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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga. (Romania)

*In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Diarra (Mali),
Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

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

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): 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): It is a real privilege to be here today. Allow me to thank High Representative Nakamitsu and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for inviting me to address the First Committee for the second year running on the work of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) Expert Preparatory Group. Before beginning, I would like to stress that my remarks today are

strictly a reflection of my personal impressions of the Preparatory Group and the possibilities for next steps.

As the Committee is aware, the Preparatory Group was mandated by the General Assembly to consider and make consensus 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 Conference on Disarmament (CD) document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. The Preparatory Group held two two-week sessions in Geneva in 2017 and 2018 and was buttressed by two open-ended informal consultative meetings held in New York at the same time.

Over the past two years, I have had the very great privilege of working with 24 other dedicated experts and engaging extensively with the broader international community to achieve that mandate and deliver a consensus report (see A/73/159) that provides a road map for future FMCT negotiations. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to those experts, my own team and the delegations in this room that contributed so directly to that success.

While the report of the Preparatory Group is not written in treaty language, it has been prepared with much the same structure as one would expect to find in an eventual treaty, with very few exceptions. It contains a concise, plain-language menu of potential treaty provisions for each of the main treaty elements — definitions, scope, verification and legal and institutional framework. It also contains a summary of the considerations that negotiators will need to bear in mind when deliberating those options

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and a list of recommendations that not only underscore that negotiations should begin without delay but also delineate what further work could be undertaken, either in parallel to negotiations or in advance, in order to facilitate a successful outcome.

What the Preparatory Group did not attempt to do, as I anticipated last year (see A/C.1/72/PV.13), was to narrow the range of options available to future negotiators, for the simple reason that we had no negotiating mandate. Consequently, experts were not expected to make concessions on their national positions, and they did not try to resolve the very real political issues that have impeded progress in the CD. Rather, the Group focused squarely on laying the groundwork for negotiations once those become possible.

The report has been well publicized and deserves to be read on its merit, and therefore I will not review in further detail the substance of it here today. Instead, I would like to use the time available to do three things — outline what I view as the significance of the report, address some of the concerns that have been voiced about it and explore how that work could be leveraged to make progress on a treaty.

Regarding the significance of the report, the Preparatory Group report is a meaningful contribution towards the negotiation of an FMCT in at least three ways.

First, the report breaks genuinely new substantive ground on some of the key issues related to a future treaty, notably its legal and institutional arrangements, which are not straightforward issues and yet have been historically underrepresented in the debate on an FMCT.

Secondly, by outlining not just the range of possible treaty provisions for each main treaty aspect but also the considerations that negotiators will need to reflect upon, the report has cleared the brush, in a sense. Exploring those options required considerable discussion within the group. While some of that terrain may need to be revisited in an actual negotiation, it is very unlikely that all of it will need to be repeated. In that way, the Preparatory Group has already made a future treaty negotiation more efficient.

Thirdly, the report takes the state-of-the-art findings of the substantive FMCT debate, which is represented by its own substantive progress and that of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) that preceded it, and

distills their essence into a readily understandable and readily usable form. That is no small thing. All Member States share a stake in an FMCT, but not all of us have the same depth of expertise available within our own Governments to support negotiations — and I include my own Government in that statement. By focusing on capturing its recommendations in plain language, the report has democratized a highly technical issue in a way that will serve the international community well when the time comes to negotiate the treaty.

In summary, while it is often said of the 2015 GGE report on an FMCT (see A/70/81) that it contained useful signposts to future negotiators on the core issues, the current consensus report should be seen as a road map that not only adds a few new signposts of its own but also shows the possible destinations and routes that negotiators may wish to take to get there.

The outcome of the Preparatory Group is significant in another way as well — it has demonstrated unequivocally that nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States can work effectively together towards a common goal, at a time when many have understandably questioned whether meaningful cooperation between those groups is possible. That suggests that the potential for such cooperation is not to be underestimated at this juncture. I therefore think that the members of the Preparatory Group and all of the many members of the First Committee who supported this work from the outset should justifiably take pride in the report.

At the same time, we all know that there are no perfect multilateral processes, and I am conscious that a number of concerns and criticisms have been raised regarding the outcome of our work, which I would like to address very briefly.

One concern I have heard is that the report has done nothing to resolve the question of scope, which some see as a precondition to negotiations. Yet the work of the Preparatory Group, like that of the GGE before it, laid bare an essential truth about the current state of FMCT discussions — there are no substantive issues that constitute an insurmountable barrier to the launch of treaty negotiations, including the issue of scope.

It is clear to everyone that the issue of scope is critical and will play the major shaping role in any future treaty. However, the idea that we must somehow proclaim whether a treaty will include or not include stocks as a precursor to negotiations is, I would

suggest, outdated. That idea has been overtaken by our discussions over the past four or five years, which have very clearly established that the question of stocks is not a binary choice between including or not including stocks. There are many categories of stocks of fissile material, some or all of which may be captured in a future treaty. Which categories are included or not included goes to the heart of the security interests of the negotiators.

Moreover, because those security interests are differentiated, not only can that issue be resolved through negotiations, but it is also probable that it can be resolved only through negotiations. It is precisely the task of the negotiators to find a workable compromise on the seemingly irreconcilable perspectives on this and other aspects of the treaty. To get to that negotiating table, however, States on all sides of the debate must be willing to give an inch on their long-entrenched positions on the issue of scope in order to allow the necessary negotiations to take place.

A second concern that we have heard regarding the work of the Preparatory Group is that it is merely a repeat of the GGE report of 2015 and sums up opposing views and nothing else. I have already addressed what I see as the added value of the report. The Preparatory Group's mandate was not the same as that of the GGE that met in 2014 and 2015, and our group made important progress beyond what was done in that forum, not only through a substantive exploration of underrepresented aspects of that debate but also by taking the state-of-the-art findings, as I have said, and turning them into readily understandable and readily usable advice to negotiators.

It is a fact that the report contains options that represent opposing views on the key elements of a future treaty. If there were none, the treaty would already be a reality. The purpose of the Preparatory Group was to drill down into those perspectives in a way that would facilitate the work of future negotiators. We are very confident that we succeeded in that task.

A third criticism that we have heard levelled at the report of the Preparatory Group is that its recommendations were weak. There has been criticism in my own country that we lacked ambition in the Preparatory Group process. While there is always a risk in multilateral negotiations of being too satisfied by too little, I would underscore that, where the vital interests of States are concerned, we must accept that progress

may be slower than we would like if credibility is not to be sacrificed to speed. The level of ambition that the Preparatory Group worked with in acquitting itself of its mandate was very simple. We took it as our job to do absolutely everything possible, short of actual negotiations, to prepare for negotiations when those can occur. We accomplished that.

I urge the Committee to consider the collective contributions of the GGE that reported in 2015 and the Preparatory Group's report. The positions of the major players have been clearly staked out. The major aspects of a treaty have been explored in substance and in depth. Options for resolving key issues have been both delineated and explained in two separate reports, and a document outlining the shape of a future treaty — which is not a negotiating text but is also not a million miles from a negotiating text — has been produced.

There is now very little that remains to be done other than to negotiate the treaty. We note that reaching a consensus report in the Preparatory Group was not an easy thing. Voices were raised, including the voice of the Chair on occasion, but I am convinced that it was a meaningful and worthwhile contribution to the debate, including the debate here in the Committee. I also believe that that work supported the discussion on an FMCT that took place within CD subsidiary body 2 this year, under the accomplished leadership of Ambassador Gabriëlse of the Netherlands.

Let me just turn to the next steps, if I may. The recommendations in the report are specific and considerable achievements and provide various avenues for moving forward. We really do need to think creatively now about how to leverage those findings to pursue concrete next steps. The adoption of the Preparatory Group's consensus report constitutes in itself a significant step forward towards an FMCT and provides a foundation on which a future treaty could be negotiated. While we are closer to knowing what a treaty could look like than we were two years ago, it is a fact that serious political impediments to negotiations remain. Consequently, while the Preparatory Group recommended that negotiations begin without further delay within the Conference on Disarmament, the risk that the report is not taken up in that body cannot be ignored.

I would suggest that it is in the interests of no one in this room that the FMCT process and its consensus-based outcome lapse. Drawing on the recommendations

of the Preparatory Group, it really is very important now that Member States and CD members that have repeatedly expressed broad support for an FMCT exercise the will to make progress towards negotiation. In order to get there, political dialogue on the real impediments to negotiation — which are squarely political — is urgently needed.

Another part of generating the political will for negotiations requires building sufficient trust among partners. Along those lines, the report recommends that further consideration be given to what measures might facilitate the commencement of negotiations and enhance confidence. I very much hope that CD members will take up that question in their discussions. In the meantime, the report's recommendations outline two specific areas in which additional technical work is needed.

First, the report outlines four possible institutional structures for an FMCT. However, the existing analysis of the resource implications of those models is out of date, and in some cases non-existent. That type of practical information would greatly inform delegations, including mine, at the time of negotiations. I very much hope that the CD considers commissioning a full costing of FMCT institutional models in the coming year.

Secondly, further work is clearly needed to elaborate the various verification-regime models in order to determine how they might work in practice in the context of an FMCT. I very much hope that the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, on which we were briefed by Ambassador Langeland yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.11), as well as the work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, will find its way into the discussions on an FMCT in Geneva.

I very much encourage colleagues to take a look at those processes with a view to harvesting their outcomes in support of FMCT discussions. While it is obviously not necessary for that technical work to be undertaken prior to negotiations, it is equally true that it could be undertaken before negotiations commence.

In conclusion, on behalf of the members of the Preparatory Group, I would once again like to extend my heartfelt thanks, as well as that of the group, to the many delegations in this room for their support for the work of the Preparatory Group since its inception. I want to thank the overwhelming number of delegations that, year after year, register their strong

conviction that now is the time to negotiate a treaty. I hope that the Committee will support this year's draft resolution on an FMCT, which seeks to welcome the report of the Preparatory Group and bring forward its recommendations to spur follow-up in Geneva.

As this chapter of the FMCT debate closes, I am very much convinced that our work has been worthwhile and substantial. However, I am also conscious of the need to move to the negotiating phase. In a context in which, for some, fissile-material production for nuclear weapons is continuing in some parts of the world and we are seeing the worrisome expansion of some arsenals, there can be no doubt about the urgency of doing so.

I encourage all delegations to carefully reflect in the coming months on the work of the Preparatory Group and consider how we may best move the treaty forward. I would equally encourage the Committee to consider alternatives if the requisite political will to move to negotiations remains elusive.

It is critical that we do not let the substantive progress and the momentum of recent years go to waste; rather, we must let the substance of the report, coupled with that of the GGE report of 2015, spur our thinking about possible ways forward, including by exploring innovative approaches such as the proposal for a framework agreement.

I urge all Committee members to engage in those discussions, and I note that Canada remains very much committed to facilitating any discussion that can take place in order to make the long-cherished goal of an FMCT a reality. I thank the Chair once again for the opportunity to brief the Committee today. I look forward to delegations' comments.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Hulan for her informative briefing.

In keeping with the Committee's established practice, I will now suspend the meeting in order to afford delegations an 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 (*spoke in French*): We will now hear from the remaining speakers on the rolling list for the "Nuclear weapons" cluster. I would like to remind delegations that we are scheduled to conclude

our consideration of this cluster this afternoon. It is therefore important that all delegations adhere to the time limit of five minutes. The Committee will continue to use the buzzer to remind delegations when their time limit has been reached.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is pleased to participate in this debate on nuclear weapons.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

As non-nuclear-weapon States and members of the first densely populated region to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, we continue to have an abiding belief in the need for urgent global efforts towards achieving the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In addition to their dire humanitarian consequences, we remain convinced that nuclear weapons run counter to the belief that they create safer and more secure environments. On the contrary, such weapons heighten the prospects for military warfare and increase the risk of instability.

It is against that background that the Secretary-General's report on nuclear disarmament (A/72/321) takes on even more significance. In addition to the special commemorative meetings that were held to mark the observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests (see A/73/PV.112) and the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (see A/73/PV.8), we witnessed the start of a new three-year cycle of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. As we look to the discussions in 2019, we trust that we can make real progress on reaching consensus on practical recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Secretary-General's report also speaks to the positive advancements made by the two nuclear-weapon States with the largest arsenals, namely, to implement the reductions agreed to in the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. We note, however, the Secretary-General's caution that, despite that progress, the estimated total number of nuclear weapons — deployed and non-deployed — still amounts to several thousand.

Also noteworthy are the important steps taken by the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to establish subsidiary bodies to consider emerging and other issues relevant to its substantive work. While we welcome that development, we note that the CD has not resumed negotiations and remain perturbed that the stalemate that has stymied its effectiveness for several decades will persist. We hope that our concern will not materialize.

CARICOM anticipates that the third session in 2019 of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will culminate in more tangible results. That would be in keeping with the stated commitment of States parties to the full and effective implementation of the decision and resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, the final document of the 2000 Review Conference and the conclusions and recommendations for follow-up actions of the 2010 Review Conference, including the Action Plan. The NPT remains as vital now as it did 50 years ago when it entered into force. We therefore look forward to the Review Conference in 2020 and urge those countries that are not yet parties to the Treaty to consider acceding to it expeditiously.

Like other delegations, we welcome the positive dialogue under way to ease tensions on the Korean peninsula and work towards its denuclearization. We encourage further progress in that regard and urge the parties to continue to work towards a denuclearization process that is complete, verifiable and irreversible.

Urgent and effective nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures remain as relevant now as they did years ago. For that reason, CARICOM joins NAM in its call for follow-up action, pursuant to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament. The early convening of a follow-up meeting would provide an important platform through which the objective could be realized and accomplished, without prejudice to the deliberations that need to take place in the CD.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty continues to be an integral part of the legal framework that promotes nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We therefore look forward to its early entry into force, pursuant to the requirements of the Treaty.

This year marks the first anniversary of the adoption of the milestone Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. For the first time in two decades, we can point to something tangible on the nuclear disarmament landscape. The Treaty plays an important role in supporting the existing global nuclear-security architecture. We are proud of the fact that several CARICOM countries have signed the Treaty, including Antigua and Barbuda, my own country, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Moreover, Guyana was among the first countries to ratify the Treaty when it opened for signature in September last year. As strong supporters of the process from the outset, CARICOM continues to play its part in promoting the early entry into force of the Treaty. In doing so we trust that the division that characterized the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty will dissipate in favour of greater collaboration and cooperation towards its full implementation. We will continue to work with all partners, including those from civil society, in that regard.

CARICOM joins the call for non-nuclear-weapon States like ours to be given the requisite assurances by nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We believe that that remains an ethical imperative, especially given the enhancement and modernization of existing nuclear weapons, their means of delivery and related infrastructure. A universal, legally binding instrument on effective, unconditional, non-discriminatory and irrevocable security assurances must be concluded.

We acknowledge and commend the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which continues to play an indispensable role in support of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Through its independent verification work, the IAEA has been central to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. Consequently, CARICOM will continue to lend its support and deepen cooperation with the IAEA. In that regard, we highlight the fact that, earlier this year, Grenada became the latest CARICOM member country to join the Agency.

In conclusion, CARICOM places on record its deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his Agenda for Disarmament, *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, which he launched in May. We are especially grateful for the focus that it places on nuclear disarmament, and assure the Secretary-

General of our full support as he takes the disarmament agenda forward.

Ms. Flores Liera (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of South Africa and the Philippines on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

We have heard with great concern in this room that the military doctrines of some States emphasize the possession, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. Although their arguments seek to demonstrate that the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons has been raised, that threshold is significantly lowered by the criteria for their use, with cyberattacks deemed as a cause and justification for nuclear retaliation. Underpinning the security of States with nuclear weapons and deterrence is unacceptable and condemns humankind to live under the constant threat of a humanitarian disaster of unimaginable consequences. The global security situation cannot justify the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, the international situation reinforces the need to guarantee the elimination of that type of weapon.

Mexico categorically rejects influencing nuclear disarmament in one way or another. What my country can agree on is that, in the light of changing threats and an uncertain global landscape, a robust global security system is necessary. However, such a system must be equitable, serve the interests of international society — and not just a few — and must be based on cooperation, law and dialogue, not on weapons. The nuclear-weapon States have a primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security that they cannot ignore.

Mexico is fully committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We are now equipped with an instrument that, for the first time, explicitly prohibits nuclear weapons and represents a major contribution to the regime. We should not stop at our goal of prohibiting nuclear weapons. The fact that the Treaty complements other instruments, such as the NPT, the CTBT and the treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones, means that we are equipped with a robust

architecture to address the different aspects of the international commitments that have been undertaken.

All States must unconditionally fulfil their commitments and obligations under the NPT, an approach that my country will foster during the current NPT review cycle and the work of the Preparatory Committee. We must ensure that that spirit prevails in order to achieve a successful NPT Review Conference that is able to agree on an outcome document with substantive and tangible action across all the pillars of the Treaty. We must acknowledge and assess the commitments and obligations undertaken in accordance with the Treaty, in particular its article VI provisions and the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. Parties must unconditionally implement the negotiating package that forged the NPT.

My country reiterates its strongest condemnation of any nuclear test. Prohibiting and eliminating such tests once and for all are measures crucial to preventing horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation. We welcome the moratorium on nuclear tests. However, that will never be able to substitute for the multilateral Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We once again call on the eight States whose signature or ratification is necessary for the CTBT to enter into force to unconditionally adhere to the Treaty. My delegation also deems the subcritical experiments and computer simulations that update or refine existing nuclear arsenals, in supposed accordance with the Treaty, as unacceptable.

As an advocate for, and founder of, the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, Mexico believes that it is essential to resume all efforts and take the action necessary to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. At the same time, we emphasize the importance of moving forward together on that particularly contentious topic.

My delegation reaffirms its full support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action reached between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany. We are convinced that it is a fair agreement for all parties involved. We also welcome the results achieved by the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during the third inter-Korean summit, as those pave the way for inter-Korean dialogue, denuclearization initiatives on the Korean peninsula and other actions for building solid and lasting peace in the region.

I wish to conclude by reiterating our support for the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament. As was apparent in the panel discussion a few days ago, security challenges require greater pro-disarmament involvement and commitment from the international community. The agenda seeks to generate spaces for dialogue that States must take advantage of, particularly when faced with the risk of a setback in global efforts on the matter. We urge States to view nuclear disarmament as the set of actions that will save humankind.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of India to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.43 and A/C.1/73/L.44.

Mr. Ray (India): India associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

India has an abiding commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament. We have always played a leading role in the international community's endeavours towards achieving that goal. India was the first country to call for a ban on nuclear testing, in 1954, and a non-discriminatory treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, distinct from non-dissemination, in 1965. In 1978, India proposed negotiations on an international convention that would prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In 1988, India presented to the General Assembly the Rajiv Gandhi action plan, which provided a holistic framework for a time-bound commitment to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

India remains committed to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. We believe that that goal can be achieved through a step-by-step process that is underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework. It may be recalled that India presented a working paper on nuclear disarmament to the Conference on Disarmament, as contained in CD/1816, in 2007, which contained a number of proposals as part of a step-by-step process that continues to remain relevant. We therefore reiterate our call for the reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear-weapon States to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the reduction of the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and the negotiation of a global agreement

among nuclear-weapon States on the no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

As in the past, on behalf of co-sponsors, India will present two draft resolutions under this cluster this year. The first, draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.44, entitled “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”, was first introduced in 1982 and is among the long-standing draft resolutions of the First Committee. It reflects our belief that a legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons that is negotiated in the Conference of Disarmament, with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States, will contribute to the process of the step-by-step delegitimization of nuclear weapons.

The second, draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.43, entitled “Reducing nuclear danger”, highlights the need for a review of nuclear doctrines and steps to reduce the risk of the unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons.

We request the support of Member States for those two draft resolutions, which reflect our shared commitment towards the common goal of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): The United States remains a leader in efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and is committed to reducing nuclear stockpiles in ways that advance international security. History illustrates not only the steadfast United States commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament, but also that progress on this front is inherently tied to the international security environment. The easing of Cold War rivalries in the late 1980s and early 1990s allowed the United States and Russia to make significant reductions in their arsenals, which are now down 88 per cent since their Cold War peak.

Unfortunately, the security environment has dramatically deteriorated in recent years. Several States with nuclear weapons are modernizing and expanding their nuclear capabilities. Regional tensions and conflicts in Europe, Asia and the Middle East persist. Several key arms-control treaties are under strain due to the non-compliance of key States parties. With respect to nuclear weapons in particular, Russia’s continued violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is unacceptable and is an untenable situation. Those underlying symptoms must be addressed if we are to successfully pursue additional

effective measures related to nuclear disarmament, as called for in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

It is for that reason that the United States is advocating for an approach that focuses on creating the conditions for nuclear disarmament. States must have a realistic expectation of what can be accomplished on nuclear disarmament at a given time and in given circumstances, and must first work together to address the fundamental challenges that predicate the need for nuclear deterrence. We welcome all States to join us in that dialogue, particularly as we move forward through the NPT review process in advance of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Although the circumstances are no doubt challenging, there are reasons to be optimistic. The United States and Russia both met the central limits of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty when they went into effect on 5 February, capping each country at 1,550 deployed warheads and 800 intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers. That represents the lowest levels of such systems since early in the Cold War. The United States remains committed to fully implementing the Treaty.

In addition, regarding North Korea, we remain hopeful for progress on the basis of our recent discussions with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. It is important for all States to maintain pressure on Pyongyang until we achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea.

Those examples are illustrative of the approach of creating the conditions for nuclear disarmament, which involves the taking of methodical steps that consider the international security environment, while also emphasizing the need for verification provisions that ensure compliance with agreements after they are agreed. They also stand in stark contrast to the approach taken by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which jumps straight to the perceived solution of total nuclear disarmament without doing any of the hard work necessary to achieve that outcome. It contains no verification provisions and does not acknowledge the important role that nuclear deterrence plays in protecting international security. It forgoes the deliberate approach that has led us to every success on nuclear disarmament, in favour of brevity and political expediency. And it does not move us any

closer to eliminating nuclear weapons. On the contrary, it serves to increase political divisions in this and other non-proliferation and disarmament bodies, making future disarmament efforts more difficult.

The United States stands ready to work with all States towards the long-term goal of the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. The approach of creating the conditions for nuclear disarmament is simply an acknowledgement that, in order to achieve that goal, we must work to remedy the circumstances that currently make nuclear deterrence necessary. That is work that all States can and must be engaged in. United States leadership has played an important historical role in contributing to the success of disarmament efforts. Our desire to engender progress in this field is steadfast and enduring. We are dedicated to working with this body to seek common solutions to our collective challenges, in order to create a safer and more prosperous world.

Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Paraguay is peace-loving and conducts its international relations according to the principles of international law. The prohibition of weapons of mass destruction is a constitutional norm in Paraguay. The Paraguayan delegation was one of the first signatories to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is currently under legislative review — the constitutional procedure preceding its approval and ratification. The delegation of Paraguay has followed the initiatives that have emerged from the First Committee aimed at the universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, with the conviction that the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons are necessary conditions for promoting international peace and security.

The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices is a crime against humanity, violates international law and international humanitarian law and breaches the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Paraguay welcomes the suspension of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear testing and the beginning of dialogue towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We urge nuclear-weapon States to take immediate and urgent measures to reduce the risk of the use of nuclear weapons, including their accidental or unintentional use. The delegation of Paraguay once again calls on the nuclear-weapon States to withdraw their interpretative declarations on the Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Paraguay is striving for transparent, irreversible, verifiable and legally binding nuclear disarmament for all States, and calls for the universalization and fulfilment of commitments on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as well as international treaties and instruments setting out nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The Republic of Paraguay urges all States to refrain from any act counter to the purposes and principles of such treaties and international instruments. Bilateral negotiations can never replace multilateral negotiations aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament in all its aspects. The delegation of Paraguay has closely followed the Preparatory Committee sessions for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

Resources allocated to modernizing nuclear-weapons arsenals must be transferred towards efforts aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The delegation of Paraguay promotes the development of a programme of work that will progressively enlarge nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East.

My delegation wishes to highlight that, over the past year, the Paraguayan Government requested and led two visits of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to Paraguay to verify, in situ, Paraguay's efforts to comply with international regulations on combating terrorism in all its aspects, as well as its implementation of public policies to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors, particularly in border areas. Furthermore, we received an official visit by experts from the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States to facilitate the implementation of the Security Council's financial sanctions regimes. In the same vein, Paraguay signed the code of conduct towards achieving a world free of terrorism, proposed by the Kazakh delegation.

Finally, Paraguay incorporated into its national legal system an amendment to the small quantities protocol to the safeguards agreement between the Republic of Paraguay and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the application of safeguards in relation to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which provides for the timely notification to the IAEA of the

possession of nuclear material and the screening of nuclear facilities under Paraguayan jurisdiction.

Mrs. Dallafior (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Preserving and strengthening the rules-based international order is a priority for Switzerland. That applies to both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

On the challenges linked to non-proliferation, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is a key element of the non-proliferation regime. We note with satisfaction that all reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirm that Iran is fully complying with its obligations. At the same time, we are concerned about the possible consequences of a United States withdrawal from that instrument. My delegation urges all parties to continue to fully honour their obligations and refrain from any action that would run counter to the objectives of the agreement.

With regard to Korea, we welcome the positive developments on the peninsula. However, those are only initial steps. We urge for further steps to be taken towards the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. My delegation is convinced that the relevant multilateral mechanisms and institutions have a key role to play in the denuclearization process, in particular the IAEA and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Organization. On the latter point, we once again urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sign and ratify the CTBT and rejoin the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State. We remain ready to support all diplomatic efforts towards achieving peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

On nuclear disarmament, we note worrisome trends that could undermine the rules-based international order. Nuclear-weapons reductions, which were significant in the past, are now at a standstill. Nuclear arsenals are undergoing sustained modernization. A number of NPT disarmament commitments, including those resulting from NPT Review Conferences, have not been implemented. And a number of nuclear-weapon States seem to be questioning some of their disarmament obligations. Moreover, we are concerned about the tendency of introducing new and unwarranted preconditions for further progress on nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, the current political climate calls for renewed efforts to move forward. With regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces

Treaty, we call on the parties to address mutual concerns through diplomatic channels.

The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons underlines the need for progress on nuclear disarmament. As stated by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Disarmament, a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. In that regard, we would like to reiterate that it is difficult to imagine how the use of nuclear weapons could be consistent with the requirements of international law, in particular international humanitarian law.

We are convinced that progress on a number of issues is necessary and possible. We are therefore in favour of a discussion on reducing nuclear risks. We believe that it is important to reduce operational readiness, as proposed by the De-alerting Group, and urge all States to support efforts undertaken in that regard. We also believe that verification and transparency will lend themselves to constructive engagement in the build-up to the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

It is important that the Conference result in a positive outcome that guarantees the stability and sustainability of the NPT. To that end, we will need to overcome polarization and ensure that nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States work towards a common objective. Collective and inclusive discussions on how to bring about concrete results across all three pillars of the NPT in the run-up to the 2020 Conference are essential. We are in excellent hands to achieve that goal with the two Chair-designates.

One year ago, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons opened for signature here in New York. While Switzerland acknowledges that the instrument is certainly valuable, we have decided not to join it at this juncture. We have a number of outstanding questions regarding some of its provisions, in particular whether the Treaty will effectively strengthen the multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and constructively advance the implementation of article VI of the NPT. Switzerland will participate as an observer State in future conferences on the Treaty and will closely follow how its provisions are implemented and interpreted.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): Let me first say that Canada aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Australia on behalf of a group of countries and with that made by the representative of

the Philippines on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

The rules-based international order is the foundation of our collective security and prosperity. It has endured for more than seven decades, despite numerous threats and challenges during that time. Canada puts a priority on promoting peace and stability, while working with cross-regional partners to uphold that rules-based order. In that regard, our ongoing work to advance nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is essential. We recognize the challenges we currently face, which are causes for deep concern, heightened tension among those States possessing nuclear weapons and growing polarization within the international community.

(spoke in French)

While Canada welcomes the recent easing of tensions on the Korean peninsula and supports continued dialogue, we note that significant security risks remain. In particular, North Korea has yet to take meaningful steps to discontinue its programmes on weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. Until such measures are taken, we must continue to rigorously implement the global sanctions regime against North Korea, counter its proliferation networks and forge a credible path to make the Korean peninsula a stable, secure and denuclearized area.

Canada also remains concerned about Iran's long-term nuclear ambitions. However, we believe that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is an important measure that enables the restriction of any nuclear programme through verification carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Despite the current challenges, Canada remains engaged in finding a concrete path forward. We cannot allow existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms — anchored in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — to be further eroded, due to the destabilizing consequences that that would have for international peace and security.

(spoke in English)

A key step on that path is the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), which is essential to help bridge the divide between the nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States and to achieve our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The recent High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group and its associated informal consultations

reinforced the critical value of an FMCT, and we hope that the group's consensus final report, on which we were just briefed, will inform future discussions and decisions in the Conference on Disarmament. Canada is ready to work with all Member States to build upon the near-universal support that has been expressed for progress towards an FMCT.

The international non-proliferation legal framework is buttressed by instruments that strengthen nuclear security. In December 2017, Canada co-hosted an event to mark the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The universalization of all such instruments is critical to preventing nuclear terrorism.

In closing, Canada remains focused on a practical and inclusive approach towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. That includes advancing progress towards an FMCT, building global capacity to address the technical challenges of nuclear disarmament verification and strengthening nuclear security.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Peace and stability have come to the Korean peninsula, which had been undergoing a severe nuclear crisis. Earlier this year, a new trend of détente was created on the Korean peninsula, thanks to the proactive initiatives and peace-loving efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Government. Such developments are having a positive influence on progress towards stability in North-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region.

With the firm will to terminate the history of confrontation and achieve lasting peace on the Korean peninsula, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has set forth proactive proposals for the establishment of a peace regime and the denuclearization of the peninsula and made sincere efforts to that end. In April, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea took the initiative and decision to discontinue nuclear tests and intercontinental ballistic-rocket tests and to irreversibly dismantle nuclear-test grounds.

Most recently, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea agreed to permanently shut down the Dongchang-ri engine test ground and rocket launchpad, with the participation of experts from relevant countries, and expressed its willingness to continue with additional steps, such as the permanent destruction of the Yongbyon nuclear facility, if the United States takes corresponding action in line with the spirit of the United

States joint statement of 12 June. The discontinuation of nuclear testing is an important process for global nuclear disarmament, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's proactive measures are a significant contribution to international efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

The historic United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea summit was held in Singapore on 12 June amid the unparalleled interest and expectation of the entire world. At the summit, both countries committed to establishing new relations with each other, building a lasting and stable peace regime and achieving the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The Singapore summit demonstrated to the world that even countries with long-standing hostile relationships can resolve regional and global peace and security issues through dialogue and negotiation.

Peace and stability on the Korean peninsula will be guaranteed if the hostile relations that have endured for more than half a century are put to an end and new Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States relations are built on the basis of mutual trust and peaceful coexistence. Confidence-building, with the aim of removing the deep-rooted distrust that exists between the two countries, should go first, in order to achieve the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The peacebuilding process on the Korean peninsula is still in its initial stages. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains firm in its position to implement the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States joint statement in a responsible, good-faith manner. The quickest way and most reliable shortcut to successfully implementing the provisions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States joint statement is to take a step-by-step approach in resolving problems one by one, starting with what is feasible, while giving priority to building trust and ensuring peace and security.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains consistent in its stance of supporting the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the total elimination of nuclear weapons around the world. Comrade Kim Jong Un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has said that it is our firm stance and his will to completely remove the danger of armed conflict and horror of war from the Korean peninsula and to turn it

into a peaceful zone that is free from nuclear weapons and nuclear threats. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will facilitate close contact and dialogue with the international community to safeguard peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and around the world.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.4.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): The international consensus reached at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) 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 towards the fulfilment of nuclear-disarmament obligations, while constantly shifting the goalpost towards additional non-proliferation measures. 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 towards nuclear disarmament boiled over, giving birth to an initiative launched outside the CD to ban nuclear weapons. That initiative faltered by ignoring the fundamental security considerations that underpin nuclear disarmament. While we empathize with the sense of disappointment that propelled its proponents, it led us only 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.

In order to promote a comprehensive disarmament agenda, a rules-based, equitable and non-discriminatory international order needs to be evolved by, first, addressing the security concerns of all States; secondly, limiting and rationalizing the stockpiles of conventional weapons; thirdly, strengthening the non-proliferation regime by shunning double standards and pursuing

equitable and non-discriminatory measures; and fourthly, extending negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Any arms control, non-proliferation or disarmament treaty that does not lead to undiminished security for all States will be a non-starter, as evidenced by the failure of the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) negotiations to kick off. A treaty that results only in a cut-off in the future production of fissile material would jeopardize Pakistan's security and bring no added value to the cause of nuclear disarmament.

Similar to Pakistan's stance towards the ill-advised Group of Governmental Experts established in 2014, Pakistan again chose not to participate in the so-called High-level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group. The limited and incomplete composition of the Expert Group, as well as its divisive genesis, restrictive mandate and partial basis of work, did not qualify it to undertake the task that was expected of it. We are not in a position to accept any conclusion or recommendation produced by the Expert Group.

Pakistan remains committed to the goal of complete nuclear disarmament in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner. As recognized by SSOD-I, the objective of that process should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces. A nuclear-weapons-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 SSOD-I.

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 (SSOD-IV) last year. A successful SSOD-IV 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 guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons from all nuclear-possessing States

should be fulfilled. Pakistan believes that the issue is ripe for treaty 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.1/73/L.4), on behalf of a large number of sponsoring States. We look forward to its adoption with the widest possible support.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.1 and A/C.1/73/L.2.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): Egypt fully aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, Egypt, Morocco and South Africa on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of Arab States, the Group of African States and the New Agenda Coalition, respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.11), and wishes to make the following remarks.

Egypt reiterates its concern about the grave threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and reaffirms that the total, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their proliferation, use or threat of use. Arguments that set preconditions for the implementation of nuclear-disarmament obligations will lead only to counter-arguments that make non-proliferation commitments dependent on similar conditions. The inevitable result of that vicious cycle of retracting previously negotiated obligations is the collapse of the whole regime.

The decades-long stalemate in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, as well as countless similar resolutions, is eroding the credibility and sustainability of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and multilateral norms, as well as the rule of law at the international level. That stalemate is one of the root causes of the instability and lack of security in a region that already suffers from chronic military conflicts and arms races, especially taking into consideration the unprecedented spread of violence and terrorism, including the actual use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in recent years.

It is long overdue for the United Nations to take meaningful and practical steps to implement those resolutions through an inclusive institutional process. Previous attempts to launch such negotiations outside

the United Nations have, disappointingly, been blocked, owing to the lack of political will on the part of some States that do not recognize the severity of the deteriorating security conditions in the region and the inevitable catastrophic consequences.

Arguments that there is a sequential or mutually exclusive relationship between disarmament, on the one hand, and peace and security, on the other, are self-defeating. Those arguments create a misleading dichotomy. As rightly stated by the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the path to peace through disarmament does not lie waiting for the right security situation to materialize, and the relevant efforts need to be actively and simultaneously conducted.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East (A/72/340), as well as the Secretary-General's *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. Both documents clearly highlight the continued international support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the urgent need for action. We also welcome the Secretary-General's continued readiness to engage with the States of the region, and we count on his good offices and convening power to redress this threat to international peace and security.

It is against that background that the Arab Group introduced draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22, on convening a conference on the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, based on consensus and arrangements freely arrived at. At the holistic level, that process would serve as a platform to address all regional disarmament and non-proliferation challenges and establish a robust regional security framework that is conducive to sustainable peace and collective security through dialogue and diplomacy. Furthermore, the launching of that process would contribute to addressing one of the most pressing issues in the context of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We count on the support of all Member States for that initiative, as well as for the other two annual draft resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East (A/C.1/73/L.1), adopted annually by consensus, and on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East (A/C.1/73/L.2). We consider that support as proof of

Member States' commitment to achieving collective security and sustainable peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): I would like to assure you, Sir, of the full cooperation of the Latvian delegation.

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and the statement delivered by Australia on behalf of a group of States (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Latvia remains committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), a major achievement in international security, remains the cornerstone of global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Therefore, as the NPT Review Conference approaches, it is our responsibility to uphold and preserve the NPT, promote its universalization and strengthen its implementation. In the light of the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT, the global community still faces complex security challenges that cannot be addressed by unilateral actions alone. A strong, unified multilateral approach is required more than ever. Nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike have to be on board.

Latvia strongly believes that the right way forward lies in a progressive approach to continuous nuclear disarmament. We cannot shy away from the realities of today. Nuclear-disarmament efforts must consider the wider security context and strategic stability. In that regard, the building blocks set out in the NPT 2010 action plan are more relevant than ever. Comprehensive and substantive implementation of the plan is a path that we should follow.

A lot of work remains to be done. The step-by-step approach requires the full and constructive engagement of all parties. Therefore, we have to revisit our disarmament and non-proliferation commitments and act upon them. The prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is crucial to achieving global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Latvia reiterates its call on all States that have not yet done so, particularly annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty. The commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is another long-standing necessity. The further development of multilateral nuclear-disarmament

verification is one more step forward towards the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Strengthening the rules-based international order is paramount to international security. Latvia has contributed to that aim by assuming the chairmanship of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) this year. The NSG contributes significantly to implementing non-proliferation commitments under the NPT.

Latvia strongly supports the ongoing diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the issue of the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We welcome the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's decision to suspend nuclear and ballistic missile tests. However, a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is required to ensure lasting peace on the Korean peninsula. Therefore, until real and verifiable progress is made, Latvia will continue to support the enforcement of existing sanctions. Latvia urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to full compliance with its international obligations, including the NPT and the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, at an early date.

Indeed, the International Atomic Energy Agency plays an essential role in the implementation of the non-proliferation obligations under the NPT, including under its third pillar, on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, I reiterate Latvia's support for the comprehensive work of the Agency in monitoring and verification activities in Iran.

It is of paramount importance that disarmament and non-proliferation commitments under existing treaties be honoured. In that regard, we urge Russia to address concerns regarding its compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and to engage constructively with the United States on the issue. The preservation of the INF Treaty is vital for international peace, security and stability.

Latvia also remains deeply worried that Russia continues to violate core provisions of the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the NPT. Such actions undermine our collective nuclear non-proliferation efforts and may have a long-term effect on eroding the level of trust among the non-nuclear-weapon and nuclear-weapon States.

Ms. Yeo (Singapore): Please allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and your colleagues on your election to the First Committee Bureau.

Singapore aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

The Charter of the United Nations articulates countries' commitments to saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Disarmament and non-proliferation are therefore at the heart of our core work here at the United Nations and of securing our common future.

Singapore is heartened by the recent developments in defusing tensions on the Korean peninsula. We were honoured to play our part in supporting efforts to promote peace on the Korean peninsula by hosting the summit between United States President Donald Trump and the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kim Jong Un, on 12 June. We welcome the continued dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all concerned parties on the realization of lasting peace and stability on a denuclearized Korean peninsula. We urge all parties to continue engaging in dialogue and fulfilling their international obligations, under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As articulated in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, there is a pressing need for us to resume constructive dialogue and to also take concrete action to halt the use and testing of nuclear weapons.

First, as a global community we must preserve and strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and work towards its universalization. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Following the second session of the Preparatory Committee held earlier this year, there remains a clear divide between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. We hope that all countries will continue to substantively engage with one another to bridge differences of opinion ahead of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Secondly, we reiterate our long-standing view that there are multiple pathways to a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that context, we believe that a realistic and complementary role for the Treaty on the Prohibition

of Nuclear Weapons within the existing disarmament architecture has to be found. The Secretary-General has stated that the underlying frustrations and concerns over the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons must be acknowledged and addressed. Meaningful progress will be made only when all relevant parties join in the effort. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to intensifying efforts to facilitate dialogue among Member States to find a common path.

Thirdly, all countries should sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in particular the remaining annex 2 States. Its entry into force is long overdue. Singapore welcomes Tuvalu's signing and Thailand's ratification of the Treaty this year. We urge all States that have already signed and ratified the CTBT to refrain from actions that go against the object and purpose of the Treaty, pending its entry into force.

Fourthly, we must make progress in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. Singapore reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). Singapore will continue to work closely with nuclear-weapon States to resolve outstanding issues and work towards nuclear-weapon States' collective signing and ratification of the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty without reservations.

Fifthly, we must support other initiatives that contribute to nuclear non-proliferation, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Singapore is committed to the PSI and its Asia-Pacific exercise rotation activities. We hosted Exercise Deep Sabre in 2016 and the operational experts group meeting in 2017. This year, we also participated in the PSI high-level political meeting and the operational experts group meeting in Paris in May, as well as in Exercise Pacific Shield in Yokosuka in July.

We must not allow today's complex geopolitical dynamics to hijack opportunities for constructive discussions and practical cooperation. In the words of the Secretary-General, the existential threat that nuclear weapons pose to humankind must motivate us to accomplish new and decisive action leading to their total elimination. Singapore looks forward to working with all to achieve that goal.

Mr. Prieto (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative

of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

Since 1959, joint efforts towards eliminating all nuclear weapons have formed part of the General Assembly's agenda and enjoyed the firm support of the majority of States. However, the current reality is leading us to reflect on the paradox that exists between the growing global concern regarding the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of just one nuclear weapon, not to mention a regional or global war, in the light of the arsenal-modernization programmes of nuclear-weapon States and the existence of approximately 15,000 nuclear weapons around the world.

Peru is committed to non-proliferation regimes and advocates the universalization of instruments for banning weapons of mass destruction with a view to attaining our ultimate goal of complete and general disarmament. As a Member State, we believe that it is inexplicable that nuclear weapons are continually relied upon in concepts, doctrines and military and security policies and that economic and human resources are squandered in programmes for the production, maintenance and modernization of nuclear weapons. Such action should compel us to reconsider existing mechanisms and measures to escape that trap.

Peru believes that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. We believe that the only guarantee against the serious threat that nuclear weapons pose to humankind is the urgent need for their prohibition and total elimination.

In the light of that need, my country signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in September 2017, which is a legally binding instrument that prohibits the development, advancement, manufacture and transfer of those devastating weapons. We were one of the first States to accede to the Treaty, as we believe that the consequences of their use are catastrophic, transcend national borders and have grave repercussions for the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security, the health of current and future generations and, above all, human survival.

In that regard, we must urgently renew efforts to mitigate the dangers posed by nuclear weapons, while reducing stocks of all types of those weapons, ensuring

their non-use, minimizing their role and importance in military concepts, doctrines and policies, limiting the development of new, advanced types of weapons and establishing greater transparency in nuclear weapons programmes and measures to generate mutual trust.

We note with deep concern the violations and challenges that non-proliferation regimes, particularly concerning nuclear weapons, have suffered in recent years. We are concerned about the threat posed by the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We emphasize that those North Korean programmes and their related activities must be abandoned in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

To conclude, Peru once again reiterates its conviction that we must resolutely follow a path that is able to grant international legal guarantees to uphold the principle of collective security, which inescapably requires the achievement of nuclear disarmament. In that regard, as a country firmly committed to international peace and security, Peru wishes to renew its readiness to continue promoting all necessary measures and actions aimed at the legally binding obligation not to possess nuclear weapons and to eliminate them on a global scale as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We fully support the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

Cuba shares the deep concern about the existence of nuclear weapons. The number of nuclear warheads deployed around the world is more than enough to destroy civilization several times over and most of life on planet Earth. The insufficient progress towards nuclear disarmament and the lack of commitment on the part of some nuclear-weapon States, including to multilateralism and international treaties on disarmament, is a matter of serious concern. The continuing modernization of existing nuclear arsenals and the development of new nuclear weapons systems are unacceptable and illegal.

The international community cannot remain passive or silent, much less so when there is evidence that certain nuclear-weapon States are strengthening the role of nuclear weapons in their defence and security doctrines and the threshold for considering the use of those weapons is being lowered, including in response to so-called strategic non-nuclear threats. Cuba rejects

military positions based on nuclear deterrence. Such positions have intensified the qualitative vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons and unleashed an unprecedented arms race, with serious consequences for humankind.

In that context, we appreciate the important contribution of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament to promoting the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We urge that, in collaboration with Member States, all necessary efforts be made to achieve that priority objective.

Cuba urges the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate political will and amend their positions, particularly in the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and during the current review cycle. It is urgent that we move forward in implementing the NPT and the commitments made in past Review Conferences, in particular concerning its pillar on nuclear disarmament.

As part of the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, Cuba reaffirms its firm commitment to continuing to promote nuclear disarmament as the highest priority in the field of disarmament. Cuba, the fifth State to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, promotes its early entry into force. To that end, we urge all States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty, which prohibits the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and any type of nuclear test in any circumstances. Nuclear-weapon States must offer legally binding assurances that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Our delegation, in addition to continuing to promote the convening of an annual high-level meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, will continue to urge that an international high-level conference on nuclear disarmament be held as soon as possible. We welcome the introduction of draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1 by the League of Arab States, calling for the convening, before June 2019, of an international conference to develop a legally binding instrument on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of destruction in mass in the Middle East.

The decision of the United States Government to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the nuclear agreement with the Islamic Republic of

Iran, violates the rules of coexistence among States. Along with the repeated obstacles to establishing a denuclearized zone in the Middle East, that could also seriously affect regional stability and security.

Finally, Cuba reiterates its firm opposition to and rejection of the application of unilateral coercive economic measures against any country. We reaffirm the legitimate right of all States to conduct research on and produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without any discrimination.

Ms. Nilsson (Sweden): Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). Let me also elaborate on that with some national perspectives.

A nuclear-weapon-free world is an overarching goal to which we are all committed. The fact that we have a tense and unpredictable security climate makes that task more urgent, not less. For Sweden, security policy and humanitarian considerations underpin our strong engagement with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Current trends, not least the quantitative and qualitative modernization of nuclear arsenals, stand in sharp contrast to the imperative of making further progress towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. Progress in both areas are mutually reinforcing and will contribute to a more secure world. Regarding non-proliferation, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remain priorities for Sweden.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should be the main avenue as we seek ways to break the stalemate plaguing multilateral disarmament diplomacy. Preparations for the 2020 NPT Review Conference must now enter a more concrete phase. Our approach should be ambitious and realistic, and our deliberations must be geared towards finding common ground and conducted in a spirit of compromise.

Apart from a clear-cut political reaffirmation of our continued adherence to the NPT, we must ensure that there is no backtracking on previous commitments made at successive Review Conferences, in particular in 1995, 2000 and 2010. With their special responsibility, nuclear-weapon States must constructively engage in advancing the implementation of article VI-related obligations.

However, 2020 cannot only look backwards. A forward-looking agenda must also be developed. The potential items on such an agenda include risk-reduction measures, such as de-alerting, transparency measures and verification. Negative security assurances, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's entry into force and the launching of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty are other staples of the discussion, which are all crucial issues with which Sweden has a long-standing diplomatic engagement, while also applying its technical expertise.

None of those instruments constitute low-hanging fruit that is ripe for picking, yet we cannot resign ourselves to failure. Instead, we should launch more detailed discussions with the aim of identifying areas within those broad issues on which progress might be possible. We cannot come up empty-handed in 2020.

As we seek areas for increased interaction between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States, disarmament verification offers a promising avenue. Through the projects of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership, we have gained a better understanding of the challenges involved and how those can be overcome. Verification enhances transparency, builds confidence and, by creating the necessary technical capabilities, could facilitate the effective and credible implementation of future agreements. Sweden strongly encourages more nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States to engage in that field.

Earlier this year, Sweden, together with a group of other Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), was involved in efforts to break the prolonged deadlock of the Conference. The decision to establish subsidiary bodies was a step in the right direction, allowing for substantive work to be conducted. CD members must now build on that progress, and the ambition must always be the adoption of a programme of work that includes a negotiation mandate — the CD's core business.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons opened for signature in September 2017. As regards Sweden, an independent inquiry is assessing the potential consequences of Swedish accession to the Treaty, including on other Swedish disarmament and non-proliferation engagements, our security and defence cooperation and legal ramifications.

The responsibility for strengthening international security by filling the existing framework for nuclear disarmament with dynamic and constructive initiative is ours. Sweden urges all States to take it upon themselves to deliver on that fundamental responsibility. In a world of heightened tensions, backtracking on prior commitments implies increased risk for all. There is no time like the present to show our commitment to creating sustainable security.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.62.

Mr. Kellerman (South Africa): South Africa associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of African States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/73/PV.11)

As we celebrate the centenary year of Nelson Mandela's birth, it is our view that his call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons should reinvigorate our common resolve and commitment towards the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons. South Africa remains steadfast in its conviction that nuclear weapons do not guarantee security but detract from it. As long as those weapons exist and vertical and horizontal proliferation persists, the world will continue to face the threat of annihilation.

Since the impact of a nuclear-weapon detonation, including the long-term humanitarian, environmental and socioeconomic consequences, cannot be constrained in space or time, nuclear weapons cannot be treated as a matter of national security concern for only those few States that still possess such weapons. By their very nature, nuclear weapons threaten the security of us all. They are a threat to our collective security. All States therefore have a legitimate stake in and responsibility for nuclear disarmament.

We remain concerned that little concrete progress has been achieved in the area of nuclear disarmament since 2010. While reductions are important, they do not substitute for concrete, transparent, irreversible and verifiable nuclear-disarmament measures. Ongoing modernization programmes, including in relation to delivery systems, make it clear that some States still wish to indefinitely retain those instruments of destruction, contrary to their legal obligations and political commitments. We believe that that undermines the bargain of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the non-proliferation norms established by the Treaty, in particular article VI, which makes it clear that nuclear disarmament is an obligation of all States parties.

In that context, South Africa joins the majority of States in welcoming the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and we believe that it represents one of the most significant developments in the area of nuclear weapons since 1945. We are pleased that national efforts have progressed to an advanced stage towards ratifying the Treaty, as per our constitutional requirements. Furthermore, we congratulate the countries that signed and ratified the Treaty on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons earlier this year, and we wish to encourage States that have not done so to please sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as soon as possible.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as well as article IV of the NPT, guarantees the inalienable right of all States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. That article is of particular relevance and importance to Africa, given the need for adequate energy supplies to fuel sustainable and accelerated economic growth on our continent. South Africa's approach to nuclear energy is premised on the fact that peaceful nuclear cooperation and access to the benefits of nuclear energy, pursuant to article VI, are integral components of the Treaty. We remain committed to maximizing the benefits that nuclear energy holds for the socioeconomic well-being of our citizens, while ensuring that those technologies are not diverted or abused for non-peaceful purposes.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that nuclear weapons have no place in today's security environment. Rather than deterring conflict and war, as some continue to allege, they remain a constant source of insecurity and a driver of proliferation. It is our view that nuclear disarmament is clearly not only a legal obligation but also a moral and ethical imperative. In that regard, my delegation again has the honour to submit for the First Committee's consideration draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.62, entitled "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world", which acknowledges the ethical imperatives for nuclear disarmament, a global public good of the highest order that serves both national and collective security interests. We hope that

the draft resolution will receive the wide support that we believe it deserves.

Mr. Ovsyanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus supports a consistent approach to the processes of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and the achievement of global zero. Our country voluntarily renounced its nuclear weapons and is a party to all key international efforts in this field. We believe that the non-proliferation regime established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should be strengthened, as it is a central element of the modern system of global security. That is a priority of our foreign policy. We believe it is essential to ensure that the current NPT review cycle produces results in order to emerge with outcomes for the 2020 Review Conference that are as effective as possible and, especially, that garner universal support. We hope that the review cycle's outcomes will enable us to overcome the existing differences among Member States' positions, including on convening a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We are ready for open and inclusive cooperation with States parties to the NPT in preparing and conducting the review process.

We emphasize our commitment to strengthening confidence-building measures among the main players in the field of nuclear disarmament, reducing international tension and formulating practical and feasible steps to guarantee security for vulnerable States. Belarus considers the issue of ensuring that nuclear-weapon States provide non-nuclear-weapon States with assurances on the non-use of nuclear weapons and preventing threats of their use to be extremely important. Today we have all the necessary preconditions for developing a legally binding global agreement on providing non-nuclear-weapon States with unambiguous and unconditional guarantees. Belarus welcomed the outcome of the discussions on the issue within subsidiary body 4 of the Conference on Disarmament. While the Conference unfortunately did not adopt its report, the work that was done will nonetheless make a significant contribution to advancing negotiations on that track, and we think it would be a good idea to convene a similar international mechanism for continuing substantive work on the topic within the Conference on Disarmament next year.

We consider the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) very important to implementing

assurances on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in accordance with the NPT. It is crucial to have an objective, depoliticized and technically based IAEA safeguards system founded on agreements between the Agency and member States. We want to point out that the Nuclear Suppliers Group is at the forefront of global efforts to develop international rules for the transfer of nuclear products and dual-use goods that can be used in the nuclear arena, adapting them quickly to traditional and new threats in the area of non-proliferation.

Belarus is firmly committed to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as the sole and virtually universal instrument for verification in this area, and one to which no alternative exists. We are concerned about the lack of constructive progress among the eight remaining States whose ratification of the Treaty is essential to its implementation. We once again call on the States on whose actions the fate of the CTBT depends to demonstrate political will and take the measures necessary for its entry into force.

Belarus continue to expand its cooperation with its partners with the aim of effectively strengthening our consensus-based and universally supported nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

Mr. Vongxay (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.11), and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Since nuclear weapons are the most dangerous weapons on earth, their existence remains a matter of serious concern with regard to international peace and security. We therefore firmly believe that their total elimination is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use and that such weapons should never be used again under any circumstances. In that connection, my delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and the General Assembly meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons held last month. We commend the countries that have signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Lao People's Democratic Republic signed that important Treaty in September of last year, and we are now going through the internal process needed for its ratification. My delegation believes that its early

entry into force will be a significant contribution to the efforts of the international community to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe it is important to redouble our efforts, raise public awareness and promote education on the danger of nuclear weapons so that current and future generations do not follow the path of acquiring those dangerous weapons.

We are of the view that 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. It is therefore incumbent on us to undertake effective measures in good faith to fill the legal gap in the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons with a view to fully implementing article VI of the NPT. My delegation supports the implementation of the three pillars of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as we strongly believe that they serve the best interests of the international community.

My delegation stresses the importance of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which would certainly contribute to advancing nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It is therefore the duty of the international community to ensure the Treaty's entry into force. In that context, we hope that the countries that have not done so, particularly the annex 2 States, will sign and ratify the CTBT.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches great importance to the creation of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, as we firmly believe that they have significantly contributed to strengthening the global nuclear-disarmament and nuclear-non-proliferation regimes, as well as to enhancing regional and global peace and security. Therefore, the Lao People's Democratic Republic strongly supports efforts to preserve South-East Asia as a region free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter.

We believe that only when we have strong political will and determination to do things together for the common good of our world and present and future generations and take concrete actions on what we say and agree, will we be able to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons. Therefore, let us work harder and step

forward together to achieve the common goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.23 and A/C.1/73/L.24.

Mr. Walsh (Ireland): Ireland wishes to align itself with the statements made by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

In the interests of time, I will read out a shortened version of our statement.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are top foreign-policy priorities for Ireland. Since joining the United Nations, Ireland has embraced a cooperative and multilateral approach in tackling the problems posed by the existence of nuclear weapons. We are inspired by the belief that progress is possible and that their total abolition should be an imperative for humankind.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is regarded as one of the international community's success stories. It has provided a solid foundation for the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime for five decades. However, the continued relevance and effectiveness of the NPT are dependent on its ability to deliver on its original promise. All existing obligations and commitments made under the NPT remain fully applicable. A reaffirmation of those commitments by all States should be the starting point, not the end goal, of the 2020 review cycle.

Nuclear weapons represent a fundamental threat to collective security and endanger the future of the planet. Ireland believes that the continued prevalence given to nuclear weapons in security doctrines is deeply problematic. At a minimum, it exacerbates tensions in international relations, undermines trust and risks further nuclear proliferation. Unfortunately, some States represented in this room believe that nuclear disarmament can progress only if and when national and international security conditions permit. In the short term, that approach is a recipe for stagnation and, in the long term, threatens the NPT itself.

We all share the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, and we have collectively identified steps and action plans for nuclear disarmament. But identifying the path to that goal is not enough; we also have to walk it. Plans must lead to action if they are to have

any real effect. We cannot chase an elusive, perfect security situation indefinitely. Such a utopia simply does not exist. Indeed, the greatest contribution that we can make to improving international security is to demonstrate good faith in the implementation of our mutually agreed commitments and obligations.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, their humanitarian consequences must remain a top priority on the international agenda. That is why, together with our co-sponsors, we have decided this year to again submit a dedicated draft resolution (A/C.1/73/L.23), with only minor technical updates. The humanitarian consequences of nuclear-weapons initiatives ignited the political and diplomatic process, culminating in the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW closes the legal gap in the nuclear-disarmament architecture by establishing a robust prohibition on the only category of weapons of mass destruction not yet outlawed. In accordance with past practice, following the adoption of a new international treaty, Ireland, together with our co-sponsors, has submitted a new and succinct draft resolution on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (A/C.1/73/L.24). We invite all States to support those two important draft resolutions and to consider co-sponsorship.

The TPNW commands strong international support and was driven not only by interested States, but also by grass-roots civil-society movements, whose experience and advocacy were essential to its adoption. Nevertheless, some States have called into question the compatibility of the TPNW with the existing disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Ireland would like to very briefly address some of those issues and highlight the positive aspects of the Treaty.

First, by providing a legally binding framework for nuclear disarmament, the TPNW complements and bolsters the NPT. Specifically, the TPNW contains a reaffirmation of the NPT's role and establishes a formal mechanism for nuclear-armed States to fulfil their obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament under article VI. Furthermore, the TPNW includes a number of ground-breaking provisions, including environmental remediation, recognition of the gendered impact of ionizing radiation and provisions for assisting the victims of nuclear-weapons testing and use.

In relation to the TPNW undermining nuclear deterrence, we must ask ourselves whether the use of

the most catastrophic and indiscriminate weapon of mass destruction can ever be justified. The testimony of the hibakusha and victims of nuclear testing must surely convince us that no such circumstances exist and that the answer must always be "no".

This time last year, Ireland expressed alarm and dismay that tensions on the Korean peninsula threatened a return to the brink of nuclear war. We are encouraged by the changed atmosphere and welcome inter-Korean summits and the direct talks between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. However, those talks must be matched by concrete and practical action. As such, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the NPT and sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) without delay.

Our call for ratification of the CTBT does not apply only to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. All remaining annex 2 States have a special responsibility to lead, without waiting for other States, and to sign and ratify the CTBT so that it can enter into force without delay.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament acknowledges that nuclear disarmament is fundamentally a question of saving humankind. During this session, we must remember that it is also a question of political will and moral courage. Our hope for this session is that, together, we can renew our commitment to a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Incarnato (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Australia on behalf of a group of like-minded countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Italy fully shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons, and disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are essential components of its foreign policy. To achieve those goals, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains a key instrument, with its three mutually reinforcing pillars. 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 also believe that it is necessary to support, uphold and preserve the NPT in the current difficult environment. The NPT provides the only realistic legal framework to attain a

world without nuclear weapons, in a way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. That goal can be attained only through a progressive approach based on effective measures, in accordance with article VI of the NPT.

The prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is crucial among those measures. We call on all States that have not yet done so, particularly the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. We also call upon all States to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions and to refrain from any action that could undermine the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

The immediate commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is another key priority. We welcome the report (see A/73/159) of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) Expert Preparatory Group, established by resolution 71/259, and are confident that its work will provide fruitful input for negotiations on an FMCT. Pending the conclusion of such a treaty, all relevant States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

We would also like to recall the potential of negative security assurances. We continue to support the possible elaboration of recommendations dealing with all aspects of negative security assurances, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument.

Italy values all initiatives undertaken in the field of nuclear disarmament verification, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We welcome the beginning of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, as per resolution 71/67, which Italy co-sponsored.

We also reiterate our support for the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be attended by all States of the region, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them.

Nuclear-weapon States bear the fundamental responsibility for the implementation of article VI of the NPT. We welcome the nuclear-arsenals reductions made so far and encourage further reductions. We are satisfied that the Russian Federation and the

United States met the central limits of the New START Treaty in February. We encourage them to extend the Treaty and to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting. 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.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons still represents a major threat to international security. The system of safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT. Italy supports the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system, including universal adherence to comprehensive agreements and additional protocols.

Italy welcomes the positive developments made on the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the first half of this year. We hope that those may lead to an open and constructive dialogue aimed at fulfilling our common goal of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains key to international efforts to strengthen non-proliferation. Unanimously endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2231 (2015), the deal plays a crucial role in promoting regional and international security. The international community needs to remain committed to the full and effective implementation of the Plan of Action as long as Iran continues to strictly abide by its nuclear-related commitments. We welcome the IAEA's confirmation of Iran's compliance with such commitments in 12 consecutive reports. We also reiterate the importance of the full and effective implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). We are determined to cooperate with all interested stakeholders to preserve the JCPOA and fully support efforts undertaken by the European Union in that respect.

Mr. Frimpong (Ghana): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Morocco on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I will therefore limit my remarks in my national capacity to a few issues.

Throughout history, nuclear weapons have been identified as posing a unique existential threat to

humankind and the environment, due to their unrivalled destructive power. We are constantly reminded of the devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, but hundreds of those weapons still remain on high alert and are ready to be launched, while not a single unit has been eliminated.

It is quite unfortunate that nuclear-possessing States continue to engage in excessive competitive spending in the maintenance and modernization of their stockpiles, at the expense of human existence and development. It is equally disappointing that nuclear-weapon States still rely on the mantra of nuclear security deterrence, which has fuelled mistrust and fear in the nuclear-disarmament arena.

Indeed, Ghana shares the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament* that the current nuclear risks that we face are unacceptable. Therefore, the need to tackle the reality of this security dilemma through the idea of disarmament saving humankind is more urgent than ever.

Ghana remains committed to the overall objective of achieving general and complete disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the peaceful use of nuclear technology for energy, as envisaged in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We look forward to the realization of tangible results at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

We welcome the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017, which has, since its inception, provided a clear justification for preventing the devastating humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and generated a renewed impetus in the stalled progress towards nuclear elimination. Certainly, the Treaty represents one of the effective measures towards nuclear disarmament and reinforces the centrality and absolute significance of the NPT. It does not in any way establish a competing norm, as claimed in some quarters; rather, it complements the NPT. The TPNW will become an indispensable component of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime upon its entry into force. We welcome the fact that, as of 17 October, 69 States, including Ghana, had signed the Treaty and 19 States had ratified it. We therefore encourage States that have not yet signed the Treaty to do so without further delay.

As earlier expressed by my delegation during the general debate (see A/C.1/73/PV.5), nuclear-stockpile reductions, the universalization of the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a possible negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) are also prerequisites to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. We therefore renew our call on annex 2 States that are yet to ratify the CTBT to fast-track the process of ratification, while encouraging the urgent commencement of negotiation of an FMCT under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

Similarly, the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the nuclear-non-proliferation regime cannot be underestimated. For that reason, while we encourage the consolidation and enhancement of the existing five nuclear-weapon-free zones, we reiterate our call for the constructive engagement of all stakeholders in the Middle East towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region.

We also underscore the pivotal functions of the CD, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the First Committee, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency and many others in the context of nuclear disarmament. However, it behoves all of us, as Member States, to give meaning to the various legal instruments to which we have subscribed under those multilateral platforms and to act to ensure that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is achieved.

We also acknowledge the important role and valued contribution of civil-society organizations, academia, parliamentarians, scientific experts and the media in addressing the irreparable damage to humankind and the environment associated with the use of nuclear weapons. We urge those stakeholders to maintain their momentum through various initiatives that can propel us towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Finally, I wish to restate that, although the pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons appears distant, far and painstakingly tortuous, we remain optimistic that the continuous positive engagement of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, through innovative approaches and the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings, will drive us towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Needless to say, we align ourselves with the

statement that I delivered on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States early in this session of the First Committee, concerning relevant nuclear-disarmament issues (see A/C.1/73/PV.4).

I will begin by emphasizing that nuclear disarmament has been one of the main objectives of the Organization since its founding, as it is closely linked to the maintenance of international peace and security. However, 73 years after the creation of the Organization, that fundamental objective has yet to be achieved, and we are still far from doing so. The continued consideration of the nuclear option in some military and defence policies and doctrines, including deterrence as a supposed measure that contributes to stability among countries and regions, as well as the permanent storage of fissile nuclear material and the effectiveness of programmes to modernize the capabilities of existing nuclear arsenals, continue to pose palpable obstacles to any possibility of moving towards nuclear disarmament.

We reiterate our concern about the negative impact of the squandering of resources on maintaining and modernizing nuclear weapons instead of official development assistance. We continue to maintain that such resources should be allocated to other fundamental priorities of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The adverse relationship between disarmament and development remains a collective concern for developing countries.

As all of us here know, there are currently some 14,500 nuclear weapons around the world, and more than half of the world's population lives in one of the nine countries that possess such weapons or are part of a nuclear alliance. We therefore cannot fail to express our concern that, despite the current level of development, there is no State or organization that is fully prepared to face the serious consequences of the deliberate or unintentional use of a nuclear weapon.

Given that backdrop, and taking into account that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a clear threat to international peace and security, El Salvador was one of the first States to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is the first legally binding international instrument to prohibit, among other things, the use, threat of use, possession or development of such indiscriminate and unique weapons, which are the only category of weapon not to have been prohibited under international law.

In that regard, we are also pleased to announce that we ratified the Treaty on 30 August and are currently carrying out the respective legal procedures to deposit our instrument of ratification as soon as possible. We hope that the Treaty will enter into force soon, which will benefit the international community as a whole — and I wish to emphasize “as a whole” in the strongest possible terms. The Treaty places the weapons that it addresses on an equal footing with chemical and biological weapons. As a result, my country believes that possessing or depending on nuclear weapons is now as reprehensible and shameful as possessing or depending on chemical, biological or bacteriological weapons for our safety. Such weapons are therefore unacceptable.

We reiterate our commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the full implementation of its three fundamental pillars. That is why we will work constructively and proactively to achieve a final document that upholds those commitments and obligations at the 2020 NPT Review Conference and will work to support the Preparatory Committee in 2019. We reiterate our call on all countries that have not joined the NPT to adhere to it without delay.

With regard to nuclear tests, which do nothing but undermine international peace, security and stability as well as endanger the lives of millions of people, we believe that they run counter to the aim and purpose of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and to the obligations and provisions of the NPT. El Salvador therefore condemns all types of nuclear tests in any part of the world, and we urge States able to do so to refrain from carrying out such tests, as well as to reduce and ultimately eliminate all actions aimed at developing or improving nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate the importance of and need for an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We call on annex 2 States of the Treaty to accelerate the process of signing and/or ratifying that instrument without further delay.

The main aim of the First Committee and, by extension, the Organization should be to continue fighting for the total elimination of nuclear weapons without delay or conditions. We regret attempts to promote a paradigm shift in nuclear disarmament and the efforts of some Members of the Organization to generate artificial division on this issue. We must keep in mind that their use carries serious consequences

that transcend borders. Moreover, their repercussions threaten human life, the environment, sustainable development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations.

Before concluding, I wish to emphasize the importance of public awareness in promoting the principles of humankind, as evidenced by the actions in favour of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we recognize the efforts undertaken to that end by other international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and, above all, the hibakusha — the nuclear survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Finally, I reiterate my country's willingness to support all efforts towards the achievement of international peace, stability and security and respect for international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): Recent developments in the political and security situation pose a challenge to cooperative relations among States. In order to narrow that gap, we need to seriously consider what to do and how to proceed at this juncture.

We should be united in our efforts to maintain and strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the most universal treaty and the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In particular, all States parties should reaffirm their commitment and begin to take concrete steps that are based on the 2010 NPT action plan and past NPT agreements towards a successful outcome of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

In order to fulfil the article VI obligations of the NPT, which is imperative to upholding the regime, all nuclear-weapon States must make further efforts to comply with that unequivocal undertaking. We call upon nuclear-weapon States to take the following actions, among others: to further reduce all types of nuclear weapons on a unilateral and bilateral basis and eventually engage in multilateral negotiations with all nuclear-weapon States; enhance transparency, including through regular reports with numerical information; and reduce the risk of the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and enhance nuclear security, in view of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, States that are not parties to the NPT should take concrete disarmament measures on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, Japan strongly urges those States to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States at the earliest opportunity and without conditions. Practical and concrete nuclear-disarmament measures should proceed with constructive cooperation from all States.

As for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we call upon all countries, particularly the remaining eight annex 2 States, to ratify the Treaty.

The final report (see A/73/159) of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) Expert Preparatory Group sets out a full range of potential treaty elements, providing very useful signposts for future negotiators. We fully agree on the need to carry out further expert work, which should lead to actual negotiations. Moreover, until the entry into force of an FMCT, Japan strongly urges all nuclear-weapon States and States possessing nuclear weapons to declare or maintain a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Nuclear-disarmament verification is indispensable to achieving a transparent, verifiable and irreversible reduction of nuclear weapons. Japan will continue to contribute to the activity of the Group of Governmental Experts on that issue and the efforts of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. Those initiatives are important platforms on which all States can work together to identify and apply the measures and technologies necessary for verification.

Promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education is imperative for us to pass on the threat of diverse nuclear risks, the devastation that was caused by the use of nuclear weapons and the steps necessary to overcome those challenges, while encouraging the development of critical-thinking skills among young generations.

Nuclear disarmament and security must move forward together. In that regard, in November, the third meeting of the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament will take place in Nagasaki to pursue a nuclear-disarmament agenda that will address hard questions about the relationship between security and disarmament.

In parallel with nuclear disarmament, it is important to strengthen and maintain nuclear non-proliferation so as to enhance peace and security. Accordingly, resolving regional nuclear-proliferation issues is vital. Japan reaffirms its strong commitment to the goal of achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all of North Korea's nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programmes and related facilities, as well as ballistic missiles of all ranges, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Mindful of recent developments, including the United States-North Korean summit and the three inter-Korean summits, Japan calls on North Korea to take concrete steps towards denuclearization. We also call on all Member States to fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Lastly, all States are encouraged to answer the hard questions. We must fully utilize existing frameworks, including the Committee, the NPT and the Conference on Disarmament, and seriously consider effective ways to enable substantive discourse. Those discussions could serve as confidence-building measures and set the foundation for a stable international security environment.

Mr. Bohn (Germany): I will read out a shortened version of our statement.

In 2020, we will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the prime example of effective multilateralism, and hold another NPT Review Conference, which will widely be seen as an indicator of the international community's capacity to add further chapters to this half-century-long success story. Germany is fully committed to strengthening the NPT in 2020 and further developing its potential across all three pillars.

Allow me to focus on three points during my statement.

First, the number and scope of nuclear challenges that we are facing today are growing. Geopolitical shifts and technological developments are transforming the strategic nuclear landscape. The polarization that we are witnessing today does not seem conducive to giving common answers to the challenges that we are jointly facing. Against that backdrop, Germany remains committed to the full spectrum of objectives laid down in the 2010 action plan. While the security environment evolves, our political commitments stand firm, and we

are resolved to redouble our efforts to make progress on its implementation under the current and, I admit, challenging circumstances.

We cannot afford to abandon or diminish our 2010 commitments, nor should we hold progress on some pillars hostage against progress elsewhere. Looking ahead to 2020, we believe it to be more essential than ever to narrow the gaps among the different camps in the nuclear community. After all, the universality and legitimacy of the NPT are grounded in mutual recognition of priorities among the States parties. That fertile ground must be preserved for the future.

Secondly, I would like to highlight the pertinence of our non-proliferation efforts. This past year vividly demonstrated both the opportunities for and challenges to multilateral diplomacy in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. Along with our European Union partners, we have underlined that we remain firmly committed to the preservation and full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). As an outcome of effective multilateral diplomacy, the JCPOA is an important contribution to the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. It subjects Iran to tight technological restrictions, coupled with the world's most robust verification and monitoring regime. The JCPOA thus ensures that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful. It is therefore a key international security interest for us to maintain the nuclear deal, as long as Iran fully complies with its JCPOA commitments. Echoing Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), we reiterate the call on all States to refrain from actions that may undermine the implementation of commitments under the JCPOA.

Germany highly values the inter-Korean détente. There is a real chance for diplomacy here, provided that the international community stays united in pushing for complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization on the Korean peninsula. We need to ensure that concrete steps are taken towards denuclearization as a prerequisite for sustainable peace and stability. Germany stands ready to engage with expertise and any progress genuinely aimed at that objective.

Thirdly, Germany remains fully committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We are convinced that nuclear disarmament contributes in an essential way to our security, and we continue to believe that this objective can be reached by pragmatic and incremental steps towards nuclear disarmament, taking

into account the prevailing security environment and building on dialogue between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. We also recognize the humanitarian impetus promoted by the proponents of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We cannot see, however, how that Treaty can help in dismantling a single nuclear warhead, and we believe that it runs the risk of furthering gaps where rapprochement is needed. Against that background, we appreciate the unequivocal support for the NPT, as expressed in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and we count on that commitment.

Germany is actively supporting the multifaceted efforts to make tangible progress on the road towards nuclear disarmament. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has been long overdue, and we call on all States not yet party to sign or ratify the Treaty. Likewise, the fissile material cut-off treaty would substantially complement the NPT. In that context, we welcome the fruitful and constructive debate that we had in the framework of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group and subsidiary group 2 of the Conference on Disarmament.

Furthermore, and in concluding, I would like to add that we see great merit in carrying forward our practical work, together with France, in the field of nuclear-disarmament verification. Together with France, we are preparing an exercise aimed at providing us with practical solutions to some of the challenges in this field.

Finally, we believe that security assurances could be an important stability factor, in particular during these times, and could reinitiate trust and remove uncertainty about the possible scenarios that might emerge due to geopolitical shifts and technological developments.

Ms. Nuzuha (Maldives): I wish to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other officials for their comprehensive briefings on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Seventy-three years ago, the world experienced the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons. Some of us, including the Maldives and many other countries, made a pledge, with determination, to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Every nuclear disaster since 1945 has reminded us that so-called nuclear deterrence is an

illusion and that we are individually and collectively more secure without such devastating weapons.

Despite the obvious dangers, however, some countries are determined to pursue the development of nuclear weapons. We ask those countries to accede to and implement the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We also ask those that possess nuclear weapons to dismantle their stockpiles and renounce the possession of those weapons. That might be difficult, but not impossible. The NPT, CTBT and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons show us the way to achieving that. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that we adopted in the General Assembly last year speaks of the international community's conscience in banning and prohibiting nuclear-weapons development, production, possession, use and threat of use. It is proof that the global community is ready for a world free from nuclear weapons. All that is required is the political will to achieve that.

The Maldives is a State party to the NPT and the CTBT. The Maldives' decision to join those instruments was rooted in the long-held belief that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against humankind. The Maldives has never produced any armaments or weaponry of any type, nor do we have the desire to do so in the future. We believe that it is our moral obligation to work towards strengthening and enforcing the international disarmament and non-proliferation machinery, of which the First Committee remains a major pillar. We will continue to express our opinions and concerns in this arena, and we will always be ready to extend our support to those who stand up for non-proliferation and disarmament.

The Maldives also strongly advocates the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, in line with resolution 2832 (XXVI), adopted by the General Assembly in 1971. It is in our best interests to maintain the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and free of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. We believe that, through cooperation among the countries of the Indian Ocean region, we will be able to maintain the region as a zone of peace.

We are witnessing the easing of years of stagnation on the Korean peninsula. It is our hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will

take concrete steps towards denuclearization on the peninsula. The Maldives welcomes the efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to find a peaceful solution to the long-standing disputes on the Korean peninsula through a multilateral framework.

We all agree that the acts of terrorism that we are witnessing are a global menace. The Maldives urges the international community to recommit adequate resources, in order to prevent the theft of materials that could be used in a nuclear weapon or terrorists acquiring them. The idea of the total elimination of nuclear weapons from this world is as old as the bomb itself, dating from the dawn of the atomic age. All that is required is the political will of the international community and a commitment to acknowledging that there is a reason to believe that we can, in fact, make that idea a reality.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in French*): We have heard today's last speaker and have exhausted the time available to us.

Before adjourning, I wish to inform delegations that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, 22 October at 10 a.m. sharp, in this conference room. The Committee will first hear from the remaining speakers on the "Nuclear weapons" cluster, and we will then hear from speakers on the cluster on "Other weapons of mass destruction".

I wish to remind all delegations that the list of speakers will be published on the PaperSmart portal. I also remind delegations that the list of speakers for the thematic discussion segment will close on Monday, 22 October at 6 p.m. All delegations interested in taking the floor should make every effort to inscribe Tuesday on the list before that deadline.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.