



General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

First Committee

3rd meeting

Thursday, 10 October 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia (Plurinational State of))

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Introductory statements

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to welcome the presence among us of Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the General Assembly, and Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

In accordance with its programme of work and timetable, the First Committee will begin its general debate today on all disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to it. Before we proceed, I would like to make a brief statement in my capacity as Chair of the First Committee at this session.

We are currently facing a particularly challenging time in the areas of disarmament and international security. We are living in a period of growing uncertainty and instability in the realm of global security. As my President, Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, pointed out in his speech to the General Assembly last month (see A/74/PV.3), we are seeing an intensifying arms race and increases in military spending, technologies used for killing, and unscrupulous arms trading. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimates that global military spending amounted to \$1.8 trillion in 2018, which was 2.6 per cent higher than in 2017 and 5.4 per cent higher than in 2009. Total spending grew for the second year running. The volume of international transfers of major weapons has grown by 7.8 per cent in the past five years. The high incidence of armed conflicts all over the globe continues, while geographic tensions persist or have worsened in various

parts of the world. Meanwhile, as our fears about global insecurity have grown, so have our worries about the validity and reliability of the global arms-control architecture. The past few years have witnessed a continuing erosion of disarmament treaties and arms-control agreements. Concerns about the future of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are clearly growing.

That uncertainty and global instability are also undermining dialogue on multilateral disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament has been deadlocked for more than two decades and the Disarmament Commission was unable to conduct substantive work this year. That makes our work in the First Committee even more relevant and important. In his address to the General Assembly last month (see A/74/PV.3), Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized the vital importance of putting people at the centre of our work, noting that the Charter of the United Nations sends a clear message to us all — that we must put people first — and referring to the first words of the Charter, “We the peoples”. As the First Committee begins its work, I want to echo the Secretary-General by underlining the importance of putting people at the centre of our work. When we are negotiating the texts of resolutions and decisions, I hope that we will take into account what they will mean for people and how they will address people’s concerns about dangers and threats to international peace and security.

I believe it is our responsibility to use this session to promote and strengthen multilateral efforts aimed at reducing and eliminating dangers and threats to peace

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

19-30387 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



and security. As representatives of our Governments, we all have a responsibility to protect our national interests. However, in this interconnected world we can maintain global security only through joint action. I therefore believe it is essential to ensure that the work of the Committee is carried out under equal conditions, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations, allowing the 193 delegations equal participation. We must all rise to the occasion and fulfil our responsibility to safeguard international peace and security.

Once again, I would like to extend an especially warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the General Assembly, who is here today to share his vision for the Assembly at its current session with us. We are very pleased to have him here, and I now invite him to address the Committee.

Mr. Muhammad-Bande (President of the General Assembly): It is an honour to address the First Committee at the beginning of its general debate. I congratulate you on your election, Mr. Chair, as well as the Bureau members.

The United Nations came into existence when world leaders chose hope over cynicism, empathy over indifference and partnership over distrust. The primary mandate of the United Nations — ensuring peace and security for the people we serve — rests with the First Committee. In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, we are affected by complex threats to international security related to nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons and outer space, among other things. We must act collectively to counter those persistent challenges. Disarmament and international security underpin the priorities of the seventy-fourth session, which are poverty eradication and efforts aimed at achieving zero hunger, quality education, climate action and inclusion. We cannot make progress in those areas, or on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its entirety, if we live in an insecure world. At the same time, poverty, inadequate education, climate change and inequalities fuel unrest and instability. Peace, security, equality and development for all are therefore connected.

With regard to the grave international security threats that we are facing, it is imperative that we work hard to achieve consensus and ensure that the disarmament machinery works effectively to keep the world safe. Almost three quarters of a century after the

creation of the United Nations, the nuclear threat still exists. We must guard against the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons and a weakening of the arms-control regime.

We commend the States Members of the United Nations that have ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and urge those that have not done so to join that important action. Next year we will be holding the new iteration of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which gives us an opportunity to recommit to efforts towards non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. No one can win a nuclear war. We know that any use of nuclear weapons would be a humanitarian and ecological catastrophe. Nuclear disarmament must be our top priority. We the peoples are entrusting the Committee with the safety of communities and life everywhere.

As we prepare for the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, I urge the Committee to be cognizant that our work should address all aspects of conflict prevention. All our deliberations at the United Nations must be representative of the people we serve, and none more so than discussions of peace and security. We also need to know the differential impact on women during and after conflict. When I set out inclusion as a priority for this session, I did so not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because we will not achieve any of our goals if we exclude half of the population. I urge the Committee to ensure the full and equal participation and leadership of women throughout its work. All peace and security efforts must be undertaken with a gender perspective.

I am an ardent believer in the effectiveness of pursuing a wide range of issues in the First Committee. The Secretary-General's disarmament agenda constitutes a significant effort to put disarmament and international security at the forefront of multilateral discourse. Promoting peace and security through conflict prevention is a priority during the seventy-fourth session. One element of that is mitigating the risks posed by rapidly developing new technologies. The General Assembly has two processes that facilitate discussion on developments in the field of information and communications in the context of

international security — the Open-ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security. “Do no harm” should be the first and foremost principle governing cyberspace. To make that a reality, Member States and stakeholders in the digital world should take reasonable steps to further exchange information and collaborate to promote inclusion and reduce inequalities. I trust that our shared responsibility will guide a spirit of collective engagement in the Committee’s work on this critical area.

In the face of these challenges, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to the ideals of the United Nations. Now more than ever we must recommit to multilateralism and work together to deliver on agreements that will safeguard our world. As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, we must emulate the courage, generosity and commitment of the founders of our Organization. Let us also be defined by our actions. I thank Committee members in advance for their willingness to work together constructively on the key issues before it. I look forward to hearing from them throughout its crucial deliberations, and I wish everyone all the best.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Committee, I thank the President of the General Assembly for his enlightening words and his message, which resonates with us all. I understand that owing to another engagement he has to leave at this time. I thank him once again for joining us today, and we look forward to our continuing collaboration with him during the current session.

I now have the pleasure of inviting Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to make a statement.

Mrs. Nakamitsu (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): I am once again grateful for this opportunity to address the members of the First Committee as they commence their general debate. At the outset, I would like to personally congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the Committee’s work. I also want to express my appreciation to the other members of the Bureau, and my personal gratitude to Ambassador Ion Jinga of Romania for his skilful steering of the proceedings of the Committee at its

seventy-third session, as well as to the other members of the Bureau during the previous session.

In view of how this session began, I feel compelled to recall a remark made by the Secretary-General at the opening of the General Assembly’s seventy-fourth session last month (see A/74/PV.3). He highlighted the profound expectations that people have for our Organization and the unique and indispensable forum that the General Assembly in particular represents. Collectively we owe it to the people of this world to tackle the pressing issues of our time in a spirit of cooperation and compromise. I ask all Committee members to begin in full on the substantive work of their mandate, which is disarmament and international security. In his address to the Assembly at the beginning of its general debate, the Secretary-General expressed his concern about the global landscape, where, in his words, “we see conflicts persisting, terrorism spreading and the risk of a new arms race growing” (A/74/PV.3, p. 2). I echo the Secretary-General’s concern that we as leaders can deliver for “we the peoples”, and his concerns about the present state of affairs. Military spending, arms transfers and the incidence of armed conflict worldwide all remain high. Moreover, global anxiety about international security continues to grow as the international security and arms-control architecture shows signs of unravelling.

It was precisely in response last year to the deteriorating international security environment and the erosion of international arms control that the Secretary-General launched his Agenda for Disarmament, Securing our Common Future. His aim with the Agenda is to place disarmament at the centre of global efforts to maintain and promote international peace and security. I would like to express my appreciation for the 19 States and one regional organization that have so far demonstrated their commitment to the Agenda as champions or supporters. Since we launched the implementation plan in October of last year, we have seen marked progress on more than two thirds of its actions. But more remains to be done by all stakeholders. In one of the Agenda’s key sections, “Disarmament to Save Humanity”, the Secretary-General highlights the existential threat that nuclear weapons pose to humankind. He stresses that that threat must motivate us to accomplish new and decisive action leading to the total elimination of such weapons. However, a toxic combination of dangerous rhetoric, qualitative weapon development, eroding relations between nuclear-

armed States and the progressive unwinding of former arms-control agreements means that as the Secretary-General said to the General Assembly, the perils posed by nuclear weapons are not merely hypothetical or in some far-off future. They are present and real. For that reason, the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the highest disarmament priority of the United Nations.

The member States of the Committee have a clear choice before them. They can either work together to prevent the continued erosion of the disarmament and arms-control regime or they can allow our collective security to be further imperilled by those weapons, which pose an existential threat. I am hopeful that they will encourage the parties to the New START Treaty to extend that important constraint on strategic nuclear weapons as a prelude to new negotiations on further reductions. I call on States to redouble their efforts to bring about the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

I welcome the commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons shown by the States that support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in a demonstration of the value that many States continue to place on multilateral approaches. But we cannot achieve nuclear disarmament without engaging with nuclear-armed States. All States should work together to reduce the dangers posed by nuclear weapons. We should look to find common ground on issues ranging from how to address new vulnerabilities posed by emerging technologies to building our shared technical capacity to verify nuclear disarmament. That work will be integral to setting the stage for a successful Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) next year and ensuring that the Treaty retains its place as the load-bearing pillar of our disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

There are many regional dimensions to the work of the First Committee and my Office remains fully engaged at the regional level. I share the Secretary-General's hope that the progress on nuclear non-proliferation represented by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action can be preserved. The first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction will take place in New York next month. A successful conference initiating a process for reaching this long-sought-after goal should have a positive impact on the

2020 NPT Review Conference and contribute to peace and security efforts in the Middle East. The situation on the Korean peninsula remains uncertain. The key parties must now capitalize on the diplomatic opening to resolve outstanding issues.

It is not just nuclear weapons that threaten our security. Any use of chemical weapons is abhorrent and constitutes a serious violation of international law. States must work together to bring accountability to those who dare to use such inhumane and illegal weapons. I reiterate the Secretary-General's full confidence in the professionalism, objectivity and impartiality of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

When the Secretary-General first came up with the idea for his Disarmament Agenda, one of his primary concerns was about reducing the harm that armed conflict does to civilians today. That is why it has a strong focus on disarmament that saves lives, another of its key areas. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 50 million people are currently affected by armed conflict. Last month, the Secretary-General and the President of the ICRC released a joint appeal on the need to protect civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We are encouraged by the growing attention to this issue. I had the privilege to represent the Secretary-General at the recent Vienna Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare. We welcome States' determination to develop a political declaration on this subject and hope that it will ultimately lead to the establishment of practical measures, including appropriate limitations, common standards and operational policies that are designed to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

The seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will be held in June next year, providing States with an important opportunity to engage constructively with the recommendations of the Secretary-General's latest report on the topic (A/71/438), specifically focusing on national target-setting and addressing various recent technological developments. I am pleased to report that my office, together with partners in the Peacebuilding Support Office and United Nations Development Programme, is finalizing plans for establishing a saving-lives entity that will follow a programmatic

and holistic approach in addressing armed violence and illicit small-arms flows at the country level. I call on donor States to support this novel approach and thank those that have already provided contributions. In the area of conventional ammunition, there is a clear opportunity for progress with the convening of a group of governmental experts in 2020. This will be an important moment for in-depth consideration of the range of safety and security challenges arising from conventional ammunition.

Emerging technologies, ranging from information and communications technologies and artificial intelligence to unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), new space technologies and hypersonic weapons, are evolving faster than our normative, legal and regulatory structures can keep up with. Without the necessary caution, transparency and foresight, those innovations may have significant negative consequences for our collective security. For that reason, the Secretary-General designated the third pillar of his Agenda for Disarmament as disarmament for future generations, in order to address the new and emerging challenges posed by the weaponization of technology, many of whose effects are already being felt. For example, cyberattacks are rapidly increasing in number and severity. Member States have established two processes to tackle the issue, an Open-ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security. Both have unique features. The Working Group will hold informal multi-stakeholder discussions, the first of their kind under United Nations auspices, and the latter is conducting regional consultations to take advantage of innovations happening in regional bodies.

Armed unmanned aerial vehicles, better known as drones, pose unique challenges, due to the low barriers to their acquisition and their propensity to be used for attacks with low levels of perceived risk. The attacks on Saudi Arabia last month, which the Secretary-General has condemned, remind us of the need to focus on the issue from an arms-control perspective. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, together with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, has suggested measures to increase the transparency, accountability and oversight of UAVs, which remain important and timely objectives in addressing the overlapping humanitarian and human rights challenges involved.

Commensurate with the increasing importance of outer space, States continue to make progress in developing norms to ensure that it does not become a destabilizing arena for warfare. I look forward to the forthcoming joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees as an opportunity to further share experience among the expert communities that focus on the security and stability of outer-space activities. While the inability of the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space to agree on a substantive outcome was disappointing, it nonetheless represented the most in-depth and substantive discussion since the item was first introduced in the Conference on Disarmament in 1985. I encourage all States to build on those discussions and deepen their engagement on this issue.

As States grapple with how to address the peace and security implications of artificial intelligence, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate the Secretary-General's strong position on the issue. Machines with the power and discretion to take lives without human involvement are politically unacceptable, morally repugnant and should be prohibited by international law. The guiding principles affirmed by the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems are a step forward, but more work remains to be done to ensure that humans remain in control over the use of force at all times. Those issues will only grow in importance for the work of the Committee. If we are to reap the benefits of technology and mitigate the concerns it raises, it will be essential to partner with its progenitors, the private sector and research communities. Likewise, diversifying the voices heard in disarmament discussions will help to revitalize them. In his Agenda for Disarmament, the Secretary-General prioritized gender parity as a moral duty and an operational necessity.

Despite some progress, the underrepresentation of women and women leaders in disarmament forums and decision-making remains a significant impediment to reaching effective solutions. That is one reason why I have urged all Member States to ensure gender balance in their nominations for groups of governmental experts and other bodies. While I am heartened by the ever-increasing prominence of gender issues in this body, I continue to believe firmly that more can and must be done by all of us to call attention to and address the

gendered impact of weapons and to promote women's full and equal participation in the field of disarmament. I also hope that more delegations will apply a gender lens to their work and take a proactive stance in coordinating gender-related language across First Committee resolutions this year.

The disarmament machinery works as a barometer of international security. This year, for the first time since 2005, the Disarmament Commission was unable to hold its substantive session. It is no secret in the Committee that our efforts to commence negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament have been stumbling for more than two decades. It is therefore more urgent and important than ever for the First Committee to achieve truly meaningful outcomes this year. My colleagues and I look forward to providing whatever assistance may be required to ensure that the Committee's work will be productive and fruitful. I wish everyone a successful session.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the High Representative for her statement, as well as her continued support for the work of the Committee. She has broached a series of challenges not just for the global agenda but also for the work of the Committee in particular.

Before opening the floor for statements in the general debate, I would like to remind delegations that I count on their cooperation to limit statements to eight minutes when speaking in a national capacity and 13 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. To assist speakers in that regard, and with members' understanding, we will use a timing mechanism whereby the red light on the speaker's microphone will begin to blink when the time limit has been reached. As necessary, I will remind speakers to conclude their statements in our collective interest. As was mentioned during our organizational meeting last Thursday (see A/C.1/74/PV.1), I encourage delegations with longer statements to deliver a summarized version and to provide their full statement to be posted on the PaperSmart web portal. I also encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed to allow for adequate interpretation.

I also want to remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will be closed tomorrow, Friday, 11 October, at 6 p.m. All delegations intending to take the floor during the general debate that have not yet inscribed their names on the list are

therefore encouraged to do so before the deadline. Delegations are further reminded that the Department of Global Communications will issue press releases with daily coverage of our proceedings in English and French that will be posted on the United Nations website a few hours after each meeting.

We will now hear from our first speaker in the general debate. In accordance with the established practice, we will begin with group statements.

Agenda items 89 to 105

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election, along with the other Bureau members. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) would like to assure you of its full cooperation. In the interests of saving time, I will read the NAM position on selected issues. A document containing all NAM positions can be found on the PaperSmart portal.

NAM is concerned about the increase in global military expenditures, whose reduction would direct more resources to sustainable development. NAM remains concerned about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the lack of progress shown by nuclear-weapon States in eliminating their nuclear weapons. We are concerned about the plans by nuclear-weapon States to modernize their nuclear arsenals, including with new delivery vehicles, as provided for in some of their military doctrines, including the latest United States Nuclear Posture Review, which sets out rationales for the use of such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. NAM is deeply concerned about the abrogation of some previously agreed arms-control and disarmament agreements.

Reaffirming NAM's principled positions on nuclear disarmament, which remains the agreed highest disarmament priority for the United Nations, we strongly call on the nuclear-weapon States to comply with their legal obligations and undertakings as soon as possible and to totally eliminate their nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. Any modernization or extension of their nuclear weapons-related facilities should also cease immediately. Pending the achievement of total elimination, the conclusion of a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding

instrument for effectively assuring all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a high priority.

A United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions, should be convened. Noting the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, NAM hopes that when it enters into force it will contribute to furthering the global objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The dangers of nuclear weaponization are being exacerbated by the failure to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in the Middle East. It is disappointing that due to the opposition of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Conference could not achieve a consensus on a process to establish such a zone. The failure to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East undermines the NPT's credibility, the balance among its three pillars and the reality that its extension is inextricably tied to the 1995 resolution's implementation. Welcoming the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, the first session of which will be held in November under Jordan's chairmanship, NAM calls on all the States of the region to participate actively in the Conference, negotiate in good faith and conclude a legally binding treaty on the zone.

Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament, and both are mutually reinforcing and essential. NAM emphasizes that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Non-proliferation policies should not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire, have access to, import or export nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. Furthermore, in the context of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), any action by the Security Council should not undermine the Charter of the United Nations, existing WMD multilateral treaties or international organizations established in that regard, including the General Assembly, where all Member States' views should be taken into account. NAM would like to recall the successful conclusion of nuclear negotiations between Iran and the European

Union 3+3, which resulted in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in July 2015, endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 2231 (2015) and calls for its full implementation by all participants.

The development and deployment of anti-ballistic-missile defence systems and the threat of weaponization of outer space have also aggravated threats to international security, with the abrogation of the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missiles Systems bringing new challenges. NAM remains seriously concerned about the negative security consequences of strategic missile defence systems, which can trigger arms races and lead to the further development of advanced missile systems and more nuclear weapons.

NAM rejects the United States' declaration that space can be an arena for fighting wars or the next battlefield. We welcome the relevant General Assembly resolutions and call for the commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, among other things. Taking note of the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer-space objects, which is a good basis for discussion, NAM calls for negotiations aimed at adopting a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

NAM strongly rejects the illegal use of new information and communications technologies (ICTs) to the detriment of its member States. Cyberspace should enable the potential of ICTs to be fully realized. We welcome the convening of an Open-ended Working Group, acting on a consensus basis, to continue to prioritize the further development of rules, norms and principles on the responsible behaviour of States and ways to implement them. We emphasize the importance of ensuring that the Open-ended Working Group continues studying the possibility of regular institutional dialogue and the application of international law to the use of ICTs by States, as well as confidence-building measures and capacity-building. NAM notes the conclusions of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security in its reports of 2013 (see A/68/98) and 2015 (see A/70/174) that international law generally, and the United Nations Charter in particular,

is applicable and essential to maintaining peace and stability and promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment.

There is an urgent need to pursue a legally binding instrument on lethal autonomous weapon systems. The issues surrounding lethal autonomous weapon systems should be deliberated thoroughly in conformity with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. NAM States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons welcome the consensus adoption of this year's report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (CCW/GGE.1/2019/CRP.1/Rev.2).

NAM is concerned about unilateral coercive measures that impinge on the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import or retain conventional arms. No undue restrictions should be imposed in that regard.

Finally, NAM is seriously concerned about the erosion of multilateralism in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. NAM is firm in its belief that with political courage, and by working together cooperatively on the basis of international law and the Charter, the First Committee can make a tangible contribution to building a more secure and peaceful world.

Mr. Kyaw Moe Tun (Myanmar): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Myanmar. ASEAN aligns itself with the statement just made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

ASEAN congratulates you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. We are confident in your ability to lead us to the best possible outcome, and we assure you of our support in advancing the Committee's important work. We would also like to express our appreciation to Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for their leadership in advancing the United Nations disarmament agenda.

We are gathered here once again to renew and reaffirm our commitment to upholding the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. ASEAN supports collective measures to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. ASEAN States members' mutual cooperation and engagement with one another on disarmament and non-proliferation contribute to achieving our goal of sustaining and maintaining a peaceful and prosperous world, and we continue to support the comprehensive Agenda for Disarmament that Secretary-General António Guterres launched in May 2018. ASEAN remains concerned about the threat to humankind that the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use pose. We therefore strongly support initiatives and discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, since they can give us a comprehensive understanding of the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons on both humankind and the environment.

ASEAN continues to recognize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. We call on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of their existing obligations, particularly those under article VI of the Treaty. ASEAN commends Malaysia, one of its member States, for its tireless and consistent efforts in chairing the third NPT Preparatory Committee in New York this year in trying circumstances. The Preparatory Committee Chair submitted recommendations that despite a lack of consensus sent the positive message that we are broadly committed to implementing our obligations across the three pillars of the NPT. ASEAN calls on all parties, including nuclear-weapon States, to demonstrate good faith and political will, promote mutual understanding and enhance trustworthy cooperation to enable the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to produce tangible results aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament.

ASEAN reiterates its commitment to preserving its region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in ASEAN's Charter and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. We also reaffirm the importance of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones to the existing global non-proliferation regime and continue to support

the ongoing efforts to establish such zones, especially in the Middle East.

ASEAN recognizes that the adoption on 7 July 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, along with the Bangkok Treaty and other nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, constitutes a vital step towards global nuclear disarmament and complements the existing non-proliferation and global nuclear-weapon-related instruments. We believe that the Treaty can also make a significant contribution to the shared goal of making our region and the world free of nuclear weapons. In that regard, the signing of the Treaty by Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, and its ratification by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Vietnam, represent significant steps towards this historic legal instrument's speedy entry into force.

ASEAN would also like to highlight the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Thailand's ratification of the CTBT on 25 September last year means that every member of ASEAN is now a ratifying party to the CTBT. ASEAN joins others in urging the annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible in order to realize its entry into force, as most recently reiterated in the final declaration of the Article XIV Conference on 25 September.

ASEAN urges all the parties concerned to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working for the realization of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration, the Pyongyang Declaration and the joint statement by the leaders of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. ASEAN reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of all the relevant Security Council resolutions and notes the international efforts aimed at bringing about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

ASEAN reiterates that every State has the right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, particularly for economic and social development. In that regard, we will strengthen our cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on issues related to nuclear safety, security and safeguards, including capacity-building. In September ASEAN signed

practical arrangements with the IAEA designed to promote cooperation in nuclear science and technology applications and on nuclear safety, security and safeguards. In Krabi, Thailand, in July, we also convened the sixth annual meeting of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy and adopted a five-year work plan for the Network from 2019 to 2023.

ASEAN also underlines the importance of the full and effective implementation of non-proliferation regimes, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). It is important that Member States cooperate closely, especially on intelligence-sharing, capacity-building and assistance. Furthermore, industry, academia and civil society have an important contribution to make in realizing an effective non-proliferation regime.

ASEAN recognizes the threat and danger of the existence and use of chemical, biological and radiological weapons and calls for universal adherence to the applicable international legal instruments prohibiting such weapons. We particularly welcome the progress made in eliminating chemical-weapon stockpiles since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention 20 years ago, in 1997. ASEAN also takes note of the discussions at the seventeenth meeting of the States parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and looks forward to its fourth Review Conference, which will be held in Norway at the end of next month. ASEAN is contributing to addressing the humanitarian aspect of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war through the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre, headquartered in Phnom Penh.

ASEAN recognizes the growing sophistication and transboundary nature of cyberthreats and underlines the importance of addressing cybersecurity challenges in a holistic manner in order to ensure an open, secure, stable, accessible and resilient cyberspace that can support the digital economy. We also stress the need to preserve and strengthen the nature, role and purpose of the various forums of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We acknowledge the important role of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and reiterate our call to the CD to agree by consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without any further delay. ASEAN commends this year's Presidents of the CD, including Viet Nam, for their sincere efforts to make progress.

The road leading to disarmament and a secure and peaceful world is a long and arduous one. ASEAN maintains the view that we must abide by our commitments and redouble our efforts to make tangible progress in disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. We firmly believe that the only way to address heightened tensions and disagreements is through constructive political dialogue, negotiations and engagement, and we are ready to interact closely with other delegations and colleagues in our deliberations.

Ms. Sweeb (Suriname): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on all disarmament and international security agenda items. We congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. Please be assured of CARICOM's full support. We would also like to express our gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Ion Jinga of Romania for his stewardship as Chair of the First Committee at its seventy-third session.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

CARICOM would like to underline its unwavering support for the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and its priority areas of disarmament to save humankind, to save lives and for future generations. We also fully endorse the Secretary-General's observation that disarmament supports sustainable development and we maintain our appreciation for the Agenda for Disarmament in that regard as it aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We also reiterate the importance that our region attaches to the 2030 Agenda and the contribution that the Committee can make, not only to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 but also to the attainment of SDG target 5.2, on the elimination of violence against women and girls.

A few days ago, Heads of State and Government delivered sobering messages on the state of affairs in the global community. The singular message that resonated clearly was that a challenging road lies ahead unless we collectively do what is required to alter the world's current trajectory, including in the areas of disarmament and international security. CARICOM continues to note with concern the escalation of strife and conflict among States, the ever-increasing influence of non-State actors, the scale and reach of international terrorism

and new proliferation threats. To that end, we maintain that in order to successfully confront those challenges, we must emphasize multilateral response strategies that will transform our current global situation into one that benefits all humankind.

CARICOM has noted with concern that criminal activity has expanded from random acts of criminality to criminal networks, which carry out their activities in an organized, highly sophisticated and technological global environment. The prevalence and pervasiveness of gun-related violence and gun-related fatalities due to proliferating illegal arms and ammunition, as well as illicit drugs, money-laundering, cybercrime and other dimensions of transboundary criminal activities, continue to pose the most immediate and significant threats to the security of our region. Those compounded challenges represent a threat to our socioeconomic well-being, the rule of law and our peace and security. To confront those challenges, the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, CARICOM IMPACS, continues to address the multidimensional nature of crime and security, guided by CARICOM's crime and security strategy. CARICOM IMPACS has been working on asset recovery in the areas of asset tracing, asset management and prosecuting asset forfeiture cases, together with capacity-building at the level of the judiciary, prosecutors and detectives. CARICOM IMPACS has also embarked on a number of initiatives and partnerships to track the proceeds of crime.

Illegal firearms feature in many violent crimes and homicides committed in our member States. The prevalence of illegal firearms accounts for significant losses of life and has negative effects on countries' productivity and economies. To that end, CARICOM has committed to the continued strengthening of regional approaches aimed at addressing the multidimensional nature of crime and security, as we are keenly aware that the Caribbean community's sustainable development depends on the safety and security of its citizens. CARICOM has found non-binding legal agreements to be of tremendous assistance in our attempts to address the illicit arms trade in our region. We therefore reiterate how important we consider the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument as critical components in mobilizing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

While we strive for consensus during negotiations on substantive issues related to the Programme of Action, we welcomed the outcome document of last year's Review Conference (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) and look forward to the convening in 2020 of the next Biennial Meeting of States. We are also pleased that the CARICOM Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons seeks to implement all necessary actions at the national and regional levels to fully combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, in alignment with international instruments. They include the development and implementation of national action plans, capacity-building within national and regional security entities and the implementation and enforcement of policies and legislation.

We in CARICOM continue to believe fervently that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) can contribute significantly to freeing many of our citizens and countless people around the world from the deadly tyranny associated with the pervasiveness of unregulated small arms and light weapons. As the life of the ATT progresses beyond the recently concluded fifth Conference of its States parties, CARICOM would like to underline that for the landmark Treaty to be a success, it must be implemented in good faith by all States parties, including the major manufacturers, exporters and importers of conventional weapons. We therefore welcome Argentina's presidency of the sixth Conference.

CARICOM would like to reiterate its gratitude for the continued support it receives from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has supported and assisted member States in capacity-building measures and technical-assistance programmes. We look forward to continued collaboration in that respect.

Turning to the issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, CARICOM noted with concern the Secretary-General's recent observation that the painstakingly constructed arms-control regime is fraying. We maintain that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humankind and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. Lamentably, in recent times we have witnessed the removal of restraints on nuclear weapons at both the bilateral and multilateral levels. We are all

too aware that an unchecked nuclear-arms race could potentially put the world on a path with catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Since that is a course that we must strive to avoid, CARICOM is proud to be part of the first densely populated region in the world to declare itself a nuclear-weapon-free zone, pursuant to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We agree that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is central to the maintenance of international peace and security. The NPT has successfully limited the number of States that possess nuclear weapons. Its safeguards regime provides assurance of the exclusively peaceful nature of civil-nuclear programmes. It is also essential to preserving an environment conducive to disarmament. In that regard, we encourage all States, including non-parties, to adhere to the non-proliferation and disarmament obligations and commitments under the NPT. In that connection, CARICOM assures States parties of its intention to be a constructive participant in the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

The Caribbean Community participated in the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, and welcomed the adoption in 2017 of the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. CARICOM member States joined like-minded countries in negotiating the Treaty, and we are pleased that there are already 79 signatory States and 32 States parties to the Treaty. CARICOM is proud to state that Guyana, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago have already ratified the Treaty, and that Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Kitts and Nevis are signatories. More CARICOM countries are expected to do the same in short order as we seek to contribute to the Treaty's early entry into force and ultimately to universal adherence to it.

There can be no question that regional progress in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is inextricably linked to our economic viability, and that accounts for CARICOM's long-standing commitment to working in a multilateral environment to address threats. We have underscored our view of the threats that are posed by weapons of mass destruction through our ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,

the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. CARICOM has benefited from the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency in strengthening its capacity through the sharing of best practices and technology transfers and that of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in providing specialized training in emergency response to the deliberate or accidental use of chemical agents.

There has been significant growth in cybercrime in the Caribbean, activity that points to the existence of serious cybersecurity vulnerabilities in the protection frameworks for persons, possessions and privacy and which extend more generally to information and critical national infrastructures. Cybercrime could have a devastating impact on national security and severely hamper the social and economic development of CARICOM States members if not addressed urgently. In the Caribbean Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019, cybercrime is listed as an obstacle and a threat to social and sustained economic development in CARICOM. In that connection, the CARICOM cybersecurity and cybercrime action plan, developed in 2016, seeks to address cybersecurity vulnerabilities in each participating CARICOM country and to establish a practical, harmonized standard of practices, systems and expertise for cybersecurity to which each State can aspire in the short and medium term. It also seeks to build the capacity and infrastructure needed to enable the timely detection, investigation and prosecution of cybercrime and of possible linkages to other forms of criminal activity. We see strengthening cybersecurity as a strategy for achieving technological resilience but one that is also linked to strategies needed to achieve social resilience and citizens' security. We acknowledge that cyberthreats have been recognized as facilitators of every kind of crime, and all aspects of the region's capacity to address such crimes must therefore be developed quickly to keep up with the fast pace of technological change. We therefore welcome the continued capacity-building efforts and international cooperation and assistance in that regard.

CARICOM would like to acknowledge the important role of civil society in the field of disarmament and international security. We value our partnership with members of civil society and are committed to continuing our collaboration with them in order to advance the goal of disarmament and non-proliferation. We reaffirm our commitment to working with the international community in realizing to the fullest

extent one of the founding principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, that of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) — Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Egypt. At the outset, the NAC would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of this year's First Committee and to assure you of NAC's full cooperation and support with a view to a successful conclusion of our deliberations during the coming weeks.

As we have done for the past few years, the NAC will present a draft resolution to the Committee, which will be introduced during the thematic debate on the "Nuclear weapons" cluster.

As a cross-regional grouping, the NAC works actively for concrete progress on nuclear disarmament. Achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons remains the NAC's primary goal. For the past few years we have advocated for the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear-disarmament measures and the fulfilment of obligations and commitments within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Although some progress has been achieved in that time, it is far from sufficient, and we are deeply concerned about the fact that new international security challenges continue to be cited as justifications for the slow progress. For the NAC, the global security environment is not an excuse for inaction but rather reinforces the need for urgency. What we lack are not favourable conditions but political will and determination.

In 2017, we witnessed the successful conclusion of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. The adoption on 7 July 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was an expression of a desire for urgent action on the part of an overwhelming majority of General Assembly members. That urgency sprang from our increased knowledge of the growing risks of a nuclear detonation and its potentially catastrophic humanitarian consequences, including their strong gendered impact. Considering that any use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law and the fact that their

consequences cannot be contained within an individual country's borders, the continued reliance on them in security doctrines and concepts is indefensible and fosters proliferation.

Nuclear disarmament is a moral and ethical imperative as well as an international legal obligation. Regrettably, in spite of the growing international consensus on the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons, an estimated 15,000 nuclear devices still exist. Those weapons remain at the heart of the security doctrines of nuclear-weapon States and States that are allied with them. Far from strengthening international peace and security, this state of affairs weakens them, aggravating international tensions and conflict and jeopardizing the collective well-being of all States and peoples as well as the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Given that almost five decades have passed since the entry into force of the NPT, the status quo on nuclear disarmament is unacceptable. The NAC believes it is time for States to finally deliver on their commitments to the elimination of nuclear weapons, in line with their NPT obligations, and to safeguard future generations from the danger posed by nuclear weapons. That is the only way to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The NAC shares a firm commitment to the NPT, which is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is crucial to bear in mind that the NPT was adopted and indefinitely extended on the basis of a grand bargain. Nuclear-weapon States legally committed to pursuing and achieving nuclear disarmament, in return for which non-nuclear-weapon States legally committed to refraining from developing nuclear weapons. A presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons runs counter to the object and purpose of the NPT and threatens to erode its credibility and effectiveness.

The Action Plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference provided an important opportunity for putting the process aimed at achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world back on track. The nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their unequivocal undertaking at the 2000 Review Conference to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament and committed to accelerating progress in that regard. The 2010 Action Plan reaffirmed the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000, including the 13 practical steps for advancing the implementation of article VI of the NPT.

The NAC affirms the significant contribution that nuclear-weapon-free zones have made to nuclear-disarmament efforts and to achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, and reiterates in that regard the importance of implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East as soon as possible, as well as acknowledging decision 73/546, which instructs the Secretary-General to convene a conference to formulate a treaty on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region.

The New Agenda Coalition once again urges and expects the nuclear-weapon States to implement their nuclear-disarmament commitment, both qualitative and quantitative, in a manner that will enable NPT States parties to regularly monitor progress, including through their use of a standard detailed reporting format, which would enhance confidence and trust among not only among the nuclear-weapon States but also between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States.

The implementation of the NPT's article VI is a legal obligation binding on all States parties. It was on that basis that the NAC welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is an effective legal measure contributing to the implementation of article VI. Additional measures, however, are still needed to fully implement article VI. We must uphold and preserve the NPT, and the best way to protect it is to implement it. The 2020 NPT Review Conference presents an opportunity for States parties to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the Treaty's current status, the implementation of previous obligations and commitments within its framework and the challenges facing its full implementation.

It is now time for the international community to translate words into concrete action, backed by clear and agreed benchmarks and timelines. Bearing in mind the special responsibility that belongs to the nuclear-weapon States, the NAC believes that those States should not only implement their existing commitments but also strive to build further on them in order to accelerate their fulfilment of their obligations under the NPT.

Given that almost five decades have passed since the entry into force of the NPT, the status quo on nuclear disarmament continues to be unacceptable. NAC believes it is time for States to deliver on their

commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons in line with NPT obligations, in order to safeguard future generations from the danger arising from the existence of nuclear weapons. That is the only way to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and that aim must guide all future efforts. The New Agenda Coalition urges all States to seize this opportunity for the First Committee to advance nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Laouani (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to be able to heartily congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. We affirm our confidence in your ability to steer the successful work of the Committee and offer you the full support of the Group of Arab States. In that regard, I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and welcome the election of the delegation of our sister republic of Lebanon as a Vice-Chair.

The Arab Group aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group reaffirms its principled position on disarmament and international security and stresses that we can only ensure the establishment of peace, security and stability in the world if nuclear weapons are eliminated. It is therefore imperative to rid humankind of such weapons and direct the enormous human and material resources spent on them to development. The Arab Group also emphasizes that adhering to the multilateral framework under United Nations auspices and the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as agreed commitments based on it, is the only sustainable way to address disarmament and international security issues. The Arab Group reiterates its deep concern about the continued failure to achieve tangible progress on nuclear disarmament and the implementation of agreed commitments in that area, in addition to the failure to achieve the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nuclear States are clearly ignoring the time frames for the implementation of international commitments aimed at completely eliminating nuclear weapons.

The Arab Group reaffirms the important role of treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as a way of achieving international peace and security

and promoting global nuclear disarmament efforts, especially in the Middle East. We reiterate that Israel's ongoing refusal to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and subject its nuclear facilities to verification under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) constitutes a serious threat to international and regional peace and security as well as a violation of scores of relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991).

Almost 25 years have passed since the adoption at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of a resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The Arab Group therefore reaffirms its deep concern about the continued foot-dragging with regard to implementing that resolution. We would like to point out that the resolution remains an integral part of the indefinite extension of the Treaty in accordance with the 1995 Review Conference. We stress how important it is to undertake immediate steps to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. During this session the Arab Group will once again submit the Arab draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", and we look forward to seeing continued support for the draft resolution from all Member States, especially peace-loving States that are committed to upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations, without double standards. In that regard, we underline the importance of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be convened by the United Nations in November under the presidency of Jordan, in accordance with decision 73/546. We urge all parties to demonstrate goodwill in negotiating a binding treaty that can contribute to enhancing regional and international peace and security.

The Arab Group again calls for the implementation of commitments regarding universal accession to the NPT and emphasizes that the balance among the Treaty's three pillars should be respected, while addressing the increasing imbalance that has arisen due to the fact that some attribute too much importance to non-proliferation to the detriment of addressing disarmament. We also reaffirm the importance of enhancing the pillar on cooperation in the area of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. We support non-nuclear

States in exercising their inalienable right to use atomic energy peacefully and in fulfilling their obligations under the IAEA's comprehensive safeguard agreements. We once again lament the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to achieve a final document. The 2020 Review Conference must be successful and lead to clear outcomes.

The Arab Group believes that outer space must be free of any arms race or conflict and used only for peaceful purposes. So far, the relevant international conventions have played a positive role in promoting the peaceful use of outer space and organizing the activities undertaken there. However, the outstanding gap in that framework makes it crucial that we work quickly to establish a new, binding instrument preventing the placement of weapons in outer space, banning armed attacks and deliberate damage to objects in outer space and prohibiting certain States from starting an arms race by developing technologies and weapons to be placed in outer space or used against satellites and space objects, since the consequences for humankind and its vital infrastructure would be catastrophic if conflicts expanded into outer space. Outer space is our common heritage and should be safeguarded for the sake of future generations, and the placement of weapons there poses a serious threat to humankind and to sustaining international peace and security. The Arab Group welcomes the progress achieved in the substantive discussions of the Group of Governmental Experts on further effective measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in line with resolution 72/250, which should help to launch negotiations on an internationally binding instrument as soon as possible.

With regard to conventional weapons, the Arab Group stresses the extreme importance of activating the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, especially in order to address the dangerous issue of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists and illegal armed groups in increasing numbers. In that regard, we welcome the unanimous adoption of the final outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action, in 2018. The Group also rejects attempts to impose commitments through other controversial conventions adopted without international consensus. We reject any restrictions on the right of States to fulfil their needs for conventional weapons, which are contrary

to the Charter of the United Nations. We look forward to seeing concrete progress in the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in June 2020, on the issue of combating illegitimate international supplies of weapons to unauthorized recipients, in accordance with the outcome of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action.

Turning to cybersecurity, the Arab Group highlights the importance of promoting international cooperation through enhanced security for information and communications technology in order to protect States and strengthen their capacity to overcome subversive attacks. That has been reaffirmed by the various reports of successive Groups of Governmental Experts. The Arab Group is committed to the ongoing central role of the United Nations in developing a system of international standards for the security of information and communications technology and to continued cooperation with the United Nations in that regard. Such technology affects vital facilities in various States, but it is increasingly used subversively in ways that jeopardize international security. In that context the Group welcomes the meetings of the Open-ended Working Group established by resolution 73/27 and hopes that it will achieve substantive and robust recommendations on regulating the responsible conduct of States in that vital field.

In conclusion, while touching on its most important priorities among the items on the Committee's agenda, the Arab Group emphasizes its commitment to working with you, Sir, and all Member States to achieve the progress we desire during this session.

Mr. Jaime Calderón (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Taking into consideration the First Committee's time limit for statements in the general debate, I will read a shortened version of our statement, the full text of which will be made available on PaperSmart.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Central American Integration System (SICA): Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and my own country, El Salvador. We would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

We are honoured that a member of the Latin American and Caribbean region has been elected as Chair and is leading the work of the Committee. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. You may count on the support of all of our delegations in carrying out your duties, Mr. Chair.

The States members of SICA, which subscribe to the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, would like to reiterate their belief that international peace and security can be achieved by adhering to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and especially by refraining from resorting to the use of force or threats of force, or in any other manner incompatible with the objectives of the United Nations, to attack the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. We also believe it is important to use multidimensional approaches to strengthening democracy, institutions and full respect for all human rights. At the same time, we want to reiterate our long-standing commitment to general and complete disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which we believe are enormously relevant to the maintenance of international peace, security and stability.

Inspired by past achievements and as part of our thorough process of integration, our countries are continuing to work to achieve a new unique, comprehensive and permanent model of regional security, while also continuing to responsibly address public security challenges, where violence is strongly linked to the presence of illicit markets, which result from the various manifestations of transnational organized crime, such as the trafficking of arms, ammunition and their components. In recognition of the ongoing threat posed by illicit markets in conventional weapons and their parts and components and their excessive accumulation, as a manifestation of transnational organized crime, and the implications of the lack of control of the arms trade in various regions of the world, SICA member States will continue to focus on the prevention of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, incorporating the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument into our States' national legislations, and promoting the application of effective controls to reduce and eradicate the diversion of arms to non-State actors and unauthorized users,

which in most cases is strongly linked to transnational organized crime.

We call for a balanced, transparent and objective application of the relevant international instruments in the field in full accord with the principles of Article 51 of the Charter. We reiterate that the successful implementation of the Programme of Action and our national legislation and international assistance and cooperation are essential, and we call for the continued fulfilment of obligations and commitments related to munitions under the relevant regional and international instruments, such as the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. We must remember that all efforts to control weapons and their ammunition and parts and components must be aimed at preventing conflict, armed violence and violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

SICA's member States reaffirm the importance of working towards the goal of nuclear disarmament and the achievement of a sustainable world free of nuclear weapons. We are opposed to improving existing nuclear weapons and developing new types of such weapons, both of which are inconsistent with the obligations of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We reiterate the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and security policies and reaffirm our States' commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the full implementation of its three fundamental pillars. We also affirm the States' inalienable right to conduct research into and to produce and peacefully use nuclear energy without discrimination and in accordance with the NPT. We will work constructively and proactively for the achievement of a document that supports those commitments and obligations at the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the same time, as States that are respectful of and committed to article VI of the NPT, we believe that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will add to and strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime and bring us closer to eliminating such weapons of mass destruction in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

We reaffirm our firm condemnation of any types of nuclear test, wherever and by whomever they are done, and we urge all States to refrain from conducting any nuclear-weapon tests, which only undermine international peace, security and stability while putting

the lives of millions at risk. They also run counter to the objective and purpose of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the obligations and provisions of the NPT.

Considering the relationship that exists between disarmament and development, the important role of security and the fight against new and traditional threats to peace, whose consequences pose a risk to our countries' social and economic development, we believe that if we can address those scourges appropriately we can help to promote stability and good governance. In that regard, we call for creating synergies to implement programmes that support disarmament and an end to urban violence, which would greatly reduce the risk factors linked to eradicating poverty, as set out in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, maintaining health and well-being, the aim of SDG 3, promoting quality education, the focus of SDG 4, advancing gender equality and combating gender-based violence, laid out in SDG 5, reducing inequality and creating sustainable communities, as in SDG 11, and strengthening a climate of peace and justice while combating corruption and consolidating institutions, the subject of SDG 16. We therefore deplore any increases in military spending, emphasize how important it is to cut such spending and call on the countries concerned to direct those resources towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We recognize that progress has been made in reducing armed violence, but we still believe that adequate funding for disarmament and violence-reduction programmes should be a priority. In that regard, SICA members reiterate their support for the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and its three pillars. At the same time, we urge all actors with the technical and financial capacity to support the various initiatives to combat armed violence and urban violence to do so, thereby also contributing to capacity-building at the local, regional and global levels.

We support strengthening international standards applicable to States in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and promoting actions and strategies to strengthen cybersecurity and prevent crime and cyberattacks, while taking account of the fact that an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful environment for information and communications technology is essential for all.

We recognize the value of the Disarmament Commission as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and its function as a deliberative body. Given that the repercussions of its problems are multilateral ones, we regret the Commission's ineffectiveness and the fact that it is being held hostage to bilateral political interests. We reaffirm the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the only specialized negotiating body within the multilateral disarmament mechanism. The member States of SICA deplore the fact that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to fulfil its mandate in decades and urge all members of the Conference on Disarmament to demonstrate the political will needed to ensure that its substantive work can commence without further delay.

We also want to highlight the important work being done by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the assistance that it provides to countries in the region in implementing disarmament measures in various areas, as well as all the efforts of the various United Nations disarmament bodies to the same end.

Mr. Jato (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden. On their behalf, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee during this year's session, and to assure you of our full support.

The disarmament and non-proliferation architecture has served global security well for decades. Yet the deteriorating global security environment is creating great challenges for disarmament diplomacy, and multilateralism is under stress. It is becoming increasingly clear that we must re-energize the work of nuclear disarmament. Qualitatively new capabilities are being developed, spurred by new technology. The gradual downward trend in global nuclear arsenals, which reached their peak in 1986, has ebbed out and must not be reversed. A potential nuclear-arms race, which would serve no one's interests, must be avoided. The Nordic countries, for which disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control remain key foreign and security policy priorities, will be active participants in efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament. Progress requires international cooperation and multilateral solutions, while respecting the international rules-based order. The Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament should serve as an inspiration for us all,

not least in promoting a gender perspective in all areas of our work. For the Nordic countries, gender issues will remain a high priority during this session and beyond.

For half a century, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and the path to a world free of nuclear weapons goes through it. But we cannot take it for granted. While highlighting the successes of its first 50 years, the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must also chart a course forward. Our clear ambition will be an outcome that affirms the fundamental role of the Treaty and takes forward concrete steps for implementing its three mutually reinforcing pillars, especially nuclear disarmament. In order to achieve that, we will need the constructive engagement of nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. The Nordic countries warmly welcome various political and diplomatic initiatives, including the Stockholm initiative on nuclear disarmament, Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an integral part of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime and vital to our efforts to safeguard international peace and security. Given global security developments, its entry into force is more urgent than ever. We urge all annex 2 States to take concrete steps towards its ratification. Meanwhile, all signatories should continue to act in accord with the object and purpose of the Treaty. Pending the CTBT's entry into force, all existing moratoriums on nuclear-test explosions should be maintained.

Nuclear-disarmament verification not only enhances transparency but also helps to build confidence, and by creating the necessary capabilities can facilitate the effective and credible implementation of future arms-control and disarmament agreements. Through initiatives such as the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, all of which have substantial Nordic participation, considerable progress has been made in recent years. We encourage all countries, not least nuclear-armed States, to engage in this important work.

Earlier this year, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, a crucial component of European and

global security for 30 years, came to an end, due to continued Russian non-compliance. Looking ahead, the Nordic countries strongly encourage Russia and the United States to come to an early agreement on an extension of the New START Treaty. Such a decision would in itself be a key contribution to strategic stability and to the forthcoming NPT Review Conference. It would also constitute a proper basis for dialogue on a new regime, preferably also covering non-strategic warheads.

By ensuring that States parties to the NPT are adhering to their obligations, the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a fundamental part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. The additional protocol, which provides the Agency with the tools to draw the broader conclusion that all nuclear material in a State is dedicated to peaceful activities, is an indispensable part of the Agency's safeguards system and constitutes the current verification standard under the NPT. The universalization of the IAEA's additional protocols must remain a top priority. We call on member States that have not yet done so to bring their NPT safeguards agreements and additional protocols into force without delay. Strengthening cooperation on nuclear security is also essential, given the continuing evolution of threats and technology.

The nuclear and missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea violate a series of Security Council resolutions and constitute a major threat to global security and the international non-proliferation regime. We encourage continued diplomatic efforts in this area. The only sustainable solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula is a political one. In order to support such efforts, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to translate political commitments into legally binding undertakings, including by signing and ratifying the CTBT. The sanctions on the country should be upheld until we see its complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a demonstration of what multilateral diplomacy can achieve, but its full implementation is essential. The Nordic countries remain steadfast supporters of the JCPOA, whose disintegration would be seriously damaging to the global non-proliferation regime. In that context, we value the efforts by the European Union and the E3 to sustain and safeguard the JCPOA, while

we regret the United States' withdrawal from it and its reimposition of sanctions. The issue of Iran's steps to reducing its commitments under the agreement is a source of great concern. We urge Iran to reverse those steps and to cooperate fully and in a timely manner with the IAEA.

The recurring use of chemical weapons in recent years in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom is appalling and constitutes a breach of a norm that we had reason to believe was well consolidated. In the past year, with the full support of the Nordic countries, steps have been taken to give the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons the ability to identify the perpetrators of such criminal acts. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons can never be tolerated. Those responsible must be held to account. The Biological Weapons Convention constitutes another vital pillar of the global disarmament architecture. As such, it deserves our full support, especially from a financial point of view. Furthermore, the rise in malicious cyberactivity, some of which is State-sponsored, is a cause of great concern and affects all countries, regardless of their size and level of technological development. We all agree that international law applies online as well as off. Now we must focus on its implementation and be willing to call out bad behaviour and take action when necessary.

The Nordic countries will make a joint statement in the thematic debate on conventional weapons. I will therefore limit our comments to the following. Twenty years after its entry into force, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention remains highly relevant as an important instrument for protecting affected communities. We need a push for increased progress in clearance, and we welcome the efforts that have been made to integrate gender into all aspects of mine action. We hope for a strong outcome for the fourth Review Conference in Oslo, to be held from 25 to 29 November, as a demonstration of continued political commitment to all obligations under the Convention.

We welcome the progress made on lethal autonomous weapon systems in the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, and are looking forward to continued work under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which is the appropriate framework for the issue. We firmly support the Arms Trade Treaty and are pleased to see that it continues to gain ground. We particularly welcome the special attention given to gender aspects at

the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. Important areas for further efforts include the Treaty's universalization and effective implementation, as well as its financial situation.

The virtue and effectiveness of multilateralism must be upheld. Our deliberations in the First Committee this year should highlight the inherent potential and necessity of re-energizing multilateralism on disarmament and non-proliferation in these trying times. By applying the traditional Nordic formula of focusing on what unites rather than divides us, the Nordic countries will engage in this spirit in the coming weeks.

Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States. The African Group sincerely congratulates you and the Bureau, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee of the General Assembly at its current session.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The seventy-third session of the Assembly witnessed efforts to address a range of important multilateral disarmament and international security issues. International security continues to deteriorate as the world faces immense challenges to peace and security, particularly the increased threat of a new arms race. In that regard, the African Group would like to underscore the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy for addressing issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. There are simply no substitutes for a multilateral approach to addressing global disarmament issues.

On 20 September 2017, the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was opened for signature. Since then it has achieved 79 signatories, including 21 African countries, and 32 ratifications. It is very important, and the African Group calls on all Member States that have not signed it to do so. The continued existence and manufacture of nuclear weapons pose a great danger, with potentially catastrophic consequences for the human race and the environment. If we are to make nuclear disarmament a reality, both nuclear and non-nuclear States should make signing and ratifying the Treaty a top priority.

On 26 September, the General Assembly convened its fourth high-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which once again served as a reminder for all of us of the importance of nuclear disarmament. Seven decades have passed since the world witnessed the first-ever use of atomic bombs, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The time has come for us to speak with unanimity so as to ensure a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. It is also the moment to raise our voices against the slow pace of the dismantling of those weapons and the lack of good faith and commitment to doing so on the part of nuclear-weapon States.

The Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons held its third session from 29 April to 10 May at United Nations Headquarters, the final session prior to the 2020 Review Conference for the purpose of mitigating nuclear weapons. The upcoming Review Conference seeks to provide an opportunity for all member States to address substantive and procedural issues that have been outstanding in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The African Group reaffirms the central role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT, as well as in their contributions to addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across every region of the world. The zones enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear-non-proliferation regime and contribute to realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament. In that context, the African Group remains committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba. Among other things, the Treaty, which this year celebrated the tenth anniversary of its entry into force, reaffirms Africa's status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for its territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear-explosive devices in Africa and prohibiting their testing on the entire space that constitutes the African continent.

In that context, the African Group reiterates its deep concern about the fact that the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction has not been implemented as agreed. The Group warmly welcomes the convening of a Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone

Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction under the auspices of the United Nations to negotiate a legally binding treaty on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546. The Group also stresses that the 1995 resolution remains an integral and essential part of the package and the basis on which consensus was reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT in that year.

The African Group also underscores the importance of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in continuing to ensure States' commitments to the implementation of their safeguards agreements and in the provision and promotion of technical assistance and cooperation by maximizing the use of science and technology for socioeconomic development. The Group notes the strides that States have made and continues to call on all States, especially nuclear-weapon States, to consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons for human health, the environment and vital economic resources.

The continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons do not guarantee security but rather represent an affirmation of the risks of their potential use. Our world, including outer space, must be free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is in that context that the Group stresses the need for the nuclear-weapon States to cease modernizing, upgrading, refurbishing or extending the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

The African Group also welcomes the ratification by Zimbabwe of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Treaty, bearing in mind the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States in that regard. The Group believes that the CTBT offers hope for further halting the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament. We welcomed the eleventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York on 25 September, and support the international community, which has remained committed to promoting the CTBT. In that regard, the Group calls on nuclear-weapon States and those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty that have yet to accede to the NPT and have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so without further delay.

The African Group joins other Member States in reaffirming the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and expresses concern at the many years of impasse that have prevented the CD from fulfilling its mandate as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. The CD must resume substantive work without further delay, because the security interests of all States are at stake, as is the survival of the human race and indeed of all species of life on Earth.

The Group underscores the great importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and welcomes the conclusion of the efforts of its Working Group III for its recommendations on "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". We are seriously concerned about the Disarmament Commission's inability to convene its organizational and substantive session this year in a formal setting, and hope that by both addressing its underlying issues and avoiding any politicization of its work, the Commission will hold its substantive sessions in 2020 in a formal setting so as to fulfil its mandate. The Group also regrets that consensus has not been reached on the agenda item on nuclear disarmament for several years and stresses the importance of the United Nations disarmament machinery as an integral aspect of multilateral disarmament. We underscore the significance not only of preserving the Commission but of realizing its deliberative objectives. We look forward to successful deliberations on the elements of agenda items in the current cycle.

The African Group urges the States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty to implement it in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States and not just the major international arms-producing and -exporting States. We affirm the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for self-defence and security needs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The full implementation of the Treaty remains achievable with the cooperation of all. We acknowledge that conventional-arms transfers to recipients who are not authorized by their Governments fuels conflict and terrorism.

We remain deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly on the continent of Africa.

The Group remains committed to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and looks forward to a successful outcome of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in June 2020. The African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative is in line with that programme but will require concerted efforts on the part of all members of the international community.

This year marks the thirty-third anniversary of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. Despite limited resources, the Centre has continued to offer technical assistance and capacity-building to States across the African region. We welcome its undertaking to deepen its partnership with the African Union Commission and African subregional organizations.

The African Group welcomes the convening of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security.

Finally, the African Group wishes to reaffirm the critical importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues.

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

Mr. Bylica (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina align themselves with this statement.

The importance of promoting multilateral solutions, a key principle of the EU's external policy, is more urgent than ever. We firmly believe that international cooperation through effective multilateralism remains the best way to advance national and collective interests, which can hardly be promoted in isolation from one another in this interconnected and rapidly changing world. Commonly agreed international rules and effective and inclusive global institutions within and beyond the United Nations system are essential to ensuring peace, security, human rights, prosperity and sustainable development for large and small countries alike. We can only address the major global challenges of our era by working in partnership with others, whether they are States, international and regional

organizations, civil society, the private sector or other stakeholders, in order to deliver results on issues that are important to our citizens.

The EU and its member States are deeply concerned about current international and regional tensions and the deterioration of the security environment, which are affecting the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and could unleash a dangerous spiral into an arms race, conflict and violence. It is important that all parties contribute to improving the strategic context and architecture for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly by avoiding the erosion of the rules-based multilateral system. We stress the need to preserve and further advance general arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes and call for further progress on all aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation in order to enhance global security. We welcome and encourage further initiatives and processes at the international and regional levels to restore dialogue and trust and promote transparency and confidence-building measures.

In the coming year, the EU will focus specifically on promoting a successful outcome of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. On its fiftieth anniversary, we must celebrate and reinforce the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the key multilateral instrument for international peace, security and stability, promote its universalization and enhance its implementation. The EU strongly supports all three pillars of the NPT and will continue to promote the comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of its 2010 Action Plan. We stress the need to implement all obligations and commitments under the NPT, including the need for concrete progress towards the full implementation of article VI, with the ultimate goal being the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We call on all States that have not yet done so, especially the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) without further delay. The EU calls on all States to uphold their moratoriums on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other explosions and to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the CTBT. Member States of the EU are actively engaged in a variety of processes and initiatives aimed at strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The EU has become a supporter of four

actions based on the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, and in that context will devote attention to promoting the CTBT's universalization and entry into force, as well as the launch of immediate negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We support starting such negotiations, in accordance with document CD/1299 and the mandate it contains.

We believe that EU-funded regional and thematic seminars will help to build common ground in support of the NPT and its three pillars. The EU welcomes the Stepping Stones initiative launched at the ministerial meeting in Stockholm on 11 June as an important contribution towards a substantive outcome for the NPT Review Conference. We welcome the new momentum on risk reduction in that and other forums. The EU also provides funding to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for a confidence-building process aimed at the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

The continued non-compliance of some States with their international obligations is a matter of grave concern to the EU. The viability and effectiveness of arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements require that those agreements be fully complied with and enforced. Ensuring accountability and ending impunity are crucial to preserving the integrity of established norms. It is therefore imperative to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of chemical attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic. The EU reiterates that any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, whether a State or non-State actor, and under any circumstances is unacceptable and violates international laws and norms. We condemn the Syrian Arab Republic's continued violation of its obligations as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and we call on all Member States to support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The EU expresses its continued support and resolute commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which the Security Council endorsed unanimously in its resolution 2231 (2015). The EU deeply regrets the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the sanctions that have been reimposed. We are deeply concerned about the measures that Iran has taken since the beginning of July, which are inconsistent with its nuclear-related commitments

under the JCPOA, as reported by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We urge Iran to reverse those activities, refrain from any further steps that risk aggravating the situation and provide full and timely cooperation with the IAEA. We call on all countries to refrain from taking actions that impede the implementation of the JCPOA.

The repeated ballistic-missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which are violations of multiple Security Council resolutions, continue to undermine international efforts to build trust and establish lasting peace and security on a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocations and take concrete and credible steps towards building trust and confidence and abandoning all its nuclear weapons and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, as required by multiple Security Council resolutions. Until that happens, we will strictly enforce existing sanctions and call on all other Member States to do the same.

We are dismayed by the repeated attempts of a few States to challenge the authority and integrity of international organizations such as the OPCW, which are fulfilling their duties at the service of the international community in a professional, objective and impartial manner. We expect all States to reaffirm their strong political support for these important organizations, as well as for conventions such as the CWC and the Biological Weapons Convention. Political will alone, however, is not enough if it is not backed up with sufficient resources. Once again, we urge all States to meet their financial obligations in full and on time, which is the only sustainable way to overcome the current financial crisis facing several disarmament treaties and conventions.

The EU would like to highlight the fact that the two nuclear-weapon States with the largest arsenals carry a special responsibility in the areas of arms control and nuclear disarmament. We are deeply concerned about the fact that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) could not be preserved, given its 30-year contribution to European security, and deeply disappointed that the Russian Federation did not address the serious concerns repeatedly expressed about its non-compliance with the INF Treaty. The EU will continue to encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to

their arsenals, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, and to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting. We attach the highest importance to the New START Treaty and would welcome an active dialogue on its future post-2021 as soon as possible, as well as on other arms-control arrangements.

The EU and its member States remain strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. During the First Committee's current session, the EU will devote attention to safety, security and the peaceful uses of outer space, notably by advocating further transparency and confidence-building measures. We believe that a voluntary instrument, to be negotiated within the United Nations framework, remains the most realistic option for gaining international consensus, without excluding the possibility of a legally binding instrument in the future.

The resumption of discussions on cyber issues within the Open-ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviours in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security is an opportunity to further advance and implement the strategic framework for conflict prevention, stability and cooperation and to ensure responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. Those two processes are distinct but complementary, and we are encouraged by the constructive start to discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. The EU and its member States support a free, open, stable and secure cyberspace where human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are upheld. We underline the applicability of existing international law in cyberspace, the implementation of norms for responsible State behaviour, the further development and implementation of confidence-building measures and further international cooperation and sustained capacity-building. We welcome continued regular dialogue, with broad participation, including multi-stakeholder participation.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are important cross-cutting priorities for the EU. Next year's twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, will be a moment to further reflect on how to effectively mainstream gender-relevant considerations in United Nations disarmament work.

We call on all Member States, particularly the major arms exporters, importers and transit countries, to join the Arms Trade Treaty. The EU welcomed the outcome of the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which encouraged States to share information and build voluntary guidance on how to take into account the risk of gender-based violence in national export-control risk assessments, in line with the obligations of the Treaty. The theme of the sixth Conference of States Parties, on countering diversion, is also important.

On the twentieth anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, we expect the fourth Review Conference in Oslo to review progress, reaffirm commitments and generate a push for the further universalization of the Convention and improved implementation of obligations under it, with a view to achieving a world free of anti-personnel mines.

The full text of the EU statement will be made available online. We are also planning to elaborate further on our views in the thematic discussions.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom has the honour to report to the First Committee on the state of play in the permanent five (P5) dialogue process between the five nuclear-weapon States recognized by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States — as the coordinator of that process for the period from 2019 to 2020. We assumed that role in May, following the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, after China's productive coordination of the process in 2018 and 2019. We express our sincere gratitude to China for its efforts during that time.

Let me first once again reaffirm the commitment of all five of the nuclear-weapon States to the NPT in all its aspects, as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of its entry into force in 2020. That landmark Treaty has provided the essential foundation for international efforts to prevent the threat of nuclear weapons from spreading across the globe and has thereby limited the risk of nuclear war. It has provided the framework within which the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, for electricity, medicine, agriculture and industry, for example, could be promoted and shared for the benefit of humankind. By helping to ease international

tensions and create conditions of stability, security and trust among nations, it has also enabled a vital and continuing contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We remain committed under the Treaty to the pursuit of good-faith negotiations on effective measures related to nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. We support the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons, with undiminished security for all. We are committed to working to ease international tension, which will be conducive to further progress on nuclear disarmament.

We pledge our full and continued support for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which plays a critical role in the implementation of the NPT both by promoting the fullest possible cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and by applying safeguards and verifying that nuclear programmes are exclusively for peaceful purposes. We emphasize the importance of further strengthening the IAEA safeguards system, including by universalizing the additional protocol. We urge all States to commit to the continued success of the NPT in ensuring compliance, promoting universalization, supporting the highest standards of non-proliferation and responding to ongoing and emerging proliferation challenges wherever they occur. In that context, our five countries reiterate our commitment to continuing our individual and collective efforts within the NPT framework to advance nuclear-disarmament goals and objectives.

In that spirit, the principals of the P5 delegations met in New York on 8 October to discuss prospects for the NPT Review Conference and the contribution that the P5 can collectively make to its success. We had an in-depth exchange of views on the strategic security environment and the key issues facing the NPT in all its aspects at its Review Conference next year. We also reviewed progress on the five areas of work agreed at our last meeting at this level, under the coordination of China, in the margins of the third Preparatory Committee.

First, we reaffirmed the importance of in-depth dialogue on our respective nuclear doctrines and policies for enhancing both mutual trust and confidence among the five nuclear-weapon States and the transparency of our nuclear doctrines with respect to the wider NPT community. We welcomed the productive discussions

that have taken place between officials from P5 defence and foreign ministries and agreed that they should continue. We also discussed ways in which the P5 could work together on strategic nuclear risk reduction. We restated our commitment to presenting our nuclear doctrines at a side event at the 2020 Review Conference.

Secondly, we reviewed our engagement with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, which we agreed to continue. We welcomed the constructive meeting on 25 June in Geneva between P5 delegations and the Secretary-General of ASEAN, and the renewed commitment on 31 July by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bangkok to ongoing discussions with the nuclear-weapon States on the issue.

Thirdly, we welcomed China's ongoing leadership of the second phase of work on the glossary of key nuclear terms, which is both a valuable contribution to the technical basis for arms control and disarmament and an important tool for promoting mutual understanding. Two meetings of the expert-level working group have been held in Beijing since the third Preparatory Committee and another is scheduled for December.

Fourthly, we commended the discussions that have taken place between P5 delegations in Vienna on ways to strengthen our cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, nuclear security and nuclear safety in the run-up to next year's Review Conference.

Fifthly, we welcomed France's initiative in convening a first meeting of P5 experts in Paris on 19 September on technical issues related to a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and we looked forward to further discussions at that level that would contribute to efforts to make progress on such a treaty at the Conference on Disarmament.

Noting China and the United Kingdom's publication of draft NPT national implementation reports (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/8 and NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/7) at the third Preparatory Committee, we also reaffirmed the commitment of all our countries to submitting national reports to the 2020 Review Conference, once again using the common template agreed on in 2013. We appreciate our continuing dialogue with the countries of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, which continued with a meeting on 9 October.

Finally, we committed to continuing and deepening our dialogue and our collective work, with the aim of promoting a successful Review Conference in 2020. We will meet again in London in February 2020 for the ninth P5 Conference.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico is pleased that one of our Latin American brothers is at the helm of the First Committee's work this year, Mr. Chair, and you have the support of my country and my delegation.

Much has been said about questions regarding the relevance and validity of multilateral agreements and even the effectiveness of multilateralism itself. There is also a perception that the issues addressed in the Committee do not produce measurable or concrete results. It is therefore appropriate to reiterate in this forum why the United Nations should continue to redouble its efforts and strengthen its work on disarmament.

First, nuclear disarmament is a major outstanding issue for the United Nations. It was the subject of the first General Assembly resolution, resolution 1 (I). Considering that the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization's founding is coming up, it is unacceptable that we continue to live under the threat represented by more than 14,000 nuclear weapons, which are the most devastating instruments of war in existence.

Secondly, the possessors of nuclear weapons boast that they are expanding their increasingly more powerful arsenals and, even worse, that they are willing to use them. We are once again hearing voices invoking the protection and usefulness of nuclear weapons of mass destruction. We cannot accept such calls, and normalizing that kind of talk would be a serious mistake. We must keep on saying for as long as it is necessary that nuclear weapons constitute a serious risk to global security, the welfare of people and ecosystems, sustainable development and the very survival of humankind.

Thirdly, the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an invaluable opportunity for advocating for multilateralism in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation that we should make proactive use of. Next year we will commemorate 75 years of the United Nations, but we should not forget that in 2020 we will also mark 75 years since the beginning of the atomic age and the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The

most fitting tribute to the victims of nuclear weapons and nuclear tests is taking concrete measures to ensure that such weapons are not used again under any circumstances but are banned and eliminated.

Fourthly, we must work to strengthen the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. For that to happen, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must be universalized and its provisions fully complied with. We must also achieve the entry into force of both the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Fifthly, we are also concerned about the continued use of other weapons of mass destruction and indiscriminating weapons. The fact that new arenas such as outer space and cyberspace are being considered as legitimate arenas for war and militarization runs counter to the notion that technological advances should be used for peaceful purposes and in support of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Today they are frequently used to justify increases in military spending.

Finally, in this general debate Mexico would like to raise the alarm about the increasingly widespread use of small arms and light weapons. They claim the most victims per day and are used in almost half of all violent deaths in the world. Approximately 90 per cent of deaths from firearms occur outside areas affected by armed conflict. Most of those weapons are distributed through illicit channels, in many cases under lax or inadequate legal frameworks and ineffective control mechanisms. They are closely linked to human and drug trafficking. They exacerbate armed conflict, cause spiralling violence within countries and are the preferred equipment for organized transnational crime and terrorism. In addition, they are a perfect tool for those who endorse hate speech and racial or religious supremacy. Hate crimes, such as the one that recently targeted a population of Hispanic origin in El Paso, Texas, are possible thanks to indiscriminate access to weapons of any kind. We cannot stand by passively in the face of such trends, which are increasingly present in the daily lives of nations.

Considering all of these issues, the General Assembly must conduct and maintain substantive and constructive discussions. We welcome Member States' positive reception of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, which Mexico strongly supports. We therefore hope that the First Committee will

adopt resolutions and measures aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of the various actions of the Agenda, which is the only way to tackle the challenges I have mentioned. Disarmament is not an end in itself. It is a way to reach a safer and more peaceful world. Put simply, we cannot comply with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations without pursuing disarmament.

Mr. Beerwerth (Germany): On behalf of Germany, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee, and to assure you of Germany's full support for your work. I will read an abridged version of the German statement, the full version of which will be uploaded onto the PaperSmart portal.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union.

We begin this year's deliberations in the First Committee while geopolitical rivalry is on the rise and new technologies are evolving, creating new challenges to our common security. Arms control has increasingly come under pressure, making today's world a less secure place. We need to do our utmost to reverse that disquieting trend and find our way back to more cooperative action. Next year in New York we will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The NPT is unquestionably a success story of multilateralism, and yet we know that this landmark Treaty is at a crossroads. The NPT is based on its three equally important pillars — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — and it is viable only with all three. We must renew our commitment to the NPT comprehensively in order to chart its future.

In the current security environment, reducing the risks of inadvertent escalation is the call of the day. Maximum transparency on arsenals, military restraint and dialogue on threat perceptions and doctrines may help to defuse the current tensions. However, risk-reduction measures must not replace nuclear disarmament but rather be aimed at facilitating it. Germany therefore remains fully committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that this objective can be reached through concrete cooperative steps that build on dialogue between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. That is why Germany's Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas, convened a

meeting in April of the Security Council in support of the NPT (see S/PV.8500). That is also why we strongly support the Swedish initiative to reinvigorate nuclear disarmament under the NPT. Furthermore, Germany and France recently jointly hosted a verification exercise, because a world without nuclear weapons can neither be achieved nor be stable without effective multilateral disarmament verification.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation order, with numerous arrangements tied into it. The Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, co-chaired here in New York just two weeks ago by Mr. Maas and his Algerian counterpart, was an impressive manifestation of support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its entry into force. We once again urge all States that have not signed and ratified the Treaty to do so without preconditions or delay. Until the Treaty enters into force we must ensure that all States maintain their moratoriums on nuclear testing and refrain from any action contrary to its objectives and purposes.

With regard to the formulation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, we have been delaying for far too long. It is high time that we removed all the obstacles and started negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Differences on certain aspects of such a treaty must no longer serve as a pretext for not moving forward.

The New START Treaty has reduced the two largest nuclear arsenals, set a new verification standard and helped to contain a global nuclear-arms race. We call on the United States and Russia to show leadership by extending the New START Treaty and adjusting it to new developments, which would demonstrate credible support for their commitment to article VI of the NPT.

North Korea's latest ballistic-missile tests constitute flagrant violations of Security Council resolutions. Opposing those provocations is a matter of credibility for the NPT and global non-proliferation efforts at large. We condemn the tests in the strongest terms and remain fully supportive of United States diplomatic efforts. North Korea must now undertake concrete and credible steps leading to the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of its nuclear programme.

Germany remains fully committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We regret the

United States' withdrawal from it and its reimposition of sanctions on Iran. Germany is deeply concerned about Iran's decision to cease implementing several of the central provisions under the nuclear agreement. We strongly urge Iran to reverse its decision and refrain from any further steps that would hollow out its JCPOA commitments, and to return to full compliance without delay. Iran must cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency on all relevant matters, including with regard to its comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol. Germany reiterates its call to Iran to refrain from ballistic-missile activities, including missile tests and launches, that are inconsistent with annex B to Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). We also urge it to cease transfers of missiles and missile technology to States and non-State actors in the region, which is a violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The world seems to be at the beginning of a new arms race, which is fuelled to a considerable extent by new technologies. If left unchanged, our current arms-control architecture risks being eroded by future weapon systems featuring autonomous functions, cyberinstruments and new missile technologies. In order to provide solutions to those challenges, Mr. Maas has initiated a dialogue aimed at capturing technologies and rethinking arms control.

The use of chemical weapons is unacceptable under any circumstances. It is important to ensure that no one — no Government or group of non-State actors — can count on impunity when using chemical weapons. Although it is the world's most successful disarmament agreement, the Chemical Weapons Convention has been infringed numerous times. Our collective challenge is to follow and enforce the rules that we have set ourselves.

In conclusion, the international arms-control architecture is under severe pressure. We must respond to that pressure by strengthening the rules and instruments we have and by developing new ones where needed.

Mr. Dinanno (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections and are committed to working with you for a successful session.

Next year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force. That commemoration should remind us of how well it has served our shared security and prosperity now and for future generations. The Review Conference is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitments to a strong non-proliferation regime that provides a framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation and a foundation for progress on nuclear disarmament. The latest innovation in this field, launched in Washington in July, is a working group on creating an environment for nuclear disarmament. In addition to creating an environment for nuclear disarmament, ongoing verification dialogues among States both inside and outside the United Nations could potentially lead to real, tangible progress in the field of nuclear-disarmament verification.

I would like to focus the remainder of my remarks on the nature and root causes of the deteriorating security environment that is impeding nuclear disarmament efforts. The United States remains committed to effective arms control that advances the security of the United States and its allies and partners, that is verifiable and enforceable and includes partners that comply with their obligations. We stand ready to engage with Russia and China on arms-control negotiations that meet those criteria. The United States wants serious arms control that delivers real security for the American people and the world. Today, the Cold War approach, with its bilateral treaties that cover limited types of nuclear weapons or certain ranges of missiles only, is no longer sufficient.

We need a new era of arms control — one in which Russia and China are at the negotiating table and willing to reduce nuclear risks rather than heighten them. The stakes could not be higher. For the first time in history, the international community is confronting two large autocratic Powers with global reach and ambition and armed with nuclear weapons. We can no longer ignore the reality that Russia and China are determined to undermine the liberal democratic order that was established in the wake of the Second World War and on which the United Nations was founded. In response to that challenge, the States Members of the United Nations need to reconsider the traditional dividing lines in multilateral disarmament forums. The key and growing difference among them is between democratically oriented States that are accountable to

their publics and undemocratic regimes that are focused on challenging the existing rules-based order.

We have often highlighted the obvious and unbreakable relationship between security and disarmament, but what is also obvious is the clear relationship between disarmament and democracy. Today, undemocratic regimes such as Russia and China are expanding their arsenals and engaging in activities that impede our ability to make progress on disarmament. Their aims are revisionist and they are bent on deploying new, destabilizing weapons. If that trend continues, China and Russia's increasing military might will eventually provide them with the means to dismantle the liberal democratic order on which our security and prosperity depend.

Russia is a serial violator of its arms-control and European security commitments and pursues a deliberate strategy undermining its neighbours' sovereignty. It has failed to comply with its obligations not only under the now-defunct Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) but also the Open Skies Treaty, the Vienna Document, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the moratoriums on nuclear-weapon tests, all of which the United States continues to adhere to. Moscow alone is to blame for the INF's demise. Russia's efforts to modernize its nuclear force do not just involve replacing aging systems. Instead, Russia has invented new weapons of war that hark back to an age when a nuclear balance of terror reigned. Those new weapons, some of which would not be subject to the New START Treaty, include a nuclear-powered and -armed underwater drone designed to destroy cities and ports with radioactive tidal waves. Russia also has much to answer for regarding the so-called Skyfall incident of 8 August. The United States has determined that the explosion near Nyonoksa, Russia, was the result of a nuclear reaction that occurred during the recovery of a Russian nuclear-powered cruise missile. The missile has remained on the bed of the White Sea since its failed test early last year, in close proximity to a major population centre.

Ensuring global security also requires adhering to and strengthening the prohibitions created by the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. During this year's high-level week at the United Nations, our Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, announced that the United States had determined that in an attack in Latakia, Syria, on 19 May, the Al-Assad regime had used chlorine as

a weapon. The regime's pattern of using chemical weapons against its own people cannot be tolerated. Such atrocities threaten to desensitize the world to the use and proliferation of chemical weapons and must end. Russia must take concrete action to prevent the Al-Assad regime from using chemical weapons.

China's military expansion is aimed at establishing regional dominance and global influence. It has amassed a vast intermediate-range, ground-launched missile arsenal under no international restraints, while today the United States has no such missiles. Simultaneously, China is expanding its nuclear arsenal, all the while resisting meaningful bilateral dialogue with the United States on nuclear-arms control and risk reduction. Precisely because China is the least transparent member of the five permanent members of the Security Council and is engaged in an ongoing arms build-up, it is hard to take it at its word on nuclear issues. China must come to realize that continued silence on its part is destabilizing.

To prevent further deterioration in the security environment and improve the prospects for disarmament, the United States calls on all like-minded States to coordinate in new and better ways in order to persuade Russia and China to change course and cease their aggressive policies, which undermine the rules-based order and make it dangerous for responsible democratic States to lower their defences. This call to action is addressed not only to America's traditional democratic allies, although they remain essential to our mutual security, but is also a call to Member States in every region of the world that value the democratic way of life and share a sincere interest in further progress on disarmament. Together, we should demand that Russia and China join the United States at the negotiating table in good faith in order to initiate a new era of arms control for the sake of international peace and security.

We look forward to building new bridges that lead to a broad coalition of States on the relationship between disarmament and democracy and the need for a new era of arms control.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Since there are delegations that wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply, we will conclude the list of speakers for today. I would like to remind delegations that their first statement in right of reply is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Jang Il Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): As I am taking the floor for the first time, Sir, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and wish you every success in your endeavours.

My delegation totally rejects the statements by the observer of the European Union (EU) and the representatives of Sweden and Germany regarding the recent missile launches conducted by my country, which were part of routine self-defence measures in response to the daily threats that we on the Korean peninsula face every day. If the EU and those two countries are truly interested in resolving the problems of the Korean peninsula, they should urge the United States to take corresponding measures in response to our sincere initiatives, which include instituting a moratorium on nuclear tests and intercontinental-ballistic-missile launches, closing a nuclear site and returning the remains of American soldiers who died in the Korean War, to name just a few. We also advise them to ask their allies possessing nuclear weapons to abandon such weapons in order to set an example for others, and to set a specific plan and timetable for withdrawing United States nuclear weapons that are deployed on their own territories.

With regard to the sanctions mentioned in those statements, I want to emphasize that sanctions and pressure do not solve problems. It is a gross miscalculation to imagine that sanctions will bring us to our knees. We have lived under sanctions and pressure for so long that we have grown accustomed to them. We will overcome all difficulties by dint of our self-development and self-reliance. The bigger the pressure, the stronger our people's will to develop and achieve progress and prosperity in our country on our own.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The performance of the observer of the European Union (EU) once again confirmed our suspicions and those of many other Member States regarding resolution 65/276, whose adoption in 2011 permitted the European Union to participate in the work of the United Nations as an observer and have the right to speak. It would seem that its adoption was a big mistake on the part of the Member States. The clumsy and stupid colonial policies of the European Union's member States were responsible for two world wars, which took the lives of approximately 100 million people and destroyed many other global assets. Since the European Union holds observer status at the United

Nations, we request that it refrain from competing with the Organization by distributing rewards and sanctions to Member States. As it is a mere observer, I would ask its representative to remember that lesson and know his limits.

The fact that the observer of the European Union has delivered criticisms and accusations brings shame on the First Committee. Did the observer recognize the full truth and the real threat, which is the fact that Israel possesses and uses chemical and biological agents, or did he conveniently forget that Israel is the only country in the region that possesses nuclear weapons and threatens to use them? Perhaps he has also conveniently forgotten that numerous European Union member States are engaged either in transporting terrorists to Syria or providing them with equipment and weapons. Some of their airports have become hubs for smuggling and transporting weapons to the terrorist organizations in my country. Moreover, some EU members have supplied those terrorist groups with toxic chemical agents, while assisting them by sending experts to compose those chemicals and use them against Syrians. My country has abided by all the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and fulfilled all its obligations. The language used in the EU observer's statement is unacceptable, and we repudiate it. The European Union knows that our chemical stockpile has been destroyed outside my country. Its representatives spout hypocrisy and lies and continue to make false accusations about countries that do not follow their instructions or succumb to their will.

The representatives of the United States should be the last people to speak about commitments to non-proliferation. It was the United States that used nuclear weapons in Japan and chemical and biological weapons in Viet Nam and elsewhere. To this day, there are children in Viet Nam who are born deformed because of the chemical and biological weapons used by the United States. I want to say to the United States representative that it is sufficient that his current President has stated that the original allegations about weapons of mass destruction — which were the reason

that the United States invaded Iraq — were false. No one has forgotten what happened in 2003 and the hypocrisy and lies surrounding the issue of so-called weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which led to the country's invasion, causing destruction, murder and the emergence of terrorist organizations that still exist, while successive United States Administrations have coordinated their actions.

We all know that we have provided the Security Council and the Secretary-General with sufficient information about the transfer and supply of toxic chemicals under the supervision of experts from the United States both to the Syrian territories and from them to other areas, as well as about the training of terrorists in neighbouring countries and in Syria on the use of chemical weapons. The United States has cooperated with some members of the mass media to spread fabrications about chemical weapons as well as false accusations, such as those that were made by the United States Secretary of State and reiterated some time ago by the United States representative. They are lies that the United States uses as an approach in order to launch acts of aggression against States that will not succumb to its policies.

The Chair: Due to time constraints, the other States that have requested to exercise their right of reply — Russia, the United States and China — will be accommodated tomorrow, for which I apologize.

(spoke in Spanish)

We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. I would like to once again remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close at 6 p.m. tomorrow, Friday, 11 October. All delegations wishing to take the floor should inscribe their names on the list before the deadline. Besides that, several delegations are planning to hold negotiations on various draft resolutions at the same time as our meeting, which will limit their participation. They have asked that that be acknowledged.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.