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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga. (Romania)

*In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Amaral (Portugal),
Vice-Chair, took the Chair*

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

The Acting Chair: As the Committee continues its consideration of the cluster “Regional disarmament and security” this morning, I once again kindly urge all speakers to observe the established time limits.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, on behalf of the League of Arab States, I would like to associate myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.23).

We stress the importance of the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world, including the Middle East region. Accordingly, we underscore the importance of taking the immediate practical steps called for in the annual draft resolution submitted by the Group of Arab States entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”, contained this year in document A/C.1/73/L.2. We call on the international community and countries seeking peace and stability to support this important draft resolution, as they have done in past years. The Arab League also calls on the three countries that co-sponsored the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review Conference of the Treaty

on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is an integral part of the indefinite extension of the NPT, to assume their responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the resolution. The League also calls on the Secretary-General to play an active role and exercise his powers to that end.

The League of Arab States reiterates its commitment to moving forward and doing its utmost to achieve a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, thereby enhancing peace, security and stability in a region of the world that is among the most susceptible to conflict and instability. In the light of the failure to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East or the outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference, which was adopted by consensus, the League sought to end the current stalemate at the 2015 Review Conference by submitting a new proposal that enjoyed the tangible support of the overwhelming majority of States parties to the Treaty. However, three countries impeded Conference’s adoption of a final document, thereby undermining the credibility and sustainability of the NPT regime.

Arab countries have assumed their responsibility to bring about peace and security in the Middle East and establish a region free of weapons of mass destruction. Other parties have yet to assume their responsibility. In that regard, the League of Arab States notes with deep concern the continued humanitarian, security and environmental dangers posed by Israel’s refusal to accede to the NPT. It is the only country in the Middle East that has not acceded to the Treaty and refuses to subject its facilities to verification under the safeguards

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regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency and to disclose the safety measures of its nuclear facilities and how it disposes of its nuclear waste, thereby posing a security and environmental threat to the Middle East, in particular its immediate neighbours and the Palestinian people.

The League of Arab States reiterates that the delay by the international community in implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East undermines progress in eliminating weapons of mass destruction throughout the world and establishing security in the region. The League of Arab States looks forward to the outcome of the current session of the General Assembly in advancing negotiations to establish a region free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in the interest and for the security of all without discrimination in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the agreed commitments in that regard.

The League of Arab States has proposed a draft decision calling on the Secretary-General to convene a meeting among the countries of the region on the holding of negotiations concerning a treaty in 2019, according to the arrangements taken by those countries upon their terms, whereby decisions would be reached by consensus, thereby demonstrating that the League of Arab States continues to be extremely flexible and is making constructive efforts while remaining committed to multilateralism. The League of Arab States believes that the decision will be supported by all countries committed to upholding their obligations and commitments pursuant to the relevant international resolutions.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.56.

Mr. Prieto (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Latin America and the Caribbean comprise what is primarily a middle-income region that has made significant progress in reducing poverty. It nevertheless continues to face challenges, including inequality, poverty and extreme poverty, which are adding to the problem of violence and insecurity. Addressing that situation requires coordinating work to move forward the implementation of measures to achieve peace, confidence-building and disarmament, together with efforts to foster economic and social development. To that end, the General Assembly mandated the United

Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean with the task of meaningfully supporting the initiatives and activities of the States of the region aimed at the implementation of peace and disarmament measures and the promotion of economic and social development.

Thanks to the support provided by the Regional Centre, the States of Latin America and the Caribbean have made progress in capacity-building, the training of specialized personnel and the development and implementation of regulations in areas related to disarmament and security. In that regard, this year the Regional Centre has organized 115 activities providing technical, legal and policy assistance to the States of the region, at their request, in the implementation of instruments concerning conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. As part of the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, the Centre has provided technical training to more than 2,500 national officials in the marking, tracing, stockpile management and destruction of small arms.

With regard to Peru in particular, the Regional Centre oversaw a project run by several agencies in northern Peru, working with approximately 90 young people and adults to raise their awareness of the increasingly serious issue of the possession and use of firearms in schools and to seek solutions to that problem. In order to support the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the Centre helped Peru draft new legislation and define the country's priorities in its national action plan. Thanks to the assistance provided, Peru presented its plan of action in July 2017. In addition, in August 2017 the Centre provided technical assistance to the Peruvian army in the destruction and the permanent removal from circulation of more than 18,000 obsolete weapons, including firearms and conventional weapons parts and components, in compliance with international instruments and norms, in particular Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument.

The basic task of identifying the areas in which the Centre must play its role has been carried out judiciously by the various administrations that have headed it, especially the current one, which is responsible for planning and carrying out its activities both in Lima

and New York. We express our special appreciation to all of them.

Lastly, for the reasons I have mentioned, my delegation has the honour to once again introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.56, entitled “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean”, for the General Assembly’s consideration. As in previous years, we are confident that we will be able to count on the valuable support of delegations for its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.23). I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Regional stability is key to our pursuit of global security, prosperity and peace. It requires understanding and respect among neighbours committed to common rules of behaviour. Unfortunately, we continue to see evidence that certain countries and groups are determined to erode previously accepted norms. The use of chemical weapons, for example, threatens to undermine international efforts to consign those heinous weapons to history, with clear implications for regional security. It is in that context that the United Kingdom remains fully committed to a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. As a co-convenor, we have made efforts to make progress on that issue by meeting the Panel of Wise Men on Disarmament Issues and Non-Proliferation of the League of Arab States and sponsoring a workshop to which all States from the region were invited. We will consider all suggestions for a way forward, but the process must be inclusive to be effective. We are concerned that the proposal currently before the First Committee does not meet that requirement.

We should remember that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East covers a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, not just nuclear weapons. In Syria, the independent Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has concluded that the Al-Assad regime had repeatedly used chemical weapons against its own people, in defiance of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. In order to make meaningful progress on the zone, countries in the region must have confidence that

others will abide by the terms of the agreement. We continue to call on the Al-Assad regime to fully declare and destroy all aspects of its past and current chemical weapons programme. The decision to strengthen the OPCW at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to review the operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention gives some cause for hope, but we must not be complacent. We now need to work together to support the Director-General to implement the decision in full.

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is another requirement for regional stability. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains an invaluable agreement in that regard. We welcome the confirmation by the International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran continues to fulfil its nuclear-related commitments, and we urge Iran to continue its compliance. The United Kingdom is committed to working with the remaining parties to the agreement to preserve its economic benefit for Iran. At the same time, we have deep concerns about Iran’s damaging regional activity, including its support for militant non-State actors. In addition, Iran’s continued development of ballistic missiles destabilizes the Middle East and is inconsistent with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

The illegal pursuit of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea poses a serious threat to regional security. We welcome the ongoing discussions between the United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. It is now vital that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea take concrete steps towards implementing complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. Until the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea commits to that process, the international community must continue to strictly enforce existing sanctions.

Ms. Edwards (Guyana), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

We and our NATO allies have raised serious concerns about Russian compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Russia has refused to engage constructively in dialogue and has offered no credible response. We want the Treaty to continue to stand, but that requires both parties to be compliant. We continue to call on Russia to demonstrate full and verifiable compliance with the Treaty. Disarmament is possible only when there is trust among all parties. There is an urgent need for confidence-building measures and a renewed effort to restore that trust. Alongside effective

attribution and non-proliferation regimes, it will reinforce the rules-based international system that is essential for the security of us all.

Mr. Sivamohan (Malaysia): Malaysia associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the statement delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/73/PV.23).

As a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Malaysia has played an active role in the development and consolidation of regional norms and principles over the years. In view of the contemporary challenges confronting international institutions, we remain firmly committed to the ideals of ASEAN, which has long been an exemplar of multilateral cooperation.

Malaysia believes that continued respect for landmark instruments, such as the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, is critical. In that regard, Malaysia supports efforts to strengthen all ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Plus Three, the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus. We are confident that those platforms will continue to provide invaluable links between ASEAN member States and the broader international community, thereby enabling the sharing of views and experience across a range of areas.

Malaysia underscores the importance of realizing the overarching objectives of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and its Protocol, in accordance with the *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together* document, adopted by ASEAN leaders. In that connection, we believe that the accession of the nuclear-weapon States to the Protocol remains imperative.

Malaysia also supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and implores all the relevant parties to take concerted action towards its realization.

Emerging security challenges will only accentuate the need for multilateral dialogue and action. Together with our partners from the region and beyond, Malaysia looks forward to exploring opportunities for an enhanced global security and disarmament agenda.

Ms. Sehayek-Soroka (Israel): The Middle East has undergone changes and challenges over the past decades that have shaped the regional security architecture. Today it is clear that the core struggle of the region is between the moderates and the radicals. The moderates are those countries that aim for stability, prosperity and a safe environment. The radicals are those countries and non-State actors that seek to destabilize the region so that they can promote their own radical agendas.

If the moderates seek genuine and positive change in the region that can counter the radicals, they must evolve their views and perceptions of the region. Although we see an ongoing change taking place in the Middle East, it seems that the moderates need reinforcement, as the price is too high. Stability, security, sovereignty, prosperity and freedom of religion are being undermined, causing human suffering and an ever-growing death toll.

The radical regime in Iran has aimed to export its revolution to other countries in the Middle East and beyond since the late 1970s. From the Arab Gulf, throughout Africa and the Maghreb, to Asia, North and South America and Europe, no one is immune. The Iranian regime, its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Al-Quds Force and its proxies attempt to create strongholds within the territories of those regions and violate sovereignty across the world. Turning a blind eye is a critical mistake, as it fuels the radical Iranian regime. Reaching out will not work, as it is viewed as weakness and will be abused by the Iranian regime with no boundaries. The Iranian regime, like the Al-Assad regime, has no problem terrorizing its own people, as well as the entire region and beyond.

Terrorism in the Middle East has evolved. While it can take many forms, terrorism has only one purpose: to change the way of life of the moderates. Terrorists aim to take down Governments in the Middle East because they are not radical enough. Such non-State actors have their own agendas, but some of them are tools in the Iranian regime's terrorism toolbox, with no inhibitions regarding religious orientation, as being radical simply serves them well.

The international community and the moderates in the Middle East must work together, without hesitation, without double standards and without illusions against such radical forces. We must all adopt a proactive approach to block the proliferation — within, to and from the Middle East — of conventional weapons,

missiles, rocket technologies and weapons of mass destruction know-how and its relevant technologies.

The moderate Powers of the Middle East need to find ways to work together to address our collective security concerns. The growing danger from one Member State in this very room — owing to its nuclear proliferation and missile and financial activities — is of great concern. We must face and achieve our common goal of a more prosperous and secure Middle East. That is why the moderates in the Middle East should adopt a constructive approach, rather than waste energy and resources on destructive agendas, which will lead us nowhere and only strengthen the radicals.

Allow me to address the region in Arabic.

(spoke in Arabic)

The State of Israel is part and parcel of the Middle East. Like the other moderate countries of the region, Israel is threatened by destructive forces, to which my country is contributing to combat.

Israel's approach has always been constructive. We stand ready to work together, as security and other challenges have no borders. The threats posed by extremist and takfiri forces are growing and do not discriminate among States or nations. We are all on the same boat and must coordinate together to reach safe shores.

In conclusion, direct engagement on bilateral and regional levels is essential, taking into consideration the importance of participating in the work against terrorism and destructive forces in the region.

The full text of my remarks will be available on the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. Almuzaini (Kuwait) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, I would like to thank the Chair for all the efforts he has made, together with the other members of the Bureau, to bring our work to a successful conclusion.

I align myself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.23), and earlier by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the League of Arab States .

The State of Kuwait reiterates its resolute and principled commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament in all its forms. My country also reaffirms the importance of establishing zones free of nuclear

weapons, including the Middle East in particular, which will promote and strengthen peace and security.

With regard to nuclear-weapon-free zones, we call once again on the three countries that were sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is an integral part of the permanent extension of the Treaty, to shoulder their responsibilities in implementing the resolution. Israel must adhere to the NPT and subject its nuclear installations to inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. We reject the Israeli attempts to prevent the holding of conferences aimed at establishing the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear weapons.

My country welcomes the constructive dialogues among the various parties to promote nuclear disarmament. We have supported direct negotiations between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the latter's nuclear programme, especially as those negotiations followed an unprecedented spike in tensions on the Korean peninsula. We hope that those negotiations will be successful and lead to a nuclear-weapon-free Korean peninsula.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait is steadfast in its position calling for supporting and enhancing the relevant conventions on disarmament. We therefore support multilateral efforts that seek to promote the universalization of conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates 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.23).

The Middle East continues to be one of the world's volatile regions. Despite all the new sources of insecurity, the first, oldest and most chronic threat to the security of the Middle East flows from the expansionist and interventionist strategies, aggressive and warmongering policies and offensive and brutal practices of the Israeli regime. The invasion of all its neighbours, and even countries beyond the region, the waging of over 15 wars and the repeated perpetration of all core international crimes represent only a small portion of its vandalism in the region.

For too long, the United States and its regional allies in the Persian Gulf have ignored any strategy to win the peace. For too long, they have made the wrong choices in our region and then blamed others, particularly Iran, for the consequences of their own short-sighted and trigger-happy strategic blunders. From supporting Saddam Hussein's invasion of my country in 1980 to aiding and abetting his use of chemical weapons; from the wars to evict him from Kuwait and then to remove him altogether; from first supporting Al-Qaida and the Taliban to waging a war to remove them from Afghanistan; from supporting the same brand of extremist terrorists bringing ruin to Syria to dangerously occupying parts of Syria under the guise of fighting the groups they have armed and financed; from Israel's invasion and subsequent aggression on Lebanon and its illegal occupation of Palestine to its routine incursions into Syrian airspace; and the bombing of Yemen with planes supplied by the West — what have those actions brought the world?

The United States and its clients in our region are suffering from the natural consequences of their own wrong choices, but they use the First Committee and other forums to revive the hysteria surrounding Iran's regional policy and obscure the reality. Yet did Iran force them to make all those wrong choices, as some of them ridiculously claim? Are we to blame because we were on the right side of history in fighting Saddam Hussein, Al-Qaida, the Taliban, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, the Al-Nusra Front and so forth, while the United States and company were financing, arming and supporting them?

The ongoing arms race in our region is an example of the destructive and unnecessary rivalry that has made our neighbourhood unsafe and insecure. The first- and third-biggest arms-importing countries in the world are in the Persian Gulf. Many of their weapons have been used for death and destruction in Yemen. The United States is the main supplier of those weapons. Certainly, no one should expect the United States to have an interest in resolving the regional problems, because all it values is money and selling more beautiful arms. It is accustomed to approaching the security problems of the region from a zero-sum perspective.

Through the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) we showed the world that our nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful. The historic success of diplomacy over coercion in the resolution of that issue reflects a simple, but important, political

lesson: all parties concerned defined the problem in a mutually acceptable way that was amenable to a mutually acceptable solution. In other words, they recognized that they had to give up their maximalist expectations in favour of a working compromise.

In our view, the Persian Gulf region, which suffers from a deficit of dialogue and confidence, is in dire need of a change. The region requires a fresh regional security architecture to transform it into a strong region where small and large nations contribute to stability. To that end, the countries in the Persian Gulf region could establish realistic regional arrangements, starting with a regional dialogue forum, based on generally recognized principles and shared objectives. Such a forum could promote understanding on a broad spectrum of issues, including confidence- and security-building measures, and combating terrorism, extremism and sectarianism. It could eventually even develop into more formal non-aggression and security-cooperation arrangements. Immediately after the conclusion of JCPOA, in 2015, Iran proposed creating such a forum. That proposal is still on the table.

All Persian Gulf States need to adopt a non-zero-sum approach. That means recognizing the need to respect the interests of all, which by its very nature will lead to stability. Unless there is a collective effort to bring about inclusive peace and security in the Persian Gulf region, we will be engulfed in turmoil. Iran is committed to fulfilling its responsibility in contributing to the preservation of peace and security in the Persian Gulf region.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia assumes full responsibility for its obligations under security and arms control agreements. Together with our allies and partners in the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, we are working on possible joint steps to eliminate new threats and challenges to regional security, resolve existing conflicts and ensure peace and stability. We are actively participating in discussions within the framework of constructive dialogue on various aspects of European security.

At the same time, we note with concern the activities of our Western partners aimed at undermining regional security in Europe. Under the slogan of the need to contain the threat from the East, there is an unprecedented build-up of conventional weapons and military capabilities in general along the Russian

borders. Springboards are being created in the countries of the Baltic region to project forces from North America to Europe in order to increase combat capabilities and deploy additional NATO and United States military contingents in the Baltic States, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. We are especially concerned about the increasing military activities of NATO countries along the length of the Russian border. The number of foreign contingents stationed in the territories of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland increased from 2,000 to 11,000 troops during the period from 2015 to 2018. Those forces possess all types of offensive weapons. The question is, why is that necessary?

There has been an increase in the intensity of reconnaissance and tactical flights in the area by NATO armed forces since 2015. We note the sharp increase in the use of strategic United States Air Force B-52H and B-1B bombers in coalition exercises conducted in the Baltic and Scandinavian countries. The number of strategic bomber flights in Europe has increased 12-fold, from six in 2014 to 72 in 2017, and over 40 sorties have already been carried out since the beginning of 2018. There has been activity in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea by NATO vessels from its combined naval forces: there were 39 launches in 2016, and 74 in 2017.

The main difference between us and NATO countries and their United States leader is that we conduct exercises on our own territory, and the United States uses the territory of its allies to conduct exercises. In addition, in our exercises we do not use special groups dressed in NATO uniforms and armed with NATO equipment; whereas NATO often does so, with its troops sometimes dressing in Russian military uniforms. All our exercises are defensive or counter-terrorism in nature, which cannot be said about NATO exercises. The NATO exercises have a clear anti-Russian orientation, regardless of where they are held, be it in northern Europe or in its southern regions.

We see another negative aspect in the increasingly active involvement of neutral States in military activities with anti-Russian subtexts. A striking example of that is the 2018 Trident Juncture operation, which involved the participation of Sweden and Finland.

We cannot forget about the financial aspect. Under pressure from the United States, military expenditures by NATO countries are set to reach 2 per cent of the gross domestic product this year and, at the same time, a recommendation was made that a 4 per cent increase

be established. The United States military budget is also increasing. The 2019 budget will set another record. That is taking place at the same time that Russia is gradually reducing its military expenditures.

Those statistics clearly demonstrate the true aspirations of our American partners and their allies. Russia takes other approaches. We advocate eliminating misunderstandings and reducing tensions through a respectful dialogue.

The security architecture cannot be strengthened under the conditions of an acute lack of trust and unexpected changes in NATO's policy and military planning on containing Russia. In that context, the recent statements that were made can be carried out only under conditions of equal security for all. We also believe that we must avoid conditions of confrontation in strengthening our relations. In that connection, I stress that Russia's military activity is under close international control, and Russia acts transparently, including by implementing the provisions the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna document of 2011.

With regard to the Russian presence on the territory of individual States, namely, Moldova and the territory of Transnistria, as well as Abkhazia and South Ossetia, we would like to emphasize once again that our troops are stationed there on the basis of an international mandate, as is the case in Transnistria, or on the basis of bilateral agreements with independent sovereign States, as is the case in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Russian military presence in those regions ensures their stability, creates conditions for normal social and economic development and, most important, for coexistence without conflict among the peoples living in those specific areas. That is a fact, which even the most vehement critics of Russian foreign policy cannot dismiss.

We believe that the statements on the militarization of Crimea, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov are pure propaganda and are meant to obscure NATO's plans for putting the region under its control. Such plans are already being actively implemented, for example, through the construction of a naval base in Nikolaev, as well as by conducting regular exercises of the NATO naval forces in the Black Sea.

The full version of our statement will be available on PaperSmart.

The Acting Chair: I would like to appeal to all delegations to limit their interventions to five minutes when speaking in their national capacities.

Ms. Abdallah (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country endorses the statement made earlier on behalf of the League of Arab States.

We emphasize our continued commitment to support dialogue and consultations and all efforts to establish zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including in the Middle East, despite the obstacles that must be addressed.

We underscore the importance of the principles and basis set out by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in confronting the issue of nuclear proliferation. We hope that positive and serious steps will be taken to implement the mechanisms and outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and ensure the convening, without delay, of the conference on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, with the participation of all countries in the region. My Country reiterates its call on Israel to adhere to the NPT, as it is the only one in the region that has not yet joined the Treaty.

The United Arab Emirates welcomed the summit between the two Koreas and the progress achieved, which highlighted a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons. That would effectively contribute to reducing tensions and establishing security and peace in that region. We reiterate our call to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to re-join the NPT and sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions in order to achieve international peace and security.

It is important to create an environment that is free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Accordingly, The United Arab Emirate renews its full commitment to the NPT and reiterates the right of States to develop peaceful nuclear energy programmes.

My country calls upon Iran to exercise transparency and comply with the standards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as to build more confidence pertaining to the nature of its nuclear activities. We hope that those steps will reflect positively on its conduct in the region.

In conclusion, we urge the international community to make further efforts to reach consensus and improve the work of the First Committee by taking effective measures that contribute to promoting regional and international peace and security.

Mr. Ornai (Timor-Leste): My delegation associates 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.23).

For Timor-Leste, tackling disarmament and security in the region is a collective responsibility in promoting peace and stability. That is why Timor-Leste became a State party of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in 2007, and of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in 2015. To that end, Timor-Leste actively participates in regional meetings, seminars and workshops to promote regional peace, security, harmony and stability, and especially friendship among peoples in the region, and continues maintaining special relationships of friendship and cooperation with neighbouring countries and ASEAN member States, in particular, and the region, in general.

My delegation believes that all parties should continue to respect and promote those regional peace instruments and foster constructive dialogue towards confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region, while fully respecting the principle of non-interference in internal affairs.

My delegation acknowledges that regional disarmament and security issues are no longer the responsibility of individual countries alone. They are becoming a collective security concern as we combat the illegal trafficking of small arms, light weapons and drugs, as well as terrorist activities, in the region.

Therefore, in 2011 Timor-Leste established a legal framework at the national level to prevent and combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. In 2014, Timor-Leste ratified the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Also in 2014, Timor-Leste established a scientific criminal investigation police to investigate crimes related to trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and other illicit drugs. In 2017, Timor-Leste also established national legislation to combat illicit drug trafficking.

In that connection, my delegation believes that terrorism, trafficking, transnational organized crime and the illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons must be addressed through border control and neighbouring countries sharing information about the illicit regional trade of small arms; mutually supporting national law enforcement; creating a database system; and monitoring the shipping of small arms for their illegal sale or purchase. The cooperation and coordination of neighbouring countries are vital for ensuring peace, security and stability at the national and regional levels.

My delegation also highlights that regional security today is also undermined by illegal shipments of weapons and maritime piracy, and that collective responsibility and security must fully respect the principle of territorial integrity as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. My delegation fully supports regional and international non-proliferation initiatives on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. Those weapons should be eliminated regionally and internationally. My delegation affirms that Timor-Leste does not support any entity, be it a State or non-State actor, attempting to develop, manufacture, acquire, possess, transport, transfer or use weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Therefore, Timor-Leste, in line with its firm commitment, signed and ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Timor-Leste also takes note of the conventions and treaties to which it is not yet fully party for their further consideration, signature and ratification.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Uzbekistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.48.

Mr. Ibragimov (Uzbekistan): I have the honour of delivering a statement on behalf of the States parties to the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, namely, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and my country, Uzbekistan, in its capacity as the current coordinator of the Treaty.

The entry into force of the Treaty, on 21 March 2009, was an important milestone that marked the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, through which the countries of the region have made a significant contribution to strengthening regional and global security. The creation of the nuclear-weapon-free zone was the result of the collective efforts of all five Central Asian States in their desire to lend security, stability and peace to the region and create the necessary conditions for the prosperity and well-being of their peoples.

In September 1997, Uzbekistan hosted an international conference entitled “Central Asia — a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone” to raise awareness within the international community about the efforts undertaken by the Central Asian countries to establish such a zone. The signing ceremony of the Treaty was held in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, where one of the world’s largest nuclear test sites was closed in 1991. The first consultative meeting on the Treaty was held in Turkmenistan in October 2009. The Kyrgyz Republic is the depository of the Treaty.

The States parties to the Treaty have committed themselves voluntarily and unequivocally to banning the production, acquisition and deployment on their territories of nuclear weapons and their components or other nuclear-explosive devices. The nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia is therefore in full conformity with the provisions of Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the global process of disarmament.

In addition, the Central-Asian zone includes a number of special features. It is the first zone located entirely in the northern hemisphere and in a landlocked region. It is the only such zone in which nuclear weapons have been deployed. All in all, the declaration of the Central Asian region, which is located in the heart of the Eurasian continent, as a nuclear-weapon-free zone significantly enhanced the security and stability of a vast geopolitical space.

We note with great satisfaction that the long process of consultation on the provision of negative

security assurances to member countries of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia was successfully completed on 6 May 2014, when high-ranking representatives of nuclear-weapon States signed the Protocol on negative security assurances in the presence of the States parties to the Treaty. The Protocol is an integral part of the Treaty and extends security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to the Central Asian countries. The Protocol to the Treaty has been ratified by four nuclear-weapon States. We hope that the formal process of institutionalizing the zone will be completed soon. That will continue to be our significant joint contribution to strengthening the NPT regime.

At this session of the General Assembly, on behalf of the delegations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, my delegation wishes to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.48, entitled "Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia". This biennial draft resolution is a technical update of resolution 71/65, adopted in 2016. The document reflects the progress made since the signing of the Treaty in 2006, and reaffirms our strong commitment to enhancing the effective implementation of measures in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, I would like to express the Central Asian countries' common hope that the proposed draft resolution will receive the unanimous consensus and wholehearted support of all States Members of the United Nations. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the Member States that have already agreed to co-sponsor our draft resolution. I kindly urge other countries to follow suit.

Mr. Aung (Myanmar): Myanmar associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the representative of the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/73/PV.23).

The stagnation in today's multilateral disarmament mechanism shows that there is a need to intensify collaborative efforts towards our ultimate global disarmament goal, that is, the elimination of nuclear weapons and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Although there has been steady progress in the regional and global disarmament agenda, it is still necessary to promote disarmament and reduce tension at the global and regional levels in the light of

the increasingly complex security challenges facing us today.

Regional and global approaches to disarmament and arms limitation have complemented each other and should be pursued simultaneously in order to safeguard regional and international peace and security. Therefore, it is important to promote and enhance international efforts towards global disarmament and international peace and security by supporting and promoting regional disarmament efforts and initiatives, as well as transparency and confidence-building measures among countries of the region.

The establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world, on the basis of agreement or arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned, is an effective measure for limiting the further spread of nuclear weapons. We strongly believe that the establishment of such zones contributes to the cause of nuclear disarmament.

Myanmar reiterates its commitment to preserving the ASEAN region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. We recognize the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Treaty, including the plan of action to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty for the period 2018 to 2022. Myanmar also affirms its commitment to engaging the nuclear-weapon States and intensifying the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty.

While expressing our appreciation to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Myanmar firmly believes that UNODA will continue to serve as a provider of advice, expertise and assistance in the area of disarmament and related security matters by helping Member States to reach their security and disarmament objectives through their respective United Nations Regional Disarmament Centres. In that regard, we thank the Regional Centres for their hard work. Myanmar fully supports the role played by the three Regional Centres, particularly the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for its practical assistance and capacity-building work to contribute to national and regional efforts in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to promote dialogue

and confidence-building, and peace and disarmament education in the region.

Myanmar has been working with the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in formulating international instruments and domestic legislation and utilizing available tools for the control of small arms and light weapons. Myanmar fully supports the commitment of the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to intensify efforts to facilitate dialogue among Member States through their engagement in formal and informal settings in order to help Member States return to a common vision and path leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To that end, it is imperative to resume, without delay, substantive and results-oriented negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

We believe that restoring trust and confidence among Member States is the key to breaking the present stalemate. Myanmar calls on all Member States to redouble efforts to seek a common path, reduce nuclear risks, build confidence and realize concrete progress leading towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons by strengthening the collective implementation of our respective regional disarmament mechanisms.

The Acting Chair: We have heard the last speaker on the cluster “Regional disarmament and security”.

The Committee will now begin its consideration of the cluster “Disarmament machinery”. I once again urge all speakers to kindly observe the established time limits.

I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.16 and A/C.1/73/L.18.

Mr. Erwin (Indonesia): I am very pleased to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

NAM remains concerned about the continuous erosion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The Movement is determined to continue promoting multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in those areas and as the only sustainable approach for addressing them, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, and reiterates its call for the CD

to agree by consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without further delay, taking into account the security interests of all States. In that regard, the Movement reaffirms the importance of the principle set out in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament that

“[t]he adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage.” (*resolution S/10-2, para. 29*)

NAM strongly rejects any politicization of the work of the CD and calls upon all Member States to fully respect its rules of procedures and agreed working methods.

The Group welcomes the efforts made by the CD Presidents from NAM member States towards the resumption of the CD’s substantive work in 2018. NAM takes note of the deliberations and discussions on substantive issues that were held during the 2018 session of the CD. While we welcome the efforts made on the programme of work during the 2018 session, the Movement encourages all CD member States to demonstrate the necessary political will to ensure that the CD fulfils its negotiating mandate.

NAM reaffirms the importance and relevance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, with its universal membership, as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery for considering various problems in the field of disarmament and submitting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. NAM calls upon all Member States to reach consensus in the Commission’s Working Group on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

For its part, NAM stands ready to engage constructively on the advancement of the issues on the United Nations disarmament agenda and the ways and means of strengthening the disarmament machinery. NAM underscores the importance of convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV), as it would offer an opportunity to review — from a perspective better attuned to the current international situation — the most critical aspects of the disarmament process and to mobilize the international community and public

opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and of the control and reduction of conventional weapons. In that regard, the Movement welcomes the successful convening of two substantive sessions in 2016 and one substantive session in 2017 of the Open-ended Working Group on SSOD-IV, chaired by Ecuador, which agreed on the objectives and agenda of SSOD-IV.

Enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery is a shared objective. Based on its existing rules of procedure and working methods, the machinery has produced landmark treaties and guidelines. NAM believes that the main difficulty lies in the lack of political will by some States to achieve progress, particularly on nuclear disarmament.

With deep concern over the continued lack of adequate representation from NAM countries in the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Movement requests that the Secretary-General and the High Representative undertake steps to ensure balanced and equitable representation in that Office. NAM also stresses that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research should be adequately strengthened and its research and information functions accordingly extended, as provided for by the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Under this cluster, the Movement introduces draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.16 and A/C.1/73/L.18, entitled, respectively, "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" and "United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament". We seek the support of all Member States for the draft resolutions.

Finally, the Movement urges all countries to work together, cooperate more and demonstrate their political commitment tangibly, including here at the First Committee, to ensure that the disarmament machinery will once again, in the not too distant future, unleash its potential to advance global peace and security.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express the solidarity of the Group of Arab States with the statement just made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The efforts of the Arab Group to ensure the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are integral part of its

principled commitment to nuclear disarmament in order to reach a world free of nuclear weapons as a high priority of the disarmament and international security efforts pursuant to the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978. The Arab Group recalls once again that the activities and mechanisms of the United Nations pertaining to disarmament are based on those special sessions and cannot be amended except through a new special session of the General Assembly convened to that end.

The Arab Group welcomes a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and looks forward to tangible results leading to dealing with the many developments witnessed in the international arena concerning the increased threats to international security. That comes at a time when the international disarmament system is witnessing an important and historic development of founding the first international binding instrument that bans nuclear weapons, while for the first time it considers their possession, transfer, deployment, development, use or threat of use as illegal, leading to fully eliminating such weapons.

The Arab Group stresses the importance of pooling international efforts to address the serious shortcomings of the nuclear non-proliferation regime due to the failure of the 2015 Review Conference. We should do our best for the success of the 2020 Review Conference through issuing a balanced and comprehensive outcome document to address the challenges facing the three NPT pillars, especially nuclear disarmament. That would achieve further progress on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapon and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which is one of the essential conditions for the success of the Conference.

Furthermore, we stress once again that the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which is the only forum for the consideration of disarmament treaties, should fulfil its role. We also underscore that the current stalemate in the work of the CD is due not to its mechanism but to the lack of political will on the part of certain States. That is why the Arab Group underlines the need to promptly reactivate the role of the CD so as to carry out its negotiating mandate, in particular nuclear disarmament.

The Arab Group believes that the issues listed on the CD agenda are in line with the objectives and priorities agreed upon internationally. We cannot

deal with one issue on the agenda before the other without agreeing on executive steps to eliminate nuclear weapons, or focusing on new commitments concerning non-proliferation to the detriment of nuclear disarmament in a way that leads to more imbalances in the commitments of nuclear countries regarding nuclear disarmament, on the one hand, and the commitments of non-nuclear countries regarding non-proliferation, on the other.

The Arab Group has repeatedly expressed its disappointment that the United Nations Disarmament Commission has not been able to reach consensus on any recommendations for several years now, excluding the relative progress achieved during the previous session, due to the unconstructive positions taken by certain nuclear States, which have hindered consensus on measures pertaining to nuclear disarmament. The Arab Group has tried hard to reach consensus and played a constructive role within the framework of multilateral efforts to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Arab Group would like to emphasize the need for nuclear States to show their political will and the flexibility required to allow the Disarmament Commission to achieve tangible progress on nuclear disarmament during its current session, which runs until 2020. The Arab Group welcomes the initiative taken by the Secretary-General in May 2018 by way of his document *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*. We look forward to developing mechanisms for implementing his initiative, in consultation with Member States, with the aim of placing disarmament efforts, especially on nuclear disarmament, at the forefront of United Nations concerns.

Mr. Tun (Myanmar): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Myanmar.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are substantively interrelated and mutually reinforcing. There is a genuine need for a systematic and progressive effort to advance those two processes. Multilateralism is the core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, with a

view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and expanding their scope. The existing multilateral disarmament institutions need to be reinvigorated and better utilized by improving the coordination and integration of expertise into their work.

Based on its existing rules of procedure and methods of work, the United Nations disarmament machinery has produced important treaties and guidelines and promoted confidence and mutual trust among States. However, it is a matter of deep concern that the global disarmament mechanism has been moving at a snail's pace as a result of the continuous erosion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament. In that regard, we believe that the political will of Member States is important and should be increased substantively.

ASEAN stresses the need to preserve and strengthen the nature, role and purpose of the various forums under the United Nations disarmament machinery, namely, the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

While acknowledging the important role of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, we are concerned about the continued deadlock in the CD concerning agreement on a programme of work. ASEAN therefore reiterates its call to the CD to agree, by consensus, on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without any further delay.

While welcoming the establishment of five subsidiary bodies during the 2018 session of the Conference on Disarmament, ASEAN encourages all CD member States to demonstrate the necessary political will in order for the CD to fulfil its negotiating mandate.

ASEAN welcomes the successful conclusion of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-IV), and calls for all Member States to continue consultations on the next steps to convene SSOD-IV.

While recognizing the important and valuable role of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on non-proliferation and disarmament, ASEAN stresses that it should be adequately strengthened and its research and information functions accordingly extended, as provided for by the Final

Document (resolution S/10-2) of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

ASEAN welcomes the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, outlined in the document *Securing our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*. We look forward to the effective implementation of its 40 actions.

ASEAN believes that the current achievements of the United Nations disarmament machinery are certainly still far from our common expectations. It is time to identify concrete measures on how the machinery could be made more effective and deliver practical benefits that will contribute to international development, peace and security.

We have been warning of the dangers of the accumulation of rust in the multilateral disarmament machinery. We have been witnessing examples of deadlock in the absence of sufficient political will. It therefore depends on our attitude whether we move the machinery forward collectively or we stay in the trap of deadlock. Our choice will determine our future disarmament architecture.

ASEAN urges all Member States to intensify our efforts to strengthen the global disarmament machinery. We recall the timeless words of the late Kofi Annan, our former Secretary-General, who said:

“If ever there was a time to break the deadlock in multilateral negotiations and bring disarmament back into the limelight of the international agenda, I believe it is now”.

Ms. Carey (Bahamas): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the thematic debate on the cluster “Disarmament machinery”. As this is my first address to the First Committee, allow me to congratulate the Chair on his election to chair the First Committee. I also extend congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. I would like to assure them of the continued support of CARICOM and the Bahamas delegation to their work.

At the outset, allow me to reiterate the significance CARICOM attaches to the United Nations disarmament machinery and the work of related mechanisms that fall under it, including the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the First Committee. The shifting global context has demonstrated the need for innovative and enhanced

dialogue and redoubled commitment towards the goal of disarmament.

CARICOM is pleased with recent progress within the Conference of Disarmament, and welcomes the 2018 decision of the Conference on Disarmament to establish subsidiary bodies on seven out of the eight items allocated to it to consider, inter alia, emerging and other issues relevant to the substantive work of the Conference.

We encourage the prompt resumption of negotiations within the CD. It is our fervent hope that within the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, delegations work steadfastly, in a transparent and inclusive manner, to overcome the paralysis that has prevented a conclusion of agreement in key areas of disarmament deliberations.

In that regard, CARICOM welcomes recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons put forward in the 2017 report (A/72/42) of the Disarmament Commission, which paved the way for subsequent consideration of a new agenda item related to outer space. CARICOM looks forward to continued movement during the new three-year cycle and engaging in meaningful discussions to build consensus on practical recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

At this juncture, the Caribbean Community expresses its appreciation to Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for the invaluable role it has played as the coordinator of regional and global disarmament initiatives. CARICOM also notes with appreciation the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, which promotes greater understanding of the functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery and other institutions working in the areas of international security, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

There can be no sustainable development without security, justice, good governance and peace. CARICOM attaches tremendous importance to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in the context of disarmament, to Sustainable Development Goal 16, which calls for peace, justice and strong institutions. CARICOM strongly views disarmament as the fundamental link

between peace and sustainable development. Regional and global disarmament approaches are mutually complementary and must be pursued simultaneously.

Consequently, CARICOM commends the stellar contributions of the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, which provide capacity-building and a range of training opportunities to Member States upon their request. We wish to highlight our appreciation for the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), headquartered in Peru, which, over the past year, undertook more than 115 substantive activities to support States in their implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Many CARICOM countries have benefited, and continue to benefit, from support extended by the Centre. CARICOM reiterates the importance of synergies in disarmament and arms control and wishes to underscore its support for the first symposium on women and security, held in Peru in December 2017. CARICOM expresses its appreciation for the voluntary contributions to UNLIREC from the Governments of El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Panama, Peru, Sweden and the United States of America over the latest financial reporting period.

Similarly, CARICOM applauds the leading role taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency through its robust verification and monitoring mechanisms, as well as its contribution to radioactive security. We also wish to commend the work of United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which is celebrating its thirty-fifth anniversary, for its independent research on disarmament affairs, which provides an invaluable forum for the dissemination and promotion of disarmament-related information.

The Caribbean Community underscores the critical importance of nuclear-weapon-free-zones as confidence-building instruments that ensure peace and security, strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and advance nuclear disarmament. We therefore commend existing nuclear-weapon-free zones on their efforts to attain those goals. In that connection, CARICOM countries are proud States parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and

the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — which observed its fiftieth anniversary last year.

In that regard, CARICOM continues to applaud the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and hopes that the Treaty, along with others, fosters workable, humanitarian-based approaches to advance disarmament objectives.

CARICOM also recognizes the vital contributions of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations, in the maintenance of peace and security. We also wish to underscore the engagement that will need to be undertaken with players within the arms industry, especially as we try to respond to new and emerging technologies.

In conclusion, while there is still much work to be done to fulfil our mandates on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, CARICOM remains committed to doing its part to support the critical work of the disarmament machinery and calls on all Member States to demonstrate the required collective will to achieve a safe and peaceful world.

Ms. Scott (Namibia): I take the floor on behalf of Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Zambia and, my own country, Namibia.

In the past four weeks, many States have stated that disarmament has fundamental gender dimensions and perspectives. They are key to our policymaking and programming and underpin the effectiveness of disarmament work within the broader peace and security effort. The evidence is clear — when examining security challenges and weapons-related issues, gender impacts must be assessed. Women, men, girls and boys experience different threats during and after conflict and are differentially impacted by weapons and their flows in non-conflict environments.

Considering gender perspectives also allows for a deeper examination of underlying assumptions about how gender shapes our own work and the dynamics of joint disarmament efforts. That was noted as early as 2006 by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, led by Hans Blix, when it recognized that expectations about gender also shape how the machinery considers and addresses disarmament and international security. While we believe there is more to be done to bring gender perspectives into the full range of disarmament and international security discussions, we are encouraged to see the high number of initiatives already taken to date, either within the First Committee or the broader disarmament machinery:

We welcome the calls made by the Chairs of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Ottawa Convention for delegations to strive for equal representation. We note the increase in the number of statements and side events where gender perspectives are applied and discussed. We commend the noticeable increase of gender analysis in resolutions — not least the persistent work by Trinidad and Tobago in putting forward draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.21, on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We welcome the establishment of the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group and the 2019 Arms Trade Treaty focus area on gender and gender-based violence. Let us build on that momentum, while recognizing that we will be judged by our actions and not just by our words.

Looking ahead, we believe the First Committee's work would be enhanced by focusing on the nexus between disarmament and the women and peace and security agenda, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, we welcome the focus on gender in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. Civil society organizations have had a powerful influence on the expansion of gender perspectives throughout the disarmament machinery. They have offered ideas, knowledge, encouragement and constructive criticism of States' efforts. We welcome their commitment and energy and look forward to ongoing partnerships and collaboration.

In conclusion, the area of gender and disarmament merits the attention it now receives because it expands the scope of our knowledge and understanding of the

challenges and solutions to foster greater progress on disarmament.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Homolkova (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

At a time when multilateralism is under great strain, we underline the utmost importance of international institutions and instruments and their proper functioning. Any efforts made in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, including within the mandates of the United Nations disarmament machinery, should contribute to upholding and strengthening international law and collective security. The United Nations disarmament machinery and its three mutually reinforcing forums remain central and irreplaceable. We must ensure their relevance and use them more effectively so that they can fulfil their respective roles and reach results in line with their agreed mandates.

The annual sessions of the First Committee provide a good opportunity for more focused and topical debates on the current major challenges to our collective security and, where appropriate, identify concrete measures to address those challenges rather than simply updating previously adopted resolutions.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) should negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties. It could also elaborate other instruments and norms, such as guidelines and codes of conduct. The EU has repeatedly regretted that it has not been possible to reach consensus on a negotiating mandate for more than 20 years. Further political will and creative thinking are required to break the impasse and ensure that we focus on substantive work according to the CD's mandate. Furthermore, the EU and its member States reiterate their long-standing commitment to the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament and strongly support the appointment of a special coordinator in that respect.

We were encouraged by the constructive atmosphere in the five subsidiary bodies of the CD and are grateful to the coordinators for bringing forward substantive work, in accordance with the mandate of

the subsidiary bodies to reach an understanding on the areas of commonalities, deepen technical discussions, broaden areas of agreement and consider effective measures, including legal instruments, for negotiations. The adoption of four substantive reports for the first time in years is an important step forward and could provide a solid basis on which to build in 2019.

We profoundly regret that the Syrian Arab Republic assumed the presidency of the CD for May and June 2018, in view of its lack of legitimacy given the brutal violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and repeated grave violations of its disarmament and non-proliferation obligations, including the prohibition of chemical weapons. Such concerns were expressed in the joint statement supported by the EU and its 28 member States, as well as a number of other CD members.

Negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) has been an agreed goal of the international community for more than two decades. We commend Canada for bringing the work of the High-level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group to a consensus-based outcome and welcome the inclusive consultative process. The EU provides significant financial support to facilitate the participation of African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries in FMCT-related consultations. The EU calls on all CD members to start negotiations on such a treaty without delay and to begin work on other issues on the agenda.

We welcome the Civil Society Forum and look forward to further opportunities to engage with non-governmental organizations, academia, industry and research institutions. The EU supports the work of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on disarmament education, including financially and through a visit of the United Nations disarmament fellows to EU institutions in Brussels.

We support the ongoing efforts to improve the working methods of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). The EU welcomes that a new topic — outer space — has been included on the UNDC agenda. We hope that a focused approach will allow the Commission to reach consensus on relevant recommendations. We highly appreciate Australia's leadership in that regard.

We emphasize the importance of independent research on disarmament and security matters. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) fulfils an important role in that regard as a stand-alone, autonomous institution of the disarmament machinery. The EU and its member States continue to support UNIDIR's activities. We welcome its new Director and look forward with interest to her work. We also look forward to the adoption by consensus of the draft decision (A/C.1/73/L.61) that France has submitted this year to follow up on the implementation of the UNIDIR resolution adopted in 2015 (resolution 70/69), with the aim of providing the Institute with a more sustainable funding structure and operating model. We also emphasize the importance of women and men's full and equal participation in the disarmament machinery.

We welcome the Secretary-General's goal of exploring synergies across the United Nations system. In his Agenda for Disarmament, he has encouraged putting disarmament and non-proliferation back at the centre of our common efforts to achieve peace and security. The EU and its member States recognize that linkages among sustainable development, humanitarian action, conflict prevention and peacebuilding can help us to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. We remain open to further discussion on how the Agenda for Disarmament can contribute to those objectives.

In conclusion, however, the United Nations disarmament machinery and its various instruments cannot function properly without sound finances and Member States' willingness to engage with all crucial issues related to international security and global politics. We must therefore be proactive and results-oriented in our endeavours in order to explore how we can further promote disarmament for the benefit of all.

Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Paraguay, which supports the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and welcomes the recent adoption by consensus of its objectives and plan of work. With regard to the Conference on Disarmament, we believe that greater transparency in its deliberations will help it to revitalize its work and arrive at a programme of work for its advancement of disarmament negotiations. We therefore call on the members of the Conference

to share with the Committee their efforts aimed at reaching a consensus on a programme of work, as well as the difficulties and challenges that are obstacles to it. In the interests of transparency and the Conference's fulfilment of its mandate, we also favour increasing its membership, and civil society and academia's participation in its meetings.

With respect to the Disarmament Commission, we recognize the value of its 2017 recommendations in the area of conventional weapons (A/72/42, annex), and we hope that its deliberations on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation will soon help to further this pressing aspect of disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that among other things, its relevant recommendations should address the consolidation and progressive expansion of declared nuclear-weapon-free zones and assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States regarding the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. We also support the Disarmament Commission's deliberations on outer space.

Where the work of the First Committee is concerned, while we realize that in many instances the only way to advance the disarmament agenda at the global level, unfortunately, is by simply keeping an item on the Committee's agenda, we urge the Committee to reflect on the relationship between the number of resolutions submitted for consideration by the First Committee at each session and the substantive progress that they make towards advancing the disarmament agenda.

However, we stress the value of the structured debates taking place in the First Committee, which allow us to gauge the political will of States to make progress where advancing in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in all their aspects is concerned, as well as to understand their national and regional positions on certain specific aspects. The delegation of Paraguay has outlined its national positions in each of these debates over of the past three sessions. We believe that the virtues of these discussions aimed at initiatives of political coordination and cooperation among States are indisputable, as for the same reasons are the opportunities presented by the participation of representatives of civil society and the academic world.

Lastly, the Republic of Paraguay reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its belief that issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation, in all their manifestations, should continue to be

debated at the multilateral level within the General Assembly, the highest democratic expression of its constituent peoples, on the basis of sovereign equality among States, and should conform to international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Bilateral negotiations can never replace multilateral negotiations in that regard. The Republic of Paraguay rejects unilateral acts by any actors in the international community designed to undermine multilateral negotiations, contravene the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations or subvert the principles of international law.

In conclusion, the delegation of Paraguay stresses that reform of the disarmament machinery must align with the work of eliminating poverty and achieving sustainable development around the world, and urges the delegations of Member States to make every effort to shift the resources allocated to modernizing their arsenals to initiatives aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mrs. Dallafior (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to address three issues under this thematic cluster.

First, we have noted the developments at the Conference on Disarmament at its 2018 session with interest. The Conference decided to take a pragmatic approach to its work by establishing five subsidiary bodies addressing all the items on its agenda. For the first time in 22 years, it was able to agree on substantive elements by adopting the reports of four out of the five subsidiary bodies (CD/2138, CD/2139, CD/2140 and CD/2141). Clearly, we are still a long way from being able to revitalize the Conference, and we do not underestimate the obstacles in the way, as the difficulties in adopting the Conference's annual report have shown. For our part, we believe that a pragmatic approach based on a gradual progression towards negotiations and providing for the possibility of formulating other, non-legally-binding instruments, could help to overcome the long-standing deadlock. We therefore believe it is important to ensure that next year the Conference on Disarmament works to build on the developments at the 2018 session.

Secondly, we are very concerned about the financial difficulties faced by several disarmament treaties and conventions. The situation is even worse this year. The financial problems are primarily due to some States parties' non-payment of their mandatory contributions,

and we once again urge them to settle their arrears as soon as possible. The issue of liquidity is another significant challenge. Switzerland hopes that the meetings of States parties of the treaties concerned will adopt the necessary measures at the first opportunity, with a view to discouraging non-payment and ensuring that these instruments are supported by procedures that provide the greatest possible financial stability and predictability.

The last subject I want to address is the question of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). We thank the Secretary-General for the report (A/73/256) he has issued pursuant to resolution 70/69 concerning a third-party assessment of the Institute's structural, financial, administrative and operational aspects. Besides recalling the importance of UNIDIR in taking forward disarmament efforts, it includes a number of important considerations and recommendations aimed at ensuring that the Institute can rely on a sustainable and stable financial structure. We fully share the recommendation inviting the Institute to articulate its work around a multi-year strategic research plan. For our part, we also intend to respond to the call of the Secretary-General to support the Institute via unearmarked contributions or at the programme level.

With regard to the contribution from the regular budget of the United Nations, we want to point out that it now represents only 9 per cent of the Institute's budget. We fully concur with the point made in the report that the imbalance between voluntary and regular-budget funding is contrary to the spirit of the Institute's founding document. As the Secretary-General's report emphasizes, the contribution from the regular budget should at least cover the Director and Deputy Director's salary, as well various key activities. We should implement that recommendation in the context of the next biennium, beginning in 2020, and we call on all Member States to work towards that. The Committee's decision to include the subject of UNIDIR on its agenda at the next session of the General Assembly will be a first step in that direction.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the League of Arab States and would like to add the following remarks.

Egypt assigns immense importance to the United Nations disarmament machinery and considers

disarmament and arms control an essential pillar of the United Nations mandate to preserve international peace and security, which remains the Organization's *raison d'être*. The stalemate in disarmament efforts is not necessarily the result of defects in the machinery as much as it is a reflection of the lack of political will on the part of some States that seek to maintain absolute military dominance and believe in deterrence rather than collaborative and collective security.

The failure of the Conference on Disarmament to adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work for more than 22 years demands immediate action. We believe that the situation can be rectified only by launching negotiations on the verifiable and irreversible total elimination of nuclear weapons with specific benchmarks and timelines. Egypt also believes that similar efforts are needed to revitalize the Disarmament Commission and enable it to adopt recommendations on nuclear disarmament. We look forward to a successful fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament as a landmark event that is urgently needed to address the alarming stalemate in disarmament and to go back to the drawing board to revisit the design of its machinery.

We continue to value the role of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, and we call for increasing UNIDIR's independence and impartiality so that it can continue to generate new ideas and promote practical action on disarmament. We believe that seeking better synergies and coordination between the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and UNIDIR could help the machinery to function more efficiently and effectively.

We once again welcome the Secretary-General's timely and valuable Agenda for Disarmament. We see this initiative as a clear recognition of the importance of enhancing the functioning of the disarmament machinery and bringing disarmament back to the forefront of the focus of the United Nations. We also encourage non-governmental organizations and civil society to take an active role in supporting the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Finally, we believe that the First Committee has a central role to play in bridging the gaps and creating momentum and guidance for the disarmament machinery. We hope that all Member States will take a

constructive, consensus approach to succeeding in that task. And we support the High Representative's call to all delegations to rise above conference-room politics in order to enable this important body of the United Nations to make a real difference.

Mr. Amaral (Portugal): Portugal aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of the European Union on this cluster.

We must ensure the relevance of three mutually reinforcing forums, the First Committee of the General Assembly, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament (CD). It is not helpful that in the past few decades the United Nations disarmament machinery has been unable to deliver as it should and is now failing to fulfil its mandate. Almost two decades have passed since the Conference on Disarmament was last enlarged. Since then the door has remained closed to the admission of new States, like mine, that throughout the years have consistently affirmed their interest in becoming full parties to the Conference. The CD's agenda encompasses global concerns that should be dealt with by a wider representation than the current 65 members. Portugal regrets that consensus has not been reached on a negotiating mandate for more than 20 years and believes that addressing the issue of membership in the Conference would be a decisive step towards its revitalization. We also want to remind the Committee that all Member States contribute to its costs, irrespective of whether they are members of it or not. Portugal reiterates that the Conference should immediately begin examining enlargement modalities, and we strongly support appointing a special coordinator for continuing consultations on this matter.

With regard to the Disarmament Commission, the sole specialized deliberative body in the United Nations disarmament machinery, we were encouraged by the adoption at last year's session of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons (A/72/42, annex). For the current cycle of our deliberations, we should build on that success and work together to reach consensus on the adoption of recommendations on both items on the Commission's agenda. Portugal particularly welcomes the inclusion of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities as a new topic on its agenda.

We reiterate our call for the immediate start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the report of the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group, chaired by Canada (A/73/159). In the meantime, a moratorium should be observed on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

The full and effective participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament is essential. Portugal strongly believes that incorporating gender perspectives will help to revitalize the disarmament machinery.

In conclusion, taking concrete steps to preserve the leading role of the United Nations disarmament machinery, including by enlarging the Conference on Disarmament, would substantially contribute to addressing the challenges we face and provide fresh impetus to disarmament diplomacy. That should be the path to follow.

Mr. Joshi (India): I too would like to thank the panellists for their informative briefings on the disarmament machinery yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.23).

In this increasingly interdependent world, witnessing growing geopolitical uncertainties and conflicts and the imminent threat of terrorism, the United Nations and the disarmament machinery triad — the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission — continue to play a critical role in furthering the objectives laid out in the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held four decades ago. The United Nations plays a central role in disarmament and has primary responsibility for advancing its goals. India remains committed to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and to the role of multilateralism in pursuing them. We reiterate our commitment to preserving and strengthening the disarmament machinery as envisaged at the first special session on disarmament.

The work of the disarmament machinery is not hampered by any procedural flaw or inherent deficiency. Its smooth functioning has rather been impeded by a lack of political will on part of Member States. The usefulness and necessity of the existing disarmament machinery has been underlined by the positive developments in the triad in the past year, testifying

to the remarkable resilience and relevance of our decades-old machinery. The First Committee embodies the international community's faith in multilateral approaches to disarmament and international security issues. It provides Member States with diverse perspectives and a platform for voicing their views, and acts as a forum for building consensus for collective action on the disarmament agenda.

The continued relevance of the Conference on Disarmament, despite all the difficulties and challenges it faces today, cannot be overstressed. India's commitment to the CD remains undiminished. It brings together Member States in full sovereign equality and responsibility for embarking on negotiations of legally binding instruments based on the principle of consensus, and thereby contributes to international peace and security. It is encouraging to see that the substantive discussions in the subsidiary bodies in the CD this year have laid solid groundwork for achieving the momentum it needs to take its mandate forward. However, we are still disappointed that it has not been able to adopt a programme of work.

India attaches importance to the Disarmament Commission as a universal forum and the specialized deliberative pillar of the disarmament machinery put in place by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Commission has demonstrated its ability to make a valuable contribution to the disarmament discourse through its notable achievements last year in adopting consensus recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons and in commencing discussions on outer space. We are also encouraged by the consensus on recommendations for the objectives and agenda for a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which is indicative of the willingness of members to work together.

The Secretariat, particularly the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, is a key partner in the efforts to achieve disarmament goals. It will be important to improve the coherence between disarmament work in New York and in Geneva, and more regular-budget resources should be allocated to increase the various bodies' capacity and thereby enable them to fulfil their functions. The work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters has been of immense value in deliberative processes,

negotiations and research. In order for us to benefit from UNIDIR's expertise, India has proposed in its draft resolution on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament (A/C.1/73/L.65/Rev.1) that UNIDIR convene a one-day seminar in Geneva in 2019 on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament affairs. That would also facilitate the development of cross-linkages among the elements of the disarmament machinery.

International security hinges on dialogue and cooperation among Member States and a commitment to multilateralism. The triad of the disarmament machinery should function as a composite whole, so that ideas can flow and so that progress made in one institution can be leveraged in the others. India is fully committed to reinforcing and strengthening the ongoing work of the disarmament machinery.

Mr. Mahomed (South Africa): While South Africa recently joined the majority of States in welcoming the landmark adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we are cognizant that such advances have unfortunately not resonated in every area of nuclear disarmament. We remain concerned about the continuing paralysis in the United Nations disarmament machinery. The current impasse in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) undercuts its credibility, raises doubts about its continued relevance and continues to have an adverse impact on the multilateral system of governance. It is South Africa's view that the continued stalemate in the CD is unsustainable. It was established for the purpose of conducting multilateral disarmament negotiations, and anything short of that objective means that it is not executing its mandate.

At the heart of the problem lies the continued resistance on the part of a small number of States to implementing their disarmament obligations and submitting to the international rule of law. We would therefore do well to remind ourselves that while the Conference on Disarmament may be recognized as the multilateral institution responsible for the negotiation of international disarmament agreements, it is not only the Conference's limited membership that bears the cost of the United Nations resources that are being used while the prolonged deadlock in the CD continues. On the contrary, it is all the States Members of the United Nations— both members of the CD and the countries that are not part of it — that through their assessed contributions to the United Nations budget have to bear

the cost for what has now become the Conference's continued inactivity. All Member States therefore have a right to hold the Conference accountable for its failure to move forward on negotiations, and to hold it responsible for the resources that are being committed to sustain the functions of a non-functioning CD. We believe that those resources could have been better used to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and other national programmes aimed at eradicating poverty, for example, making a great deal of progress towards meeting people's basic needs.

Despite that, as a country committed to seeing a resumption of substantive work in the CD, we have always tried to be as flexible as possible. We therefore remain ready to consider any proposal that would genuinely help to break the impasse in the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. Its bodies must be allowed to discharge their respective mandates in order to remain relevant. Negotiations are essential if we are to strengthen the international rule of law, which is key to promoting peace and security by ensuring that all countries are able to play by the same rules. Such negotiations are also vital if we are to achieve the requisite progress on nuclear disarmament that the world community seeks. South Africa will therefore remain actively and constructively engaged in the multilateral disarmament forums with a view to seeking solutions.

Ms. Fazylova (Kazakhstan): We must all admit that the United Nations disarmament triad — the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) — has experienced numerous impediments over the past few decades. It is widely acknowledged that the Disarmament Commission was created as a deliberative body by the decision of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, for the purpose of making recommendations on various issues in the field of disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament was established by the same decision, and to this day remains the only multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament issues.

The First Committee of the General Assembly, which annually drafts resolutions in the field of disarmament, completes the disarmament triad. But we are compelled to note with deep regret that like the Commission, the First Committee has not fulfilled its mandate, and while the relationship between the entities of the triad was originally meant to be appropriately

harmonized, sadly that balance has now been lost due to varying national perspectives that have taken precedence over the common collective good.

The previous cycle of the Disarmament Commission could not prepare its recommendations, and the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to adopt a programme of work for decades. It is only now that we are seeing a good start to the Commission's new cycle that will enable us to move forward in the next two sessions with the aim of achieving consensus in both of its working groups in 2020. However, that calls for a constructive and pragmatic stance and for unity on the part of Member States, despite their different points of view and the geopolitical tensions that can pose challenges to reaching common ground.

The First Committee, which has great potential for getting things done, is also far from being an example of unity. Despite all delegations' general statements affirming their commitment to nuclear disarmament, none of the Committee's nuclear-disarmament resolutions, except for those on the recognition of nuclear-weapon-free zones, have been adopted by consensus.

We would also like to touch on the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Kazakhstan views the CD as the only multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament. Nearly all existing international treaties in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation have been drafted in the CD. Despite its tremendous capabilities and the potential for ensuring the public good, the Conference has been deadlocked. This year the Conference established five subsidiary bodies to discuss items such as nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons. A great deal of work was done in those subsidiary bodies and we therefore hope that this positive dynamism and momentum will continue next year and that the CD will adopt a programme of work.

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters seamlessly and significantly complement the disarmament triad. UNIDIR's expertise is especially important

in preparing thematic documents that contribute to a comprehensive, objective study of disarmament issues. Kazakhstan strongly supports its activities and makes voluntary contributions to it. We therefore encourage Member States to extend their ongoing financial and political support for UNIDIR's operating budget and specific projects. The Advisory Board has proven a valuable incubator for ideas on how to address the challenges posed by emerging technologies and disarmament education. Civil-society organizations have also proved to be key champions and advocates of the disarmament process, and the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, is a good example of that. In the past few years it has been an active and tireless voice for nuclear disarmament.

Finally, it is obvious that policy- and decision-makers in the area of arms control should enhance the engagement of the expert and scientific community and civil society in discussing all aspects of the disarmament and non-proliferation issues and work as a collective synergy with redoubled vigour to achieve what we all desire.

Ms. Courtney (Ireland): Ireland fully aligns itself with the statements made by the observer of the European Union and the representative of Namibia on gender, and I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

The challenges we face require urgent attention. A properly functioning disarmament machinery that is fit for purpose, efficient and produces results is essential, not just for narrow disarmament issues but for global peace and the credibility of our multilateral system. Our disarmament architecture must facilitate rather than hinder our ability to make meaningful progress on our shared objectives.

The First Committee is an important forum for setting the agenda on disarmament and non-proliferation. We welcome the improvements in its working methods, particularly the electronic sponsorship system. However, we would welcome a meaningful effort by Member States to explore ways and means of better incorporating the voices of civil society into our work. Their knowledge and expertise are essential to ensuring that the disarmament machinery remains connected to emerging issues. The links between disarmament and international security have been highlighted on a number of occasions in the Committee. A lack of

progress on disarmament commitments and, in some cases, reversals on those commitments, will lead to an increasingly difficult global security environment.

Breaking the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is a top priority for Ireland. It is deeply troubling that Ireland has been a member of the CD for almost 20 years but that in that time consensus on a programme of work has never been achieved. We are greatly encouraged by the valuable work undertaken by the subsidiary bodies this year and hope that the momentum can help us to reach an agreed programme of work as soon as possible. We also support broadening the membership of the CD in order to boost its credibility as an inclusive forum.

In a United Nations where resources are scarce and there are competing demands across the board, the CD is a well-funded body. We as Member States have a responsibility to demonstrate the flexibility and political will to step outside the strict silos of national self-interest and achieve genuine progress. That is why Ireland warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's new disarmament initiative on the need to restore disarmament to its central role in building international peace and security. We look forward to working together to break the deadlock that has stymied progress on a number of issues.

We are disappointed that a number of disarmament meetings have been shortened or cancelled over the past number of years due to funding issues. We strongly urge all States to pay their assessed contributions in a timely manner to avoid further impact on our work. It is a matter of course that sustainable funding is critical to a properly functioning disarmament machinery. In that regard, we welcome this year's General Assembly report (A/73/256) on the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and look forward to the adoption by consensus of the draft decision on the subject this year (A/C.1/73/L.61). We as Member States must aim to put UNIDIR on a more sustainable, long-term funding structure and operational model. It has a proven track record in conducting research of the highest quality and convening and facilitating difficult discussions across a broad range of disarmament topics. It also has vital technical competence and has provided essential input for our work in the CD's subsidiary bodies. Its long-term financial sustainability is therefore in all of our interests.

Ireland has long highlighted issues relating to gender in the disarmament sphere. We firmly believe in improving the equal engagement and participation of women across multiple disarmament forums, and we strongly advocate for gender diversity across all platforms. This year, Ireland, Namibia and UNIDIR took practical steps toward realizing gender equality and the inclusion of gender perspectives in the disarmament machinery by establishing the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group, which held two successful events in 2018 — one in Geneva to determine, in coordination with disarmament stakeholders, the entry points for mainstreaming gender effectively into disarmament forums, and another here in New York to engage First Committee delegations on actions towards gender equality as per the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament.

As a result, the Disarmament Impact Group, in coordination with representatives of Member States, civil society and other stakeholders, has identified a number of disarmament forums for priority engagement in 2019, including the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty and the Review Conference on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. As co-Chair of the Impact Group, Ireland looks forward to building momentum on gender equality in the disarmament machinery. We thank the many Member States and other stakeholders that have contributed to the work of the Group to date, and we welcome all efforts to prioritize gender in our work.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.61.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and would like to make a few additional points.

My country is deeply committed to the disarmament machinery. Its purpose is organizing multilateral instruments and mechanisms in order to build a safer world for all, based on a shared understanding of current security challenges. To make progress towards that goal, the international community must revitalize a constructive multilateral dialogue, based on respect for the security interests of every country and region

and on taking their great diversity and increasing complexity into account. Collective security can be built only on a foundation of mutual trust. We also must live up to our collective commitment to multilateralism and the consolidation of international law, considering that more than ever, the non-proliferation regimes on which our collective security rests — that is, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention — are being subjected to severe constraints, if not serious violations. The international community must take account of the full measure of the threats posed by those infringements and respond as firmly as possible.

Another essential aspect is respect for the rule of consensus, which remains key to reaching commitments that are freely consented to and advancing universalization. That is why France is deeply concerned about the growing trend towards polarizing debates on nuclear disarmament. The progress that we have made together since the creation of the United Nations, including in the field of disarmament, has been made possible only by bringing countries and peoples closer together, not by dividing or stigmatizing them. France continues to promote an inclusive and constructive approach, which represents our only guarantee of effective multilateralism.

The disarmament machinery and its institutions, as established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, provide a solid framework that remains vital to progress in the area of disarmament, using an incremental process to work towards general and complete disarmament. I want to point to France's commitment to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the only multilateral forum responsible for the negotiation of disarmament treaties with universal scope. It was of course in the Conference on Disarmament and the bodies that preceded it that the major disarmament treaties were negotiated. France can only deplore the stalemate in the CD.

However, encouraging progress has been made in 2018 with the development of subsidiary bodies that enabled very substantial exchanges on every item on the CD's agenda, including a fissile material cut-off treaty. Until then we had had only general debates that limited us to divergent political positions that prevented us from making any progress. The ongoing technical discussions, particularly on a fissile material cut-off treaty, have enabled us to overcome various

differences and identify areas of convergence. France also welcomes the consensus-based adoption of the four reports (CD/2138, CD/2139, CD/2140 and CD/2141) that concluded the work of the subsidiary bodies and that constitute a sound basis that we can build on in future sessions of the CD. France would like to see the subsidiary bodies reconvened with a view to ensuring continuity from year to year.

With respect to the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), France welcomes the opening of the new UNDC three-year cycle, as well as the unprecedented addition of an outer-space cluster to its agenda. The start of discussions on that topic in the UNDC on the basis of the recommendations of the Governmental Group of Experts gives us a window of opportunity to deepen our consideration of the issue. We know that the outer-space environment has continued to deteriorate, owing to its many challenges.

France is deeply concerned about the disarmament conventions' serious funding problems. States must honour their financial obligations and pay their contributions on time. We cannot permit the cancellation of meetings because of funding shortfalls. Budget constraints should not pose a threat to respect for multilateralism, and we urge for a collective consideration of the matter.

Before concluding, I would like to touch on the issue of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which occupies a special place in the disarmament machinery. France attaches particular importance to that institution. We were among its founding members and we periodically submit draft resolutions reaffirming the international community's support to it. In 2015, the year that marked the thirty-fifth anniversary of its founding, it had to deal with a number of institutional, organizational and financial challenges. As a result, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/69 with a view to supporting UNIDIR in that sensitive period and preparing for the future. Its implementation included an external audit outlining a new, rigorous management and funding model that would enable UNIDIR to operate more sustainably. The audit was the subject of a report of the Secretary-General (A/73/284) submitted to the First Committee. In that context, this year France has proposed draft decision A/C.1/73/L.61, which takes note of the report, reaffirms its support for UNIDIR and includes it as an item on the next agenda of the General Assembly.

We thank the First Committee for its unanimous and consensus-based support for the draft decision.

Mr. Khaldi (Algeria): Algeria fully associates itself with the statements made earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the League of Arab States and would like to add the following remarks.

Algeria affirms the importance and relevance of the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, composed of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the sole multilateral negotiating body for disarmament, and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as a universal deliberative body and subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, as well as the First Committee. My delegation emphasizes the necessity of preserving and further strengthening the nature, role and purpose of each of those substantive components.

Like many others, my country is deeply concerned about the fact that the CD remains unable to reach consensus on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. That intolerable state of affairs, which has existed in the CD for two decades, has particularly harmful effects for non-nuclear weapon States. We do not believe that the impasse is due to failure on the part of the CD or that it is inherent in its mode of operation or methods of work. Nor can we attribute it to its agenda or its rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus, and we certainly should not ignore the fact that the CD has made a valuable contribution to multilateral disarmament. We therefore strongly believe that the CD cannot fulfil its negotiating mandate unless all its members demonstrate the political will needed to advance the issue of global nuclear disarmament and commitment with a view to arriving at a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. In that regard, I would like to point to decision CD/1864, on the establishment of a programme of work, adopted by consensus in 2009 under Algeria's presidency of the Conference, which remains an example showing that the CD can move forward in a responsible way.

Considering the significance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, Algeria is pleased about the recent adoption by consensus of the report of the Commission's Working Group II (A/72/42, annex), with substantive recommendations on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. In the light of that encouraging development, my delegation very much hopes that we can see that kind of success

achieved on the agenda item on nuclear disarmament as the Disarmament Commission begins its next cycle.

In conclusion, my country underscores the importance of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to thoroughly review all disarmament issues. In that regard, we welcomed the convening in the most recent session of an open-ended working group and its adoption by consensus of objectives and an agenda for a fourth special session.

The Acting Chair: Before we hear from delegations wishing to exercise their right of reply, in my national capacity I would like to state for the record that Guyana also aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Namibia.

I now call on those delegations wishing to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply to respond to remarks made by the representative of Iran.

As we all know, Iran is the world's leading State sponsor of terrorism. It has killed and maimed innocent men, women and children all over the world. As recently as yesterday, the Government of Denmark publicly announced that it had foiled a plot by Iran to assassinate three individuals living on Danish soil. Iran's is a regime that has threatened to wipe Israel off the face of the map, not once but repeatedly. It provides funds and weapons to groups such as Hamas, Hizbullah and the Houthi rebels, and to the Al-Assad regime and many others.

The regime has no credibility. It lies repeatedly and with glee. It takes hostages. A very important example of that for my Government was back in 1979, when it seized American diplomats and held them for several hundred days. For a long time, it hid its nuclear-weapon programme. There is a long list of crimes that the regime has committed, many of which I outlined a couple of weeks ago in this forum. No matter how often it tries to describe itself as a peace-loving State committed to multilateralism, it is fooling absolutely no one. As I have said in the Committee a couple of times previously, on 4 November my Government will make it extremely difficult for the regime in Tehran to continue to finance terrorism.

With regard to comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation, I should say once again that Russia's malign behaviour around the world is of great concern to the United States and its allies. It should end its efforts to undermine the Ukrainian and Georgian Governments and to cover up its own and Syria's use of chemical weapons. It should stop violating treaties, the most recent being the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. We call on Russia to destroy the ground-launched cruise missile it has developed and tested in violation of that Treaty. And my last point is that Russia must stop trying to redraw borders in Europe by force.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to exercise my delegation's right of reply. I reject the allegations made against Iran and the lies told about it by the representative of the Israeli regime. Israel cannot create a smokescreen to hide the atrocities it has committed against Palestinians, its continued violations of Palestinian human rights and its continued acts of aggression against the Palestinian, Lebanese, Jordanian and Syrian peoples on the pretext of a hypothetical threat from Iran that is more hype than anything else.

Israel tries to frame itself as moderate. But that should not divert our attention from its highly negative and destabilizing actions and policies in the Middle East. The Israeli regime's entire history has been filled with major acts of occupation, crimes against humanity and aggression against its neighbours in other countries in the Middle East and beyond, carried out at least 15 times since 1948. How can Israel be moderate? It has become an apartheid, racist regime. Furthermore, it continues to flout all the international regimes governing weapons of mass destruction by refusing to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Israel remains the only obstacle to the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. It continues to refuse to participate in any international efforts to realize that goal. The fact is that nuclear weapons in the hands of such a regime pose the most serious threat there is to the security of all the States in the region and to the non-proliferation regime. How can it call itself moderate?

The representative of the Israeli regime should remember that her regime has arrogantly violated at least 86 Security Council resolutions adopted between 1948 and 2016 as a result of Israel's acts of aggression

and occupation. That appalling track record affords the Israeli regime no moral standing or credibility in its attempt to frame itself as a moderate force and designate others as radicals. Everyone in the United Nations is aware of the real nature of the Israeli regime. It is the source of extremist violence in the region. It has killed the hopes of the people of Palestine, and that breeds extremism.

In response to the baseless accusations by the representative of the United States, the United States must understand and admit that the situation in the Middle East serves as a rallying call for extremist recruitment there and has been an endemic problem caused by foreign invasion and occupation, starting with Palestine and compounded by systematic political and military interventions aimed at preserving, perpetuating and then reshaping the regional architecture. Contempt for international law and attempts to undermine the rule of law in international relations have been some of the main features of the current United States Administration's foreign policy.

The United States must rid itself of its addiction to sanctions and violations of international law. If it is committed to peace and stability in the Middle East, it should acknowledge that its sanctions have failed miserably to achieve their own objectives. It should return to compliance with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The United States should understand that its withdrawal from the JCPOA has been rejected by its allies because they considered it destabilizing and unlawful. It should stop its futile attempts to make baseless allegations about Iran in order to justify its withdrawal from the JCPOA and divert international public opinion from its own unlawful behaviour and outright violation of resolution 2231 (2015), which was drafted and proposed by the United States itself and adopted unanimously by the Council. It should abandon its arrogant attitude to the region and respect the interests of all States in the region. It cannot ignore the interests of Iran, which is a pillar of stability in the region. It must make the right choices, including the strategic choice to abandon its bullying and threats to and invasion of other countries in the region.

The United States continues to be the world's largest State sponsor of terrorism and to provide assistance to terrorist networks and its allies, which support terrorism in the Middle East, while the emergence of

terror groups such as Da'esh and the Al Nusra Front, and the current cycle of totally unprecedented, ruthless, barbaric violence, can be traced back to its own foreign military misadventures in the early years of this century. The arming and financing of those groups by the United States and others in the region cannot be ignored. The United States must stop creating and supporting terrorist organizations in the region. It should stop demonizing freedom fighters who resist Israeli occupation and act as a good, responsible, law-abiding, measured and reliable force for international peace and security.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank my British colleague for the opportunity to once again draw our attention to the situation that has developed around the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. It appears that I will be obliged to stand him a beer after the meeting for providing the opportunity.

Now, to get to the point, we want to express our concern about the United States' compliance with its obligations under the Treaty since 2000. Unfortunately, it has avoided any genuine substantive dialogue on the concerns we have had, which have been gradually increasing. For all practical purposes it has been sabotaging the work being done within the framework of the Special Verification Commission, which was established under the INF Treaty specifically for settling complex issues, including those related to parties' compliance with their obligations.

What we did not expect was the United States' launch, in 2013, of an aggressive campaign to discredit Russia as a responsible party to that important disarmament agreement. At the same time, it refused to discuss a whole array of extremely important problems within the framework of the Verification Commission. It was not until 2016 that the United States agreed to discuss mutual concerns within the framework of the Special Verification Commission. In response to the concerns and issues of the United States, we provided exhaustive information that went as far as including tactical and technical features of the missiles that were a source of concern to the Americans, as well as on the results of tests conducted with those missiles.

Regrettably, the United States has continued to speculate on its concerns about Russia's violations of the Treaty, while refusing to provide any specific information from its end to allay Russia's concerns,

which I emphasize that we have had since the year 2000. The question that arises is why for five years the United States found it necessary to use megaphone diplomacy instead of discussing all of its problems concretely and constructively with us within the framework of the INF. That question was answered very recently, on 20 October, when President Donald Trump announced the withdrawal of the United States from the Treaty and the consequent build-up of his country's nuclear-missile potential, showing that none of the accusations by the United States claiming that Russia was avoiding a substantive dialogue with it about the problems related to the INF Treaty had anything to do with reality. The fact is that it is Russia that has been urging the United States for a long time to engage in such a dialogue and to settle all issues related to compliance with the Treaty. And the United States' accusations of violations of the Treaty by Russia are just as unfounded and unproven. The main and only violator of the Treaty is the United States, and that is why its leaders decided to withdraw from it.

I would just like to add a few words in response to my American colleague's comments about the military activities of the Russian Federation. It seems surprising to me that the United States, which has approximately 700 military bases all over the world, of which about 170 are located around the Russian Federation, should speak about the military activities of other States having an impact on peace and security, when its own activities in various regions of the world, where it deploys powerful strike-capability concentrations supported by the presence of military bases, represent a real threat to security and peace.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The performance of the observer of the European Union (EU) has confirmed the doubts that we and other Member States had about resolution 65/276, adopted some years ago, granting the EU observer status and allowing it to make statements in meetings. In our view, its adoption was a serious mistake. It is reprehensible that the observer of the EU can make accusations about certain countries, including Syria, in the First Committee. Her statement showed clearly that the EU is playing the role of devil's advocate with regard to us while refraining from any kind of criticism of Israel for causing instability in the region and around the world. Nor did she mention Israel's arsenal of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, clearly because of the fact that certain EU countries

have provided Israel with nuclear reactors, heavy water and other technologies and materials, as well as submarines capable of launching nuclear weapons and other means of delivery. In addition, it seems that she forgot that four EU States, and another State that is trying to join the EU, have deployed American nuclear weapons on their territory, in violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The EU's clumsy, short-sighted policies have brought terrorism and violent extremism to Europe itself. They have destroyed Libya, which previously had illegal migration to Europe under control, and they have been trying to destroy Syria. It seems that the observer of the EU has forgotten that several of its member States on whose behalf her statement was delivered have continued to cooperate with Israel on every level, with a view to boosting its nuclear, biological, chemical and military capabilities by offering it material, expertise and technological assistance. They also assist in the manufacture and distribution of weapons of mass destruction. I would like to remind the observer of the EU that a majority of its member States have exported terrorists to Syria, sponsoring them and providing them with weapons, ammunition, equipment and other materials, including toxic chemical substances. Europeans devised the use of poison gases. That is their heritage. They used those gases against each other in the First and Second World Wars. We are the victims of that European legacy.

In conclusion, the EU member States are in no position to make such accusations, and of course that also applies to the United States, which is attempting to undermine all kinds of international and multilateral efforts at every level, not just that of disarmament and international security. If we looked closely at what is really happening, we would see that the United States is withdrawing from international treaties and conventions. Is it not the United States that is undermining international security? It has withdrawn from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, as well as from UNESCO and the Human Rights Council. It is threatening to withdraw from the World Trade Organization and the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Its ruling regime is trying to do everything it can to undermine global stability. It is openly violating the NPT by deploying nuclear weapons in five countries and many other States. In fact, if we were to review the United States' ongoing violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law,

as well as international conventions, we might need a number of additional meetings.

In yet another violation of the NPT, the United States is helping Israel to develop its military nuclear, chemical and biological programmes. It is also providing and overseeing the transfer of toxic chemical substances to Syria as well as from areas in Syria controlled by the terrorist groups Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front to other parts of Syria. United States forces are currently occupying parts of my country. They should leave Syria as soon as possible. Everyone should understand that the United States forces have never attacked Da'esh. They have merely moved its leaders from one area to another and exchanged control over some areas with them, something for which there is audio and video documentation. The illegal coalition led by Washington is destroying Syria's infrastructure and attacking the Syrian Arab Army and its allies fighting terrorists in Syria.

The British regime is the main funder of terrorist groups in Syria. It founded the White Helmets terrorist group of the Al-Nusra Front, which everyone knows is a branch of Al-Qaida. It is the one ordering those terrorists to stage their chemical incidents. We call on Britain to notify the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons about all its undeclared programmes in that regard, which the incident in Salisbury exposed.

The Israeli regime is the chief sponsor of terrorism in our region, and its possession of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, under no international supervision, is a threat both to our region and the world. The Israeli regime has cooperated with Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front and has provided them with toxic chemical substances. We have made all of this information available to the Security Council, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the United Nations counter-terrorism committees. Israel also supplies terrorists with weapons, equipment and munitions as well as treating their wounded, as United Nations reports have documented. Any region, anywhere in the world, that is dealing with instability and tension is a victim of the former Israeli officers, some of them retirees, who participate in the illegitimate arms trade. The Israeli regime has used internationally banned weapons against the peoples of Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Egypt. It is a racist regime that relies on extortion and terrorism to help it realize its cheap objectives.

Mr. Nikolenko (Ukraine): I would like to exercise Ukraine's right of reply by responding to some of the remarks made by the representative of the Russian Federation under cluster 6, "Regional disarmament and security", specifically his claim that the militarization of Crimea is a propaganda creation. As we stressed in our statement yesterday (see A/C.1/73/PV.23), the militarization of Crimea is a real threat, not just for Ukraine but for other States of the region and far beyond.

The Russian statement may have left the false impression that NATO and its members are doing everything possible to attack a totally innocent and completely peaceful Russian Federation. We see such claims as yet another attempt by the Russian Federation to divert the international community's attention from its aggressive and hostile policies towards its neighbours, and not just towards them. Russia's destabilizing activities in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, including the annexation and occupation of various parts of their territories and their subsequent transformation into Russian military bases, and the fact that the current Russian authorities already consider some of those territories to be Russian territory, are vivid confirmation that Russia's policies are hostile and aggressive.

Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova): I would also like to quickly react to the statement by the representative of the Russian Federation on cluster 6, "Regional disarmament and security", particularly in connection with its affirmation of the presence of Russian military forces in the Republic of Moldova. I want to emphasize once again that the presence of Russian military forces in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova is in no way legitimate, because it is stationed there without the consent of the host country and has no international mandate of any kind. I would like to remind the Committee that back in 1999 in Istanbul, at a summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Russian Federation itself agreed to withdraw its forces. It has never fulfilled that commitment. Moreover, Russia's activities in the region, its military exercises and open support for the unconstitutional power structures in the Transnistrian region are contrary to any principle of neutrality and impartiality, which is mandatory for any peacekeeping operation. My delegation therefore rejects any attempt to legitimate its military presence, which is contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I would like to respond — and I will be brief — to comments made by the representatives of Syria and the Russian Federation.

We have just listened once again to Bashar Al-Assad's propaganda machine reeling off ridiculous accusations about a number of countries represented in this room. Let me say that the Al-Assad regime has wreaked havoc on Syria, its own country, for more than seven years. It has repeatedly gassed its own people. The evidence is there. Its use of chemical weapons is not in doubt. The regime and its supporters can try all they want to divert attention and create these fictitious narratives, but when all is said and done, the regime and its backers will be held to account.

It is very difficult to respond to the comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation. When we confronted the Russians with evidence with regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty violation, the Russian Federation said, "No, it is you who have violated the Treaty". That is what Russia does. We have what is clearly a bottle of water here. Russia will tell you, "It is a coffee maker". You say, "No, this is a bottle of water". "No," Russia says. "It is a coffee maker". We have provided the Russian Federation with plenty of facts and information about its violation. As we all know, we have been discussing this with Russia for well over five years. Only recently did it admit that it had produced a ground-launched cruise missile. The bottom line here is that we cannot have one country adhering to an agreement and the other party violating it, openly and blatantly.

My final point is that Russia should stop bullying countries that do not agree with it and calling them cowards because they do not side with it on a particular vote. We saw last week how counterproductive that bullying can be.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Just now we heard an example of the United States representative's systematic policy of feeding Member States lies and hypocrisy. It is common knowledge that it is the United States that has used

nuclear, biological and chemical weapons against civilians all over the world. These are undeniable facts. The United States has used the worst kinds of weapons of mass destruction to achieve its own narrow goals and yet it has failed. Current and previous United States Administrations have used internationally prohibited weapons in Syria, specifically white phosphorus and depleted uranium. In addition, the United States is developing its nuclear arsenal in violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other conventions and running secret military biological programmes in which it is developing new biological weapons.

Lies are one of the most important elements of United States foreign policy throughout its Administrations. That is what led to the invasion of Iraq, as is well known. The United States also uses terrorist groups in its foreign policy for so-called political terrorism in order to achieve its illegitimate goals.

The representative of the United States mentioned a so-called undeclared nuclear reactor in Syria in his statement. Without going into this further, I would urge Council members to read *The Age of Deception: Nuclear Diplomacy in Treacherous Times*, by a former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei. In his book Mr. ElBaradei confirms that the United States has no credibility on the subject. If the United States had any credibility, it would have submitted images of the alleged undeclared nuclear facility in Syria before it was subjected to an Israeli attack.

The conduct of the United States Administrations is based on creating pretexts and then following up with media and political mobilization and international diplomacy against countries that refuse to bow down to them. The United States has had good Administrations that sought to establish and spread peace around the world, but it seems that the current and immediately preceding Administrations have shown that they want to undermine stability all over the world.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.