



General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

First Committee

2nd meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Santos Maraver(Spain)

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

Introductory statements

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I warmly welcome all delegations to this meeting, including those joining us by webcast from capitals and other United Nations duty stations. I extend a particularly warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly, who is here today to guide us with his vision for the current session of the Assembly. We are very pleased that he is here among us. I also acknowledge and am grateful for the presence of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu.

In accordance with the decision made at the organizational meeting held on Tuesday, 6 October, the Committee today will begin its general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to it — items 94 to 110. Before we proceed, allow me to make a brief statement in my capacity as the Chair of the First Committee at this session.

A few days ago, I received an invitation, as Chair of the First Committee, to address a recorded message to the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization — Nihon Hidankyo. Its members will not be able to join us, as they usually do, owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) restrictions affecting our deliberations this year. I have been wondering for some days what message I could send to the *hibakusha* — the survivors of the nuclear explosions of 6 and 9 August 1945 — that is not clichéd and lives up to their dignity as victims.

This year we are commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the San Francisco Conference held in 1945 — the negotiation of the Charter of the United Nations beginning on 25 April, its signature on 26 June and its entry into force on 24 October that year.

In Article 1, which defines the four purposes of the Organization, the first purpose establishes a categorical imperative concerning international relations, which is the very reason for the existence of the United Nations, namely,

“[t]o maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace”.

On 16 June 1945, the first nuclear test — the Trinity test — was conducted in the New Mexico desert. The dates 6 and 9 August 1945 marked the first use of nuclear weapons, the effects of which we are all familiar with and which today would equal the impact of a tactical nuclear weapon in terms of today’s technological capacity. The sequence of events from April to August 1945 somehow makes it difficult not to associate the Charter, a document we all revere, with the image of the nuclear mushroom cloud and all its effects on the ground.

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>).



The Charter's entry into force two and a half months later was intended to mark a new era for humankind to leave its past behind — We the peoples.

On 24 January 1946, the first resolution of the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)), adopted on the recommendation of the First Committee, established a Commission to deal with problems raised by the military application of atomic energy. In the second preambular paragraph of resolution 1378 (XIV), the General Assembly at its fourteenth session expressed its intent to strive “to put an end completely and forever to the armaments race which places a heavy burden on mankind, and to use resources thus released for the benefit of mankind.” In its sixth preambular paragraph, the resolution also considers that, “the question of general and complete disarmament is the most important one facing the world today”. Finally, in paragraph 3, the resolution expresses the hope “that measures leading towards the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control will be worked out in detail and agreed upon in the shortest possible time”.

Since then, the First Committee has tried to fulfil that mandate by combining two strategic theories — sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary — on the one hand, deterrence; and on the other, the restriction and destruction of arsenals. Both regimes are subject to international law emanating from voluntary agreements among sovereign nations. It would be a mistake to imagine that those two strategic approaches originated in the First Committee. They can be traced back, among other historical sources, to the dispute between the delegates of Athens and Melos related by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

But we have left a long trail of partial successes and, above all, of failures — from the Strasbourg Agreement of 1675 to the present Conference on Disarmament established in 1979, by way of the World Conference on Disarmament of the League of Nations extant from 1932 to 1934. Today, as Secretary-General António Guterres reminded us a few days ago, we are faced with the collapse of a large number of the agreements related to nuclear and chemical weapons reached since the 1980s. We are faced with a new arms race, in the middle of an unprecedentedly severe pandemic and economic crisis, which has fuelled the geopolitical tensions accumulated since the end of the twentieth century.

Our task will not be easy. The COVID-19 pandemic is a great challenge, although we have shown ourselves able to agree on working methods like those adopted at our first meeting (see A/C.1/75/PV.1). Caution will be required in carrying out our discussions so that we can consolidate the body of existing resolutions. But we must also remain hopeful during these distressing times and try to find a way forward — gradual as it may be — to achieve our mandate of reaching general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Recalling the first part of my statement, I would ask members to consider what message we must send to all the victims and survivors of not only nuclear weapons but all weapons. My hope is that, when we finish the meetings of this session of the First Committee, our work itself will have served as a response and we will have been guided by the categorical imperative of Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations.

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly, to address the Committee.

Mr. Bozkir (President of the General Assembly): I am honoured to address members of the First Committee today. I would like to congratulate the Chair, His Excellency Mr. Agustín Santos Maraver, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, and the other members of the Bureau on their election. I wish them every success for this session.

I would like to repeat here what I said when I addressed the Third Committee. I believe that when it comes to the General Assembly, the Main Committees are like factories with laboratories and production lines. Whatever the First Committee achieves will be the pillar of the work of the General Assembly. From that perspective, I look forward to the Committee's valuable and fruitful work and the results that it will present to the General Assembly.

As we enter the seventy-fifth year of the United Nations, I note that its primary mandate — to ensure peace and security — is considered by the First Committee and the importance of the Committee's work cannot be overstated. It has become more complex in recent times, with new security threats in cyberspace and a multitude of non-State actors involved in conflicts.

The seventy-fifth session will undoubtedly be affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, not least because of the limitations placed

on in-person meetings. As we all know, the benefit of face-to-face diplomacy cannot be taken for granted. I extend my congratulations to the Bureau for its pragmatism in proceeding with a hybrid working model that includes in-person meetings, including this one.

As the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1) makes clear, the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, sustainable development and human rights — are equally important, interrelated and interdependent. One cannot progress without the others. Enhancing peace and security, whether through disarmament or other means, will contribute to sustainable developments gains, as recognized in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. As security issues disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, addressing them can have an enormous positive impact on their lives.

Insecurity hampers progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, from education and gender equality to the rule of law. Going to school, establishing a business or eradicating poverty become more challenging during a conflict, while in the same way the risk of conflict is increased by the lack of education, poverty and human rights violations. The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will require us to make progress on peace and security matters.

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive weapons in humankind's arsenal. The Organization was born out of their embers 75 years ago and their use today is unimaginable. The consequences would be devastating to humankind and the planet. I was encouraged by the high-level participation of Member States at the meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, held last week on 2 October. I commend the efforts of the Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) for issuing a video message calling on all Member States to sign and ratify the CTBT and I support that call.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an essential pillar of international peace and security and at the heart of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was postponed because of the pandemic, is crucial for providing Member States with the opportunity to recommit to efforts

towards non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to monitoring the implementation of the agreements made by Member States.

I look forward to the rescheduling of the Review Conference before April 2021 and it is important that the pandemic does not disrupt efforts to maintain international peace and security without the existence and use of nuclear weapons. I also welcome the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, as well as the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace.

While neither body has been able to meet in person owing to the pandemic, I am pleased that the Chairs of both bodies have facilitated an ongoing exchange through written inputs and informal virtual meetings. Such dialogue is an important part of our efforts to see both bodies successfully fulfil their respective mandates.

I also look forward a positive outcome following Member States' review of 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.

At the general debate, many leaders pointed to regional and international conflicts as barriers to progress on development and human rights. Addressing the underlying threats to regional and global peace and security is an unavoidable imperative for the promotion of general and complete disarmament. That is clearly a vital issue for us all. Leaders supported the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and also highlighted the horrific consequences of conflicts.

The Committee is passing through one of the most critical periods in constructing and sustaining the existing principles of cooperation and agreements on disarmament and arms control, but it is amid such trying times that the Committee must show its resolve to overcome distrust. We cannot afford to unravel what we have painstakingly built for the past 75 years.

Therefore, I encourage members to build trust among themselves, increase confidence among their

nations and seek sustainable compromises to enhance global security for us all.

I thank members for inviting me to this meeting and I wish them all the best in their important endeavours.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the General Assembly very much for his insightful statement. 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 close collaboration with him in the future.

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 grateful for this opportunity to address the First Committee, which is meeting during a session like none other, as it commences its deliberations. I would like to extend my personal congratulations and appreciation to you, Mr. Chair, upon your election to preside over the work of the Committee. I also extend my appreciation to the other members of the Bureau. I also wish to express my gratitude to the previous Chair from the Plurinational State of Bolivia for steering the proceedings of the Committee at its seventy-fourth session, as well as to the members of the Bureau of that session.

To paraphrase the Secretary-General in his remarks at the opening of the general debate last month (see A/75/PV.4), in order to overcome today's challenges we need increased international cooperation, strengthened multilateral institutions and better global governance. At the high-level event held on 21 September to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, Member States adopted the forward-looking Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), which reflects the theme of the General Assembly at this year's session — "The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism".

In the Declaration, Member States declared their commitment to upholding international arms control and non-proliferation and disarmament agreements and their architecture. Members' work in the First Committee is more important than ever. Although we may be frustrated at the limitations of the modalities

under which we are conducting our work this year, it is imperative that we work hard, with renewed and redoubled determination for success.

Even during the global pandemic, concerns about the increasing risk of the use of nuclear weapons are beginning to permeate beyond the walls of forums such as this one. The world is rightly alarmed by the growing antagonism among nuclear-armed States, the return of the concept of nuclear warfighting, the race to improve nuclear weapons and the absence of guardrails at the intersection between nuclear weapons and domains such as cyberspace and outer space.

Risk-reduction measures that will lower the prospects of deliberate or accidental use or miscalculation are urgently required. But while risk reduction is important, let me reiterate that the only way to eliminate nuclear risk is to eliminate nuclear weapons. The notion that now is not the time to take practical steps towards nuclear disarmament is counter-intuitive. It is during times of turbulence that the stabilizing forces of arms control and disarmament are needed most.

In that context, I congratulate those States whose ratifications are paving the way for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to enter into force and the civil society organizations whose dedication continues to contribute enormously. The Treaty will soon enter into force and the Office for Disarmament Affairs is ready to support the preparations for the first meeting of States parties.

Likewise, I welcome the ongoing dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation. It is my hope that both sides will conclude an extension to the New START Treaty for both their own security and the security of us all.

The postponement of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has provided extra time for States parties to lay the ground for a successful conference that will help reverse current trends. The Review Conference should strengthen the implementation of all three of the NPT's pillars, including through the actualization of previously agreed commitments. The NPT remains a bulwark against the spread of nuclear weapons and the primary vehicle for their elimination. Its continued vitality should be a priority for all States.

The norm against nuclear testing is one of the greatest accomplishments of the Cold War. Yet the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is one of nuclear disarmament's most important pieces of unfinished business. A legally binding prohibition on all nuclear tests is an integral element of a world free of nuclear weapons. All States should work to ensure the CTBT's early entry into force and not take any actions that will undermine the global norm against nuclear testing.

Last November, in accordance with decision 73/546, the Secretary-General convened the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. I congratulate the participating States for achieving a successful outcome, including the adoption of a political declaration (A/CONF.236/6, annex).

While the second session of the Conference has been postponed, the Office for Disarmament Affairs organized an informal workshop on good practices and lessons learned from existing nuclear-weapon-free zones in July and is planning to convene a second informal workshop before the end of the year.

With respect to other weapons of mass destruction, I strongly condemn any use of toxic chemicals as weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. The findings of the first report of Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons are deeply disturbing. The use of chemical weapons with impunity and without accountability is a threat to international peace and security and a danger to all. It is imperative to hold accountable all those who use chemical weapons. We must work together to prevent the further erosion of the norm against chemical weapons.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has raised awareness of the impact that diseases can have and the urgent need to improve global health security. A part of that effort should focus on addressing the possibility of the deliberate use of disease as a weapon. Although universally seen as repugnant, a bioweapon or bioterror attack could cause widespread death and disruption. I therefore call on Member States to give appropriate priority to next year's ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and work together to strengthen the Convention so that it can robustly face those and future challenges.

More than 20,000 people have been killed in armed conflict since the Security Council called for a global cessation of hostilities in resolution 2532 (2020). Ongoing violence is instead pushing millions of people to the brink of conflict and hindering the battle against the outbreak. Despite the strong rhetorical backing of many States, including parties to conflict, it is clear that those words have not yet been put into full effect.

Much of the fighting is taking place in urban areas. Currently, more than 50 million people are affected. For victims of that kind of warfare, who are already suffering from injury, disability, displacement and insecurity, the threat that the pandemic poses is too great to bear. The use of heavy explosive weapons damages and destroys the essential infrastructure needed to run health-care systems, such as hospitals and other medical facilities, as well as power and water-supply lines and sanitation networks.

I welcome the ongoing efforts led by Ireland to develop a political declaration addressing the humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas through an inclusive consultative process. I encourage all Governments to support that effort and commit to avoiding the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, that commitment is more urgently needed than ever.

The year 2020 marks the target year for the African Union's flagship Silencing the Guns initiative. In order to bolster the initiative, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, together with the African Union Commission, supported seven countries in the implementation of the African Union's voluntary hand-over initiative of illicit small arms and light weapons this year.

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, which has been postponed until next year, provides States with an important opportunity to engage constructively with the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the topic, namely, by considering a focus on national target-setting and addressing recent technological developments.

Tomorrow will mark the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which continues to be an important tool for developing new rules and norms to address

emerging challenges and strengthen the protection of civilians.

I am pleased to note that, working jointly with the United Nations Development Programme and in close cooperation with the Peacebuilding Support Office, we have established the Saving Lives Entity fund, which will allocate grants to catalyse a much needed, more comprehensive approach to small-arms and armed violence reduction in priority countries. Planning for pilot activities is under way and I invite donor States to support the fund. I would also like to thank those countries that have contributed funds or have pledged to contribute funds.

The United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation will continue to operate in parallel for the 2020-2021 implementation cycle for quick impact, short-term and hands-on projects.

We continue to see promising advances in the area of conventional ammunition. The Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus has been able to undertake serious, substantive discussions on the safety and security challenges, despite the interruption to its work caused by the pandemic. The Group is well-positioned to complete its work next year. As ammunition is an integral component of the conventional weapons used in armed conflicts, progress in that area is essential.

This year we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security and the tenth anniversary of General Assembly resolution 65/69, on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In that area, we have made progress in acknowledging the vital contribution of women.

However, women remain chronically underrepresented, not least in decision-making and leadership. It is time to accelerate progress on that issue by setting standards for ourselves and ensuring accountability in reaching our parity targets. But we must also move beyond mere statistics. Equal representation will mean little unless there is an enabling environment in which participation is truly meaningful.

I encourage all Member States to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach to the work of the First

Committee. I regret the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on making its rules of procedure gender-neutral — a measure that was relatively straightforward and clearly overdue. My Office stands ready to assist Member States in advancing gender equality and empowerment. That is not only a normative imperative but will lead to more effective disarmament efforts.

The ceaseless development of new technology has not been slowed by the pandemic. Therefore, finding ways to keep ahead of the implications posed by emerging weapon technologies has never been more urgent. In July, we issued the third report of the Secretary-General (A/75/221) on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts.

The report provides a comprehensive update, describes current technological developments related to the means and methods of warfare and assesses their implications for international peace and security, as well as efforts to limit the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict. We will issue an enhanced version of the report later this month, as part of our efforts to raise awareness on the implications of new weapon technologies.

Information and communication technologies in the context of international security have become one of the most important issues in our digitalized world. As all members know, in 2018 Member States established two processes to address the issue — the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and the Group of Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security. Both processes have now reached a critical juncture in their respective deliberations, and I encourage States to contribute actively and in good faith to help ensure their mutual success.

Deliberations are reaching a similarly critical stage at the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons talks on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons. I am heartened by the important areas of consensus or near consensus that have been achieved so far, particularly with regard to the need to ensure that humans remain in control of weapons and the use of force. I hope that States can continue to engage constructively and inclusively as we approach

the holding of the sixth CCW Review Conference next year.

It remains important to advance practical measures to ensure that outer space does not become a domain of active hostilities and the setting for a new arms race. We are therefore encouraged by the active development and discussion of new proposals on seeking norms of responsible behaviour. It should also be recalled that such measures can form the basis for concepts and proposals for legally binding obligations and I hope that such new proposals will complement and actively contribute to such efforts.

I welcome the renewed multilateral interest in missile controls, which among other things is driven by technological developments in that area. In a keynote address at the most recent meeting of the Missile Dialogue Initiative and in a subsequent op-ed, I offered a number of proposals for taking forward that work, including the possibility of working towards internationally agreed definitions and exploring regional approaches.

I believe that the time has come for renewed, substantive and multilateral efforts on the difficult issues associated with missiles of various types and I welcome further discussion and debate on the issue. We also remain ready to support efforts by States to develop measures to increase transparency, accountability and oversight of armed uncrewed aerial vehicles, which have clearly become weapons of choice in many conflicts.

I am pleased to be able to report that we have continued to make steady progress on the implementation of the 40 actions contained in the Secretary-General's *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. Despite the pandemic, more than three quarters of the 140 steps and activities contained in the *Agenda's* implementation plan have continued as planned. Others have been carried forward with adjustments, such as by using digital platforms in lieu of in-person meetings. Only about a dozen planned activities have been postponed.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent cooperation that we have enjoyed with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in that work and congratulate the Institute on its fortieth anniversary.

Despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, the three Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament quickly adapted to ensure the uninterrupted

implementation of their activities in support of Member States in their respective regions. I am pleased to note that despite the unusual circumstances, the donor community has continued to lend its support to the Regional Centres through funding several future projects.

I am also pleased to note that the forty-fourth edition of the *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* is the first to include a dedicated companion website. In using the new online platform, readers will have easy access to the disarmament developments and trends covered in the current edition of the *Yearbook* and in future volumes.

Last year, the General Assembly reaffirmed the important and positive contribution that young people can make to sustaining peace and security by adopting resolution 74/64. To mark the first anniversary of the resolution's adoption, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has launched a dedicated digital platform located at the site: www.youth4disarmament.org. Our goal is to help empower and create space for young people to meaningfully contribute to progress on disarmament.

We are working with our first group of Youth Champions for Disarmament, made up of 10 young people whom we are training through both online courses and hands-on training and who will embark on a two-week in-person study tour in Vienna, Geneva, Hiroshima and Nagasaki when it is safe to travel. The first group of Youth Champions and hopefully many more in the future will pursue peace and disarmament in their respective communities, countries and at the global level through such creative means.

In the face of the unprecedented crisis gripping each of our countries, the Committee remains a viable institution. I find it encouraging that, despite the challenging circumstances this year, Member States continue to introduce new proposals — a testament to the Committee's relevance and efficacy. I therefore appeal to members to remember, in the weeks ahead, that we currently face the same enemy — the COVID-19 pandemic — and that our purpose here is to seek agreement on solutions that benefit the security of all.

My colleagues and I look forward to providing any assistance required to ensure that the Committee's work will be productive and fruitful in this most challenging of years. I wish everyone a successful session.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the High Representative for her statement and her commitment to the long-term disarmament process.

Before opening the floor for statements in the general debate, I would like to remind delegations that each delegation may deliver one statement. I count on their cooperation to limit statements to 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity and 13 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations during this session. Statements may include general views, specific priority issues that require attention and the presentation of proposals to be discussed.

In accordance with the decision made at the organizational meeting of Tuesday 6 October (see A/C.1/75/PV.1), delegations may deliver their statements in person, in written form or via pre-recorded videos. In-person statements will be included in the verbatim record. Written general statements will be included in the compendium to be issued as a document of the Committee.

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 mentioned during our organizational meeting last Tuesday (see A/C.1/75/PV.1), I encourage representatives with longer statements to deliver a summarized version and provide their full statement to be posted on the eStatements web portal. I also encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed to allow for adequate interpretation.

I also remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will be closed on Monday, 12 October, at 6 p.m. I therefore encourage all delegations intending to take the floor during the general debate that have not yet inscribed their names on the list 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, which 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 94 to 110

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM). I congratulate you, Sir, on your election, as well as the other members of the Bureau on their elections, and I assure you of NAM's full cooperation.

The full text of this statement will be made available on the eStatement portal. I will read out an abridged version.

NAM wishes to express its concern about the increasing global military expenditure, which could otherwise be spent to address the new challenges facing the international community in the areas of development, poverty eradication and the elimination of the diseases that afflict humankind, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

NAM reaffirms its principled positions on nuclear disarmament, which remains the agreed highest priority for the United Nations in the area of disarmament. The nuclear disarmament situation continues to be characterized by an alarming impasse. The nuclear-weapon States have not made progress in eliminating their nuclear weapons. The role of nuclear weapons in their security policies has not diminished. They are modernizing their nuclear arsenals and are either planning research on new warheads or have announced their intention to develop new infrastructure for such weapons.

NAM expresses concern that the strategic dialogue among the nuclear-weapon States has remained limited and that no negotiations are under way to advance strategic nuclear arms reductions beyond the expiration of the New START Treaty in 2021. NAM calls for the renewal of the commitments agreed within the framework of the Treaty.

NAM expresses grave concern about the United States Nuclear Posture Review and national security strategy, which run contrary to legal obligations and undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals and threaten international peace and security. The termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) also has serious implications for international peace and security.

NAM reiterates its deep concern about the greatest threat to peace and security posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the military doctrines of nuclear-weapon States and NATO that incorporate rationales for the use or threat of use of such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon-States. Such doctrines cannot be justified on any grounds.

NAM once again renews its firm call on nuclear-weapon States to fully and urgently comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons without further delay, in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. NAM calls on the nuclear-weapon States to immediately cease their plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

Furthermore, NAM calls for immediately reducing the operational status of those weapons, including through complete de-targeting and de-alerting. The total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again is the only absolute guarantee against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from their use.

NAM reaffirms the urgent need for 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 under any circumstances as a matter of high priority.

NAM welcomes multilateral efforts towards nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons. NAM takes note of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It is hoped that, when it enters into force, the Treaty will contribute to furthering the agreed global objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

NAM believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and are essential to strengthening international peace and security. Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament. Proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

NAM States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regret the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to

the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach consensus on a final outcome document despite the efforts made by NAM delegations and call upon the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate the political will to enable the tenth Review Conference to reach concrete recommendations on achieving nuclear disarmament — the ultimate objective of the NPT.

NAM States parties to the NPT reiterate their profound disappointment that the 2010 action plan on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction has not been implemented. They strongly reject the reasons given for the non-implementation of the 2010 action plan on the Middle East and the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

Pending the zone's establishment, NAM States parties to the NPT demand that Israel — the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT or declared its intention to do so — abandon its nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without preconditions or further delay and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

NAM welcomed the adoption of General Assembly decision 73/546, which led to the convening of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction under the presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in November 2019 and the session's successful outcome, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (A/75/63). NAM calls on all States of the region, without exception, to actively participate in the Conference, negotiate in good faith and conclude a legally binding treaty on the establishment of such a zone.

NAM States parties to the NPT re-emphasize the special responsibility of the States that co-sponsored the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to implement it. The indefinite extension of the NPT agreed at the 1995 Review Conference is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution.

NAM underlines that non-proliferation policies should not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire, have access to and import or export nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. NAM reaffirms the same right of every State to develop the research, production and use of nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a

full national nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

NAM recalls the successful conclusion of nuclear negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union 3+3, which resulted in the finalization of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on 14 July 2015, as endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 2231 (2015). NAM calls for the agreement's full implementation by all participants and underlines that it shows once again that dialogue and diplomacy are the most appropriate means to resolve such issues, as NAM has always advocated.

NAM believes that the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, are positive steps and important measures towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. NAM calls on all nuclear-weapon States to ratify related protocols to all treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and withdraw any reservation or interpretative declaration incompatible with their object and purpose.

NAM stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, especially by all nuclear-weapon States, which, *inter alia*, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) note with satisfaction the effective operation of CWC in providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. They urge the United States, as the only remaining State party that has yet to do so, to take all necessary measures to ensure its compliance with the detailed plan for the destruction of chemical weapons remaining after the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 as soon as possible in order to uphold the credibility and integrity of the Convention.

NAM States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention consider that the lack of a verification system continues to pose a challenge and call for the resumption of multilateral negotiations to conclude a non-discriminatory legally binding protocol that deals with all articles of the Convention in a balanced

and comprehensive manner in order to sustainably strengthen the Convention, including through verification measures. They urge any party rejecting negotiations to reconsider its policy.

NAM reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their relevant parts, components and ammunition for their self-defence and security needs. NAM remains deeply concerned about the wide range of security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. NAM also underlines the need for a balanced, comprehensive and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

NAM is seriously concerned about the negative security consequences related to strategic missile defence systems, which could trigger arms races and promote the development of advanced missile systems and an increase in the number of nuclear weapons. NAM rejects the notion that space is a war-fighting domain and emphasizes the need to urgently commence substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, among other things.

NAM strongly rejects the illegal or malicious use of new information and communications technologies, including social networks, for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, which could adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure of States to the detriment of their security. NAM also calls for the intensification of efforts to safeguard cyberspace from becoming an arena of conflict and instead ensure its exclusive peaceful uses.

As NAM is concerned about the erosion of multilateralism in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, it is determined to continue promoting multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in those areas, as the only sustainable approach that is in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery is therefore a shared objective. Based on its existing rules of procedure and methods of work, the machinery has produced landmark treaties and guidelines. The main difficulty

lies in the lack of political will of some States to achieve progress, particularly on nuclear disarmament.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the CD as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and reiterates its call for the CD to agree by consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without any further delay, taking into account the security interests of all States.

NAM hopes that all Member States will also support the following eight draft resolutions being submitted under its sponsorship, entitled “Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation” (A/75/399, draft resolution IX), “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament” (A/75/399, draft resolution VII), “Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control” (A/75/399, draft resolution XV), “Relationship between disarmament and development” (A/75/399, draft resolution V), “Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium” (A/75/399, draft resolution IV), “Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol” (A/75/399, draft resolution VIII), “Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament” (A/75/399, draft resolution VI) and “United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament” (A/75/400, draft resolution VIII).

Lastly, NAM underlines the importance of the demonstration of political will by all. NAM is confident that, with political courage and working together cooperatively, the First Committee will contribute tangibly to building a more secure and peaceful world.

Mr. Eldandarawy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, it is my pleasure to sincerely congratulate you, Sir on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We are confident that your abilities will make the Committee’s work successful. We promise that the Group of Arab States will fully support you at the current session, which is being held in unprecedented and exceptional circumstances. I also convey the Arab Group’s congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

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

The Arab Group stresses its principled position on disarmament and international security. It emphasizes that peace, security and stability across the world cannot be achieved in the presence of nuclear weapons. It is imperative to free humankind from such weapons and direct the human and financial resources spent on them to achieve development.

The Arab Group asserts that the multilateral frameworks established under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as the purposes, principles and commitments enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, constitute the only sustainable basis for addressing disarmament and international security issues, the importance of which is increasing given the current developments throughout the world, as well as the consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In such circumstances, international and multilateral cooperation must be strengthened in order to address all urgent matters.

The Arab Group expresses once again its grave concern about the continuing failure to achieve tangible progress on nuclear disarmament and on the implementation of agreed commitments in that area, especially the failure to realize the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nuclear-weapon States are clearly evading the establishment of any specific time frame within which to implement those commitments.

The Arab Group reaffirms the importance of concluding treaties to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones as a way to achieve international peace and security and bolster nuclear disarmament efforts worldwide, especially in the Middle East region. The Arab Group reiterates that Israel’s continued refusal to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear State and subject its nuclear facilities to inspection 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 numerous relevant international resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991).

In 1995, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons adopted a resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Arab Group therefore reiterates our grave concern about

the continued procrastination of the implementation of the resolution, which remains an integral part of the indefinite extension of the Treaty in line with the 1995 Review Conference.

Accordingly, the Arab Group stresses the importance of undertaking immediate steps to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. During this session, the Arab Group will once again submit a draft resolution entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East” (see A/75/402, para. 7). We call on all Member States, especially peace-loving States that are determined to uphold the principles and purposes of the United Nations, to implement its provisions without applying double standards. The Arab Group also wishes to announce its support for the draft resolution entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East” (see A/75/395, para. 7).

In addition, the Arab Group welcomes the convening of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction — established pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546 — held in November 2019 under the presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. We commend the positive outcome of the Conference, as well as the adoption of important substantive and procedural resolutions, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (A/75/63). We call on all those invited to the Conference to participate in its work in good faith so as to negotiate a binding treaty that will strengthen regional and international peace and security.

The Arab Group once again calls for the implementation of commitments relating to 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 owing to the focus by some countries on non-proliferation to the detriment of addressing nuclear disarmament. We also stress the need to enhance cooperation in the area of the peaceful uses of atomic energy and to support non-nuclear States in fully exercising their inalienable right to the peaceful use of atomic energy, as long as those States fulfil their obligations under the IAEA’s comprehensive safeguard agreements.

The seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT and the twenty-fifth anniversary of

its indefinite extension. Therefore, we all must take practical measures in order to safeguard the Treaty and move forward in terms of ensuring that its obligations are met.

In that regard, the Arab Group emphasizes the need to ensure the success of the 2020 Review Conference by adopting a comprehensive and balanced binding document that includes clear procedures for guaranteeing the credibility and sustainability of the Treaty by implementing its agreed obligations, particularly with regard to the full elimination of nuclear weapons and achieving the universality of the Treaty, as well as by establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Arab Group recalls once again the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in promoting the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and of the specific responsibility of nuclear States and other States that have not yet joined the NPT to work towards the prompt entry into force of the CTBT.

In 2017, the world witnessed the unprecedented historic development of the establishment of the legally binding Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was a significant landmark towards establishing nuclear disarmament and making the possession and use of such weapons or even the threat to use them run counter to basic international law and international humanitarian law. Moreover, such weapons pose a direct threat to international peace and security.

The Arab Group believes in the importance of preventing arms races and disputes in outer space and in its use for peaceful purposes. We must work urgently towards reaching a new legally binding international instrument that bans the placement of weapons in outer space and military attacks or intentional damage against objects in it. We must also prevent certain States from launching an arms race in outer space and from developing technologies and arms that could be placed in outer space or used against satellites. Such technologies and arms would have devastating consequences for humankind in the event of a conflict in outer space.

With regard to cybersecurity, the Arab Group underscores the importance of enhancing the security of information and communications technologies in order to strengthen States and improve their ability to defend themselves against any subversive attacks — a

fact that has been confirmed in many reports by groups of governmental experts. In that regard, we welcome the launch of meetings of the Open-Ended Working Group established under resolution 73/27. We hope that those meetings will lead to objective and credible recommendations on controlling the responsible conduct of States in that vital field.

Concerning conventional weapons, the Arab Group stresses the extreme importance of strengthening 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 to address the dangerous phenomenon whereby such weapons are falling increasingly into the hands of terrorists and illegal armed groups.

In that regard, the Arab Group rejects attempts to impose commitments related to controversial conventions adopted without international consensus. We also reject any restrictions on the legitimate right of States to fulfil their needs for conventional weapons, contrary to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and the principle of self-defence.

The Arab Group looks forward to seeing concrete progress at 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 2021, on the issue of combating illegitimate supplies of weapons to unauthorized recipients, in accordance with the 2018 outcome of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action.

The Arab Group reiterates the need to enable the Conference on Disarmament to play its role as the only forum of its kind for negotiating disarmament treaties. We also stress that the current stalemate affecting the work of the Conference does not necessarily reflect any shortcoming on the part of its mechanisms but rather is owing to the lack of political will of certain States. Consequently, we stress the need for strengthening the role of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular its negotiating mandate in the area of nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, in highlighting its priorities with regard to the items on the Committee's agenda, the Arab Group wishes to emphasize our commitment to work with the Chair and all Member States to achieve the progress we want during this session.

Mr. Valtýsson (Iceland): It is an honour to address the Committee on the behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Iceland.

The Nordic countries have always been strong proponents of multilateral cooperation as the most efficient means to deal with global security challenges. Currently the international community is being put to the test by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. This experience should be a strong reminder of the importance of seeking global solutions to our common threats.

The subject matter of the Committee—disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation—is an integral part of the global security environment. We need to redouble our efforts to preserve and further strengthen the existing architecture and its individual institutions, processes and mechanisms.

With their long-standing and strong commitment to disarmament and arms control, the Nordic countries stand ready to contribute actively in order to re-energize the work on the whole disarmament agenda. Renewed impetus is of particular significance when it comes to nuclear disarmament. This year, 75 years have passed since Hiroshima and Nagasaki fell victim to nuclear weapons. That tragic reminder should inspire us all to make extra strides towards nuclear disarmament.

This year also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)—the instrument that is the foundation for the advancement of nuclear disarmament. The forced delay of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should not diminish the pride that State parties can take in the success of the Treaty. Nonetheless, we must continue to fulfil our duty to advance the Treaty and reinforce our commitments to full implementation, in particular of article VI on nuclear disarmament, by taking the necessary next steps.

The Nordic States have supported, initiated and developed important and concrete actions for the furtherance of the implementation of the NPT. We attach high hopes to various initiatives, especially the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative.

Nuclear disarmament verification is another area that is crucial to the progress of nuclear disarmament and arms control. The Nordic countries have been instrumental in advancing that work through initiatives like those of the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and through the United Nations. This year, a decision on nuclear disarmament verification has been proposed to maintain that important work on the Committee's agenda. We hope to see universal support for the decision.

The Nordic countries pledge their full and continued support for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in its crucial role underpinning the implementation of the NPT through its safeguards agreements and additional protocols, whereby the peaceful use of nuclear energy can be verified and ultimately promoted. The efforts to universalize the IAEA safeguards system and the additional protocols are of the utmost importance.

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is an integral part of the nuclear disarmament architecture. We strongly urge States outside the Treaty, in particular the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty, thereby guaranteeing a universal nuclear testing moratorium. We also reaffirm our support for the early negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Apart from the challenges facing the existing institutional framework for nuclear disarmament, there are other developments that create risks and challenges in the nuclear field. The demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, triggered by the non-compliance of Russia, marked another step towards the erosion of the international arms control architecture. We are currently witnessing an unclear situation with respect to the previous bilateral arms reduction treaty — the New START. The Nordic countries welcome the ongoing strategic stability dialogue between the United States and Russia and reaffirm their call for the extension of the New START.

Furthermore, the Nordic countries encourage China to join substantive talks on nuclear arms control. We also support the inclusion of non-strategic weapons in such discussions, as the distinction between strategic and non-strategic weapons is increasingly blurred. Milestone treaties should not be abandoned, particularly

in the light of the development of new and modernized nuclear capabilities and growing rivalries.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to pose a major threat to global security. Its illegal nuclear weapon and missile programmes remain in violation of numerous Security Council resolutions. We note the lack of progress in the dialogue between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, thereby requiring the continued strict implementation of the sanctions against the latter.

The Nordic countries reiterate their call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to make good on its commitments, including by signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea is the only way to achieve sustainable peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

The Nordic countries continue to fully support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Its coming into being remains a landmark of multilateral diplomacy. We urge the Iranian authorities to return to full compliance with the agreement and we expect Iran's full cooperation with the IAEA on all its safeguards obligations.

The erosion of norms against the use of weapons of mass destruction is currently affecting the Chemical Weapons Convention. The re-emergence of chemical weapons is one of the most urgent threats to international peace and security and has to be dealt with firmly and collectively. In recent years, we have witnessed the use of chemical weapons in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom, as well as most recently in the attempted murder of a Russian citizen in his own country.

The Nordic countries reaffirm their absolute condemnation of the most recent use of a chemical weapon in the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned in Russia by a military chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group. We reiterate our call on Russia, as a matter of urgency, to be fully transparent and bring those responsible to justice, bearing in mind Russia's commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We condemn the Syrian Arab Republic's continued violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as most recently concluded in the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

(OPCW). Perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria must be identified and held accountable. We look forward to the next report of the Team. Any use of chemical weapons under any circumstances is a clear breach of international law and the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the use of all chemical weapons. Such use can be classified among the most serious crimes of international concern — war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Impunity for breaches of the global norms against chemical weapons must not be tolerated and those responsible must be held to account. That will be facilitated by the ability of the OPCW to identify the perpetrators of such heinous crimes. As strong supporters of the OPCW, we underline our full and unequivocal confidence in the objectivity, impartiality, independence and technical expertise of the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is a vital pillar of the disarmament regime. With a view to the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention next year and the global pandemic, it is time to recommit to that important treaty and constructively attend to its implementation.

Although weapons of mass destruction are currently dominating the disarmament dialogue in general for valid reasons, there are many other important disarmament and arms control issues on the Committee's agenda that require our full attention, whether they fall under the umbrella of conventional weapons or new initiatives on other kind of weapons.

The Nordic countries note the successful outcome of the fourth Review Conference commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention, which was held in Oslo in November 2019. The strong and ambitious action plan and the road map that was agreed at the Conference need to be implemented with strong determination in order to achieve a mine-free world by 2025. We urge other participating States to join us in the effort and hope that more States sign the successful Convention, which contributes so much to the humanitarian cause.

The annual Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty was held in August under difficult conditions, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the work ahead, the Nordic countries underline the importance of the full implementation of the Treaty. Transparency and information-sharing are of the utmost

importance in reducing the risk of diversion. Continued attention to the risks of serious acts of gender-based violence is essential.

The Nordic countries support the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, in particular the 11 guiding principles adopted by consensus last year and consequently highlighted in the statement of the Alliance for Multilateralism. It will be important to advance work on those principles, especially with respect to human-machine interaction, in the Group's work leading up to next year's Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

The Nordic countries are firmly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In the light of the rapid developments and growing interest by many States, we want to contribute to breaking the impasse on the discussions on that issue. Strengthened multilateral cooperation is needed to preserve and enhance the safety, security and sustainability in outer space activities. To that end, we welcome and support the draft resolution entitled "Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours" (A/75/397, draft resolution II).

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored how dependent the world has become on information and communications technology. Globally accessible, free, open and secure cyberspace is more than ever fundamental to how the world operates. Unfortunately, the increase in malicious cyberactivity witnessed during the past decade has not slowed with COVID-19. In fact, the year 2020 has revealed that malicious State and non-State actors will take advantage of any opportunity in cyberspace — even a global pandemic.

The Nordic countries welcome efforts to merge the current parallel tracks on international cybersecurity within the United Nations into a single programme of action. The establishment of such a programme would create a permanent, long-term home for such issues under the aegis of the United Nations.

The progress achieved to date by the Open-Ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security provides an important point of departure for further

discussions. We need to further our understanding of the applicability of international law and ensure that already-agreed norms are implemented to ensure stability in cyberspace.

Let me briefly mention the initiative to address explosive weapons in populated areas. The Nordic countries are keen to support current efforts to develop a political declaration that addresses the protection of civilian populations suffering from the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons in urban areas. That is a humanitarian challenge that must be addressed urgently, given the growing number and intensity of conflicts affecting populated areas.

Last but certainly not least, let me turn to the issue of gender, which should be weaved into the very fabric of our work, procedures and substantive activities. Gender equality, the empowerment of women and a gendered approach to our substantive work should be the order of the day. The Nordic countries will accept nothing less.

From the very beginning, the Nordic countries have emphasized the importance of reinvigorated multilateralism in addressing the challenges facing the international rules-based disarmament regime. The individual pieces of the complicated architecture of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments all require special attention and new measures must be developed. That is essentially the work ahead of the Committee. The stakes are high and we should be guided by the aim of preserving and strengthening global peace and security.

The Nordic countries will make every effort to contribute constructively to the important work of the First Committee and beyond. In that endeavour, they will be guided by the time-tested spirit of Nordic cooperation and compassion.

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

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

We warmly congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your and their election. We are proud to have our fellow member, the Philippines, represented in the Bureau. We believe that under the able leadership of the Chair and Bureau, the First Committee will produce a sound outcome. We assure you, Sir, of our full support in that regard.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, while the First Committee's increasing efforts and contributions to global disarmament continue. We thank Under Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Izumi Nakamitsu and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for their contributions to advancing the United Nations disarmament agenda.

We note the tremendous challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to the United Nations and every Member State. We also note the new challenges currently facing international security, as mentioned by the Secretary-General and many world leaders at the general debate of the General Assembly held in September. Formidable challenges require formidable efforts by all of us.

ASEAN continues to support international efforts towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. It remains concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and the risks posed by their continued existence. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to guarantee against their use and threat of use.

ASEAN reaffirms its recognition of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It welcomes the fiftieth anniversary of the 2020 entry into force of the NPT and calls on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to its full implementation, particularly with regard to article VI and its provisions for general and complete nuclear disarmament. ASEAN calls for dialogue and negotiations in good faith to ensure the success of the upcoming 2021 NPT Review Conference.

ASEAN emphasizes the importance of the full and effective implementation of other non-proliferation regimes, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). It calls for greater cooperation on information-sharing, capacity-building and technical assistance, as well as greater participation

and contributions related to non-proliferation endeavours on the part of industries, academia and international organizations.

ASEAN continues to stress the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). All ASEAN member States have ratified the Treaty. That reflects our steadfast support for the CTBT and strong commitments to international norms against nuclear testing. ASEAN urges the remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible in order to expedite its long-overdue entry into force.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a historic agreement that contributes to global nuclear disarmament and complements other existing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. There has been an increase in the number of instruments of ratification of the Treaty and of States' accession to it and ASEAN member Malaysia was the forty-sixth State to ratify the Treaty on 30 September 2020. We believe that once it enters into force, the Treaty will contribute further to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We reiterate our commitment to preserving the South-East Asian region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and the ASEAN Charter. We stress the importance of the full and effective implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty, including through implementing the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty (2018–2022). We reaffirm our commitment to continuously engage with the nuclear-weapon States and intensify the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty.

Our ASEAN experts can explore ways to bridge differences, including through engaging with the nuclear-weapon States' experts. We will continue to submit the biennial SEANWFZ resolution through the First Committee to the General Assembly. ASEAN also reaffirms the importance of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones for existing global non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. It continues to support the ongoing efforts towards the establishment of such zones, including in the Middle East.

ASEAN reaffirms the inalienable right of every State to the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy for economic and social development. It looks forward to the implementation of the practical arrangements between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which were concluded in September 2019 and will provide a framework of cooperation for ASEAN to tap into the experience and technical assistance of the IAEA in the areas of non-proliferation, nuclear safety, security and safeguards and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. ASEAN also looks forward to the convening of the seventh annual Meeting of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy, to be held in November.

The situation on the Korean peninsula remains a concern. We stress the importance of continued peaceful dialogue among all parties concerned in order to realize lasting peace and stability on a denuclearized Korean peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and agreements reached among the parties concerned. We reiterate our readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilizing ASEAN-led platforms, such as the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation, in promoting an atmosphere conducive to peaceful dialogue among the parties concerned.

ASEAN continues to call for universal adherence to the applicable international legal instruments prohibiting chemical, biological and radiological weapons. ASEAN condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of such weapons by any party under any circumstances, as that constitutes a serious violation of international law. ASEAN welcomes the progress made on eliminating chemical weapons stockpiles under the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating consequences for socioeconomic development and human life, ASEAN stresses the importance of biological security and safety.

ASEAN is deeply concerned about the illicit proliferation of conventional weapons globally. The effective regulation and control of conventional weapons is important for peace, stability and sustainable development. ASEAN supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We look forward to the convening of

the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action in 2021.

ASEAN notes the outcome of the fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, held in Oslo in November 2019. ASEAN commends the role of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre in encouraging efforts to address explosive remnants of war. We thank all partners and relevant institutions for their contributions and support for the Centre.

ASEAN reaffirms its commitment to building a safe, secure and resilient cyberspace. The United Nations must continue to play a key role in cybersecurity. We welcome the efforts and productive discussions of the Open-Ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. We hope that they can continue to work closely and in complementarity with one another.

Given the current dynamics in the international security environment, ASEAN stresses the need to further preserve and strengthen the United Nations disarmament machinery and other related multilateral and bilateral mechanisms. It continues to recognize the important role and the contributions of the Conference on Disarmament in that area.

ASEAN recognizes access to outer space as the inalienable right of all States. The exploration and use of outer space must be based on the principle of peaceful purposes and be conducted for the benefit of all humanity, in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. ASEAN reaffirms that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and its weaponization is of vital importance. We urge all Member States to respect and ensure the full implementation of all related United Nations instruments and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

ASEAN reaffirms its cooperation with the United Nations to bring about a peaceful, secure and prosperous world. We can achieve tangible progresses in disarmament and non-proliferation only through constructive dialogue, negotiations and engagement. We reiterate our readiness to contribute substantively to the work of the First Committee during this session.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the eight States members of the States of the Central American Integration System (SICA) — Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. We congratulate you, Sir, as a big brother to all the people of Latin America, and all the other members of the Bureau on your and their election. You can count on the support of the States members of SICA.

We are meeting during exceptional times owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic — a health crisis that has entailed serious socioeconomic consequences worldwide, including the loss of many precious human lives. We express our solidarity with and support for the families who have lost loved ones. The crisis has highlighted that the response to major global challenges must be through multilateralism, based on strong international ties and cooperation.

The States members of SICA regret that the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the work of the agenda of the First Committee. We call for sustained commitment and, despite the current challenges, upholding the mandates that we have assumed within the framework of the disarmament machinery, including the humanitarian consequences of the use of weapons, armed conflicts and other issues that put international peace and security at risk.

The States members of SICA, which subscribe to the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, reiterate their belief that peace and international security can be achieved by adhering to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially by refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

It is also important to use multidimensional approaches to strengthening democracy, institutions and full respect for all human rights. At the same time, we 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 our past achievements, our countries are continuing to work to achieve a new, unique, comprehensive and permanent model of regional

security. Nevertheless, we continue to responsibly address public security challenges. Violence is closely related 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, their parts and components and their excessive accumulation, as a manifestation of transnational organized crime, as well as 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 the 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 Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons into our States' respective national legislations, and promoting the application of effective controls to reduce and eradicate the diversion of weapons to non-State actors or unauthorized users, which in most cases are 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 relevant national legislation and international assistance and cooperation are indispensable to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action. At the same time, we call for the continued fulfilment of obligations and commitments relative to munitions under the relevant regional and international instruments, such as 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.

The States members of SICA reaffirm the need to move forward in achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament and a sustainable world free of nuclear weapons. We are opposed to improving existing nuclear weapons and the development of 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.

We are proud to be party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco — the first instrument of its kind to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. For that reason, we are able to attest to the positive effect of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones towards achieving a world free of weapons of mass destruction and the threat that such weapons pose wherever they are found in the world.

For SICA States members, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of global efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, promote the peaceful use of nuclear weapons and achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament. We reaffirm our States' commitment to the NPT and the full implementation of its three fundamental pillars. We also reaffirm the inalienable right of States to conduct research into and produce and peacefully use nuclear energy without discrimination and in accordance with articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT.

We will work constructively and proactively for the achievement of a document that supports those commitments and obligations at the 2021 NPT Review Conference. At the same time, as States that are respectful of and committed to article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, 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 the elimination of such weapons of mass destruction in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

We reaffirm our firm condemnation of all types of nuclear tests, wherever and by whomever they are conducted, and we urge all States to refrain from conducting all types of nuclear-weapon tests, which only undermine peace, security and human rights and put the lives of millions of people 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.

We reiterate the importance of and need for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We call on States listed in its annex 2 to move forward without further delay in the signing and/or ratification process of that international instrument, which is of the utmost importance to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The States members of SICA underscore their firm belief that the complete elimination of chemical and biological weapons is a priority in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, through the adherence of all States, and the importance of the full implementation of both Conventions' provisions and obligations by States parties.

Considering the relationship that exists between disarmament and development, the important role of security and the fight against new and traditional threats to peace, the consequences of which pose a risk to our countries' social and economic development, we believe that adequately dealing with those scourges will help promote stability and governance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has produced great challenges at the global level, including budgetary challenges. SICA member States have observed with dismay the steady increase in conventional arms transfers since 2000 and the resulting excessive and record military spending, which reached \$1.9 billion in 2019. In that regard, we call for the resources used to fuel the arms race to be redirected to strengthening our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and bring about a more just, peaceful and stable world.

We call for the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and appeal to the remaining parties, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency, to continue working towards fully resolving that issue. SICA stresses that the Agreement demonstrated once again that dialogue and negotiations are the only effective way to resolve disputes among States.

The issue of anti-personnel mines continues to demand the attention of the international community. SICA underscores the importance of cooperation in demining activities and assisting victims and hopes that the achievements of recent years will continue. SICA supports all international efforts to reduce the suffering caused by cluster munitions and their use against civilian populations, which is in clear violation of international humanitarian law. It also recognizes and appreciates the willingness of all States to take immediate multilaterally agreed measures to deal with the humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions.

We support strengthening the 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 cybercrime and cyberattacks, while taking into account that an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful environment for information and communication technology is essential for all.

We recognize the value of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and its function as a deliberative body. We regret the Commission's impasse and inability to convene its 2019 substantive session and organizational meetings in a formal setting and we hope that the delegations involved can resolve the relevant issues as soon as possible so that it can hold its 2021 substantive session in a fitting manner and fulfil its mandate by adopting the agreed substantive recommendations.

SICA urges all members of the Conference on Disarmament to demonstrate the political will necessary to ensure the commencement of its substantive work without further delay. We call for its programme of work to promote progress on nuclear disarmament, including the negotiation of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances, as well as the prevention of an arms race in outer space and a non-discriminatory treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices for the purposes of non-proliferation and disarmament.

Lastly, we highlight the important work done by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the assistance that the Centre has provided to countries in the region to implement disarmament measures in various areas and the efforts of the various disarmament agencies of the United Nations system to that end.

Mr. Nyanid (Cameroon): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States. I congratulate you, Sir, and all the other Bureau members on your and their election and I assure you of the African Group's support and cooperation.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and would like to make the following remarks.

The seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly is being held in the very challenging and unprecedented context imposed on us by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, at a time when the disarmament and non-proliferation regime is eroding. 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 Group underscores the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy for addressing disarmament, non-proliferation and international security in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Group also reiterates that there are no substitutes for a constructive multilateral approach to addressing global disarmament issues.

On 20 September 2017, the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was opened for signature. Given the slow progress and frustration that had characterized nuclear disarmament activities for so many years, the Treaty marked a watershed in the drive to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

The African Group would like to underscore that the Treaty reinforces the need for our commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and complement the Treaty. As the international community awaits the realization of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the African Group seeks more profound and concrete measures in pursuit of the objective of nuclear disarmament in a verifiable and irreversible manner within a clear time frame.

Nuclear weapons will represent a grave existential threat to humankind as long as nuclear-weapon States continue to possess and modernize such weapons of mass destruction. The Group therefore welcomes and underscores the importance of resolution 73/34 as an integral part of multilateral disarmament efforts.

Seventy-five years have passed since the world witnessed the first-ever use of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The devastation of the impact caused by the twin attacks continues to be borne not only by the *hibakusha* but also by all the peoples around the globe, as well as the environment. It is therefore time to raise our voice against the slow pace and lack of good faith and commitment on the part of nuclear-weapon States concerning the dismantling of their nuclear weapons.

Despite the concerted efforts of non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly in Africa, the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in 2015 requires the positive engagement of States parties to prepare for the tenth NPT Review Conference, which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty.

In that respect, the Group calls on all State parties to the NPT to work towards preserving the credibility and sustainability of the Treaty and achieving its universality and objectives through the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive outcome document. It also offers a platform to restate our commitment to the exceptional role of the NPT as vital to our collective resolve to eliminate nuclear weapons. The threat posed to humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons is unique.

In that regard, the African Group insists on the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States in the context of the Treaty, especially article VI.

The failure of the previous Review Conference remains fresh in our minds. It is therefore hoped that those disappointments will serve as a clear reminder of the need to renew the commitment to the overall objective of the Treaty. The African Group reaffirms the central role of nuclear weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT and their contribution to addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world.

The Treaties of Pelindaba, Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Bangkok, the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status all significantly contribute to the overall objective of bringing about a world free of nuclear weapons. They enhance global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute towards realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament.

In that context, the African Group remains committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which celebrated its tenth anniversary last year and among other things reaffirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for its territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear-explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting their testing on the entire space that constitutes the African continent.

The Group calls on all States invited to the Conference to actively participate in it in good faith as a practical step towards implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and creating equitable, sustainable and non-discriminatory security in the region. The Group stresses that the 1995 resolution remains an integral and essential part of the package, as well as the basis upon which consensus was reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995.

The Group would like to highlight the validity of those commitments and obligations pending their full implementation. In that context, the Group also expresses its support for draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.1, entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, and draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.2, entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”.

The African Group underscores the importance of the peaceful use 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 African Group emphasizes the humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons at this session, and in particular its serious concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use or detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or as a deliberate act.

In that context, the African Group strongly supports all efforts aimed at the total elimination and delegitimization of nuclear weapons, including the anticipated entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Group also congratulates Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Nigeria on their recently ratification of the Treaty. It is hoped that nuclear-weapon States and those under the so-called nuclear umbrella will also seize the opportunity to sign and ratify the Treaty in pursuit of the goal of a nuclear-free world.

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. In that context, 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 limiting the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

The Group welcomes the convening of the eleventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York on 25 September 2019, and supports the international community, which has remained committed to promoting the CTBT. 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 Group remains deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread.

The African Group welcomes the progress made in the context of the Open-Ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications. The African Group will submit two draft resolutions that have undergone technical updates and for which it will seek the support of all delegations — draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.10, entitled “African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty” and draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.11, entitled “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

Mr. Barman (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on all agenda items with respect to disarmament and international security. At the outset, CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We wish to extend our sincerest congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your and their election and to assure you of CARICOM’s full support throughout this session. We would also

like to place on record our appreciation for the work done by your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sacha Llorentty Solíz of Bolivia, for effectively guiding our work during his tenure as Chair of the First Committee at its seventy-fourth session.

As we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization, CARICOM underscores its appreciation for the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament, entitled *Securing our Common Future, An Agenda for Disarmament*, and its priority areas of disarmament to save humankind, disarmament to save lives and disarmament for future generations. We fully support the view of the Secretary-General that,

“[D]isarmament and arms control measures can help ensure national and human security in the twenty-first century and must be an integral part of our collective security system.” (*Securing our Common Future, An Agenda for Disarmament*, p. vii).

For us in CARICOM, disarmament is about preventing and eliminating violence, supporting sustainable development and upholding the value of humanity. We believe that there is a direct correlation between disarmament and development and our commitment to disarmament is therefore anchored in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs). We remain cognizant of the valuable contribution that the Committee can make not only to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 16 but also to the attainment of SDG 5.2 on eliminating violence against women and girls.

The advent of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic, together with rapidly evolving security threats, including but not limited to transnational organized crime and its attendant cross-border activities, has undoubtedly hindered our region's ability to achieve the SDGs.

That challenge has been made more manifest as our limited resources are now realigned to ensure the health and safety of all our citizens. Illegal firearms feature in an alarmingly high number of the crimes of violence and homicides committed, often resulting in socioeconomic consequences and unimaginable suffering for many families in our region. The increasing proliferation of small arms and light weapons not only accounts for the significant loss of lives but also affects the young and vulnerable, who so often harm themselves by becoming the perpetrators of acts of violence.

Although we have crafted regional solutions to tackle those problems, we remain cognizant of the need for cooperation at the multilateral level. In that regard, CARICOM fully subscribes to the object and purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We firmly believe that the ATT is an essential framework for addressing the menace of the illicit arms trade and we maintain that for the ATT to be a success it must be implemented in good faith by all parties, including the major manufacturers, exporters and importers of conventional weapons.

CARICOM continues to underscore the importance of the United Nations 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 in all its aspects. We welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/75/78) on that issue and on the assistance provided to States to curb that activity, which among other things provides an overview of small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and international levels.

We also appreciate the report's inclusion of an overview of good practices, lessons learned and recommendations on preventing and combating the diversion and illicit international transfer of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized recipients. We look forward to the convening of the rescheduled 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 in 2021.

CARICOM notes with concern the increased threat of cybercrime in the era of COVID-19, given the increased reliance on digital platforms. According to the Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015-2019: Repositioning CARICOM, cybercrime negatively impacts national security and severely impedes the socioeconomic development of CARICOM States. In that regard, the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security has embarked on a strategy to boost resilience in the Caribbean region by utilizing a number of pathways, including but not limited to public awareness and building sustainable capacity.

In addition, the CARICOM Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Action Plan seeks to address the cybersecurity vulnerabilities in each participating CARICOM country and establish a practical,

harmonized standard of practices, systems and expertise for cybersecurity. It also seeks to build the required capacity and infrastructure to allow for the timely detection, investigation and prosecution of cybercrime and explore possible linkages to other forms of criminal activity.

Therefore, strengthening cybersecurity is not only seen as a strategy to achieve technological resilience but is also linked to strategies for achieving social resilience and citizen security. CARICOM is therefore in full support of the work of the current Open-Ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security on articulating norms and behaviours to promote peace and security at the global level. In that regard, CARICOM looks forward to participating in the next substantive session to be held in 2021.

It is indeed regrettable that the international community continues to grapple with the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, 75 years after the founding of the United Nations. The disastrous consequences that would result from the use of the nuclear option today is a grim spectre that the world must strive to avoid at all costs. CARICOM continues to underscore that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons constitute a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

To that end, 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 therefore reiterate our call for the denuclearization of all areas of the world.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is central to the maintenance of international peace and security and has successfully limited the number of States that possess nuclear weapons. In addition, the NPT safeguards and provides assurance of the exclusively peaceful nature of civil nuclear programmes. The NPT is also essential to the preservation of an environment conducive to disarmament — yet the international community remains unable to undertake negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament 50 years after its entry into force. We therefore continue to encourage all

Member States to honour their commitments to uphold the important obligations conferred upon them under the NPT.

The adoption of the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons in 2017 by a majority of States challenged the perception that disarmament is the neglected goal of the United Nations. CARICOM member States joined like-minded States in the negotiation of the historic Treaty and welcomed its adoption. We are pleased that following its opening for signature on 20 September 2017, there are to date 84 signatory States and 46 States parties to the Treaty. We remain optimistic that the Treaty will enter into force sooner rather than later.

CARICOM's long-standing commitment to working in a multilateral environment to address the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction is underscored by its ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We continue to emphasize that our regional progress with respect to the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is inextricably linked to our economic viability.

CARICOM acknowledges the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in strengthening its capacity through the sharing of best practices and transfer of technology and in providing specialized training in emergency response to the deliberate or accidental use of chemical agents, respectively. We place on record our sincere appreciation to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for the valuable, practical work that it has undertaken in many spheres of disarmament within CARICOM member States.

CARICOM also acknowledges the important role of civil society in the field of disarmament and international security. We value our partnership with the members of civil society and commit to continuing our collaboration with them in order to advance the goal of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Before I conclude, I will offer a few remarks in my national capacity. Trinidad and Tobago will once

again sponsor the draft resolution entitled “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control” (A/C.1/75/L.21). We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/75/133) on Member States’ implementation of resolution 73/46 on that important initiative. We also take special note of the actions being taken at the national and regional levels, as well as within the United Nations system, to promote the participation of women in all decision-making processes on matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Once again, we look forward to the support of the Committee for the adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.21 and reiterate our commitment to gender equality, disarmament and arms control.

Mrs. Moldoisaeva (Kyrgyzstan): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia — the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and my own country, the Kyrgyz Republic, currently acting as Chair of the Treaty.

Initially, the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia was proposed by Uzbekistan at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, held in 1993 (see A/48/PV.6). The proposal was further discussed at an international conference on the theme “Central Asia — a zone free of nuclear weapons”, held in Tashkent in September 1997. Motivated by the desire to contribute meaningfully to systematic and consistent efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally and with the ultimate goal of eliminating such weapons and achieving general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, the Central Asian States signed the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia in September 2006.

The Treaty was signed in the city of Semipalatinsk, where in 1991 one of the world’s largest nuclear-test sites had been closed. It entered into force on 21 March 2009 and represented an important step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and promoting cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It also signified the advancement of cooperation in the environmental rehabilitation and recovery of territories affected by radioactive contamination, and therefore constitutes an important measure for enhancing regional and international peace and security.

In October 2009, the first consultative meeting of the States parties to the Treaty was held in Ashgabat. Further consultations have been organized regularly in the various capitals of the Central Asian States. Those meetings have identified joint activities to be undertaken by the States parties in the region in order to ensure the fulfilment of their obligations as set out in the Treaty and to develop cooperation on disarmament issues with other United Nations States Members and international bodies. My country has been entrusted to serve as the depositary of both the Treaty and its Protocol and is faithfully fulfilling those functions. Kyrgyzstan is also the coordinator of the Zone for 2020.

Last year, we were pleased to announce the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Central Asian Treaty, and we will continue resolutely to fulfil its mandate. The Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone is distinguished by a number of characteristics.

First, the Zone includes a State that previously possessed nuclear weapons.

Secondly, it is the first nuclear-weapon-free zone established in the northern hemisphere.

Thirdly, it is the first time that a nuclear-weapon-free zone has been created in a region that shares a long border with two States possessing nuclear weapons. Another distinctive feature of the Treaty is the fact that its parties are required to conclude agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on implementing comprehensive safeguards pursuant to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The States parties were also obliged to add an additional protocol to their respective safeguards agreements with the IAEA and pledged to comply with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. We regard those provisions as the first line of defence against nuclear terrorism.

Lastly, among the innovative features of the Zone, there are provisions under which the parties agree to assist efforts towards the environmental rehabilitation of territories contaminated as a result of past activities, which are related to the development, production or storage of nuclear weapons and other nuclear-explosive devices, in particular uranium mill tailings storage sites and nuclear-test sites. Therefore, building such strong guarantees of peace and security at both the

regional and global levels lays a strong foundation for sustainable development, cooperation and progress for humankind.

On 6 May 2014, the five nuclear-weapon States — France, China, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America — signed the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which provided negative security assurances. That was the first time a protocol to a nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty was signed simultaneously by the five nuclear-weapon States.

That accomplishment marked an important milestone for enhancing both regional security in Central Asia and a global nuclear non-proliferation regime. By ratifying the Protocol, the five nuclear-weapon States will undertake legally binding obligations not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the States parties to the Treaty. To date, the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the French Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have ratified the Protocol, and we express the hope for its earliest possible ratification by the United States.

With regard to the Protocol, we recall paragraph 59 of resolution S-10/2, "Final document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly", which urges the nuclear-weapon States to pursue efforts to conclude, as appropriate, effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We also refer to resolution 73/58, "Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia", adopted by consensus by the General Assembly on 5 December 2018, which in paragraph 2 calls on the nuclear-weapon States to take measures for the early ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia.

We look forward to a productive discussion during this session of the First Committee on enhancing global security, promoting further cooperation and sustaining peace and prosperity throughout the world.

I would like to note that the updated annual draft resolution entitled "Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia" (A/C.1/75/L.56) will once again be proposed on behalf of the States parties to the Treaty. We therefore call on all Member States to endorse the draft resolution. Their valuable support will demonstrate the importance of the sincere intentions and aspirations of the Central Asian States to achieve

a nuclear-weapon-free world and the important role of the Central Asian Zone in ensuring international peace and security.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that, for the States of Central Asia, the establishment of a zone was a practical necessity driven by the need to ensure that the people of our region will never again suffer the consequences of a nuclear arms race.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Gonzato (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its States members. The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania and the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina align themselves with this statement.

We are concerned at the deteriorating security environment and the continued erosion of the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. In that regard, we call on all States to uphold international norms, fully implement their obligations and commitment to restore dialogue and trust, and promote transparency and confidence-building measures.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the EU welcomes the significant contribution it has made to international peace, security and stability. We should step up our efforts to ensure the successful outcome of the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The NPT is a historic success and the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, and its full implementation is crucial. The EU strongly supports all three pillars of the NPT and will continue to promote the comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of the action plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference. We stress the need to implement all obligations and commitments under the NPT.

The EU welcomes the various initiatives, including the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and its Stepping Stones initiative, as an important contribution towards a sustainable outcome of the NPT Review Conference. We acknowledge the increased

attention given to risk reduction during the current NPT review cycle in that and other forums.

The EU recalls that the two nuclear-weapon States with the largest arsenals hold a special responsibility, and we will continue to encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to their arsenals, including strategic, non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, and to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, risk reduction, including strategic and nuclear risk reduction measures, verification activities and reporting. We welcome the strategic stability dialogue being held between the Russian Federation and the United States in Vienna and Helsinki.

Given its expiration in early February 2021, we strongly call for the extension of the New START Treaty as well as negotiations of broader follow-on agreements. In that regard, the EU welcomes the increased transparency shown by some nuclear-weapon States concerning their doctrines and the nuclear weapons they possess and calls on others to do likewise. We encourage China to actively contribute to that process.

Promoting universal adherence to, and the entry into force of, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a top priority for the EU. All EU member States have ratified the CTBT and are abiding by its obligations. We urge all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the CTBT without any preconditions or further delay. In the meantime, we call on all States to abide by a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosion and to refrain from taking any action that would defeat the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

The EU has become a supporter of the 10 actions of the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament, entitled *Securing our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, and in that context we will devote attention to promoting the universalization and entry into force of the CTBT; supporting nuclear disarmament verification activities, including the convening of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament in 2021; and the start of immediate negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

As the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) celebrates its fortieth anniversary, the EU and its States members highly value the Institute's role and work as a stand-alone, autonomous institution of the disarmament machinery that produces high-quality and impartial research and implements initiatives that can help build a common understanding and move disarmament processes forward. The EU underlines the necessity of providing a more stable and sustainable financial basis for UNIDIR, as proposed in draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.37, entitled "Fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research", co-sponsored by France and Germany.

The EU reaffirms its resolute commitment to, and continued support for, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We deeply regret the 2018 withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the subsequent reimposition of previously lifted United States sanctions. We call on all countries to support the full implementation of the agreement. The EU continues to uphold its JCPOA commitments, including on sanctions lifting.

The EU remains gravely concerned about Iran's continued accumulation of low-enriched uranium — currently more than tenfold in excess of the JCPOA limit — and the fact that its maximum enrichment level is above the limit set by the JCPOA. We also remain very concerned about the continued enrichment at Fordow and the expansion of Iran's centrifuge research and development activities.

All the activities mentioned here are inconsistent with the JCPOA and have severe proliferation implications. We therefore strongly urge Iran to refrain from any further actions that are inconsistent with its JCPOA commitments and return to full JCPOA implementation without delay. We also strongly support the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) undertaken to clarify all open questions.

The reaffirmation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2020 of its intention to retain and further develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes undermines international work for building trust and establishing lasting peace and security on the Korean peninsula. The repeated ballistic missile launches that occurred earlier in the year violated multiple Security Council resolutions.

We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay and return to compliance with its obligations under the NPT and the IAEA safeguards. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocations and take concrete steps towards building trust and confidence and abandoning all its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner in order to pave the way for a lasting peace and denuclearization through peaceful means. Until that happens, we will strictly enforce existing sanctions and call on all other United Nations States Members to do the same.

The continued non-compliance of some Member 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 the established norms.

It is imperative to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of chemical attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic. The EU reiterates that the use of chemical weapons constitutes a serious breach of international law. We denounce the Syrian Arab Republic's continued violation of its obligations as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force, as concluded by the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on 8 April.

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the assassination attempt on the life of Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned in Russia by a military chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group, as confirmed by the OPCW on the basis of analysis conducted at two of its designated laboratories. The Russian Government must do its utmost to disclose the circumstances of that crime in full transparency. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons must not and will not be tolerated.

The European Union also calls on the Russian Federation's authorities to fully cooperate with the OPCW to ensure an impartial international investigation and to bring those responsible to justice. We reiterate our full confidence in the technical expertise, objectivity,

impartiality and independence of the OPCW Technical Secretariat. The European Union calls for a resolute joint international response and reserves the right to take appropriate action.

We are dismayed by the repeated attempts by a few States to challenge the authority and integrity of international organizations, such as the OPCW, which are fulfilling their duties in the service of the international community in a professional, objective and impartial manner.

The EU also reaffirms its strong support for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons — the only existing framework that provides for an investigation of the alleged use of biological weapons, which has successfully worked in the past.

We remain strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Without excluding a legally binding instrument in future, we believe that voluntary measures constitute a pragmatic way forward at the moment. We especially encourage further international cooperation on norms of responsible behaviour in outer space and in that regard appreciate the submission of draft resolution A/C.1/75/L.66, entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities".

The EU and its States members support a free, open, stable and secure cyberspace in which human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are upheld and apply online as they are upheld and apply offline. We remain concerned about the rise in malicious cyberactivity by State and non-State actors alike.

The increased attention devoted to cybersecurity at the United Nations, including the resumption of the discussions on cyberissues within the Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security, is an opportunity to further advance and implement the strategic framework for conflict prevention, stability, cooperation and capacity-building and to ensure responsible State behaviour in cyberspace.

We therefore stress the importance of focusing in 2021 on the work currently under way in those

important processes. We warmly welcome the growing cross-regional support for a programme of action on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace that provides a way back to a consensus on cyberissues within the First Committee.

The European Union stands united in its support for the universal ban on anti-personnel mines. We appeal to all actors to refrain from the production, stockpiling, trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines and strongly condemn their use anywhere, anytime and by any actor. All EU member States have joined the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and we urge all States that have not yet done so to join the Convention without delay, or as an interim step to comply with the norms of the Convention.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions will celebrate its tenth anniversary at the second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The EU supports the Convention's humanitarian goal and calls on all actors to refrain from the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions and fully observe the principles of international humanitarian law. We welcome the ongoing consultation process, which Ireland launched with the aim of contributing to the elaboration of a political declaration to address the humanitarian harm arising from the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

The EU supports efforts to universalize and strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and stresses the importance of compliance with all its provisions and annexed protocols. We welcome the outcome of the 2019 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention, notably the progress on endorsing the 11 guiding principles and the start of the 2020 Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. Ahead of the sixth Review Conference of the CCW, to be held in 2021, we will support the Group in the clarification, consideration and development of aspects of the normative and operational framework for emerging technologies in the area of lethal weapons.

We emphasize that human beings must make the decisions with regard to the use of lethal force, exert

control over the lethal weapons systems they use and remain accountable for decisions concerning the use of force in order to ensure compliance with international law, in particular international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

We call on all Member States, in particular the major arms exporters, to join the Arms Trade Treaty, which is the only legally binding international instrument of its kind.

Supporting and promoting gender equality and the full empowerment of women is at the heart of the European Union's policies, internally and externally. In that regard, under the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament, the EU is a supporter of actions 36 and 37. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, which provides us with the opportunity to further reflect on how to effectively mainstream gender-relevant considerations in United Nations disarmament work.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by the representative of Mexico.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the Conference Room.

The Chair (*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 on Monday, 12 October at 6 p.m. All delegations wishing to take the floor should make every effort to inscribe on the list before the deadline.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held this afternoon at 3 p.m. sharp in this Conference Room. We shall continue with the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items, and I once again appeal to all delegations to be punctual so as to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.