process.

The Moroccan delegation again emphasizes its conviction that consensus is the way to ensure the widest possible support for a future treaty, whose universality should be pursued; that is particularly true in this area. The treaty's implementation will enhance the effectiveness and credibility of the multilateral United Nations regime.

Morocco will continue to rely on the active participation of civil society.

The challenges that I have described require us all to show political will and work together, thus demonstrating our strong attachment to multilateralism in disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation will make supplementary remarks in the thematic debate.

Ms. Bongo (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I assure you of my delegation's full support in carrying out your task.

I associate myself with the statement made at the Committee's 4th meeting by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

The notion of disarmament most often refers to the issue of weapons of mass destruction, namely, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Africa continues to contribute to the efforts of the international community to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The entry into force, on 15 July

2009, of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which creates a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, was a significant contribution to strengthening the global nuclear security and non-proliferation regime.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems represents a real threat to international peace and security. Our responsibility is to ensure that technology and other nuclear components do not fall into the hands of terrorists. We also need to ensure efficient and orderly management of waste.

Gabon regrets the impasse in multilateral disarmament diplomacy, particularly the negotiation mechanism, that is, the Conference on Disarmament. We must conclude an agreement on fissile materials.

We welcome the holding this year in Vienna of 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, which made it possible to review the progress made in implementing the Treaty and the action plan resulting from the 2010 eighth Review Conference in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Although the devastating nature of such weapons is now recognized, it is clear that conventional weapons have also become weapons of mass destruction, as measured by the number of their victims around the world. Most conflicts in many parts of the world, especially in Africa, are fed and exacerbated by the irresponsible, anarchic and immoral trade in conventional weapons, primarily small arms and light weapons, with tragic consequences for peoples, particularly women and children.

We welcome the encouraging results of the second Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, presided over by Ambassador Joy Ogwu of Nigeria. The Conference registered significant developments, namely, a recognition of the adverse effects of the illicit trade in small arms on disabled persons; a recognition of the role of women in efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms; and the need to involve peacekeeping missions in tracing such weapons.

It is in that sense that my country has undertaken to launch a large-scale exercise to produce an inventory of weapons circulating in the country, to be followed by marking. That will be done by opening a databank in

order to improve and enhance the traceability of small arms and light weapons.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the outstanding work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, whose twentieth anniversary we will celebrate in December. Since its establishment, in 1992, the Committee has contributed in a tangible manner to efforts to prevent or resolve conflicts in our subregion and to build peace there.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its commitment to the conclusion of a robust, binding arms trade treaty to control the trade in conventional weapons, and thus safeguard investments, especially in African countries, and promote peace and development.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, Mr. Chair, I would like to express my sincere felicitations to you and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I am fully confident that your wise and able leadership and vast diplomatic experience in the field of disarmament will lead the Committee towards a successful conclusion. I assure you of the fullest cooperation of my delegation, and wish you every success.

The Islamic Republic of Iran fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement at the beginning of the general debate.

The very existence of nuclear weapons is still the gravest threat to international peace and security. Yet the adoption, in recent years, of nuclear posture reviews by a certain nuclear-weapon State and a military alliance that justify the use and threat of the use of such weapons have further aggravated the situation.

Furthermore, the continued allocation, by a certain nuclear-weapon State, of billions of dollars to modernize nuclear weapons, sharing such weapons with other States and deploying them in other territories, as non-compliance cases of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), are yet other factors that further intensify the already tense international security environment.

Not only the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, but also the mere possession, sharing, deployment and modernization of such weapons run counter to the principles, rules and regulations of international law. Accordingly, such cases of non-compliance with clear legal obligations and unequivocal commitments

undertaken at successive NPT Review Conferences have to come to an end.

A country like the United States — which, among other things, conducted the first-ever and the most nuclear test explosions; which is the only State to have used nuclear weapons; which possesses one of the largest nuclear arsenals and is still allocating billions of dollars to modernize its nuclear weapons; and which, in its Nuclear Posture Review, threatened to use nuclear weapons against some NPT States parties — should fully comply with all its legal obligations, including under article VI of the NPT.

There is no doubt that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination, and that the only safer world, as a long-standing goal of all nations, is a world free from nuclear weapons.

In our view, to rid the world of the dangers to international peace and security, and the very survival of humankind, by the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons and their possible deliberate or accidental use is not an option but an imperative. To make a reality of that noble goal, all must strive individually and collectively, but the nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility.

Some believe that the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world will not be reached quickly, and perhaps not in their lifetimes, and therefore call for patience. But, because of possible deliberate or accidental use, even tomorrow is very late. They have to be aware that, after almost seven decades of constant calls by all nations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the response to which was merely some symbolic measures, the nations have lost their patience and believe only in deeds. That is why all nations call upon the nuclear-weapon States to end their rhetoric and vague remarks and start adopting practical measures to fulfil their nuclear disarmament obligations. The generations that witnessed the horrible consequences of the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki strongly call for the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world as soon as possible — in their lifetimes, not later.

The limited bilateral or unilateral decommissioning of some deployed nuclear warheads is far below the expectations of the nations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and cannot substitute for the explicit legal obligations of the nuclear-weapon States for the complete elimination of all their nuclear arsenals.

Along with the overwhelming majority of Member States, the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports the conclusion of a nuclear-weapons convention as a legal framework for the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeline, with the deadline of 2025, and to prohibit the development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of such weapons, as well as to provide for their destruction.

The vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons is also a serious source of threat to international peace and security. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the best way to stop that trend is the full and non-selective implementation of the NPT and ensuring its universality, in particular in the Middle East, where the clandestine nuclear weapons programme of the only non-NPT party in the region, which was originally assisted by France, seriously threatens regional and international peace and security.

To overcome the threat of nuclear weapons in the region, Iran proposed the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in 1974. But efforts to establish such a zone have not yet succeeded, due to the persistent refusal of the Zionist regime to adhere to the NPT and to place its concealed nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Iran strongly calls for the immediate implementation of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East. In that context, Iran believes that there should be extreme international pressure on the Israeli regime, particularly in the upcoming 2012 conference, to force it to accede to the NPT, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, without any condition or any further delay, and promptly place all its underground nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards, in order to remove the only impediment to the long-sought goal of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

There is no source of insecurity and instability in the Middle East and beyond other than the Israeli regime, which audaciously tries to identify red lines — in the form of a childish cartoon — for the peaceful nuclear activities of others, while, confident in its big patron and certain other Western supporters, it has itself crossed all red lines during its lifetime and committed every sort of crime, from crimes of aggression to war crimes and crimes against humanity, and continues to threaten

other countries. Now its representative, sitting on 300 nuclear warheads, cries “wolf!” about the peaceful, safeguarded nuclear activities of others.

While noting the successful conclusion of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, Iran believes that, in addition to the Treaty’s universality, its continued relevance, credibility and effectiveness depend completely upon its full and non-selective implementation. Certain nuclear-weapon States that pretend to be the strongest advocates of the NPT have to be aware that the Treaty’s relevance and credibility have been severely challenged as a result of their clear non-compliance with their Treaty obligations, in particular under article VI.

I turn now to the Biological Weapons Convention. While welcoming the successful conclusion of its seventh Review Conference, my delegation stresses the need for its full, comprehensive and effective implementation and for its universalization. Likewise, Iran still attaches particular importance to strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a non-discriminatory and legally binding protocol, and urges the only State party rejecting the resumption of the negotiations for such a protocol to reconsider its policy towards the Convention in the light of persistent requests by all the other parties.

As a victim of chemical weapons used by Saddam’s army, with the support of certain Western countries, Iran considers the non-compliance of major possessor States party with the 2012 final extended deadline for the total destruction of their chemical weapons as a setback in the operation of the Convention, which seriously challenges its relevance and credibility.

In our view, the failure of the 2012 United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty was due to procedural and substantive difficulties. Procedurally, the Conference did not have a real negotiations nature, and the draft text presented by its President was merely his recollection of the discussions during and prior to the Conference.

Likewise, there were substantively some critical elements, such as exemptions and loopholes in the text created for the sake of only one State, to give it immunity for transferring any weapons under the pretext of military alliances, or to deploy any weapon in other countries, which clearly run counter to the very goal of an arms trade treaty. Therefore, holding another arms trade treaty conference would be a futile

exercise if the procedures were the same and if equal treatment of all proposals, as well as the security rights and interests of Member States, could not be ensured.

Contrary to that conference, the second Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held this year, was successful in producing an outcome document. In spite of some deficiencies, its overall work under the able President, Ambassador Ogwu of Nigeria, was a step forward towards the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

We attach great importance to the full and effective implementation of the Programme and the International Tracing Instrument, in particular in areas related to international cooperation and assistance.

In conclusion, I reiterate that, like other States party to the NPT, my country has an inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology, including a sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle. Iran is determined to exercise that right, and in doing so it takes its responsibilities seriously.

Contrary to the baseless allegations made by a few countries represented here, Iran's nuclear activities are, and have always been, exclusively for peaceful purposes. Despite all external political pressure on the IAEA, the Agency has repeatedly confirmed the non-diversion of declared nuclear materials in Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always demonstrated its readiness to negotiate without preconditions, and reiterates its willingness to engage in a serious and constructive negotiation, based on justice and mutual respect. It is up to the other parties to change their failed policy of coercion and intimidation and to demonstrate their goodwill by coming back to real negotiation and cooperation.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Ms. Christory (International Committee of the Red Cross) (*spoke in French*): Significant changes are afoot in the international debate about nuclear weapons. For decades, the discussion about such weapons focused primarily on military doctrine and security issues. But now there is a growing understanding of their catastrophic consequences for public health, human safety and the environment. More and more States

are recognizing and expressing a desire to look more closely at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons.

That recognition was first voiced in the Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and in a statement delivered by Switzerland, on behalf of 16 Governments, to the Preparatory Committee session in May for the 2015 Review Conference. The decision by Norway to convene an intergovernmental conference next year to address the human and environmental costs of nuclear weapons is further evidence of that trend. In the view of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), those are important and encouraging developments.

The ICRC has been focused on raising awareness of the incalculable human cost of using nuclear weapons ever since we assisted the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, in August 1945. Our recognition of current dangers and opportunities recently led the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to renew its call for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Movement, which comprises the ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies of 188 countries, adopted that position at the Movement's Council of Delegates meeting in November 2011.

Our position, which builds upon earlier Movement resolutions, emphasizes the immense suffering that would result from any use of nuclear weapons, as well as the lack of any adequate international response capacity to assist the victims if a nuclear weapon were detonated.

The Movement recalls the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/51/218), which expressed the Court's view that the threat or use of such weapons would generally be contrary to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law.

Finally, the Movement calls on all States to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used and to pursue negotiations to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement.

The ICRC is disappointed that States were unable to adopt an arms trade treaty at the July 2012 Diplomatic Conference. We nevertheless welcome

many of the key provisions of the draft treaty text submitted by the President of the Conference on 26 July. We are particularly encouraged that the draft recognizes the humanitarian imperative behind an arms trade treaty, one of whose objectives would be to prevent the international trade in conventional arms from contributing to avoidable human suffering and serious violations of international humanitarian law. In our view, an effective treaty will require all transfers of all conventional arms and their ammunition to be scrutinized carefully.

Despite the lack of a result at July's Diplomatic Conference, the need for an arms trade treaty remains as urgent as ever. As long as international arms transfers continue to be insufficiently regulated, the enormous human cost for individuals and communities around the world will persist. We urge all States to work intensively to conclude negotiations on an effective arms trade treaty early next year. The ICRC remains committed to working with States, the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and the United Nations and other organizations in order to ensure that a robust arms trade treaty is adopted without delay.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects also has an important role to play in addressing the human cost of arms availability. In many respects, its commitments would complement the obligations contained in a future arms trade treaty. During the recent second Review Conference of the Programme of Action, States renewed their commitment to implement a number of measures at the national, regional and global levels. We urge all States to undertake those measures with the utmost haste and to devote the resources required to fulfil their commitments in that field.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. That historic treaty has saved countless lives by banning the use of anti-personnel mines and ensuring that mined areas are cleared and stockpiles are destroyed. It has also brought about greater emphasis on assisting the victims of anti-personnel mines.

The ICRC urges States parties to make a renewed commitment to fully implement the Mine Ban Convention and ensure that the promise made 15 years

ago, in its first preambular paragraph, to “put an end to the suffering and casualties” caused by mines is fulfilled. The ICRC also urges the remaining 36 States that are not yet party to accede to the Convention and, until such time, to express their support for its humanitarian goals by voting in favour of the annual General Assembly draft resolution on the Convention's implementation. In past years, approximately half of those States voted in favour. There is no reason, in our view, why the number cannot continue to grow in 2012.

Finally, the ICRC would like to raise its humanitarian concerns about cyberwarfare — that is, means and methods of warfare that rely on information technology and are used in the context of armed conflict. While the military potential of cyberspace is not yet widely or fully understood, it appears that cyberattacks against transportation systems, electricity networks, dams and chemical or nuclear plants are technically possible. Such attacks could have wide-ranging, serious consequences, resulting in large numbers of civilian casualties and significant damage.

Given the interconnectivity of cyberspace, the ICRC is concerned that an attacking party might be incapable of distinguishing between military and civilian computer systems when launching a cyberattack. It might, in fact, be impossible to target just a military computer network. It might also be difficult to evaluate the indirect effects on civilian networks if military computer networks are attacked.

It is therefore crucial to uphold the rules of international humanitarian law if such new technologies are used in armed conflicts. There is no legal vacuum in cyberspace. As with any new technology, cyber operations must comply with international humanitarian law, in particular with the rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution. That is not to deny that there may be a need to develop the law further as technologies evolve or their humanitarian impact is better understood. That will have to be determined by States.

The Chair: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind delegations that the number of such interventions by any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to two, and that the first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Sagie (Israel): It was truly surreal to listen to the Syrian representative speak about preventing the

illicit transfer of arms, considering that his country has served as a warehouse and transit point for transferring weapons to Hizbullah, Hamas and other terrorists throughout the Middle East region for years. It is ruthlessly using those weapons today against its own people, utilizing them to massacre women, children and thousands of other innocent civilians.

Among other things, the Committee is tasked with addressing the consequences of small arms and weapons trafficking. If the brutal, despotic Al-Assad regime had any interest in the subject, it would begin by looking carefully in the mirror. Today more than ever, it serves as a unique threat to the peace and security of our region.

It is time the Syrian representative stopped using Israel to sweep under the carpet the despicable crimes his Government has committed. Saying the magic word "Israel" time and again will not distract the world's attention from the atrocities and other crimes of the Al-Assad regime. His desperate words say nothing about Israel, and everything about the regime that he represents.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Israel, a country with nuclear weapons that refuses to submit its nuclear installations to international control, has made an intervention that is a provocation to the peoples of the world.

As usual, Israel is assuming a weak position, which it uses to escape its international responsibility with regard to non-proliferation and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Israel is trying to cover up the aggression committed two years ago and continues to refuse to submit its nuclear facilities to International Atomic Energy Agency control, despite the fact that the current and former Directors General of the Agency have visited Israel on a number of occasions and have tried to reach some sort of international resolution for Israel to accept that kind of solution.

Israel represents a danger to the world as a whole. The General Assembly has adopted resolutions in that connection.

Israel today continues its nuclear weapons build-up, possessing an arsenal of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles exceeding the British and French arsenals, for example. Israel is attempting to hide that nuclear

arsenal, and threatens the countries of the region. Israel calls that the policy of ambiguity.

Fifteen religious authorities have called on the United States to cease its nuclear support for Israel. Israel must understand its own mistakes, inasmuch it refuses to adhere to United Nations declarations and conventions. Therefore, Israel must participate in international efforts to create a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region, in order to eliminate the danger it poses in the Middle East.

Recent investigations into a number of terrorists arrested in my country have revealed that they possess arms produced by Israel, which proves Israel's participation in the events afflicting my country.

The intervention of the representative of Canada is of concern to us. Those are the defenders of the devil; the intervention is empty. We call on Israel to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to open its facilities to inspection.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation had not planned to speak during this discussion, but Georgia's statement requires us to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

What is going on around the borders of Ossetia and Georgia is very important to us. In particular, we have paid attention to the recent parliamentary elections in Georgia, in which the people of Georgia showed a lack of confidence in President Saakashvili, the current President, and his policy of division against his own people, which led to the people of Abkhazia and South Ossetia requesting their independence.

The representative of Georgia expressed concern about the uncontrolled situation, in particular in relation to radioactive materials and the accumulation of conventional weapons in the so-called occupied territories. Those territories are not occupied; the events that the representative of Georgia spoke of are not happening.

In order to convince the Committee of this, we suggest that one simple step needs to be taken in particular: recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, so that these subjects of international law can take part in international forums and the relevant control mechanisms. That goes far beyond the framework of the First Committee's work,

and we shall hardly be able to solve the problem here in this room.

In that context, my delegation calls on our colleagues from Georgia to avoid politicizing our Committee's work and to focus on solving those issues that fall within the Committee's agenda.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation rejects the statement made by the Canadian delegation.

First, the representative of Canada said that the testing of a ballistic missile in April was thoroughly provocative and unhelpful. In fact, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a space satellite for peaceful purposes, in a transparent manner and following all necessary procedures as a State party to the Outer Space Treaty and the Convention on Registration of Launched Objects, including the prior notification of its launch to the relevant international organizations. In Canada's eyes, any rocket launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will look like a ballistic missile.

Secondly, the representative of Canada said it was sad that a country experiencing dire poverty had invested so much in its weapons programme. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been developing its weapons programme because its supreme national interests were jeopardized, that is, its security was exposed to severe threat by the nuclear blackmail of the United States, continued over several decades. National security comes first, before anything else. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea possesses a nuclear deterrent to defend its sovereignty. Economic development will follow now that it has a solid guarantee of peace and security.

Mr. Makharoblishvili (Georgia): I shall not take too much of the Committee's time, but I have to say that it is regrettable that our Russian colleagues have not only disregarded the findings of some institutions and commissions, but have also forgotten the position of the Russian leadership, which has explicitly stated that aggression against Georgia was planned well in advance and then conducted.

I also remind our Russian colleagues that military presence and effective control of the territories concerned does represent their occupation.

Furthermore, I remind our Russian friends that this Organization and many others have adopted numerous resolutions and statements underlining Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. It will be the Russian side politicizing this venue when it refers to recognition of Georgian regions, as well as referring to the elections that have been democratically conducted in Georgia.

Georgia has in the past taken many steps to engage itself with Russia in a meaningful political dialogue. Unfortunately, Russia has not reciprocated. If the elections meant a turning point for the Russian leadership, the Georgian Government, whoever they might be now or in the future, would be ready to engage in a meaningful political dialogue — of course, emphasizing the principles of international law.

We hope that, at some point, with the efforts of the international community, we shall, instead of reminding the Russian Federation of some of its international commitments, be commending its decisions to pledge the non-use of force with regard to Georgia, which Georgia has already done; to demilitarize Georgian territory and de-occupy Georgian regions; and to engage in a meaningful political dialogue with our country.

Organization of work

The Chair: The Committee will begin the second phase of its work — the thematic discussion on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee — tomorrow at 3 p.m.

Unfortunately, we were unable today to have the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its past sessions. That will take place tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.