



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

First Committee

13th meeting

Friday, 13 October 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

*In the absence of the Chair, Ms. Raadik (Estonia),
Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

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

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

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

The Acting Chair: In accordance with its programme of work, the Committee will first hear a briefing by the Chair of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, Her Excellency Ms. Heidi Hulan, Ambassador of Canada to Austria and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to international organizations in Vienna. Following her statement, the Committee will change to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions, after which the Committee will continue listening to statements on the nuclear-weapon cluster.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Hulan.

Ms. Hulan (Canada) (spoke in French): It is truly a privilege for me to be here today. I would first like to warmly thank High Representative Nakamitsu for inviting me to address the Committee today.

It is difficult to believe that it has been nearly a year since the General Assembly's adoption of Canada's resolution 71/259, establishing a high-level expert preparatory group tasked with drafting a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear

weapons (FMCT). Although that title is rather easy to pronounce, especially in French, from now on I will refer to it as the preparatory group. The resolution, co-sponsored by Germany and the Netherlands and supported by 177 delegations in this room, was the start of an important process that I truly believe has the potential to serve as a catalyst in the negotiations on this treaty. I will explain my reasoning shortly, but I would first like to express my sincere thanks to all the delegations that supported Canada's efforts to promote the treaty, particularly during the past year.

According to the resolution's mandate, the preparatory group will consider and make recommendations on substantial elements of a future treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of the Conference on Disarmament's document CD/1299 and its mandate. With a view to making possible recommendations, the preparatory group will also examine the report (A/70/81) of the 2014-2015 Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as the points of view expressed by Member States on the subject of a treaty in 2013 and 2016. The group has met once since its establishment, from 31 July to 11 August in Geneva. It is an honour to chair that process, and it is in that capacity that I address the Committee today. However, I would like to emphasize that the summary that I will present today is a reflection of my personal impressions of the work of the experts and does not prejudice our

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

17-32513 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



deliberations and final recommendations. Before going into detail on the first meeting of the preparatory group, I would like to take a moment to put the process into context.

(spoke in English)

The FMCT preparatory group was not the only significant initiative that the First Committee launched last year. The FMCT process was created at the same time as the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which will begin its work next year. One thing that was very clear to me from the conduct and discussions that took place in the first meeting of the FMCT preparatory group this summer was that more work on the technical side of nuclear disarmament verification can only benefit our collective efforts, and I am confident that the Group is in very good hands with our Norwegian colleagues. I wish them well as they conduct their work.

The FMCT process has also run parallel to the negotiations and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I am certain that members will have heard, as I did, Ambassador Whyte's very interesting briefing yesterday on that Treaty (see A/C.1/72/PV.12). One thing in her briefing that struck me was the importance of an inclusive process that is responsive to the new international context. Those are themes that you will also hear from me. That context makes it clear just how high the stakes are nowadays when it comes to non-proliferation and disarmament. Needless to say, this room is populated with delegations from States representing the full range of views on the Treaty, from its strongest supporters to its biggest sceptics. However, one point on which I am confident that all our views converge is that the Treaty is not in conflict with the FMCT process. Irrespective of our positions on the Treaty, it is very clear that concrete steps — such as the effective legal prohibition of the production of materials that are required to make nuclear weapons — remain indispensable to progress on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

There has been some public debate regarding the continued relevance of an FMCT in the context of a prohibition treaty. Even prior to the conclusion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, some argued that the time for an FMCT had passed. I could not disagree more. In fact, I would argue that an FMCT is more relevant a pursuit than ever for this body, because, as I think we all know and as has been widely

acknowledged, the debate on nuclear disarmament has become increasingly polarized. While the FMCT preparatory group is not a panacea for the current dysfunction in our disarmament machinery, it does provide an effective forum for reducing tensions and engaging in much-needed bridge-building, with the involvement of representatives of nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, States that are party to various political blocs and multilateral security frameworks and parties on all sides of the Prohibition Treaty equation. I emphasize that because it is precisely that constellation of interests that will have to be taken into account if progress is to be achieved on an effective and internationally verifiable FMCT.

The theme of inclusivity weaves its way throughout that process and extends outside the 25-member preparatory group as well. Last year's resolution, as the Committee is aware, decided that the Chair would convene two informal consultative meetings here in New York. That represents an innovative mechanism for engaging the broader United Nations membership on the work of the preparatory group. I thank the more than 100 delegations represented in this room that attended the first informal consultative meeting in March, which I view as a real indication of the ongoing interest and widespread support for a treaty. More than that, the informal consultative mechanism is critical to ensuring that the entire United Nations membership remains engaged in the necessary diplomacy to hold the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to account in negotiating a treaty. As Chair, I am personally committed to ensuring that the views of the entire membership are taken into account in the preparatory group's work at every stage in the process. The inclusive character of the process and the iterative path that we are treading between the General Assembly and the preparatory group is something that I view as one of the group's greatest strengths as it moves towards an outcome next year.

I would now like to say a few words on the preparatory group's meeting to date. The session, as I have said, took place in July and August, and its deliberations were substantive and highly interactive. I was particularly struck by the genuine spirit of goodwill and the collegial atmosphere that pervaded the meeting from the outset. On a personal note, I have to say that it is extremely humbling to chair a group of such distinguished, dedicated and professional experts.

One thing I learned in chairing that first meeting was that keeping our discussions moving in a productive and substantive direction required real clarity of purpose within the group. In that regard, I found it useful at the time, and still do, to remind ourselves about what the preparatory group is not doing. We are not negotiating a treaty. We are not seeking to narrow the range of options for what a future treaty might look like, unless, of course, some convergence happens naturally in the room. We are not taking issues off the table. We are not triaging, or setting aside contextual issues such as the challenging dynamics in the contemporary security environment, which a number of members of the group have raised. And we are not seeking to resolve the real political obstacles that are preventing action in the Conference on Disarmament. What the group is doing, as its name suggests, is preparing negotiations. That means everything possible short of actual negotiations, in order to facilitate that work when it does occur. In that regard, a key priority for me as Chair was maintaining a fact-based, policy-neutral approach to discussions. I encouraged the group to focus its work on the added value that it can bring to the debate and especially to avoid simply repeating the debate conducted by the 2014-2015 Group of Governmental Experts.

Experts were not expected to make concessions on their national positions, which would of course be detrimental to any future negotiating posture. That created the freedom for the group to openly and frankly debate the merits of all options and to examine how they would relate to each other as part of the future architecture of a treaty. I can report that the group succeeded in distilling a concise, plain-language array of potential provisions across all treaty aspects, including its definitions, scope, verification and legal and institutional framework. We now have a comprehensive sense of the options that exist for treaty provisions in those areas, as well as how they intersect each other. The group also had a very important series of discussions on the considerations that would have to be brought to bear in selecting from those options. And I was impressed with some unexpected substantive progress in the areas of legal and institutional arrangements, themes that the earlier Group of Governmental Experts did not have time to fully explore in 2014 and 2015. In those areas, the group also benefited from expert presentations on a number of issues, including legal and governance questions, treaty verification and transparency and confidence-building measures.

In keeping with the spirit of inclusivity, the Secretariat presented the views of the previous Group of Governmental Experts report that were submitted last year to the Secretary-General by Member States not represented in the group. As Chair, I was also pleased to convey my summary to experts of the informal consultative meeting in March. Thankfully, the group's mandate was not to resolve the challenges in the Conference on Disarmament, and I can report that we succeeded in avoiding protracted debates regarding where negotiations should take place.

I must say that I found the detailed and technical discussions that occurred on the core issues that I have already raised to be heartening, and they went beyond well-worn political positions, including among States that possess nuclear weapons. I firmly believe that this type of dialogue pays dividends of its own. In fact, while Canada is determined to see a successful outcome of the current process, we also see the process itself as critical and as an important transparency and confidence-building measure. Without wanting to diminish in any way the very real divisions of substance that remain on the core issue, the goodwill that exists within the preparatory group is encouraging and I hope to see that tone continue into its final session next year. However, while I am pleased with the success we have had so far, I should note that the group is extremely pressed for time. We are already halfway through our mandate period and a great deal of work remains to be done at our second session. While the tone of the first meeting bodes well for success, it is far too soon to speak of results.

Finally, I would note that a sentiment that was clear for most experts in the group was regret that a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices has not already been negotiated, a position that Canada very much shares in its national capacity. In the absence of agreement within the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that includes negotiating an FMCT, the preparatory group will continue its current deliberations consistent with resolution 71/259 and do its utmost to submit a report to the Secretary-General that meets the First Committee's expectations. As per the resolution establishing the preparatory group, if the CD is able to agree on a balanced programme of work that includes FMCT negotiations, the work of the preparatory group reverts to it. In the meantime, I look forward to convening the

second informal consultative meeting here in New York in February 2018 in order for the broader membership to have an opportunity to provide input on what they view as the essential elements of an eventual FMCT. I hope that all delegations will be able to attend and participate in that session.

Before concluding, I would once again like to warmly thank Germany and the Netherlands for their co-sponsorship of last year's resolution, this year's decision and their strong support for all that has occurred in between. I also thank the overwhelming number of delegations in this room that year after year register their conviction that a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons will make a substantive contribution to peace and security. Most of all, I would like to thank the members of the preparatory group, many of whom are here today, for the dedication and professionalism that they have brought to the task. If we can produce a final report that captures in plain language the full range of options for treaty provisions, as well as additional considerations that would have to be brought to bear in choosing among those options, it will constitute important guidance for future negotiators and a meaningful step towards the negotiation of a treaty.

The Acting Chair: I thank Ambassador Hulan for her briefing.

In keeping with the Committee's established practice, I will now suspend the meeting in order to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion on the briefing we have just heard through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 3.25 p.m. and resumed at 3.50 p.m.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now hear from the remaining speakers on the rolling list for the nuclear-weapon cluster. Before we proceed, I would like to remind delegations that we are scheduled to conclude our consideration of this cluster this afternoon. For that to be possible, it is important that all speakers keep to the stipulated time limit of five minutes when speaking in their national capacity. The Committee will continue to use the buzzer to remind delegations when their time limit has been reached.

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of

Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

Bangladesh subscribes to the notion that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security can be assured only by the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We share the concerns about the slow pace and progress of nuclear-arms reduction efforts and the sustained and enhanced investments that continue to be made in further improving, planning and researching nuclear weapons, their means of delivery and related facilities. We also recognize the immediate need to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons, including through complete de-programming and de-alerting.

Against that prevailing scenario, Bangladesh considers the adoption earlier this year of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to be a significant development. Bangladesh signed the Treaty on 20 September and considers it a critical instrument in delegitimizing nuclear weapons and thereby mitigating the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could arise from their use. Efforts to portray the Treaty as a divisive instrument are unwarranted, considering that its avowed objective is to further complement and reinforce the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), particularly in its article VI. We consider the Treaty to be fairly comprehensive and forward-looking insofar as it contains provisions for eventually enabling nuclear-weapon States to accede to it and for independently verifying their elimination of their nuclear weapons in an irreversible and transparent manner.

Bangladesh remains committed to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects and considers nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to be mutually reinforcing. We support the effective implementation of all three pillars of the NPT and hope that the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty will be able to overcome the setbacks suffered at the preceding one. We reiterate our grave concerns about the repeated nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and urge all concerned to help to de-escalate tension in the region and to resume dialogue in order to find a lasting solution to the rapidly evolving situation. Bangladesh also recognizes the continued critical importance of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action concluded between the Islamic Republic of

Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany in 2015.

Bangladesh continues to align itself with other States parties in advocating an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In principle, we support the call for holding annual high-level plenary meetings of the General Assembly to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests on 29 August.

We remain particularly concerned about the fact that the work on a legally binding instrument providing assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States remains hostage to the overall dynamics in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We reiterate the continued relevance of commencing negotiations in the CD on an effective, non-discriminatory, legally binding and internationally and effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), which should cover existing stocks. We look forward to constructive suggestions in that regard from the high-level expert preparatory group on an FMCT.

Bangladesh remains convinced that, with the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system and verification regime in place, peaceful uses of nuclear technology can make an effective contribution to our common endeavour to achieve sustainable development. Article IV of the NPT obliges States parties to cooperate with one another in the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological knowledge, as well as information on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

Bangladesh looks forward to the high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to be held in 2018 to review progress on that critical issue. We stress the importance of observing 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and once again congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize this year.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): In a speech in Geneva in January, President Xi Jinping spoke of building a community of a shared future for humankind in order to realize the shared benefits for us all, as well as of improving the international nuclear-disarmament process. That is the only way to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and is an important step

towards achieving that community of a shared future for humankind.

First, therefore, China proposes establishing a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security system to create a favourable international environment for nuclear disarmament. Secondly, we must resolutely safeguard international arms-control and disarmament mechanisms such as the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Conference on Disarmament. The NPT represents customary international law in the field of international arms control and non-proliferation and we cannot use pragmatism or double standards in that context. Thirdly, we must stick to a step-by-step process in nuclear disarmament whereby all nuclear-weapon States must take effective measures to mitigate the role of nuclear weapons in national security policy, renounce a policy of nuclear deterrence based on the first use of nuclear weapons, refrain from deploying nuclear weapons abroad, abandon the development and deployment of missile defence systems, which undermine the global strategic balance, and work effectively to prevent the weaponization of outer space or an arms race there.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was recently opened for signature, which is something about which China is seriously concerned. In the context of nuclear disarmament and in terms of the ultimate goal of such endeavours, China's position is by no means different from that of the Treaty. We believe that, in order to achieve nuclear disarmament, we must maintain international stability and security and ensure undiminished security for all. We must work to make gradual progress and ensure that the relevant processes are based on the principle of consensus and are conducted within the framework of the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms with the participation of all sides. China is therefore seriously concerned about the way in which the Treaty was forced through and concluded by a vote outside the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and without the participation of the five nuclear-weapon States.

We believe that the Treaty is in direct conflict with the NPT and jeopardizes its authority and effectiveness. It does not reflect customary international law or constitute a new contribution to that law. It does not supersede any existing international law and is therefore not legally binding on any States that

are not parties to it. China did not take part in the negotiations on the Treaty and will not sign it. Despite that, however, China's position in support of nuclear disarmament remains completely unchanged. China has always followed the path of peace and development and adhered to the principle of self-defence. While we have possessed nuclear weapons from the start, we have always advocated their comprehensive ban and complete destruction. We have honoured our commitment to no first use of nuclear weapons and to refraining from using or threatening to use them on non-nuclear-weapon countries. I will not repeat all our statements on the subject, but our nuclear policy positions remain unchanged.

China has always supported new international nuclear-disarmament efforts and worked sincerely to fulfil its obligations and take the disarmament process forward with concrete solutions. We have a positive attitude towards the NPT review process. We have always supported the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its objectives, and we remain committed to a moratorium on nuclear tests. With regard to a fissile material cut-off treaty, we believe that the relevant negotiations should be started in accordance with the Shannon mandate and on the basis of a balanced and comprehensive plan. Chinese experts have also participated constructively in the FMCT expert preparatory group and we hope that it will conduct its work in accordance with its mandate in order to finally come up with an outcome that will strengthen the authority of the Conference on Disarmament.

China attaches importance to nuclear-disarmament verification and has consistently conducted research on verification measures and technical means and submitted the relevant position papers to the United Nations. In conclusion, China will work tirelessly with the international community in our efforts to achieve a final comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons and their complete destruction.

Mr. Yuwan (Israel): I will deliver an abbreviated version of my delegation's statement today in order to keep to the time limit. The full version will be available on PaperSmart.

Israel maintains a policy of responsibility and restraint in the nuclear domain consonant with the underlying goals and principles of the non-proliferation regime. Accordingly, and wherever possible, Israel joins and brings itself closer to international norms on nuclear

safety, security and non-proliferation. Israel signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 and is an active contributor to the development of all the elements of the Treaty's verification regime. In that regard, we transmit data from our certified seismic stations to the International Data Centre, an obligation that some States of the region have yet to undertake, unfortunately. In a clear indication of our support for the CTBT, Israel was one of the sponsors of Security Council resolution 2310 (2016).

Israel values the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and recognizes its contribution to the non-proliferation regime. At the same time, however, it is also clear that the NPT is inadequate to fully address the deliberate advancement of clandestine military nuclear programmes by States with little or no regard for the international legal obligations they have undertaken. Nowhere is the problem more apparent than in the Middle East, where four of the five cases of non-compliance with the NPT emanate from, specifically in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya. The fifth case of non-compliance with the Treaty is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is a source of grave concern in itself, given that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is heavily involved with proliferation to the Middle East. Israel has joined the international community in condemning the recent nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and has expressed its concern about the danger that it poses to regional and global stability.

Unfortunately, despite its importance, the NPT has not prevented substantial violations of its obligations by those member States and has been inadequate to remedy them once they have been discovered. Iran is an illuminating case in point, as it has remained the most significant threat to the Middle East and beyond even after the agreement between Iran and the 5+1 group was reached. The NPT has been inadequate to prevent the advancement of Iran's nuclear programme, owing to Iran's acts of concealment and duplicity. When those violations were eventually discovered, the NPT lacked the tools to recognize and to address them appropriately.

Israel did not participate in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, concluded on 7 July in New York, and voted against the First Committee and General Assembly resolutions pertaining to the process. Israel's deep reservations regarding the initiative were based on substantive as well as procedural considerations. On the substantive

side, Israel is concerned, among other things, about arms-control and disarmament processes that fail to give due regard to the security and stability context in the drafting of disarmament measures. Such endeavours may result in arrangements and agreements that hinder rather than reinforce disarmament processes, as well as global and regional security. On the procedural aspect, Israel firmly believes that such negotiations should be undertaken in the appropriate forums, under the appropriate rules of procedure, which would not undermine national security considerations. It should be emphasized that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not create customary international law related to the subject or the content of the Treaty, contribute to its development or indicate its existence. Moreover, it does not reflect legal norms that apply to States that are not party to the Treaty and does not alter in any way the existing rights or obligations of States that have not acceded to it.

While there is no dispute that the 20-year stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament is a long period and that we should make every effort to return it to the path of negotiations, we must at the same time seriously consider the implications and disadvantages that result from using independent processes, particularly the diversion of international attention towards weaker or less effective solutions.

Lastly, Israel has always endorsed a realistic approach and policy regarding regional security and arms control, rooted in our belief that the broad range of security concerns of all the States of a region should be taken into account and addressed realistically in a direct regional dialogue. Unfortunately, while Israel has demonstrated sincere commitment to the process of direct dialogue and confidence-building in the region, our Arab neighbours have preferred to invest their efforts in divisive resolutions such as that regarding the so-called risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, introduced annually in this Committee. Israel was disappointed to see that it has once again been submitted this year as draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.2, and regrets the choice of the Group of Arab States to endorse a path of confrontation rather than conciliation. Resolutions such as these serve only short-sighted political interests and hamper the long-term prospects for a better security environment in the Middle East.

Mr. Viinanen (Finland): All of us here today share grave concerns about nuclear weapons and their proliferation. As long as those horrific weapons exist, we

run the risk of a catastrophe with immeasurable human and humanitarian cost. That is why we are following the path chosen by the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in disbelief and condemn it in the strongest terms. Its provocative nuclear and missile tests are dangerous and irresponsible, and constitute an acute threat to international peace and security. We once again urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to completely and irreversibly abandon its illegal nuclear-missile programmes and comply with its international obligations.

Our common goal is a world without nuclear weapons. To achieve that, we need a unified and inclusive approach. To be effective, nuclear disarmament must involve all countries possessing nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) must remain the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament. Its key role in the rules-based international security architecture must not be jeopardized in any way.

We reiterate our call to all nuclear-weapon States and States possessing such weapons to take concrete action in the areas of nuclear disarmament and confidence-building. Increased transparency, enhanced verification, de-alerting, negative security assurances and a no-first-use policy are among the steps that can mitigate the threat posed by nuclear weapons and pave the way for nuclear disarmament. Finland is especially concerned about the thousands of tactical nuclear weapons stationed in Europe in our vicinity. They are not covered by any binding verifiable agreement, a gap that must be filled. There should also be clear distinctions between them and conventional weapons both in military doctrines and in exercises.

One concrete way to advance nuclear non-proliferation is to ensure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the efficient implementation of its monitoring and verification mechanisms. The voluntary commitment of all States but one to a moratorium on nuclear tests is an important confidence-building measure, but it cannot replace a treaty with legally binding obligations. We urge all States that have not yet done so, especially the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

The establishment of a high-level expert preparatory group on the fissile material cut-off

treaty is a welcome step. We must show determination and commence negotiations on a treaty banning the production of weapons-grade fissile material as soon as possible. It is important to ensure that a future treaty can also deal appropriately with existing stockpiles. The agreement between the international community and Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is a major multilateral achievement in nuclear non-proliferation. We call on all parties to the JCPOA to continue implementing it in full.

Finland is an advocate of pragmatism. We are committed to promoting initiatives that allow for concrete steps, even small ones, that can take us closer to our common goal. We find initiatives such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism extremely valuable, and we participate actively in both. Finland will serve as the international coordinator for the Global Initiative for the next two years. We see many opportunities to move forward if we act together. We must focus on the issues that unite us and we must support and strengthen the NPT. That is our main message in this First Committee meeting and in the ongoing NPT review process.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.28.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil): Brazil associates itself with the statements made previously by the representatives of Mexico, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, and Argentina, on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

We would also like to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace prize, in well-deserved recognition of the Campaign's efforts leading to the recent adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The nuclear threat has been at the forefront of the disarmament and non-proliferation debate in the United Nations since the General Assembly adopted its very first resolution. More than two decades of virtual paralysis in multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations have shown us that new approaches are necessary if we are to accomplish our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Bearing that in mind, Brazil was one of the proponents of the negotiations that led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of

Nuclear Weapons, which bans the only category of weapons of mass destruction that was not subject to a global prohibition.

That historic achievement reflects the conviction of most of the international community that weapons of mass destruction do not enhance national or international security and have no place in military doctrines in the twenty-first century. That is particularly relevant at a time when tensions are escalating between countries possessing such weapons, turning a regional situation into a serious threat to the entire planet. In establishing a universal ban on nuclear weapons, the new instrument contributes to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and strengthens the existing international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, including by combating incentives to proliferate, which is key to the sustainability of the regime.

There are some other steps that we can take towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Adequate implementation of article VI of the NPT and the outcome documents of its Review Conferences is long overdue. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is still pending. We especially urge the eight remaining States listed in the CTBT's annex 2 to take individual initiatives to sign and ratify it without further delay.

Regarding fissile material, we welcome the start of discussions in the high-level expert preparatory group. On disarmament verification, the Group of Governmental Experts to be convened in 2018 could shed light on possible ways to build trust among nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States in nuclear disarmament. We hope that those initiatives will also contribute to progress on multilateral nuclear disarmament.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to present draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.28, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", which Brazil is submitting jointly on behalf of Indonesia, New Zealand and South Africa. The text of the draft resolution has been circulated to all delegations and I would like to make some brief comments on its key elements.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has been acknowledged as a significant interim measure for combating nuclear proliferation and supporting nuclear disarmament. The existing treaties that establish those zones — Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and

Central Asia — cover the entire southern hemisphere and encompass more than 100 countries, showing the willingness of a majority of States to eliminate the most lethal and indiscriminate category of weapons of mass destruction. We call on all relevant States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the protocols to the treaties and urge all nuclear-weapon States to withdraw any reservations or interpretive declarations contrary to the treaties' object and purpose.

In addition, the draft resolution welcomes the steps taken that envision the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between the States concerned, including the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and encourages efforts to reinforce coordination among nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia. Finally, it welcomes the most recent relevant development in nuclear disarmament, the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and its recognition of the important contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to global and regional peace and security. We invite all States to sponsor and support the draft resolution.

The Acting Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to remind delegations to kindly limit their statements to five minutes when speaking in a national capacity.

Mr. Benard Estrada (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her briefing.

Guatemala aligns itself with the statement delivered previously by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

While the international community has unfortunately become used to the existence of nuclear weapons, they are anything but normal, which is why the issue is of equal concern to us all. In that regard, the international community should act in order to ensure that the political and legal commitments that we have made in recent years result in an effective international process that enables the adoption of specific, immediate and definitive measures leading to the prohibition and elimination of all nuclear weapons as soon as possible. In that regard, my delegation would like to point to the International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons*, which states:

“the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of international humanitarian law”. (*A/51/218, annex, para. 105*)

As my delegation has stated in a number of different forums, we believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has not been implemented in a balanced way. While significant progress has been made on the peaceful use of nuclear energy and non-proliferation, the same is not true for nuclear disarmament, where the progress has been much more modest, not to say symbolic. Some quantitative reductions have been made, but they have been accompanied by qualitative improvements that in terms of nuclear power make the reductions even smaller, while the step-by-step approach outlined in the 2010 Action Plan is not being implemented and the disarmament efforts of nuclear-weapon States are inadequate.

Nevertheless, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a landmark of hope for the international community, and it bridges the legal gap by categorically prohibiting such weapons. As we said in the Committee's general debate (see A/C.1/72/PV.4), Guatemala signed it on 20 September and is currently ratifying it. We are committed to international peace and security and especially to the promotion of nuclear disarmament as a priority, recognizing the threat represented by weapons of mass destruction and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of their use.

Guatemala is firmly committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We are a strong advocate of complete and verifiable disarmament. In addition, my country is very proud to be a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first densely populated zone free of nuclear weapons and serves as an example for other regions to create similar zones. We reiterate to nuclear-weapon States that we reject the very existence of nuclear weapons. We firmly believe that the NPT is the cornerstone of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The international community must therefore make every effort to achieve its universalization. That is why we call on the international community to work together towards that goal. We also urge States that are not parties to the NPT, particularly annex 2 States, to accede to it unconditionally as non-nuclear-weapon States as a matter of priority, with

the aim of contributing to the nuclear-disarmament process. We also reiterate the need to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the belief that they are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

We also renew our commitment to strengthening the cooperation and consultation mechanisms among the various nuclear-weapon-free zones. We will continue to promote the exchange of information between those zones and work to coordinate our positions as appropriate. In that regard, we welcome the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in our discussions in the First Committee.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Guatemala reiterates the importance of holding a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament in 2018, as decided in General Assembly resolutions. It will be an important opportunity for reviewing the progress that has been made in nuclear disarmament and in promoting that important objective, which contributes to the cross-cutting implementation of the founding pillars of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.17.

Ms. Mancotywa-Kumsha (South Africa): South Africa associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of African States, Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Mexico, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

We would like to warmly congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. That well-deserved and timely award is a clear recognition of the active role played by civil-society organizations in the area of nuclear disarmament and in pursuit of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

History has demonstrated the immense, uncontrollable capacity and indiscriminate nature of nuclear-weapon detonations, which can reach well beyond national borders, leaving a trail of death and destruction in their wake. The continued existence of such weapons is a threat to humankind. The current security situation in North-East Asia, characterized

by heightened tension, further illustrates that the development and possession of such weapons do not enhance security but rather constitute a source of international and regional insecurity, accompanied by an increased risk of their use.

South Africa welcomes the adoption and opening for signature this year of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It is our hope that this Treaty, which stigmatizes and delegitimizes the possession of nuclear weapons, will help to strengthen the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, leading ultimately to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. Beyond working for the Treaty's entry into force and universalization, efforts must be made to achieve full implementation of the commitments made by the States parties in fulfilment of their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), particularly the nuclear-disarmament obligations that have been neglected for too long.

South Africa believes that the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems and modernization undermines and is contrary to the legal obligations and commitments set out in the NPT. Action must be taken to implement the long-standing disarmament and non-proliferation obligations and commitments undertaken in the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including, among others, the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We hope that the 2020 NPT Review Conference will successfully address those issues. In that regard, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices should remain a priority for the international community. Such a treaty should serve both the non-proliferation and the disarmament objectives. A ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons would be a step towards a nuclear-weapon-free world and would reinforce the ideals of the NPT and complement the CTBT.

In conclusion, I would like to say that it is clear that nuclear weapons have no place in the current security environment because of the potentially dire humanitarian impact of their use. Rather than deterring conflict and war, as some allege, nuclear weapons remain a constant source of insecurity and a driver of proliferation. The huge amount of public resources

expended on the production and maintenance of nuclear weapons stands in sharp contrast to those directed towards socioeconomic development, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Nuclear disarmament is not only a legal obligation but also a moral and ethical imperative. In that regard, my delegation once again has the honour of introducing for the Committee's consideration draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.17, entitled "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world", which we hope will again receive wide support.

Mr. Thammavongsa (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Viet Nam, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/72/PV.10). However, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Nuclear weapons remain a matter of serious concern for international peace and security because as long as nuclear weapons exist, there is the risk of their accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or unintentional detonation, exposing humankind and the environment to their catastrophic effects. Therefore, we believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

In that connection, my delegation welcomes the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 20 September 2017. The Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches importance to the Treaty, and that is why it is one of the countries that signed it at the first opportunity. My delegation believes that its early entry into force will contribute significantly to the efforts of the international community towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. In the same vein, my delegation also welcomes the General Assembly meeting commemorating the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, on 26 September 2017.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, as it is the only relevant international instrument that is being enforced and is nearly universal. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to pursue in good faith effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons aimed at the full

implementation of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. My delegation supports the implementation of the Treaty's three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy, which are all well articulated in the Treaty. We strongly believe that implementation serves the best interest of the international community. Those three pillars are meant to be implemented equally, yet discrepancy remains, as nuclear disarmament is lagging behind.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), to which the Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches great importance, would certainly contribute to moving forward nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, more than 20 years after its adoption, the CTBT remains ineffective. It is therefore the duty of the international community to ensure the entry into force of that Treaty, about which we are optimistic. In that regard, we hope that countries that have not done so will sign and ratify the CTBT, in particular the remaining eight annex 2 States.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches great importance to the creation of regional nuclear-weapon-free-zones, since we believe that they have significantly contributed to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as well as the enhancement of regional and global peace and security. Therefore, we are a strong supporter of preserving the South-East Asian region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic believes that if all Member States have a strong determination and the political will to act for the common good and to follow up with concrete action on what we said and agreed, only then will we achieve a world free of nuclear weapons — something for which most, if not all, Member States earnestly hope. Let us work harder and step forward together to achieve the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Tene (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with its statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and with the statement delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

We wish to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

Nuclear disarmament remains Indonesia's highest priority. Indonesia was among the first countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, on 20 September 2017. We believe that that instrument could significantly contribute to the effort to break the ongoing standstill in nuclear disarmament and to addressing the deep concerns regarding the catastrophic humanitarian impact in the event of a detonation of nuclear weapons. We should intensify our efforts to ensure that the Treaty enters into force at the earliest.

Indonesia's commitment to the new Treaty, however, should never be interpreted as diminishing its commitment to the continued relevance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). On the contrary, Indonesia believes that the NPT is an indispensable instrument to prevent global nuclear proliferation, to make progress on nuclear disarmament with the eventual objective of achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Indonesia underlines the importance of a balanced undertaking of the three pillars of the NPT, which are mutually reinforcing. Indonesia deeply regrets that the grand bargain, the basis of the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, continues to be ignored.

Indonesia emphasizes the importance of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and urges the convening of the long-delayed conference.

We also underscore the necessity of facilitating the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and urge the annex 2 States that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty to do so.

We believe that in order to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons, some additional measures need to be pursued. Pending the achievement of total global nuclear disarmament, and as a State that has renounced the nuclear weapons option, we would like to emphasize that security assurances are one of the additional measures that should be concluded as a matter of urgency. For countries that never took the nuclear weapon path, it is important that we be given unambiguous, legally binding and universal security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States. Indonesia wishes to underline the urgent need for early

agreement on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to assure States that do not possess nuclear weapons about the non-use or threat of use of such weapons.

Indonesia remains concerned about the security doctrines of some States that still rely on nuclear weapons. We believe that reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines is inconsistent with international legal obligations and commitments with regard to nuclear disarmament. We therefore call on States to abandon the possibility of use of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines. We are particularly concerned about nuclear weapons modernization programmes. We fail to see how such programmes would fit into the nuclear-weapon States' commitments on nuclear disarmament. We are yet to be convinced as to how those modernization programmes would contribute to nuclear disarmament efforts.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons significantly affects regional and global security. We believe that a secure international environment and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing. We need to create an environment that is conducive to the promotion of international commitments on arms control and disarmament. Progress on nuclear disarmament is unacceptably slow. We need to redouble our efforts to achieve the shared goal of a nuclear-free world. It is high time for all States to show their good faith in nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Reda (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to state that my country endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the statement delivered by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

My delegation congratulates the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and on its exceptional efforts in bringing about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted in July 2017.

My Government believes that strengthening the universalization of all conventions and treaties on nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, adhering to them at the global level without discrimination and complete elimination are essential cornerstones for truly assuring the international community that the use or threat of use of such weapons will never arise. That

would also help to promote and maintain international peace and security and to ensure a safe and sound future for our communities and future generations.

To that end, my delegation voted in favour of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted in July. The delegation of Iraq believes that the adoption of the Treaty was the result of continuous and multiple efforts undertaken by Member States over the past 20 years.

The Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was unable to adopt an outcome document in 2015. That represents a major challenge at this critical and sensitive time for the world, and will undoubtedly negatively affect the Treaty and its credibility. Greater flexibility and political will are needed in order to ensure that the work of the 2020 Review Conference will be successful and will produce outcomes that address the concerns of all Member States.

To that end, Iraq reiterates the importance of demonstrating serious commitment to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. That is the fourth pillar of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The establishment of such a zone would undoubtedly strengthen nuclear disarmament efforts and reinforce regional and international peace and security. Furthermore, Iraq believes that Israel must eliminate its nuclear weapons, accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear State, and subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That is will be extremely critical and crucial in ensuring that the Middle East zone can be successfully established.

The Chair took the Chair.

Iraq calls for the development of an international, legally binding safeguards instrument for non-nuclear States, under which the nuclear States shall guarantee not to use or threaten to use their nuclear weapons. Means for achieving that goal must be established. Negative security assurances are a just and legitimate requirement for non-nuclear States, which have voluntarily renounced the option to develop a nuclear military force by acceding to the Treaty.

Nuclear terrorism is one of the major and most dangerous threats to international peace. Strict nuclear security measures are necessary to prohibit terrorists

and other unauthorized parties from having access to nuclear material. There are terrorist groups that have the will and the capacity to cause massive nuclear destruction if they are able to obtain the necessary technology on the black market. That is why the call for the establishment of a world without nuclear weapons and for their destruction is a legitimate one that will rid the world of the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Iraq attaches great importance to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Iraq and the Kingdom of Belgium, which co-chair the 2017 tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty, are making efforts to step up its entry into force.

Mr. Sofe (Samoa): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and your Bureau on guiding the work of the Committee. You can be assured of Samoa's full support for your leadership throughout this session.

During the 1970s, the Pacific region was tainted with nuclear testing, and some of our island countries became sites for those tests. The scars of terror and mistrust from those real-life experiences have given our region a shared point of reference that has shaped our perspective on nuclear disarmament and has made us strong advocates for disarmament. We demonstrated that unity of purpose with the establishment of the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty — the Rarotonga Treaty, which came into force in 1986.

The existence of the Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty has played a deterrent role in the effort to safeguard our region against nuclear weapons and also to protect the ocean — the Pacific nations' main resource — from radioactive contamination caused by the dumping of nuclear waste at sea. We are committed to cooperating and coordinating with other nuclear-weapon-free zones, States, international organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations on concrete actions to move us closer to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Samoa's determination to deter nuclear testing in the Pacific and anywhere else is evident in our becoming a State party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 2002 and to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995. We encourage those that have yet to ratify or accede to those Treaties to do so in order to provide a united and effective front to prevent the spread and use of nuclear weapons.

Samoa places great importance on the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee, given its mandate not only to discuss but also to find solutions to some of those seemingly intractable issues which have become increasingly magnified by recent events on the Korean peninsula. The developments that we are witnessing have reaffirmed our belief that the mere existence of nuclear weapons will never guarantee a peaceful world.

This year's session of our Committee has historical and special significance, since it is taking place against the backdrop of the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which 50 States, including Samoa, signed on 20 September during the high-level week of the General Assembly. That marked a breakthrough in the efforts towards nuclear disarmament and highlighted strong political commitments to achieving and maintaining a nuclear-free world. We encourage all Member States to sign and ratify the Treaty, as it will not impede or hinder but will strengthen existing nuclear non-proliferation regimes.

Samoa truly appreciates and recognizes the vital role of civil society in our joint fight to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of nuclear weapons and the like. A word of congratulation is therefore in order to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday, 6 October.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating Samoa's firm belief that the only guarantee humankind has against the use and the threat of use of nuclear weapons is through the non-possession and total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Mrs. Palacios Palacios (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): For Spain, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and the basis for furthering nuclear disarmament and the development of nuclear energy applications for civilian purposes. It is a key instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We welcome the constructive environment that prevailed in the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference. The main objective of this new review cycle should be to renew our commitment to the NPT, to strengthen the Treaty, to work on all matters of common concern and

to responsibly address important pending matters that we have yet to resolve in a satisfactory way.

At present, the main threat to the NPT and the non-proliferation regime is the nuclear and ballistic programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Spain strongly condemns the nuclear test conducted on 3 September and the multiple ballistic tests conducted by that country in flagrant violation of various Security Council resolutions. The North Korean nuclear and ballistic programme poses a very serious threat to international peace and security and to stability on the Korean peninsula.

We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to renounce its current defiance of the international community, to take clear measures to reduce tensions and to declare an unconditional moratorium on its nuclear and ballistic tests, which could pave the way towards substantive negotiations for the complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Likewise, we call on all Member States to strictly enforce the sanctions regime imposed by the Security Council.

Spain welcomes the nuclear agreement between the E3/EU+3 and Iran, which ensures the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. That agreement, endorsed by Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), shows the capacity of the international community to resolve a serious controversy through diplomatic means. We call on all parties to uphold and to implement it fully and in good faith.

The NPT is the basic framework for advancing nuclear disarmament, as provided for in its article VI. We take note of the implementation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. We urge that it be supported and expanded energetically, as called for by the entire international community. We extend that appeal to the rest of the nuclear-weapon States, which also bear an enormous responsibility that they must not avoid.

Spain is very sensitive to the discussion on the humanitarian impact of the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, but it does not share the approach of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We consider it necessary to promote a nuclear disarmament process that takes security issues into account, through concrete and realistic initiatives in which the nuclear

Powers participate. The action plan agreed upon at the 2010 NPT Review Conference remains fully in force and should guide our efforts.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) would be a firm step in the disarmament process. We believe that the moratorium on testing has become a de facto international standard, but in no case can it replace the CTBT. We therefore appeal to countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, especially those included in its annex 2, that they do so as soon as possible.

We support a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, which, in our view, should include, in a coherent way, aspects of both disarmament and non-proliferation. We are confident that the High-level Expert Preparatory Group established last year will make it possible to move in that direction.

Spain regrets that an agreement has not yet been reached on the future convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We reaffirm our support for the 1995 resolution and the obligations agreed to at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and we encourage all parties to demonstrate genuine political will to agree and to seek a consensus that would enable the holding of that conference, with the participation of all the countries of the region, as soon as possible.

The 2010 action plan also encourages us to discuss policies that can prevent the use of nuclear weapons and reduce their role in military and security doctrines. Similarly, it recommends reinforcing negative security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States, which would reinforce the non-proliferation regime.

Nuclear verification is also an essential element. Spain welcomes the momentum shown in that regard by the First Committee, which we hope will continue this year. Spain also supports a reduction in the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems, which provides an additional alternative to improve mutual trust.

With that, I conclude my statement. The full version is available on PaperSmart.

The Chair: I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.10.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): The international consensus reached at the first special session of the General

Assembly devoted to disarmament to systematically pursue nuclear disarmament is breaking down. As the international and regional security environment worsens, the goal of nuclear disarmament seems even more elusive. The principal reason is the lack of progress made by the nuclear-weapon States in fulfilling their nuclear disarmament obligations, while constantly shifting the goalposts towards additional non-proliferation measures that are cost-free for their own strategic calculus. The situation has been further compounded by the exercise of double standards in the application of non-proliferation norms for the sake of political expediency and economic benefits. Those discriminatory measures endanger strategic stability in the South Asia region and beyond.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is a vital and indispensable part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. It is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Regrettably, it has fallen short of expectations in fulfilling its *raison d'être* of nuclear disarmament. It was only a matter of time before the frustration brewing on the slow progress on nuclear disarmament boiled over, giving birth to an initiative launched outside the CD to ban nuclear weapons. However, that initiative faltered because it ignored the fundamental security considerations that underpin nuclear disarmament. While we empathize with the sense of disappointment that propelled its proponents, it only led us to the conclusion that the launch of such initiatives outside the CD, on a non-consensus basis and without all the key stakeholders on board, no matter how well-intentioned and justified, would not lead to any real change on the ground.

To promote a comprehensive disarmament agenda, a rules-based, equitable and non-discriminatory international order needs to be developed by taking the following steps. First, the security concerns of all States must be addressed. Secondly, there must be progress on strategic weapons, as well as on the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons. Thirdly, the international non-proliferation regime must be strengthened through objective criteria-based policies, pursuing treaties that are equitable and non-discriminatory and shunning exceptionalism driven by strategic, political or commercial considerations. Fourthly, negative security assurances must be extended to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Any arms control, non-proliferation or disarmament treaty that does not lead to undiminished security for

all States would be a non-starter, as evidenced by the failure of the fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations to begin. A treaty that results only in a cut-off in the future production of fissile material, as envisaged under the Shannon mandate, would jeopardize Pakistan's security and bring no added value to the cause of nuclear disarmament. Pakistan stands ready to consider a treaty that covers the past production of fissile material, and it has put forward a detailed working paper in that regard in the CD.

Similar to Pakistan's stance towards the Group of Governmental Experts established in 2014, Pakistan has again chosen not to participate in the so-called High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group. The limited and incomplete composition of that Expert Group, as well as its divisive genesis, restrictive mandate and partial basis of work, does not qualify it for the task expected of it. We will not be in a position to accept any conclusion or recommendation produced by that Expert Group, including any attempt to force its report onto the CD.

A nuclear-weapon-free world would be less stable and less secure if some countries possessed disproportionately excessive conventional military capabilities. Nuclear disarmament therefore needs to be pursued in a comprehensive and holistic manner, in accordance with the principles agreed upon at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Pakistan has consistently supported the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world through the conclusion of a universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear weapons convention in the CD. As recognized by the Assembly's first special session on disarmament, the objective of that process should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

My delegation was highly pleased with the successful outcome of the work of the Open-ended Working Group mandated to agree on the agenda and objectives of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. A successful fourth special session on disarmament would be an important step towards the revival of the global consensus on general and complete disarmament, while taking into account the security concerns of all States.

The issue of negative security assurances has been on the international agenda for more than half a century. Pending nuclear disarmament, the long-

standing and genuine aspiration of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive negative security guarantees should be fulfilled. Pakistan, along with the vast majority of Member States, believes that such issue is ripe for negotiations in the CD.

During this session, Pakistan will introduce its traditional draft resolution entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/72/L.10), on behalf of a large number of co-sponsoring States. We look forward to its adoption with the widest possible support.

Ms. Barreto (Cabo Verde): Let me first convey my congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on the assumption of their offices. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and thank the Secretariat for its support.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use is a complex and challenging issue for humankind, fully justifying that the prohibition and elimination of such weapons should be kept high on the agenda of the international community. In that context, Cabo Verde reiterates its commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which reaffirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The other nuclear-weapon-free zones, established through the Treaties of Tlateloco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Central Asia, as well as the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia, are positive and important measures towards attaining the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Such advancements deserve to be completed by the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Cabo Verde joined many others in signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the world's first legally binding treaty prohibiting the development, testing, manufacture, acquisition and possession of nuclear weapons. The adoption of the Treaty in July 2017, followed by the ceremony in September when it was signed by a large number of United Nations Member States, marks both a high point of international cooperation and a significant step in the history of non-proliferation.

The existence of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons will not, of course, make them immediately disappear. However, it will reinforce the stigma against their use and support commitment to nuclear

risk reduction, and it represents an incentive for non-proliferation. Cabo Verde therefore calls on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as soon as possible to facilitate its entry into force.

Cabo Verde remains strongly committed to non-proliferation. In addition to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, my country is also party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a crucial step in advancing nuclear disarmament and nuclear proliferation, whose entry into force is regrettably still pending. Finally yet importantly, in October 2013 Cabo Verde was one of the 125 countries to sign the Joint Statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, Cabo Verde promises to be constructive in its engagement with other Member States to fulfil the moral imperative and objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): Our meeting is taking place during a very tense period when the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime is being challenged, primarily by the nuclear and ballistic missile tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Hungary condemns in the strongest terms those flagrant violations of the relevant Security Council resolutions, which pose a serious threat to not only regional but also global security. We support the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In that regard, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to compliance with its obligations under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

Regarding nuclear disarmament, Hungary shares the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. In our view, however, there is no fast track in this area. Nuclear disarmament can be achieved only through a gradual and inclusive process by taking concrete and practical steps that engage nuclear-weapon States and take the international security environment into consideration. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not meet those requirements but, by creating an unnecessary and divisive duplication, weakens the existing multilateral nuclear disarmament framework. Therefore, Hungary did not participate in the negotiations on the Treaty and will not accede to it.

At the same time, bearing in mind that in the present complex security environment the international

community should do its utmost to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, we stand ready to work with all States on elements of the incremental approach, which remains the only credible way to produce tangible results. In that respect, one of our most important tasks is to ensure the success of the current review cycle and the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and, through its article VI, the only realistic framework for multilateral nuclear disarmament. Therefore, the NPT and the comprehensive action plan adopted by the 2010 Review Conference must be built on, rather than neglected. We are pleased that the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference took place in a constructive atmosphere, giving a positive impetus to the current review process.

The nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are also strong reminders that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), providing for a total ban of nuclear testing, is more relevant and that its entry into force is more needed than ever. Therefore, as affirmed by Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), there can be no alternative to or substitute for the CTBT. With its reliable global monitoring system, the CTBT is a unique asset that needs to be properly financed and further developed.

Another concrete step towards a world free of nuclear weapons would be starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Concluding a non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable FMCT would also contribute significantly to the implementation of the NPT. We are pleased that the first session of the High-level Expert Preparatory Group set up last year by the General Assembly was held in a constructive atmosphere under its able Canadian chairmanship and was able to make progress.

Yet another key building block towards nuclear disarmament is the existence of effective and reliable verification and monitoring mechanisms and instruments. We share the view that nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States should work together to create such verification tools by the time that the necessary conditions are in place for the conclusion of new multilateral nuclear disarmament agreements.

Hungary therefore fully supported resolution 71/67 and is prepared to contribute to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to be established by the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, let me underline that until now we have been pleased with the fulfilment of obligations by all sides under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The progress that we have seen so far is reassuring. However, the continued full implementation of the agreement has to be subject to continuous and thorough verification by the IAEA. In our view, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also endorsed by the Security Council, needs to be preserved because it is in full conformity with the principles of the NPT and serves as a positive example for resolving controversial questions within the broader framework of that Treaty and the international non-proliferation machinery.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): Nuclear arms control is facing challenging times. Last month brought a stark reminder with the six nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Those tests were proceeded and followed by multiple ballistic missile tests. The Netherlands condemns that provocative behaviour by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the strongest possible terms. Those actions destabilize the region and are a threat to regional and global peace and security, so they should be stopped immediately. The regime should fully comply with its international obligations, including the relevant Security Council resolutions. In addition, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must return to complying with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, and sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The international community faces tensions between nuclear-possessor States, disagreements on how to make further progress on disarmament and how to ensure non-proliferation. Even the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world is at risk of being obscured. In a more insecure and challenging world, we need to redouble our efforts on nuclear disarmament, as well as focus our goals and persevere in identifying and in pursuing steps to reach them. We therefore welcome this year's awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which underlines the continuing importance of nuclear disarmament and the need to make steps forward.

We all share the same goal: a nuclear-weapon-free world. Having a common goal — a shared objective — helps to create confidence in dialogue and keeps our differences in perspective. More than ever, we need an honest dialogue about nuclear weapons, disarmament and international security. Let us concentrate on identifying our common interests and shared concerns and on understanding each other's security perceptions. That includes acknowledging our different perspectives on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and finding a way to deal with them. Let us concentrate on measures that contribute to our common safety by reducing nuclear risks. Such measures are important building blocks for arms control and disarmament, mutual trust, stability and transparency. The Netherlands believes that we should focus our efforts on implementing and strengthening the NPT and the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime of which it is a cornerstone.

The Netherlands chaired the 2017 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, focusing on prosperity and inclusivity. We have tried, through a regional approach, to emphasize the importance of global ownership of the NPT. The discussions in Vienna at the first session of the NPT Preparatory Committee proved that there are many issues we must address towards 2020 and beyond. However, we have also been able to identify a number of basic views on the NPT that are shared among Member States. Those, we hope, will serve as a basis for further discussions. We now stand ready to cooperate with our Polish colleagues who are chairing the 2018 Preparatory Committee.

The Netherlands remains committed to working on concrete measures to implement a strengthened NPT regime. To that end, we strongly supported the establishment of the High-level Expert Preparatory Group to make further progress on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), skilfully chaired by Canada. We would also like to thank Ambassador Hulan for the presentation that she gave today. The Netherlands attaches great importance to an FMCT as a crucial step towards nuclear disarmament. The work of the High-level Expert Preparatory Group that commenced this year will help to bring us closer to negotiating a treaty.

Another such initiative is nuclear disarmament verification. The Netherlands will continue to play an active role in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, and it co-initiated the

establishment of a group of governmental experts next year. There is a great deal of work to be done — work that must be done by nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States together.

Another prime example of what we can accomplish together is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The path to that robust deal was a rocky one, but agreement is a success. The Netherlands calls on all parties to continue the rigorous implementation of that multilateral agreement in order to build trust, strengthen the Plan and overcome the hurdles that are part of all comprehensive and far-reaching deals.

The NPT review cycle, the discussions on an FMCT, the work on verification and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action show that no matter the political circumstances, we can build confidence in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime while working on concrete and practical steps together. Of course, more such steps towards non-proliferation and disarmament can and should be identified and pursued. We need to be creative in our thinking and come up with new ways forward. We need common goals as much as we need to be pragmatic and persistent. The First Committee can play an instrumental role in both respects. We stand ready to work with the Committee to that end.

Mr. Abbani (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statements on nuclear weapons made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

Algeria reiterates its firm position that nuclear disarmament is an urgent priority in anchoring and in achieving peace, security and stability in the world. That cannot happen without the total elimination of those weapons, ridding humankind of their dangers and the threat of their use.

Despite the many commitments and pledges that we have endorsed in the context of various international instruments, especially the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the presence of those lethal weapons continues to pose the greatest threat to humankind. Despite the provisions of article VI of the NPT and the decisions taken at its successive conferences, those weapons continue to represent the backbone of the military doctrines of many States and deterrent tools in their security policies.

In line with its belief, my country participated in the negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is yet another contribution to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In fact, in September Algeria was among the first countries to sign the Treaty. We call on all countries to accede to that Treaty so as to achieve our common goal for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

I seize this opportunity to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, given its continuous efforts in that regard. As we await the total elimination of nuclear weapons, my country's delegation stresses the utmost importance of adopting an international binding instrument on negative security guarantees for non-nuclear States. Furthermore, Algeria reiterates the great importance of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in order to promote the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We call on all relevant parties to accede to that Treaty so as to eliminate the threats and risks of those tests. My country's delegation welcomes the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We support its great contribution in moving forward negotiations on that important issue.

As for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Algeria underscores once again the inalienable and sovereign right of all States parties to develop their national capacities in order to use that type of energy peacefully for the promotion of the social and economic development of all nations, especially developing countries.

Algeria supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones all over the world, because that anchors nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and promotes stability, peace and security at the regional and international levels. Algeria expresses its deep concern, given the impediments preventing the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, despite the adoption of the decision of the 1995 Review Conference on the Middle East more than 22 years ago.

In conclusion, we stress that the showing of genuine political will by all relevant parties and maintaining the current momentum of our collective efforts will enable us to ultimately overcome the stumbling blocks thwarting the total elimination of nuclear weapons and achieving a world free of those lethal weapons.

The full version of my statement will be posted on the website assigned for that purpose.

Mr. Boausaibh (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the United Arab Emirates aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of Arab States; by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; and by the representative of Australia, on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

More than 70 years have passed since the first use of nuclear weapons in war. That incident demonstrated the horrific and catastrophic impact of those weapons on human beings and on the environment. It is therefore imperative to focus on taking stronger and credible steps to achieve nuclear disarmament goals, to address the security challenges that undermine international efforts in the area of disarmament and to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The United Arab Emirates attaches special importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as it is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and nuclear disarmament. We believe that priority should be given to the full implementation of its provisions and of the decisions of the NPT Review Conferences. My country reaffirms its continued commitment to supporting dialogue, consultation and all efforts aimed at achieving progress towards that goal. We hope that positive and serious steps will be taken to implement the mechanisms and the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and to ensure that the postponed conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is held with the participation of all countries in the region.

As for the deadlock of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, we stress the need to conclude a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons as soon as possible.

The United Arab Emirates considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to be an important instrument in supporting global efforts on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as it has paved the way for deterring nuclear tests. In that context, we reaffirm the importance of the entry into force of the CTBT, and we call on annex 2 States to

sign and ratify the Treaty to ensure its entry into force as soon as possible.

We urge all States to maintain the moratorium on nuclear testing and to fulfil their international commitments. We express our deep concern at North Korea's continued development of its nuclear and missile capabilities. We strongly condemn its regular nuclear tests, which continue to threaten the security of its neighbours and international peace and security.

The United Arab Emirates recognizes the importance of the central role played by the safeguards regime and the verification mechanism of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in reducing the grave consequences of nuclear proliferation, as well as their contribution to regional and international security and peace. The safeguards regime is the basis of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and it is supported by most States. We refer to the importance of the additional protocol of the IAEA safeguards regime, and we believe that the full implementation of safeguards by States and their compliance with non-proliferation rules are a prerequisite for the development of their nuclear programmes. In that regard, we urge all States whose activities have triggered questions concerning their nature to fully comply with their international obligations and take the necessary steps to address international concerns regarding their nuclear activities.

In that regard, the United Arab Emirates expresses its deep concern at Iran's continued nuclear activities and the development of its missile programme. We hope that Iran's implementation of the nuclear agreement and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action will be reflected in its behaviour in the region. We reiterate that Iran's compliance and full and transparent implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action are essential to building confidence and credibility with regard to its nuclear activities. We therefore support the new United States strategy in dealing with Iranian policies that undermine security and stability.

In conclusion, my delegation stresses that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons lies in the total abandonment of those weapons. That goal requires a quantitative and qualitative reduction in all types of nuclear weapons, in accordance with a transparent and credible framework.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of

Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Argentina, on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

Nuclear weapons pose a serious threat to the existence of the human species because of their highly destructive power, of which the inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were victims 72 years ago. So were the peoples of the Pacific islands, including sovereign States that at the time were under colonial rule and the sites of nuclear tests. They still suffer the effects of the atomic radiation to which they were exposed.

The current geopolitical tensions in various regions of the planet and the warmongering rhetoric of some nuclear-weapon States exacerbate the risk of a nuclear war that would have catastrophic consequences for the planet. Those fears are based on the fact that there are currently more than 14,000 nuclear weapons, of which 4,150 are operational and 1,800 are maintained in a state of alert, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Nuclear-weapon States cannot continue to expose humankind to the danger of a nuclear conflagration or to its extinction altogether. The use of such weapons is a crime against humanity and a violation of international law and international humanitarian law. No security doctrine of any country or military block can justify the mass killing of human beings or the destruction of the planet. The goal of eliminating nuclear weapons is a moral and political imperative that involves all Member States, especially nuclear-weapon States.

Despite the dangers posed by those instruments of terror, as well as the urgent need for immediate multilateral action to reduce and to completely eliminate that category of weapon of mass destruction, little progress has been made to date in that regard. Nuclear-weapon States refuse to condemn those weapons or to modify their security strategies in which those types of weapons form the central axis of their deterrence policies.

Despite that discouraging outlook, the international community has not ceased its efforts to advocate for the elimination of nuclear weapons. In that vein, we are encouraged by the historic decision on 7 July by the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination, by which the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was

adopted, with the active participation of civil society. In that connection, we congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its important contributions to nuclear disarmament. We hope that the aforementioned Treaty can soon enter into force, leading to its universalization. We are convinced that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only effective way to guarantee that humankind will never again suffer the terrible scourge of their impact.

Moreover, we stress the importance and urgency for the eight annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay or precondition so that it enters into force as soon as possible. We bear in mind that that instrument constitutes a fundamental pillar of the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and complements the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In that context, we categorically reject the conducting of any kind of nuclear test, including subcritical experiments that aim to improve nuclear arsenals. We also urge those countries to maintain their moratoriums and to abstain from any act that is contrary to the spirit and purpose of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Although more than 20 years have passed since the adoption of the 1995 resolution to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East as a basis for the indefinite extension of the NPT, that decision has not yet been implemented because of the lack of political will by some States. Venezuela firmly believes that establishing such a zone would positively contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East. Those challenges compel us to work with determination to ensure the success of the next NPT Review Conference, in 2020. We urge a balanced implementation of the three pillars of the NPT, without preconditions, especially that of respect for the sovereignty of States that are developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes for technological independence and development.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates that nuclear disarmament efforts must continue unrelentingly. Dialogue and cooperation are essential to achieving total and effective nuclear disarmament. Convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament are both positive

initiatives within the process towards multilateral disarmament diplomacy.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): There is growing anxiety about nuclear weapons as we face a very serious challenge to the global non-proliferation regime. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is accelerating its nuclear and ballistic-missile programme, in total defiance of international law and in clear violation of Security Council resolutions, posing a grave threat to regional and international peace and security.

Last month, North Korea carried out its sixth nuclear test, which was firmly condemned by the Portuguese Government. The nuclear and ballistic-missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea underscores the urgency of achieving a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We strongly urge North Korea to cease all its nuclear and ballistic activities and to open the way for a diplomatic resolution of the crisis.

Recent developments underline the crucial importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and of its verification regime and remind us all of the urgency of the Treaty's early entry into force. Once again, Portugal reiterates its appeal to all States that have not yet done so, especially the eight remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the CTBT.

We believe that, following today's announcement by the President of the United States, our collective responsibility to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme must be particularly stressed. In 2015, Portugal welcomed the accomplishment of the JCPOA, which resolved a highly complex issue with political will and in good faith. No violations of the commitments contained in the agreement have ever been reported, which means that the deal has been serving its purposes. Portugal therefore reaffirms its support for this historic agreement and continues to strongly encourage its strict implementation by all parties and the need to create conditions for monitoring Iran's nuclear programme after 2025.

Portugal congratulates the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on the Nobel Peace Prize that it received. The well-documented catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons should remind us all that we must remain steadfast in pursuing the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. In our view, that is a moral imperative.

My country shares some of the concerns and frustration about the failure of States to take concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament that led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. However, we are not convinced that the Treaty represents a realistic way to achieve our shared goal. In our view, a process of gradual reduction of nuclear weapons, taking into account legitimate national and international security concerns, continues to be the best approach to ensuring sustainable progress in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Portugal considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element in the future development of nuclear energy for peaceful applications. We will undertake every effort to achieve a substantial outcome at the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

Portugal is also convinced of the urgent need to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and to achieve progress on nuclear-disarmament verification. We also consider it essential to preserve and ensure the full and verifiable compliance of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

The international community must continue to seek the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We must remain seized of the efforts to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, guided by the action plan set forth at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The specific responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States under the NPT require their full engagement in advancing nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, Portugal looks to the renewed will of the international community to confront shared nuclear challenges and advance towards a peaceful nuclear-free world.

Mr. Kunjara Na Ayudhya (Thailand): The Kingdom of Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

As we stated in the general debate, Thailand firmly believes that people lie at the centre of disarmament and non-proliferation (see A/C.1/72/PV.4). Human

rights, development and peace are mutually reinforcing concepts. They are also at the foundation of human and collective security for all. In that equation, there is no place for weapons of mass destruction.

Thailand welcomes the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which, as evidence of concerted efforts, is an important milestone on the road to nuclear disarmament, bringing us a step closer to a world without nuclear weapons. In practical terms, it has opened up a legal pathway for States to give up their nuclear arsenals. In symbolic terms, it can be seen as the international community's fierce response to increasing uncertainty worldwide.

Thailand participated actively in the process leading to the adoption of the Treaty and is among the three States to have signed and ratified it. In our view, the Treaty's provisions enable inclusive dialogue and cooperation with all parties towards the common aspiration of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thailand strongly believes that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons complements and strengthens the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In particular, by setting the comprehensive safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as a minimum requirement of the new Treaty, it bolsters the NPT's safeguards system. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons also fulfils the obligations under article VI of the NPT. Its non-discriminatory and inclusive nature welcomes all States to join. In that regard, we also look forward to the substantive, meaningful, comprehensive and actionable outcomes of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

At the same time, as a depositary State of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, we urge nuclear-weapon States to continue consultations with ASEAN towards the signing and ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty. We also attach importance to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all areas of the world, especially the Middle East.

Thailand continues to share the international community's grave concern over heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula. We hope that all parties will use peaceful means to realize peace and stability on a denuclearized Korean peninsula.

Not only can the weaponization of technology be catastrophic but the diversion of resources can also deny us the opportunities and benefits that can contribute to peace and development. Nuclear technology should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The work of the IAEA to promote nuclear science and technology and their peaceful applications is and will continue to be important in our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We strongly support the IAEA in its endeavours to that end.

I would like to conclude with the following. We arrive at an important juncture in history when renewed attention is given to nuclear weapons as instruments not of security or prestige but of terror and destruction. The Kingdom of Thailand wishes to pay special tribute to the proponents of the humanitarian initiative. In particular, we recognize the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which was recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, as well as other civil society organizations for their perseverance and support to this cause.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): The historic nature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was recognized in last week's decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). New Zealand takes the opportunity to warmly congratulate ICAN.

The new Treaty has its critics. It has been suggested, for instance, that it has created divisions within the international community regarding the manner and pace of nuclear disarmament. Such an assertion would seem to overlook the long-standing dissatisfaction that has been evident on the part of many Member States regarding progress on nuclear disarmament. The Treaty may well be a symptom of division within the United Nations membership but it cannot credibly be said to be the cause of that divide. Some criticize the Treaty for not being a concrete step linked to the actual reduction of nuclear weapons. Of course, for that to have been possible, nuclear-weapon possessors would need to have accepted their invitation to take part in its negotiation. There is nothing in the Treaty that stands in the way of continued reductions or that puts any impediment in their path.

No treaty exists in a vacuum. Had the Prohibition Treaty been designed in the abstract as a stand-alone measure, instead of one that is focused on reinforcing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

(NPT), a number of its provisions might not have mirrored the text of the NPT so closely. The treatment of safeguards in the new Treaty is strongly influenced by the relevant provision in the NPT. The new Treaty parallels the legal obligations set out by the NPT to have a comprehensive safeguards agreement and establishes that as a minimum baseline. It goes further than the NPT by requiring that, as a legal obligation under its own terms, States parties to the Treaty have an additional protocol to retain that protocol as their minimum baseline. The allegation that the new Treaty does not strengthen the NPT overlooks the fact that successive review conferences have not been able to require States parties to the NPT go beyond the comprehensive safeguards agreement as the safeguards baseline.

There has been particular questioning regarding the language of article 18. I have heard it suggested that the language of article 18 might enable States parties to the Prohibition Treaty to choose to forgo their obligations under other treaties, including the NPT. Such a suggestion overlooks the existing terms of international law, notably the binding nature of treaties and other aspects of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, including its article 30. It also overlooks the fact that, as a practical matter, the obligations undertaken by States parties to the Prohibition Treaty are to similar effect and reinforce the obligations set out in the NPT.

I have heard the Prohibition Treaty criticized because it enables States in actual possession of nuclear weapons to take up the invitation to join it without having already relinquished their weapons. It is true that it is possible for a nuclear-weapon possessor to become party to the new Treaty. However, any such adherent to the Treaty must immediately remove their weapons from operational status and proceed to destroy them irreversibly, pursuant to a time frame and a verified plan established with other States parties. Flexibility is retained with regard to the particular international institution that may prove best placed to facilitate adoption and verification of the requisite plan in the light of the then prevailing circumstances.

The claim made that the Prohibition Treaty might somehow complicate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) seems far-fetched. There are serious and long-standing obstacles that stand in the way of the entry into force of the CTBT. However, those obstacles arise from the Treaty's text itself and from domestic processes

for its ratification, which is something on which the Prohibition Treaty has no bearing.

Today, New Zealand has chosen to address some of the less positive reactions to the Prohibition Treaty in an effort to ensure that misperceptions do not stand in the way of a proper appraisal of it and because we have heard it said that the onus is upon the signatories of the Treaty to answer its critics. New Zealand remains proud to have signed the Treaty and is equally proud to remain a consistent and unwavering supporter of the NPT. The onus that all NPT States parties retain, whether as signatories of the Prohibition Treaty or not, is to move forward on the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We look forward to continuing to work with all colleagues to that end.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Australia on behalf of a group of 29 like-minded countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

Italy fully shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world that is free of nuclear weapons. Our utmost concern for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons underpins our efforts for effective progress on nuclear disarmament.

We want to reaffirm the centrality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States, without delay and without conditions. We are actively participating in the preparatory process of the 2020 Review Conference. The NPT provides the only realistic legal framework to attain a world without nuclear weapons in a way that promotes international stability, based on the principle of undiminished security for all. We believe that that goal must be pursued in a step-by-step and verifiable way, based on effective measures, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty, and involving all the relevant actors with a perspective based on the search for consensus.

Among the effective measures needed to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons, the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is crucial. Italy calls on all States that have not yet done so, in particular, the eight remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. In the meantime, Italy calls on all States to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions.

Another key priority for Italy is the immediate commencement within the Conference on Disarmament (CD) of negotiations on a treaty that deals with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The CD could also make another key contribution towards the fulfilment of the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons by resuming its substantive discussions on negative security assurances, with a view to developing recommendations dealing with all of their aspects, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument.

We also value all efforts aimed at making progress on nuclear-disarmament verification. We support the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, and we look forward to the commencement of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, established by resolution 71/67, which we co-sponsored. Furthermore, we reiterate our support to the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which would be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them, as decided by the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Nuclear-weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities for the implementation of article VI of the NPT. While welcoming the nuclear-arsenal reductions made so far by most of those States and the continued implementation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, we encourage them to seek further reductions to their nuclear arsenals. We underline the importance of preserving the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty as a landmark agreement that remains key to European and international security and stability.

Italy condemns in the strongest terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ballistic-missile and nuclear tests, which violate its international obligations and represent an increasing threat to regional and international security and peace, as well as the global non-proliferation regime. In its current capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), Italy supports worldwide efforts to properly implement the set of restrictive measures adopted by the Security Council.

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

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker on the nuclear weapons cluster.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that regard, I would like to remind delegations that statements are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to reply to those countries that have made groundless and illegal comments about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in their statements. The representatives of Finland, Spain, the Netherlands, Hungary and Portugal need to gain a proper understanding of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula before making baseless arguments.

The essence of the situation on the Korean peninsula is a confrontation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America, in which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is trying to defend its national sovereignty and dignity in the face of the hostile policy and nuclear threats of the United States. We defend ourselves through nuclear deterrence, which is a powerful sword that reliably guarantees our sovereignty and existence. No one can say that it is right or wrong.

Secondly, I would like to say to the representative of Israel that his country is a symbol of the failure to implement international obligations. It is an illegal nuclear-weapon State, a destroyer of peace in the Middle East and the only opponent to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. Before telling outright lies about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Israel should first withdraw all its illegal military assets from neighbouring countries and return the territories that it has illegally occupied to their rightful owners. It must also stop committing crimes against people in

the Middle East. My delegation strongly urges Israel to implement its international obligations by joining a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply and I will be very brief. In reference to the comments made by the representative of the Pyongyang regime, this is not an issue between the United States and the regime in Pyongyang; it is an issue between that regime and the international community. When the Pyongyang regime calls on other countries to fulfil

their international obligations, it should look no further than to itself. It needs to comply with its international obligations, particularly those stemming from Security Council resolutions.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to make it clear that the Korean peninsula issue is between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States regime should keep what I said in my previous reply in mind.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.