



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

First Committee

28th meeting

Monday, 5 November 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga. (Romania)

*In the absence of the Chair, Ms. Edwards (Guyana),
Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

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

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

Action on draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Acting Chair: Today the First Committee will continue to take action on all draft resolutions and draft decisions submitted under agenda items 93 to 108. We will be guided by the same procedure that I explained last week, and I trust that all Committee members have a copy of the ground rules for reference. If not, they should request a copy from the Secretariat.

The Committee will now take up the draft resolutions and draft decisions under cluster 2, listed in document A/C.1/73/INF.1. Information on additional requests for votes that may have been made since the issuance of informal paper A/C.1/73/INF.1/Rev.3 will be posted on the southern wall of the conference room, to the left of the rostrum. Once the Committee concludes the draft proposals in document A/C.1/73/INF.1, it will take up those in document A/C.1/73/INF.2/Rev.3. I shall now give the floor to delegations wishing to make general statements or to introduce draft resolutions and draft decisions under cluster 2, "Other weapons of mass destruction".

Mr. Czepelak (Poland): I am taking the floor to refer briefly to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, on the

implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which Poland, as sole sponsor, has presented to the First Committee every year. For years the draft resolution has contributed to international peace and security and enhanced the chemical-weapon non-proliferation regime based on the Convention and its implementing body, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In the past, it gained unanimous international support, but regrettably, last year's draft resolution was unable to achieve consensus. Poland strongly believes that given the fundamental challenges facing the Convention, the international community now needs a strong and clear message of support for the CWC's comprehensive implementation more than ever. We must also support the efforts of the OPCW's Director-General and Technical Secretariat in that regard.

The draft resolution represents a factual and accurate reflection of the state of the Convention's implementation in recent months. It refers to critical issues such as universality, progress in destroying declared chemical-weapon stockpiles, national implementation, verification, the risks posed by the threat of the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, including terrorists, and, last but not least, international cooperation. The integrity of the CWC and the credibility of the OPCW are at stake. The draft resolution cannot be silent on the key challenge to the Convention, which is the continued use of chemical weapons around the world in recent months. That is why we have proposed objective, balanced and truly fact-oriented language. Accordingly, with regard to the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States

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Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in June, the language that the draft resolution proposes does not reflect any legal assessment but is based solely on the facts of the situation. In other words, it is purely factual and does not in any way prejudge what the process in The Hague will look like in future.

I have to admit that building a common understanding on those issues has proved to be extremely challenging. Poland did its very best to address the situation in a balanced and adequate manner while taking into account the OPCW's ongoing work. The end result before the Committee is the product of an open and transparent process. I would like to express our deep gratitude to all the delegations that have contributed to those discussions over the past few weeks. That said, I want to conclude with a strong call to all member States in the room to take a positive position on the current text of the draft resolution. Together let us take one more step towards a world free of chemical weapons.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country, Syria, is a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and we are committed to our obligations under it. We therefore relinquished all our chemical materials — I repeat, all our chemical materials — to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and ended our chemical programme, as the OPCW acknowledged, transferring the material to United States vessels in the Mediterranean.

My Government categorically rejects the false claims and accusations that the Syrian Arab Army has used toxic chemicals against civilians anywhere in my country and stresses that the Syrian Arab Army does not possess chemical weapons of any kind. They were not used in the past and will not be used in the future because we do not possess such weapons, and we advise anyone who questions that to seek out the real criminals.

My Government condemns the crime of using chemical weapons in the strongest terms. We believe that we must strive to rid the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. The Committee knows that in 2003, when Syria was a member of the Security Council, we took the initiative to present a draft resolution on freeing the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction. As members are aware, we joined the OPCW in order to prove to the entire world that we are committed to standing

against any use of chemical weapons. My country has met its obligations under the CWC despite the extraordinarily difficult situation it has gone through. That was confirmed by Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Head of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission in Syria, in her report to the Security Council in June 2014 (S/2014/444, annex). With the destruction of its last two remaining sites and the OPCW's investigation and verification of the destruction and transfer of the rubble from those two sites, the Syrian Arab Republic has fulfilled all its commitments related to destroying all its chemical-weapon facilities and has addressed issues related to its national declaration in line with OPCW requirements.

My country is deeply concerned about the blackmail and threats being used by some Western countries, especially the United States, Britain and France, the States that constitute the tripartite aggression against Syria, which pushed for the OPCW's adoption of a decision that would allow them to politicize it and use it as a tool to attack independent and sovereign countries under the pretext that those countries are using chemical weapons. The decision runs counter to the provisions of the CWC and sets a dangerous precedent within the international regime, since it confers on a technical organization responsible for scientific and technical matters the authority to conduct criminal and legal investigations beyond its competence while it is not responsible for reviewing chemical-weapon use. That is especially the case since it clearly encroaches on the functions of another international body responsible for maintaining international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

In addition, the decision lacks legitimacy since it was adopted by only 82 of 193 States, fewer than half of the States parties to the Convention. It has also conferred on the OPCW mandates that are not stipulated in the Convention. For that reason, the Executive Council did not adopt in October a draft decision on the 2019 programme and budget that included a special item related to financing a so-called liability determination mechanism established by the decision adopted by fewer than half of the States Members of the Organization. My country believes that draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, based on that decision, will only further complicate the OPCW's ability to fulfil its mandate, putting it in jeopardy and leading to further polarization among its member States, and

meaning that it would be impossible to ensure the draft resolution's implementation in practice.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): I have asked for the floor to make a general statement on behalf of France and Germany about draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.59, entitled "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources". As the Committee knows, our two countries have presented a joint draft resolution on this subject, subsequently adopted by consensus, every two years since 2005. The initiative fits into the broader context of the fight against terrorism, particularly the prevention of radiological terrorism, but also with regard to our efforts to strengthen the security of radioactive sources. Those efforts have three goals — first, enhancing the international regulatory framework for strengthening the security of radioactive sources; secondly, improving cooperation among States and supporting the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in this area; and thirdly, promoting a gradual return to alternative technologies to high-activity radioactive sources.

It is in that framework that during the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit France submitted a statement on strengthening the security of radioactive sources that was circulated by the International Atomic Energy Agency as document INFCIRC/910 and has garnered the support of 30 other States. Regrettably, in order to preserve consensus, the draft resolution could not refer to that document or to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which includes 88 States. Nonetheless, this year's draft resolution presents important advances, including in the development of alternative technologies seeking to limit the risk of the malicious use of high-activity radioactive sources. France and Germany welcomed the constructive atmosphere during the informal consultations on the text in Vienna a few weeks ago and more recently here in New York. We thank the 50 delegations that collaborated on that stage of the draft text and, of course, all the delegations that have supported it by joining the consensus.

Ms. Bhandari (India): I have asked for the floor to make a general statement on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9, on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC).

We were pleased that under India's chairmanship in 2017 the meeting of States parties to the BWC successfully delivered on the mandate given to it by its eighth Review Conference, owing to the constructive engagement of all States parties, which led to the adoption by consensus of an intersessional programme for the period from 2018 to 2020. India has participated actively in all the meetings of experts this year and looks forward to further constructive engagement over the next two years until the ninth Review Conference is held, in 2021. As one of the original signatories to the Convention, India has always been committed to improving the BWC's effectiveness and strengthening its implementation. In that regard, we would like to highlight the importance of ensuring that its financial resources are both stable and predictable.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I want to once again propose that we try to take a sober look at the situation emerging in the area of chemical-weapon disarmament. I would like to draw attention to the Syrian delegation's very substantive and accurate statement outlining the facts about what is going on in that area, particularly in Syria, and which cannot be dismissed. They are not imaginary. This is the reality of what is going on right now. The Chemical Weapons Convention has proved itself our most successful international disarmament instrument. It has brought new and extremely positive results in the past few years. In fact, one of the most important events in recent years has been the Syrian Government's very responsible decision to accede to the Convention and destroy its chemical-weapon stockpiles under the strictest international control, all of it under the extraordinarily difficult conditions of the Syrian people's fight against international terrorism and the simultaneous aggression from a number of Western States. In essence, that aggression was in support of the terrorists who were on Syrian territory, and that cannot be ignored. That is the reality of what is going on in Syria.

Furthermore, as we all know, last year witnessed another landmark step for the Convention. The Russian Federation concluded its programme destroying the enormous stockpile of chemical weapons that it had inherited from the Soviet era. One might have assumed that against the backdrop of all those highly positive facts, we could have expected further positive developments in States' cooperation within the framework of the Convention. But for some reason there are Western

States that are no longer interested in constructive cooperation under the Convention. Consider the fact that to this day the strongest Western Power for some reason continues to maintain its stockpile of chemical weapons, despite the fact that it itself insisted that the Convention should include specific and very strict deadlines. We all know perfectly well that the Convention states that all chemical-weapon stockpiles should be destroyed by April 2007.

The fact is that the countries of the West are very fond of accusing others of violations but refuse to look at themselves in the mirror. What is one of them doing to comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention? Right now, in 2018, it remains the only State officially possessing the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons in the world. But even that is not all. The countries of the West have decided to shatter the entire system of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Convention itself. They have decided to turn those successful international instruments into a mechanism that only they control in order to put pressure on countries they do not like — that is, those of us who do not want to unprotestingly follow their orders. In order to do that, they have decided to grant the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW illegitimate attributive functions. I have exhausted the time allotted for my general statement, but I will continue during explanations of vote.

The Acting Chair: We have heard the last general statement under cluster 2. The Committee will now hear from delegations wishing to explain their position before we take action on the draft resolutions and decisions listed under this cluster. I would like to remind delegations that explanations of vote before the voting are limited to 10 minutes and that they should respect the time limit.

Mr. Medeiros Leopoldino (Brazil): My delegation has asked for the floor to explain its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The delegation of Brazil will vote in favour of the draft resolution, in line with its long-standing support for the objectives and purposes of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its full and effective implementation. However, and while recognizing the diligent efforts of the draft resolution's main sponsors during the informal consultations, Brazil believes that the text before us includes language that does not help to alleviate the

deep disagreements on sensitive issues such as the implementation of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 regarding the use of chemical weapons in the conflict in Syria. The draft resolution brings to the First Committee controversial issues on the agenda of the policymaking bodies of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and we should not seek here to prejudge discussions that are still taking place in The Hague. Unfortunately, in the past year we have witnessed an erosion of the culture of consensus in the Organization, and Brazil believes that discussions on those issues in the context of the First Committee should be aimed at rescuing that culture rather than becoming an additional forum for polarization.

With regard to operative paragraph 4, Brazil believes that the language on decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 does not contribute to mobilizing support for the draft resolution. The decision in question did not enjoy the support of all OPCW members, and discussions on its implementation are still ongoing in The Hague. We want to point out that there is no hierarchical relationship between the First Committee and the OPCW. There is therefore no point in “stressing” the importance of the decision's implementation, since it will happen based on the ways, means and timing to be decided on by the OPCW's policymaking bodies.

With regard to operative paragraph 16, Brazil believes that discrepancies identified by the OPCW in declarations made by States parties should be thoroughly addressed in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and on the basis of constructive dialogue with the States parties in question.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). My delegation, along with other friendly delegations, attempted once again to arrive at a balanced draft text that would enjoy consensus and reflect the positive situation regarding the full elimination of Syria's chemical-weapon programme. Nonetheless, some friendly delegations have informed us of their unwillingness to participate in informal meetings to discuss the draft resolution, since the countries that introduced it would not include those delegations' amendments. Only amendments by certain countries would be included in the draft resolution, specifically countries such as the United States, Britain and France, which have completely disregarded the steps that have

already been taken to eliminate chemical weapons in my country. They practice double standards in their approach to certain issues that have nothing to do with the draft resolution.

The United States delegation, and other delegations that follow its lead, claim to be concerned about ensuring that the Middle East is free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. However, reports and studies have shown that Israel is the only country in the Middle East with a nuclear arsenal and a horrifying arsenal of chemical and biological weapons. Yet that has not moved the United States and others to put pressure on Israel to become a party to international conventions and treaties on weapons of mass destruction. Reports have confirmed that the Israeli entity has supplied terrorist entities in Syria with toxic chemical materials, and that in recent months Israel has provided terrorist groups with Grad missiles armed with ready-to-use chemical materials. None of that has compelled the United States, or others whose approach to chemical-weapon disarmament is hypocritical, to request an investigation into the Israeli violations that threaten regional and international peace and security.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic believes that the use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, is immoral and unacceptable and should be condemned. We are a full-fledged State member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We participate in all OPCW meetings and discussions, like other Member States. My country is committed to implementing the provisions of its Executive Council, and we have met our obligations before the established deadlines. We have cooperated with OPCW investigations and with its work teams, as was acknowledged by both of our organizations and by world public opinion.

My country fully cooperated with the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). However, it has been shown that it was exploited by certain Western countries, and by the United States, Britain and France in particular, to make fabricated accusations against my country. Its reports were unprofessional, unscientific and lacked material evidence. In fact, my country provided concrete data and material evidence on the matter and demonstrated that chemical weapons were used by terrorist parties in the region that were directly and indirectly supported

by certain parties both inside and outside the region, specifically the United States, Britain and France as well as various of their pawns, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.

Syria has scientifically, technically and legally refuted the claims in the JIM reports. Without foundation, the Mechanism refused to visit the areas where the alleged chemical-weapon incidents occurred in order to determine what happened. Its reports do not conceal that. The hysteria shown last year in the United States and in the West was simply a way of extending the Mechanism's work ahead of the issuance of its recent distorted report prior to the Security Council's decision to end its work. That demonstrated the true intentions of the countries concerned that wanted its work to continue. They wanted to reward the JIM for facilitating their falsifications.

The Mechanism does its work in a very strange way that runs counter both to the provisions of the CWC and to the agreement signed between the Syrian National Council and the OPCW. It conducts remote investigations. Is that not a strange way to prepare reports, when the Mechanism has not visited the sites where the alleged incidents occurred? There are three conditions that must be met in any true investigation. There must be direct collection of samples, the collection must be done as soon as possible, and it must be done straight from the sites where the alleged incidents occurred. As the Committee knows, the Mechanism met none of those conditions. JIM investigations are based on information from open sources of terrorist armed groups and their leaders, as well as so-called eyewitnesses, who are members of terrorist groups or their supporters, particularly the White Helmets organization created by Britain.

The Mechanism's work does not comply with the chain of custody, which is another condition outlined in the Convention's Verification Annex. Why has it not issued its final report on the alleged incident in Douma? Fifteen eyewitnesses, most of whom appeared before the OPCW in The Hague, have denied the use of any chemical weapons in Douma. Some other witnesses appeared in videos that were fabricated by the White Helmets on the orders of their sponsors, specifically the British. Is it not strange that the JIM should submit samples six months after an alleged chemical-weapon incident? These are abnormal working methods. We cannot accept the Mechanism's reports on work that is conducted in The Hague and in one of Syria's neighbours.

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20 cites the adoption in June this year of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The decision is illegitimate for the reasons I outlined previously in my general statement. With regard to the declaration of principles, it is a technical matter that Syria is currently discussing with the OPCW in The Hague. Last week, we hosted the new Director-General of the Organization, accompanied by his team, and provided him with information, in accordance with the agreement and the regulations. We also requested that a new team be created to assess the declaration and that it consist of individuals with sufficient practical and technical experience.

My country has always strived to reach consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, but we have witnessed attempts by some States to politicize it in an exaggerated way in order to render it selective and make it focus on Syria. That focus is unacceptable. Syria is a full member of the CWC and OPCW, and issues related to it should be addressed from a purely technical perspective within the framework of the OPCW.

Given that the draft resolution is politicized, biased and does not take into account the facts I have cited, we request that separate votes be taken on the fourth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraphs 2,3,4 and 16 of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20. We call on all countries to vote against those paragraphs and against the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): My delegation would like to explain its intention to abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapon and on Their Destruction".

Egypt participated actively in the negotiations leading to the Chemical Weapons Convention and has always strongly supported its objectives, in line with our firm stance against all weapons of mass destruction. Despite this draft resolution's many shortcomings, my delegation has for years voted in its favour, in a reiteration of Egypt's principled position in support of the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and firm condemnation of any use of such weapons by any party in any circumstances. However, we can no longer continue to support it at a time when its main supporters refuse to support any

efforts aimed at establishing a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, while arguing that the security conditions in the region are not propitious and implying that the possession of nuclear weapons is legitimate until those conditions change.

Many of the States that have actively supported this resolution, including its sole sponsor, are themselves under the protection of a nuclear umbrella and strongly resist any genuine efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons, based on arguments related to so-called strategic stability or the international security environment. That is simply a reflection of what are unacceptable double standards, since nuclear weapons are the most destructive category of WMDs, and their possession, use or threat of use violates the most basic human values and international humanitarian law. We reiterate that human values and moral standards are inseparable, and that the security of some States is not more important than that of others. Moreover, while we continue to condemn in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons by any party, my delegation is not in a position to express an informed opinion on several paragraphs related to the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, of which Egypt is not a member.

The continued politicization of this resolution severely undermines its value, and we believe that the attribution of incidents involving the use of chemical weapons must be founded on an independent, multilateral and evidence-based process within the framework of the United Nations. Lastly, we want to reiterate that serious efforts to implement the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of WMDs could have saved the region and the world from the horrors of the incidents involving the actual use of chemical weapons in the region in recent years. We stress that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East represents a necessary precondition for Egypt to reconsider its position on joining conventions related to other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation will vote against the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 16 of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, sponsored by Poland. Moreover, as we did last year, we will vote against the draft resolution as a whole.

It is truly regrettable that the Polish draft resolution, which previously enjoyed consensus, is becoming an example of how the countries of the West attempt to turn what were originally very successful disarmament mechanisms into unacceptable levers for putting pressure on any States that they find objectionable. The Syrian delegation's statement gave us an excellent picture of what is really going on. The fact is that the countries of the West are destroying both the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Chemical Weapons Convention itself, in an extremely serious development that undermines international security. Look at what is happening. The countries of the West want to grant the OPCW's Technical Secretariat illegitimate attributive functions. That is absolutely unacceptable. It would undercut the Convention and lead to the destruction of the entire system of modern international relations, which is founded not on the will of Washington or Brussels but on international law and our United Nations and its Security Council. No one has given them the right to take such arbitrary steps.

The decision of the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention was devoid of substance and completely illegitimate. A majority of countries refused to associate themselves with it. A total of 111 countries refused to support the decision, which was pushed through by some Western countries, because it exceeds the Conference's mandate and encroaches on the exclusive authority of the Security Council. It threatens not just the Convention but the entire system of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of international relations in which we all participate. We should all think about the dirty games that the Western countries have played to achieve their selfish goals in the forum of the OPCW in The Hague, grossly violating the rules of procedure. Besides that, we all know how they approached members, trying to exert pressure, blackmailing and bribing States that did not want to go along. It was totally obvious, and we all know who made the approaches and how. It all serves to undermine the OPCW and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

As we all know, attempts are being made to ram through approval of a budget for the OPCW for next year enabling the imposition of the West's illegitimate attribution initiative. Such unlawful actions are completely impermissible. Russia will continue to demand that investigations into all incidents involving

the use of chemical weapons be conducted in an impartial and entirely professional manner, in strict compliance with the high standards of the Chemical Weapons Convention. That can be ensured only under the auspices of the Security Council, as the delegation of the Russian Federation has proposed on numerous occasions. As we all recall, specific measures based on Russia's efforts in the Security Council were proposed for establishing such a mechanism, and it was Western States that blocked that initiative. And what we got in return were completely unfounded accusations against Syria. In response to the Syrian Government's willingness to host OPCW inspections and fully disclose everything that had happened on its territory, it was subjected to air strikes. Regrettably, that is the reality of the world we live in.

Sadly, the draft resolution proposed by Poland — and it is clear that it was imposed by their NATO and European Union allies — will take things in the direction of undermining the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Chemical Weapons Convention and resulting in the development of mechanisms controlled only by the West. And they do not need any investigations. All they need is an excuse, and then without any kind of investigation, as has already happened twice in the past two years, they bomb the State they consider undesirable without any discussion in the Security Council or any other attempt at legitimacy. That is unfortunately what we have been seeing in our work in the Committee, including on this draft resolution.

There has been no response to our comments or our attempts to restore a previously consensus-based draft resolution to the normal channels of cooperation in the First Committee. We cannot have that kind of behaviour. We are here to reach an agreement on mutually acceptable mechanisms for supporting international security and disarmament, not to destroy them. That is why we urge all States to once again look closely at what is really happening in that regard and to take a responsible decision, not dictated by pressure from the West, on this draft resolution. If they do not succeed in that right now and have no instructions from their capitals on the issue, then at the very least we believe it is their duty to report to their capitals about what is really going on with this important issue. I would particularly like to draw the attention of our European partners to this. We still want to believe that reason will prevail and that the norms that they themselves have

helped to develop and the level of professionalism that they have always shown will enable them to recall the wise words of the Czech journalist Julius Fučík, who said, “People, be vigilant.”

Mr. Abbani (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to explain its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”.

At the outset, I would like to stress that my country is fully committed to the principles and objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We are a party to the Convention and have fully and effectively implemented all its provisions. My country participates in all activities aimed at strengthening regional and international cooperation with a view to achieving the Convention’s goals. In that regard, we would like to point out once again that implementation of the Convention is not restricted to banning one category of weapons of mass destruction and eliminating its stockpiles so as to maintain international peace and security. It also covers the peaceful use of chemical substances and techniques in order to facilitate the development of all States, without exception. International cooperation must also be strengthened so as to facilitate the transfer of chemical technologies and substances, particularly to developing countries, as well as sharing technical and scientific information in that area. On numerous occasions, and within multilateral frameworks, Algeria has completely rejected the use of chemical weapons by any party and under any circumstances. We believe it is unacceptable because it is a flagrant violation of international law, which we categorically condemn.

We had hoped that the draft resolution before us would be general and geared towards the implementation of the CWC and its positive aspects at the international level, in view of the objectives and commitments under the Convention and those reached during its Review Conferences and annual meetings of States parties, especially as we draw closer to the desired result, which is to build a world free of such weapons. However, with respect to chemical weapons in Syria, we once again deplore the fact that certain language in previous versions of the resolution, particularly that of 2014, has been removed. We welcomed that wording because there was progress on eliminating Syrian stockpiles of chemical weapons and on Syria’s efforts to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical

Weapons (OPCW), despite the fact that Syria was a new member of the OPCW and despite the difficult and complex security situation in the country at the time owing to terrorist-group activity. Algeria is of the view that the draft resolution’s focus on a specific case creates an imbalance, because in this matter in particular, Syria is a subject of ongoing discussion in the Security Council and the OPCW.

We also deplore the fact that issues that run counter to provisions of the Convention are included in the draft resolution and that it also contains purely technical issues that should have been discussed within the OPCW framework in The Hague. As we have said in the past, there are double standards in dealing with issues that fall under the mandate of other United Nations bodies. That does not serve the purposes of the draft resolution or of any party concerned, and it includes the issue of chemical weapons in Syria. For the reasons I have just mentioned, Algeria will abstain in the voting on the paragraphs concerned because we do not draw conclusions based on data or information that seeks to distance us from our shared objectives.

Ms. Castro Loreda (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation would like to explain its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”.

Cuba reiterates its full commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Our country complies with all its provisions and participates actively and constructively in the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Cuba categorically rejects the use of such weapons and supports the complete, irreversible and verifiable destruction, as soon as possible, of all types of chemical weapons.

Regrettably, although Cuba agrees with the overall objective of the draft resolution, we cannot support the text this year. We reiterate our call to its authors to revert to the practice of seeking its adoption by consensus, which would send a message that the international community is united in support of the existing international standards regarding chemical weapons. During consultations, we proposed restoring the draft resolution’s traditional balance, but our concerns about the text were not taken into consideration because of the politicization of the issue. Cuba will once again abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20.

Our delegation will abstain in the voting on the fourth preambular paragraph, as we did last year, and we will vote against operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 16.

With regard to operative paragraphs 2 and 3, we believe that the forum of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is adequate to discussion of the issue. It is unacceptable for us to accuse a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention of using such weapons without an independent, impartial, comprehensive and conclusive investigation conducted by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, based on reliable proof and evidence from the field. It is not up to the General Assembly to validate the work of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, about which several delegations have expressed legitimate concerns that should be duly addressed.

The First Committee is not mandated to endorse or take action on the conclusions of reports submitted to the Security Council, which are not based on exhaustive research in the field as the Convention stipulates. To that end, given that the Cuban delegation voted against the decision taken on 27 June in The Hague at the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we will vote against the operative paragraphs in question. We reject selective, biased and politically motivated approaches to implementing the Convention and the hasty creation of mechanisms that are not based on consensus and have not been fully substantiated and analysed by the States parties with respect to their operational, administrative, financial, legal and human-resource implications and external links.

The draft resolution disregards the cooperation of the Syrian Government, despite the country's complex security situation. Its cooperation enabled Syria to become a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to quickly and verifiably destroy all its declared chemical weapons, along with 27 production facilities. It also ignores the cooperation of the Syrian authorities with regard to clarifying their national declaration. The pending technical issues pertaining to the declaration should be resolved within the framework of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, without bias or politicization, in keeping with established procedures. We again call on the sponsors to reconsider the course of action that has been followed with regard to this draft resolution over the past five years. They cannot continue to

choose confrontation and politicization over a spirit of cooperation and unanimous support for the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to explain my delegation's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Iran reaffirms its strong support and commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention as a unique, multilateral agreement that has codified and reinforced international norms against chemical weapons, made remarkable progress in eliminating them and provided a framework for international cooperation and the exchange of scientific and technical information in the field of chemical activities among State parties for peaceful purposes. It will be essential to preserve the effectiveness of the CWC and its implementing institution, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In fact, draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20 is expected to serve that purpose. However, it is unfortunately being used for political ends rather than to contribute to the CWC's implementation. It is being used to highlight controversial issues and deepen divisions among the State parties, rather than moving them towards consensus. It contributes to further confrontation and polarization among the State parties rather than uniting them around the CWC's main objectives. It advocates a particular point of view on issues about which member States' opinions differ substantially, rather than providing a balanced and professional detachment from such positions.

It has been drafted to align with specific political views held by a single group of States parties, thereby polarizing the OPCW and attempting to shape its Technical Secretariat into a political organ rather than a technical implementation body. The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, in any circumstances. However, the condemnations and accusations of a State party to the Convention that has shown an unprecedented level of cooperation with the OPCW in destroying its chemical stockpiles in the shortest possible time are not acceptable, based as they are on unproven assumptions and unsubstantiated claims. Strict observance of the principles of impartiality and independence, as well as the preservation of the integrity of the chain of custody, is vital to the conduct of investigations into the alleged use of chemical weapons and to the ability to draw reliable, scientific conclusions. Some

of those principles were not observed in preparing the relevant reports. Conclusions have been based not on scientific information but on speculation, assumptions, remote assessments, interviews with certain people and information from open sources and terrorist groups, which seriously undermines the reliability and credibility of the reports and their conclusions. My delegation will vote against the draft resolution, as a number of its paragraphs are highly politicized. We hope that the politicization of the draft resolution and of the OPCW's work will end, thereby enabling the Committee to adopt a consensus-based resolution on the CWC at its next session.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.59, entitled "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources", my delegation fully supports its main objective. If we are to preserve the global consensus on the issue, we should avoid overloading the draft resolution's text with unrelated matters. We encourage the sponsors to refrain from introducing issues that are of a technical nature and that should be exclusively considered within the International Atomic Energy Agency. We acknowledge the way that its main sponsors conducted the consultations on the draft resolution and encourage them to keep that spirit if they wish to maintain consensus on it.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): I had not intended to take the floor to explain my vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, but given the remarks of several speakers before me, I feel obliged to take the floor to speak about this important draft resolution and explain why my delegation will naturally vote in favour of it.

The draft resolution takes into account an important development, the decision taken at The Hague on 27 June, which we consider historic. And I am choosing my words carefully. What does the vote at The Hague mean? It means that the States party to the Chemical Weapons Convention made it clear that they reject impunity. They made it clear that the verified — I repeat, verified — use of chemical weapons, which is a crime, cannot go unanswered, and that the file on chemical weapons is not closed. What would our peoples have said if the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) had refused to act while it was issuing regular reports about victims of chemical weapons? The decision in The Hague was taken entirely properly, without any kind of blackmail, in line with the rules of procedure that all States parties

have accepted by consensus in the past. Now we are dealing with a number of countries that are contesting a perfectly normal decision. What they are actually contesting is multilateralism, and we cannot accept that.

Basically, and contrary to statements made this morning in the Committee, the decision does not change the mandate of the OPCW or the Chemical Weapons Convention in any way. The Convention already included a number of provisions for investigating violations of the Convention. It was not the States parties that said this before the vote but the Director-General of the OPCW himself, who stated several times that the Convention had provided for the OPCW's conduct of investigations for attributing responsibility. The decision at The Hague was not about changing the OPCW's mandate but rather about providing it with additional resource capacities. There was never any question of giving the OPCW any prosecutorial powers. After the use of chemical weapons has been verified, it stands to reason that the OPCW should be able to attribute responsibility for it. The States parties voted for the decision in the understanding that after responsibility was determined, sanctions or restrictive measures would be taken not by the OPCW but by competent bodies such as the Security Council.

The vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20 is therefore extremely important, and my delegation urges everyone to take responsibility for it. What we must do is to declare whether we are for or against impunity. My delegation's response is simple. We are against impunity and will fight everywhere to ensure that justice is served.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to explain its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

Our delegation reiterates its condemnation of the use of chemical weapons regardless of where, by whom or for what reasons it is committed. We believe firmly that all such weapons of mass destruction should be completely eliminated. In that regard, we condemn the chemical-weapon attacks by Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. We emphasize the need for all States parties to sign and ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention. We believe that the full implementation of all provisions of

the Convention requires the united efforts of all States parties. In that regard, we are concerned about that fact that this year's draft resolution submitted to the First Committee is unbalanced and highly politicized. It also attempts to foist responsibility on the authorities of a member State that has been prey to interference by foreign Powers and violence perpetrated by terrorist groups. In our view, the selective manner in which the sponsors of the draft resolution address the issue runs counter to the main objective of the text, which is to promote and consolidate support for the Chemical Weapons Convention, and that is why it will once again be impossible to adopt it by consensus. For those reasons, my delegation will abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20 as a whole and on its fourth preambular paragraph, and will vote against its operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 16.

The Acting Chair: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lomaia (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9 was submitted by the representative of Hungary on 18 October. The sponsor of the draft resolution is listed in document A/C.1/73/L.9.

I will now read an oral statement by the Secretariat on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The present oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 10 and 11 of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9, the General Assembly would, first, request that the Secretary-General continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and provide such services as may be required for the conduct and the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences and, secondly, appreciate the fact that the meeting of States parties held in Geneva from 4 to 8 December considered financial

matters under item 9 of its agenda, noted with concern the financial situation of the Convention — among other things on account of systemic issues with the current funding arrangements, as well arrears in the payment of assessed contributions — and requested the Chair of the 2018 meeting of States parties to prepare an information paper in consultation with the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Implementation Support Unit and States parties on measures to address financial predictability and sustainability for the meetings agreed by States parties and for the Implementation Support Unit for review by States parties in 2018, and to call on States parties to consider ways of addressing these serious issues as a matter of urgency, in line with paragraph 19 (f) of the report of the meetings of States parties.

The Secretary-General also wishes to draw the attention of member States to the fact that at the meeting of States parties in 2017, the States parties to the Convention reached consensus on the intersessional programme from 2018 to 2020, including the related cost estimates prepared by the Secretariat. It is recalled that all activities related to international conventions or treaties that under their respective legal arrangements ought to be financed outside the regular budget of the United Nations may be undertaken by the Secretariat only when sufficient funding is received in advance from States parties to those conventions. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9, no additional requirements would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019, as well as in the proposed programme budget for 2020.

The Acting Chair: The sponsor of the draft resolution has expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9 was adopted.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.17, entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol".

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lomaia (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.17 was submitted on

8 October by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/73/L.17.

The Acting Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad

and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

none

Abstaining:

Israel, United States of America

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.17 was adopted by 178 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lomaia (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20 was submitted by the representative of Poland on 9 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/73/L.20.

The Acting Chair: A separate vote has been requested on the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 16 of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20. I shall now therefore put those paragraphs to the vote, one by one.

I shall first put to the vote the fourth preambular paragraph.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel,

Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic

Abstaining:

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Egypt, Eswatini, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Oman, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

The fourth preambular paragraph was retained by 128 votes to 7, with 30 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic,

El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam

Operative paragraph 2 was retained by 120 votes to 14, with 32 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 3.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Suriname, Tajikistan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam

Operative paragraph 3 was retained by 123 votes to 13, with 33 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 4.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia,

Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania

Operative paragraph 4 was retained by 113 votes to 19, with 34 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 16.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Fiji, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mongolia, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam

Operative paragraph 16 was retained by 112 votes to 15, with 39 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, as a whole. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa,

Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Cambodia, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, Suriname, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20 was adopted by 148 votes to 7, with 23 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.42, entitled “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction”.

I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lomaia (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.42 was submitted by the representative of India on 16 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/73/L.42. Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, and the Philippines have also become sponsors.

The Acting Chair: The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.42 was adopted.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.59, entitled “Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources”.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lomaia (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.59 was submitted by the representative of France on 18 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/73/L.59. Equatorial Guinea, Guinea and the Philippines have also become sponsors.

The Acting Chair: The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.59 was adopted.

The Acting Chair: I will now call on delegations wishing to make statements in explanation of vote after the voting.

Mr. Yu Peng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to take this opportunity to briefly state its position on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20. China has always opposed the use of chemical weapons by any State, organization or individual, regardless of the circumstances or purpose. We support comprehensive, objective and impartial investigations into incidents of the alleged use of chemical weapons. We believe that investigations should be based on hard evidence in order to arrive at findings that can stand the test of time and bring the perpetrators and all those responsible to justice. China supports the full use of the existing mechanisms of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the proper handling of incidents involving the alleged use of chemical weapons in strict compliance with its provisions. The results of the voting at the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in June revealed a wide range of views on how to attribute accountability for the use of chemical weapons. China is concerned about the fact that a vote was forced without full consultations in order to address a major issue surrounding the purposes and objectives of the Convention. We urge the contracting parties to meet each other halfway and to properly resolve their differences through consultations on an equal footing so as to avoid any negative effects on the Convention's future development.

China believes that the draft resolution should be a platform for unity and cooperation among States parties to the CWC rather than one that creates division. Its original purpose was to comprehensively and objectively reflect and advance the implementation of the CWC, but it has increasingly deviated from that in a

clear tendency towards politicization. Though the lead sponsor conducted consultations on the draft resolution, in a grave departure from the spirit of multilateralism it completely disregarded drafting proposals from member States. We believe that a draft resolution as important as this one should be resubmitted to the First Committee after being presented by the Chair of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and adopted by consensus among the contracting parties. Based on these points, China voted against draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20 as a whole and its relevant paragraphs.

Mr. Soemirat (Indonesia): My delegation would like to take the floor to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”, which we have just adopted. I would also like to thank the delegation of Poland for submitting the draft resolution to the First Committee at this year’s session.

Our delegation believes that draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20 remains important and should be considered by the Committee, since it is the most important, if not the only, one that comprehensively addresses issues surrounding the Chemical Weapons Convention. We continue to believe that the deliberations of the Chemical Weapons Convention should always be conducted in a spirit of multilateralism. We strongly believe in the importance of united and effective actions to increase our ability to promote the objective of the Convention itself.

While we take note of various important elements in the resolution that was just adopted, we believe that several references in the text might invite misinterpretation and may not make a positive contribution to the overall spirit of the draft resolution. In our view it is important to avoid any misinterpretation of any of the cases highlighted in the text that are based on incomplete findings or reports. We also believe that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is the only intergovernmental organization that has the technical capability to conduct technical research or issue reports on the technical side of the chemical-weapon issue in general. It should not be politicized, nor should it have been politicized. That is the reason we abstained in the voting during the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in June.

We also believe that the draft resolution should address the issue of the responsibility of the remaining possessor States more adequately. Based on those positions, and despite the fact that we voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole, we cannot support operative paragraphs 3, 4 and 16 and therefore abstained in the voting on them.

Ms. Yeo (Singapore): I am taking the floor to explain my delegation’s vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The recent incidents involving the use of chemical weapons pose a threat to the rules-based international order and are a violation of the international norm against their use. Singapore condemns the use of chemical weapons by any party in any circumstances, as it constitutes a grave violation of international law, and we have therefore consistently supported this draft resolution. This year it again calls for the adoption of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, taken at the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in June, and stresses the importance of implementing the decision, in accordance with the Convention.

Singapore voted in favour of that decision earlier this year in order to ensure the Convention’s effective implementation, which includes addressing issues involving non-compliance with or contravention of its provisions. We want to stress that any proposals for strengthening the capability of the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), or proposals by the Director-General on the provision of technical expertise to States parties in order to identify perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or those otherwise involved in the use of chemical weapons, should involve inclusive and comprehensive consultations with States parties in accordance with the Convention. We take note of the plans that the Director-General has circulated and look forward to his proposals concerning paragraph 20 of the decision. We continue to believe that there should be inclusive consultations with States parties in order to ensure that their decision-making process is effective, transparent and accountable.

In conclusion, Singapore takes its international obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention

seriously, and we support the work of the OPCW, which should be carried out in a comprehensive, objective and impartial manner.

Ms. Bhandari (India): I have asked for the floor to explain India's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

India voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, given the high importance that we attach to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and all its provisions aimed at addressing concerns about the alleged use of chemical weapons. We have always maintained that any use of chemical weapons shows a complete disregard for humankind and is reprehensible and contrary to the provisions of the CWC, as well as to accepted international norms. India is against the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, in any circumstances. The perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable. However, the delegation of India felt constrained to vote against operative paragraph 4 and abstain in the voting on operative paragraph 16 because of our principled position on the decision adopted at the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have taken note of the commitment contained in operative paragraph 4 to implement the decision in accordance with the CWC. India remains willing and open to discussions with States parties in order to find ways and means to strengthen the Convention and its effective implementation.

Mr. Mohd Nasir (Malaysia): My delegation is taking the floor to deliver our explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

Malaysia remains firm in its principled position with regard to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are fully supportive of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and recognize the valuable contributions made by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in upholding that legal instrument. While we note decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, adopted on 27 June during the fourth Special Session of the Conference of

the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we are concerned about the potential implications of a decision that is yet to be fully considered by all States parties to the CWC. Malaysia maintains its position that the special session was not the appropriate venue for States parties to decide on matters that would affect the scope of the OPCW's work and the Convention. On that note, we want to emphasize the importance of protecting the OPCW, a respected technical organization, from extraneous influences on the conduct of its work. On that basis, Malaysia abstained in the voting on operative paragraphs 4 and 16 of the draft resolution under discussion.

Mr. Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam): We would like to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction". Viet Nam abstained in the voting on operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 16 and voted against operative paragraph 4, while voting in favour of the draft resolution as a whole. We have consistently supported disarmament, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the prevention of the use of such weapons leading towards their total elimination. In addition, Viet Nam attaches importance to complying with the obligations and mechanisms under the Chemical Weapons Convention, in order to ensure its objective, effective and transparent implementation.

Ms. Plath (United States of America): I am delivering an explanation of vote on behalf of Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and my own country, the United States, on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

Our respective countries voted in favour of the draft resolution because we believe it reflects the objectives and goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and supports the extraordinary work done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We want to express our deepest appreciation to the brave women and men of the OPCW for their dedication and professionalism in investigating, when

called on to do so, chemical-weapon attacks in Syria and other places where chemical weapons have been used.

While we were striving for stronger language condemning those who have used chemical weapons and supporting the decision adopted in June at the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the draft resolution highlights the grave concerns about the use of chemical weapons in Syria, Malaysia, Iraq and the United Kingdom. Nearly every country in the world, including Syria and Russia, is party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Yet the Al-Assad regime continues to flout its international obligations and the standards of basic humanity by repeatedly using chemical weapons against its own people. Earlier this year Russia used a military-grade nerve agent of the Novichok class of chemical weapons in a brazen assassination attempt in the United Kingdom that ultimately left one innocent woman dead and four more individuals fighting for their lives, while endangering countless others. That act is another blatant example of Russia's violations of its international obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. In another case, the chemical agent VX was used to assassinate Kim Jong-nam in Malaysia. The draft resolution rightly recognizes our collective view that such horrific acts are reprehensible and must end, and that the perpetrators involved must be held accountable.

On 27 June, as a result of those acts and the unprecedented disregard that they show for the rule of law and the global norm against the use of chemical weapons, the States parties to the CWC took action to preserve its integrity and the international norms and standards against the use of chemical weapons. On that day, at the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, responsible nations collectively and overwhelmingly stood together to endorse decisive action to counter such threats and renew their solemn commitment to a world free of chemical weapons. Their historic decision calls for a number of key actions, including directing the Technical Secretariat to put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of chemical-weapon attacks in Syria; affirming the importance of identifying the perpetrators of any such attack by authorizing the Director-General, when called on by a State party conducting a national investigation into the use of chemical weapons, to provide technical expertise to identify those responsible; and inviting the Director-

General to identify ways to strengthen verification and increase assistance to States parties to implement the Convention. It is essential that as States parties to the CWC we stand together, recognize the important role of the OPCW Technical Secretariat identified in the decision taken at the Conference of States parties and ensure its full and effective implementation. We also condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. Chemical-weapon terrorism is a threat to all of us, and we must work together to stop it.

We can no longer turn a blind eye to this threat while claiming to be working for a world truly free of chemical weapons. We must not acquiesce to non-compliance on the part of States parties to the CWC. We have to call out such concerns and address them accordingly. Silence and inaction only further embolden those who seek to use chemical weapons to the detriment of all humankind. As responsible nations, we must be unwavering in our resolve on such matters and have the courage of our convictions to collectively banish the scourge of chemical weapons forever to the past. Any effort to ignore the aforementioned serious issues undermines the work we have advanced to date, detracts from the extraordinary efforts undertaken by the OPCW and the United Nations and constitutes a grave challenge to the CWC. We must continue to collectively condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by any State or non-State actor, and to hold all who would use such weapons accountable. To that end, we commend the commitments by participating States of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons and invite others to join and further support such efforts with the aim of reinforcing the norm against the use of chemical weapons.

Mr. Nakai (Japan): I would like to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

Japan voted in favour of the draft resolution. The use of chemical weapons is extremely inhumane and is not permissible. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the incidents of the use of such weapons that have occurred since 2012 in Malaysia, Iraq, Syria and the United Kingdom, which are tragedies that should not be repeated. In order to prevent the use of chemical weapons, the perpetrators, including non-State actors,

should be identified and be held accountable. As a first step, a permanent international mechanism for identifying perpetrators should be established. In that regard, Japan welcomes the decisions taken in June at the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and believes that ensuring their complete implementation is extremely important. It is our belief that the resolutions on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) adopted in the First Committee contribute to reinforcing it and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Japan supports the draft resolution and will continue to cooperate with the international community to strengthen the CWC regime.

Mr. Syrymbet (Kazakhstan): I would like to express my country's position on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction", submitted by Poland.

We thank the Polish delegation for its efforts to find a compromise in difficult circumstances by holding consultations at various levels and with various groups. On 27 June Kazakhstan was unable to support the decision of the fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, especially with regard to the creation of an attribution mechanism in the framework of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are therefore unable to support the paragraphs of the draft resolution that include references to the decision. Given that the draft resolution contains controversial and divisive points, many of which still need additional discussion and clarification, Kazakhstan refrained from supporting the draft resolution.

At the same time, we note that Kazakhstan fully supports the Chemical Weapons Convention and also greatly values the significance of the OPCW's activities. We will continue to facilitate the work of this crucial organization in every way. However, we are not in favour of including references to non-consensus decisions in today's draft resolution. Kazakhstan will work, in the context of the upcoming Conference of States Parties in The Hague at the end of this month and together with all, to find mutually acceptable solutions to the issue.

Mr. Ovsyanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to speak in explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.17, "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol". We have consistently supported this resolution, which is always adopted by what amounts to an absolute majority of the States Members of the United Nations. This year we again voted in favour of it, because we believe that the measures it provides for are especially important to international security, particularly given various events that are currently ongoing. In that connection, we would like to understand the motives of the two States that continue to propose that the draft resolution be adopted by a vote.

The Acting Chair: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting on cluster 2, "Other weapons of mass destruction".

The Committee will now turn to A/C.1/73/INF.2/Rev.3, beginning with cluster 3, "Outer space (disarmament aspects)". Before proceeding further, I would like to inform delegations that the main sponsors of draft resolutions A/C.1/73/L.53/Rev.1 and A/C.1/73/L.60 have requested that action on them be postponed. The Committee will take up those draft resolutions at a later date, to be announced.

We will first hear general statements or statements by delegations wishing to introduce draft resolutions and draft decisions under cluster 3, "Outer space (disarmament aspects)", followed by explanations of vote. I would sincerely like us to keep our statements brief so that we can take action on the three draft resolutions and one draft decision under cluster 3, for which we need at least half an hour. I would very much appreciate it if we could complete those statements by 12.30 p.m. On that note, we will now hear general statements.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): It is regrettable to see that all four of the proposals submitted under this cluster will be put to a vote, including a mere procedural, factual decision. This situation clearly indicates the intentions of some States to turn outer space into another battlefield and a theatre for military conflicts that would have catastrophic consequences. Given the fragility and volatility of the outer-space environment, we believe that it is more necessary than ever for the United Nations to send a clear message about its resolve to address this alarming threat to a truly strategic domain. We hope that in future the First Committee will adopt the relevant proposals by consensus and that

negotiations on a legally binding and comprehensive treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space will begin in the near future and without further delay, with a view to preserving international security and the security of future generations.

Ms. Castro Loreda (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba is deeply concerned about the threat of an arms race in outer space. The ongoing development and upgrading of space weaponry and the presence of military equipment in space are extremely worrisome, as they represent intentions to establish the concept of self-defence and the application of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations in outer space, thereby legitimizing the possibility of an armed conflict in a domain that should be used solely for peaceful purposes. We are also alarmed by the recent announcements that the United States will be funding the deployment of space equipment for intercepting ballistic missiles, including a new group of anti-missile early-warning satellites, as well as the creation of a space force.

Cuba repudiates the militarization of outer space, which would turn it into a battlefield. All these reasons point to the importance of strengthening and building on the current legal regime in order to prevent an arms race in outer space. That is why Cuba supports efforts to draft a treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space as soon as possible and subscribes to the policy of no first placement of weapons in outer space. An arms race in outer space would pose a serious threat to international peace and security, and the international community should reject it. For those reasons, Cuba is sponsoring and supporting all the draft proposals submitted under this cluster, that is, A/C.1/73/L.3, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", A/C.1/73/L.51, "No first placement of weapons in outer space", A/C.1/73/L.68/Rev.1, "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" and A/C.1/73/L.50, "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space".

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are about to consider several draft proposals on issues relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As the Committee is aware, the Russian Federation is a hugely committed and consistent proponent of preventing an arms race in outer space. We believe it is one of our most important tasks in today's world. We still have the possibility of preventing the placement of weapons in outer space. Space remains an

area for peaceful interaction among States in furthering social, economic, scientific and technological progress. It is not an arena for confrontation. Regrettably, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty banned only the placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space. We therefore have an opportunity to prevent the placement of conventional weapons in outer space, and we should do so as soon as possible, because the military space doctrine of one of the leading States of the Western world includes its intention to place weapons in outer space. It even provides specific dates. It has set 2030 as its date for placing attack weapons in outer space. The fact is that the world is facing a choice. We either acquiesce in that extremely dangerous measure on a path that could lead to the destruction of civilization on Earth, or we can ban the potential placement of weapons in outer space.

At the Conference on Disarmament, the Russian-Chinese draft of a legally binding international treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the use of force against objects in outer space or from outer space against terrestrial objects is still being blocked from being the subject of proper negotiations in the Conference, and we all know who is responsible for that. The initiative for no first placement of weapons in outer space has therefore been launched and has already become global, with a growing number of States subscribing to it. Its main thrust is the adoption of a non-legally-binding but politically extremely important commitment to refraining from being the first to deploy weapons in outer space. It is utterly clear that if all the countries of the world make that political commitment, they would all be under an obligation never to place weapons in outer space. Yes, for the time being it would be only a political commitment. For the time being it would not be verified or provide a clear definition of what constitutes a weapon in outer space, but it would be a vital transparency measure and an expression of commitment on the part of all States to not putting weapons in space.

That is the goal of our current efforts and of the draft resolutions that the Committee will now consider. Every member State therefore has the opportunity to make a choice and decide for itself how we want to see international security in the future. Are all of us here ready to work together to erect an indestructible barrier against the placement of weapons in outer space? The position of the European States in that regard is a very interesting one. Their priority has always been

to prevent an arms race in outer space. Unfortunately, under pressure from a State that is seeking to place weapons in outer space, they refrain from even discussing the issue, and that does not seem right.

The Acting Chair: We have just heard the last general statement. We will now hear from delegations wishing to explain their positions before we take action on the draft resolutions and draft decisions listed under cluster 3, “Outer space (disarmament aspects)”.

Mr. Ehling (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I am taking the floor to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51, on the no first placement of weapons in outer space, which we are not in a position to support.

The European Union and its member States have long advocated the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and the peaceful uses of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. Strengthening the safety, security and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space is a key priority for us and is in our common interest. We believe it is important to develop initiatives that will increase confidence and mutual trust among current and future space actors. In that regard, we would like to highlight the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures that can make a contribution to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. That is why some years ago the EU proposed an international code of conduct for outer-space activities. We encourage further international cooperation to develop agreed principles of responsible behaviour in outer space. The EU and its member States remain committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. All EU member States therefore voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 71/31, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51, on the no first placement of weapons in outer space, we are worried that this particular initiative does not adequately respond to the objective of strengthening trust and confidence among States but could rather

increase the risk of conflict in space. The no-first-placement initiative does not address the difficult issue of defining what a weapon in outer space is, which could lead a State to mistakenly assess that another State has placed weapons in outer space. Without a common understanding of what constitutes a weapon in space, a State could inadvertently put an object in space that another State considers to be a weapon. We remain concerned about the continued development of all anti-satellite weapons and capabilities, including those that are terrestrially based, and underline the importance of addressing such developments promptly and as part of international efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Rather than introducing a no-first-placement pledge, the EU and its member States believe it would be more useful to address countries' behaviour in and use of outer space in order to advance meaningful discussions and initiatives on how to prevent space from becoming an arena for conflict and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the space environment.

Ms. Plath (United States of America): I would like to explain our vote on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.50 and draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51.

With regard to A/C.1/73/L.50, entitled “Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space”, the United States will vote against the decision, which welcomes the commencement of the work of a United Nations Group of Governmental Experts to consider and make recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, among other things. The United States was disappointed with the General Assembly's adoption in December 2017 of resolution 72/250, proposed by Russia, establishing a Group of Governmental Experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The United States continues to oppose the fundamental premise of that resolution, which draft decision A/C.1/73/L.50 welcomes. As we noted last year, it appears that the authors of the draft resolution intend to suggest that the Russian and Chinese draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer-space objects should serve as a foundation for the review by the Group of Governmental Experts. We have long opposed negotiating a legally binding agreement in the Conference on Disarmament based

on the Russian-Chinese draft treaty because of our fundamental concerns about the treaty.

The draft treaty would not effectively prohibit the development of threats to outer-space systems today, including terrestrially based and orbital anti-satellite weapons. As my delegation has noted to the Committee, its authors are developing capabilities that are designed to attack satellites in space, the very thing they claim to seek to prohibit. The draft treaty also fails to resolve the definitional problems of what constitutes a weapon in outer space, given the dual-use nature of many space technologies. Nor does it address the challenge of creating an effective verification regime.

The United States is participating in the Group of Governmental Experts both to ensure there is a full understanding of the draft treaty's fundamental flaws and to guide discussions on space security towards more practical and productive approaches to enhancing space security. We support the professional approach taken by Ambassador de Aguiar Patriota, the Chair of the Group, and appreciate his efforts to conduct a balanced assessment of the full range of options to enhance security and stability in outer space.

The United States has also taken note of the discussions in subsidiary body 3 of the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and we thank Ambassador de Aguiar Patriota for his leadership of subsidiary body 3 in 2018. The United States looks forward to participating in further discussions on space security at the Conference on Disarmament in 2019, with a particular focus on the practical implementation of the relevant recommendations put forward in the 2013 report (see A/68/189) of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. The United States looks forward to continuing to engage constructively and pragmatically with other States Members of the United Nations in order to strengthen the safety, stability, security and sustainability of outer-space activities.

On behalf of the United States, France and the United Kingdom, I would also like to deliver an explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51, "No first placement of weapons in outer space". The United States, France and the United Kingdom look forward to continuing to engage constructively and pragmatically with other Member States in order to strengthen the safety, stability, security and sustainability of outer-

space activities. The safety and security of the outer-space environment is under threat, and all nations must make progress on the development of effective transparency and confidence-building measures. Our national experts are contributing to the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We also encourage all countries to take advantage of forums such as the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in order to make real progress on transparency and confidence-building measures, including the practical implementation of the 21 agreed COPUOS guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer-space activities. However, we believe that Russia's no-first-placement initiative contains a number of significant problems and that Russia's military actions do not match its diplomatic rhetoric.

First, the no-first-placement initiative does not adequately define what constitutes a weapon in outer space. In space, any object with manoeuvring capabilities can in theory be used for offensive purposes. Without a common understanding of what we mean by a space weapon, the draft resolution will increase mistrust and misunderstanding with regard to the activities and intentions of States. Secondly, there are limits to what can be verified once a vehicle has been launched. The initiative contains no features that would make it possible to effectively confirm a State's political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space. Thirdly, we cannot support the reference in the draft resolution's fourth preambular paragraph to shaping a "community of shared future for humankind". That phrase has been promoted by China to insert its own view of multilateralism and geopolitics in the international system. None of us should support incorporating language that targets a domestic political audience into multilateral documents.

Lastly, systems in space can also be damaged from Earth. The draft resolution fails to address the near-term threat from other types of anti-satellite weapons, such as lasers or terrestrially launched systems. Such weapons also pose a serious threat to the space environment, with the potential to leave large amounts of dangerous debris in orbit for hundreds of years, as was the case with just one anti-satellite test in 2007. All nations must take concrete steps to strengthen the safety, stability and sustainability of space. The draft resolution on the no first placement of weapons in outer space is not the

right mechanism for achieving those goals. Instead, our nations support the development of non-legally-binding transparency and confidence-building measures. The measures should be clear, practical and confirmable, and clarifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviour would therefore be important. There are real threats to the outer-space environment, but the no first placement initiative is not the answer. We therefore intend to vote no today in the First Committee.

Mr. Sánchez Kiesslich (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the past, Mexico has supported the draft resolution on no first placement of weapons in outer space, because we agree that it is important and urgent to prevent an arms race in outer space, in keeping with our commitment to using outer space for purely peaceful purposes. Nevertheless, we want to make it clear that our continued support for draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51 should in no way be seen as a tacit endorsement or acceptance of an alleged right to place weapons in outer space or launch them from Earth if another State does so first or in response to an attack. Mexico will continue campaigning to ensure that no one places weapons in outer space in any circumstances. We also particularly want to reiterate that all nuclear weapons should be prohibited and eliminated regardless of their class or placement, in accordance with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The Acting Chair: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolutions and draft decisions under cluster 3, "Outer space (disarmament aspects)". We will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.3, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lomaia (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.3 was submitted by the representatives of Egypt and Sri Lanka on 25 September. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/73/L.3. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have now also become sponsors.

The Acting Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Palau

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.3 was adopted by 181 votes to 2, with 1 abstention.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.50, entitled “Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space”.

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lomaia (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): Draft decision A/C.1/73/L.50 was submitted by the representatives of the Russian Federation and China on 16 October. The sponsors of the draft decision are listed in document A/C.1/73/L.50. Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have now also become sponsors.

The Acting Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao

Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Ukraine, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Eswatini, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft decision A/C.1/73/L.50 was adopted by 127 votes to 3, with 49 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51, entitled, “No first placement of weapons in outer space”.

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lomaia (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51 was submitted by the representative of the Russian Federation on 16 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/73/L.51. Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Zambia have now also become sponsors.

The Acting Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus,

Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Estonia, France, Georgia, Hungary, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Tuvalu

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51 was adopted by 129 votes to 12, with 40 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.68/Rev.1, entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities".

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lomaia (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.68 was submitted by the representatives of the Russian Federation and China on 19 October. Subsequently, a revised draft resolution, A/C.1/73/L.68/Rev.1, was submitted on 30 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/73/L.68/Rev.1. Guinea, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have now also become sponsors.

The Acting Chair: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of

Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Palau

Draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.68/Rev.1 was adopted by 176 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.

The Acting Chair: We will now proceed to explanations of vote after the voting, to be followed by statements in right of reply. Delegations wishing to exercise their right of reply are kindly asked to indicate that to one of the Secretariat officers so that we will be able to determine when we should stop the explanations of vote after the voting.

I now give the floor to delegations wishing to explain their vote after the voting.

Ms. Bhandari (India): I have asked for the floor to explain India's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51, "No first placement of weapons in outer space".

India voted in favour of the draft resolution. As a major space-faring nation, India has vital development and security interests in space. The draft resolution states that the legal regime applicable to outer space should be consolidated and reinforced. India supports that objective, as well as the strengthening of the international legal regime in order to protect and preserve access to space for all and to prevent the weaponization of outer space without exceptions. We support the substantive consideration of a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference on Disarmament. While not a substitute for legally binding instruments, transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful role that complements such

instruments. We see no first placement of weapons in outer space as an interim step only, not a substitute for substantive legal measures to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which continue to be a priority for the international community.

Mr. Masmajan (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I am taking the floor to explain my delegation's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51, entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space".

We welcome the fact that the draft resolution expresses the concern that space could become a theatre for military confrontations. Nonetheless, we remain concerned about the fact that the draft resolution does not take some important elements into consideration. The development of ground-based systems that make it possible to attack satellites or interrupt the operations of space systems, including the testing of such systems, is a profound source of concern. We deplore the fact that the draft resolution does not address those issues. It also fails to address the possible second placement of weapons in outer space. Those considerations explain why we abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. Switzerland will continue to closely follow developments in the draft resolution. We are ready to delve more deeply with its sponsors into our concerns about its fundamental concepts and about how it can be developed to attract broader support.

I would now like to explain our vote on draft decision A/C.1/73/L.50, entitled "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space". We voted in favour of the draft decision, particularly in view of its first paragraph, which welcomes the commencement of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts. We view the fact that the major space-faring nations are participating in the process as a positive sign. We hope that it will be successful and provide new impetus to efforts to develop new instruments aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space.

Mr. Collard-Wexler (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51 on behalf of Norway, the Republic of Korea and my own country, Canada.

Canada, Norway and the Republic of Korea abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51, "No first placement of weapons in outer space", which calls on member States to make a political pledge to not be the first to place weapons in outer space. We have three concerns about the text. First, it does not

adequately address the issue of what exactly constitutes a weapon in outer space. Since there are a number of dual-use space technologies, and any space object that can manoeuvre could be considered a weapon in outer space, countries could be led to think mistakenly that another country has placed weapons in outer space.

(spoke in English)

Secondly, we do not believe that a no-first-placement pledge would be effectively verifiable. A political obligation is of limited value without a means to verify compliance. We favour measures that have practical rather than mere political effect. Without a means of verifying compliance, a no-first-placement pledge does not fulfil the criteria for space-related transparency and confidence-building measures established by consensus in the 2013 study of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189).

Thirdly, the draft resolution is focused solely on space-based weapons. It does not address the threat of the ground-based weapons that are currently being developed and tested, such as anti-satellite missiles and high-energy lasers. It is silent on the arms-control benefits of discouraging anti-satellite missile tests that create space debris. Given those concerns, we were unable to support the draft resolution and abstained in the voting.

The Acting Chair: Given the time we have left for this meeting, we will move on from explanations of vote after the voting and proceed to statements by delegations wishing to exercise the right of reply.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: I would like to speak with regard to the remarks of our United States colleagues in support of Poland's draft resolution (A/C.1/73/L.20), on the Chemical Weapons Convention. Regrettably, they made a totally irresponsible reference to claims that the Russian Federation is violating it. In general, we understand our American colleagues' nervousness, considering that the essential element of the Convention is the destruction of chemical weapons, and that was what we agreed to, back at the beginning of the 1990s. That was the Convention that we all signed in 1997 and later ratified. It included a clear obligation to eliminate all stockpiles of chemical weapons by 2007. Unfortunately, here we are in 2018, and the only State in the world that still officially possesses enormous stockpiles of chemical weapons is the United States of America. It

is indeed a deplorable state of affairs when one of the leaders of chemical-weapon disarmament has so far sadly been unable to fulfil its own primary obligation under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and that has resulted in its totally irresponsible statements about the Russian Federation.

As we all know, in October of last year the Russian Federation completed the destruction of its chemical weapons under its federal programme, officially confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and by the United States itself. Regrettably, it is since then these irresponsible statements about the Russian Federation have begun. We would like to call on our American partners to adopt a more consistent position and to refrain from speaking in this way at the United Nations and making completely unsubstantiated accusations against other States.

Regrettably, such allegations are being made about our Syrian colleagues. We have all witnessed how the United States has now twice made unfounded accusations claiming that the Syrian Government has used weapons against its own people, which seems absurd given that Syria took an unprecedented step in the context of combating international terrorism when its Government decided to accede to the Convention and destroy all of its chemical-weapon stockpiles. Incidentally, that was done under international control and with the full assistance of the United States. Regrettably, however, even in 2011 the United States clearly declared that it would make every possible effort to topple the legitimate Government of Syria and use its alleged use of chemical weapons as a pretext.

We would like to remind our United States colleagues that all of Syria's chemical-weapon stockpiles were destroyed under the strictest international control and with the assistance of the United States itself, on its own platform. Any accusations against Syria are therefore totally unfounded. It shocked the entire international community that in the wake of those accusations, without waiting for an investigation — and when OPCW inspectors were already on the way to the sites where chemical weapons had allegedly been used — the United States took concrete action, conducting two air strikes. The United Kingdom and France joined the second strike in a cynical and blatant violation of the principles of our Organization, in which one State Member of the United Nations attacked another sovereign State with air strikes.

That is the reality with which we are living, and it is entirely incompatible with the principles of the United Nations. That is the reason for our American partners' nervousness and their desire to present their position as reality and justify their completely unacceptable methods of interacting with other States. This must be discussed. We cannot turn a blind eye to it. We must prevent such action through our joint efforts here at the United Nations and in the First Committee, which is mandated to discuss all these issues and take decisions with the aim of ensuring that they are never repeated and that the United States, a permanent member of the Security Council, can never again take such unlawful action against another State. It has happened all too often, unfortunately, but such is our world of contradictions. People say one thing and do another. We will continue to hope that reason and justice will prevail here and that our United States partners will conduct themselves in line with the principles that they signed on to when their country became a Member of the United Nations.

Ms. Plath (United States of America): I feel compelled to take the floor to respond to the remarks made by both my Russian and Syrian colleagues about some of the issues that have been discussed here today. I would like to start with the comments we just heard. I want to make it clear to my Russian colleague that he should not mistake my clarity and accuracy about the truth for nervousness. I would instead ask him that he thank my Government for the incredible amount of financial assistance that it provided to enable Russia to destroy its chemical weapons on time. He is welcome.

Secondly, I want to turn to what we are all doing here as members of the First Committee. Much has been said here today and over the past five weeks about draft resolutions, the numbers that we are getting, and who did or did not support this or that. I have to say — and this refers back to the remarks by my Russian colleague earlier today — if we are all here together solely to find the lowest-common-denominator draft resolution that enjoys consensus, rather than holding member States accountable for flagrant violations of hard-won international treaties and agreements, we should fundamentally reconsider what we are doing during this five-week exercise. Indeed, there should be a greater focus on adopting draft resolutions that put credible and substantive strength behind the organizations that we try to support, or we will risk undermining the credibility of the entire Committee. Frankly, this

silence, inaction and search for the lowest common denominator are what destroys these mechanisms, as my Russian colleague said. They should be levers of pressure to facilitate change, and if they are not, what are we doing? To what end and for what purpose do we meet here and draft and negotiate texts for weeks on end if it is not to facilitate change and use them as the facilitators of levers that they should be? How are we advancing international peace and security if we fear speaking up, speaking for our principles, addressing impunity and keeping our faith in what we know is right and wrong? That is how I will end my statement today before a fantastic lunch.

The Acting Chair: Before we hear from the next speaker, I would like to inform delegations that the interpreters have kindly agreed to stay with us until 1.10 p.m., so interpretation will be available to us until then.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): During the explanations of vote today, the representative of the United States spoke on behalf of a group of States to explain their vote. She spoke of compliance with international norms, the principles of humanity and conventions. In that regard, I would like to ask the Committee a question. Which of those States on whose behalf the representative of the United States spoke are complying with disarmament conventions, international law or the Charter of the United Nations? Representatives of several countries spoke in explanation of vote, and some of those countries have directly provided armed terrorist groups in Syria with toxic chemical substances. Some of them have even provided those groups with chemical weapons that are ready to be used.

I would like to cite a source that I could not a couple of days ago owing to language issues. It is a testimony by Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, who was a senior aide to former United States Secretary of State Colin Powell. He spoke to the Real News Network on 11 September about United States plans for acts of aggression against Syria and its search for pretexts for such acts, seeking another target after Iraq in order to achieve its final objective of overturning the Iranian Government. Colonel Wilkerson affirmed that his country, along with Britain and France, has no proof of Syria's use of chemical weapons in the past. United States intelligence officials illegally present in Syria have found no evidence that improves the credibility of such accusations. On the contrary, the evidence points

to the fact that it is terrorist groups that are carrying out chemical-weapon attacks. What we have are accounts provided by senior officials in the United States Administration who have a great deal of information that regular officials are not privy to.

Some representatives, and the representative of France in particular, have attempted to analyse the illegal June decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which was adopted by using terror tactics and threatening OPCW member States. Several countries pressured other States to adopt the decision, but they are afraid to convene a review conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention because they have a great deal to hide. The incident in Salisbury unmasked several countries, revealing chemical-weapon programmes that they had not declared to the OPCW, which is a breach of their obligations under the Convention. Many Western States that should have declared to the OPCW their chemical-weapon programmes and the fact that they had secret programmes for developing chemical agents and substances did not do so. They said nothing, which is a clear breach of their obligations.

The decision adopted in The Hague is illegitimate, as it seeks to change the Convention by granting it prerogatives that do not belong to it. I would like to challenge delegations on the following point, which is that there is no provision in the Convention that grants the OPCW a mandate for criminal investigations. The June decision therefore runs counter to the Convention's provisions. The countries that have been perpetrating the aggression against Syria have done everything they can to find pretexts for it. But we are here to say that those countries are against Syria. That has been clear and undeniable since 2011. They have sought to send, and at times have even succeeded in sending their terrorist pawns — from the four corners of the world and more than 100 States — to Syria and providing training for them. Even worse, those terrorists have been trained to mix and use chemical agents. They do not want to stay in Syria. We have already warned the world that they will go to other countries or, in all likelihood, return to their countries of origin. I would therefore like to congratulate those countries that gave assistance to terrorists and are now having to deal with them as they return home. Those terrorists have state-of-the-art military knowledge, including of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons.

The States that have financed and sponsored terrorists in Syria will never be winners in my country. They have used every possible means and they have failed. We have a long road ahead, but we want to once again warn the world about the terrorists who are returning home. They will be against the regimes that have used terrorists and sent them to Syria. They will return home and unfortunately people will suffer, thanks to the narrow, short-sighted perspectives of certain Western countries, particularly the United States, French and British regimes.

Mr. Yu Peng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): With regard to the statement made by the representative of the United States of America and its unfounded charges against China, I would like to make the following points.

We live in a global information age, and the world has become a global village. We are facing many non-traditional challenges and threats, such as climate change, pandemics and terrorism. Cyberspace and outer space, arenas that should be used for peaceful purposes, face threats of war, weaponization and militarization. All of humankind is dealing with the same challenges. The use of language such as a “community of shared future for humankind” is simply an objective description of the world in which we live, the problems we face on the planet and in human society and the future we aspire to. We introduced that wording with regard to outer space (draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.51) because it is very pertinent and reflects the fact that countries want to be able to use outer space for peaceful purposes. It has nothing to do with our domestic politics. Of course, countries that are eager to deploy weapons in outer space do not want to understand that other countries have well-intentioned desires and aspirations. If we do not describe the global domain in which we live as a community of shared future for humankind,

(*spoke in English*)

should we describe it as a community dominated by one super-Power?

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank our United States colleagues for a frank conversation and for the many right and useful principles that were expressed in their right of reply. The problem lies elsewhere. The fact is that we have utterly different attitudes. The Russian Federation and the vast majority of States around the globe are in favour of equal and mutually beneficial relations in the world and believe they should be based on international

law. Unfortunately, our United States partners have a different attitude. As practice has shown, the United States is no longer guided by international law. It has simply bypassed it. If we take a close look at its official statements, it is now guided by certain norms, while not mentioning international law. The most important thing for the United States is achieving its national interests, which is generally a commendable attitude. No doubt every State seeks to realize its national interests, but every State must operate on the understanding that it is in an interdependent and very fragile international arena, and that acting like a bull in a china shop is completely unacceptable.

It is cynical in the highest degree for the United States to say that it is working for international security. That was pushed aside a long time ago. Let us look at the facts. None of this is new. In 2001, the United States tossed one of the foundations of strategic stability, the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, into the dustbin of history. At that time it also decided to pull out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. That decision is not something recent. The decision was made back then. The United States decided that it did not need the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and recently announced that officially. The United States is undermining what is essentially the only remaining treaty in the area of strategic offensive weapons, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. It did not comply with its obligations in that regard by February. The Russian Federation was not able to confirm that.

What we are seeing is the complete destruction of the entire arms-control machinery, all of it happening because the United States claims that it wants to make it more effective. But effective for whom? For itself, so that it can control everyone, all over the world? Probably. But is that possible in our contemporary multipolar world? Of course not. We are approaching a point where we will encounter very, very big problems. That is being done by breaking down the current system without proposing anything to replace it.

Let us take the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which we have only just been discussing. Consider the level of criticism there was regarding the simple issue of no first placement of weapons in outer space. Why? Because the proposed mechanism is truly effective and the only one that could at least do something to ensure that the United States did not place weapons in outer space. While there is much that a document that is not legally binding does not and cannot provide for, it cannot provide for everything. It is a very difficult process and, needless to say, we urge our United States colleagues to engage in serious joint efforts.

The Acting Chair: We have exhausted the time available to us today. The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow at 10 a.m. sharp in this conference room. The Committee will take up the remaining explanations of vote under cluster 3, to be followed by action on the draft resolutions and decisions under cluster 4.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.