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Seventy-fifth session

First Committee

3rd meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Santos Maraver(Spain)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 94 to 110 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I open the floor, I would like to remind delegations once again that the rolling list of speakers for this segment of our work will close on Monday, 12 October at 6 p.m. All delegations intending to take the floor should inscribe their names on the list before that deadline.

I would further remind delegations that I am counting on their cooperation to limit statements to 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity and 13 minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations. Statements may include general views, specific issues of priority that require attention and the presentation of proposals to be discussed.

I encourage representatives with longer statements to deliver a summarized version and provide the full text of their statement to be uploaded to the eStatements web portal. I would also encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed to allow for adequate interpretation.

Mr. Kvalheim (Norway): Let me start by thanking you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership in working out the modalities for this year's First Committee session. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic poses new challenges to our work. Nonetheless, it is important that we are able to conduct our business to the best of our ability. We are confident that we will be able to do so within the framework that you have drawn up for us.

Norway is fully committed to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which can be achieved only through the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of such weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of our common efforts in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and applications. Norway is working towards the universalization and full implementation of the NPT. We support the effort to hold the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT as soon as possible.

On 25 February in Berlin, a group of 16 countries issued a ministerial declaration on advancing nuclear disarmament that identified 22 concrete actions — or stepping stones — for that purpose. We encourage all States to sign up to those actions.

We also welcome the United States initiative on creating an environment for nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament verification is vital for making progress on nuclear disarmament, and we are encouraged to see that work on it is gaining momentum and an increasing number of States are engaging substantively in that area.

For this year's Committee, we are proposing a draft decision on nuclear disarmament verification together with partner countries to keep the topic on the agenda of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. Similar decisions were adopted in 2017 and 2018, and we hope that all States will support the draft decision.

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>).



Norway is advocating the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The comprehensive safeguards agreements and its additional protocol constitute the global verification standard that enables the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor and evaluate compliance with obligations under the NPT.

The nuclear weapons and missiles programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remain completely unacceptable. We stand firmly behind the relevant Security Council resolutions and call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to meaningful negotiations.

The fact that Iran does not observe the limitations set by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is of deep concern. We urge Iran to return to full compliance with the agreement and to cooperate fully with the IAEA on all its safeguards obligations.

Dialogue on arms control and strategic stability between major Powers plays a crucial role in promoting global security. We welcome the ongoing talks on arms control and the New START Treaty between the United States and Russia. The New START Treaty is important to ensure strategic stability and promote the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We therefore encourage an extension of the current agreement with a view to expanding it. We also support the invitation from the United States to China to participate in such a dialogue.

Norway condemns the attack using a Novichok nerve agent against the Russian citizen Alexei Navalny. We strongly urge the Russian Federation to investigate the matter in the most extensive and transparent way.

We remain deeply concerned about the continued possession of chemical weapons and production facilities by the Syrian regime.

We are appalled by the recurrent use of chemical weapons in recent years. We continue to vigorously condemn any use of chemical weapons. Any breach of the global non-use norm is unacceptable, and we demand an end to impunity for the perpetrators of those horrific crimes. Norway reiterates its full support for the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its Director-General.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention remains a crucial pillar of the global disarmament architecture. We are concerned about the difficult financial situation of the Convention.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased our reliance on information and communications technologies. We are seeing a continuous rise in malicious cyberactivity from both State and non-State actors. Lately, we have witnessed such actors even taking advantage of the global pandemic, including by targeting critical infrastructure that is essential for mitigating the crisis. That is unacceptable and shows the urgent need for joint action by all States. A globally accessible, free, open and secure cyberspace is more than ever fundamental to how the world operates.

We welcome the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security. It is important that they be allowed to conclude their efforts in an orderly and constructive manner. Based on the outcomes of both processes, we should consider how to further advance the agenda of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace at next year's session of the First Committee.

Activities in outer space and the global infrastructure for their support are also of relevance to global and national security. Norway remains committed to preventing an arms race in outer space. The initiative by the United Kingdom for the adoption of a draft resolution on reducing space threats aims to lay the groundwork for potential discussions on responsible behaviour and threat perception and management in outer space. Such discussions should form a substantive contribution to preventing an arms race in outer space for the benefit of all, including space-faring States and States supporting or relying on space-based services.

Landmines and cluster munitions kill and maim indiscriminately long after the end of a conflict. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has been hugely successful, yet challenges remain. Recently, we have seen a worrisome rise in the use of improvised landmines and related injuries. It is essential to address those challenges under the framework of the Convention, with improved risk education constituting an important element. The action plan adopted in Oslo last year provides a reference point and guidelines for implementation. We look forward to the new, effective

action plan for the Convention on Cluster Munitions to be adopted in Lausanne later this year.

We must continue to combat all irresponsible and illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. The Arms Trade Treaty is gaining valuable ground. Norway continues to support efforts towards the effective implementation of the Treaty in order to establish universal norms for a responsible international arms trade.

We underline the importance of incorporating a gender perspective into all arms control efforts.

Norway strongly supports The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We were pleased to welcome three new subscribing States during our chairmanship from 2019 to 2020 and will continue to work for its full universalization.

Mr. Popolizio Bardales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your chairmanship of the work of the First Committee. You can count on my delegation's support and commitment towards a successful outcome for the Committee's deliberations.

This very special year for the United Nations — as we commemorate 75 years since its creation and prepare for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — has been overshadowed by the impact of the pandemic that has severely affected the world. The effects of the coronavirus disease, in terms of both health and the socioeconomic situation, have highlighted our vulnerabilities and the need to cooperate closely and in a coordinated manner to address them. The situation also prompts us to reflect on unnecessary military expenditures on the sophistication and development of weapons, to the detriment of the public health and economic revival of our countries.

As is well known, Peru is a peace-loving country with a long tradition of promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Our principled position has led us to participate in all related international regimes and all multilateral forums, advocating for general and complete disarmament as well as efficient and effective arms control.

We are actively participating in that context in the work of the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, as we are convinced that its effective, conscientious and transparent implementation will

contribute decisively and directly to preventing and eliminating the illicit trade in conventional arms and preventing their diversion to the black market.

Likewise, in accordance with our firm stance in support of strict and consistent control of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, we have been working resolutely to implement 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. We wish to reiterate our commitment in that regard to the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and to continue to work towards the adoption of legally binding instruments related to the marking, registration and tracing of such weapons.

Nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is another issue of great interest to my country, as the primary goal we must strive for is to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. Peru considers that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. The only guarantee against the grave threat to humankind posed by nuclear weapons is their urgently needed prohibition and total elimination.

We were accordingly among the first States to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons because we consider the consequences of the use of such weapons to be catastrophic. Moreover, we do not believe the Treaty will negatively affect the current disarmament and non-proliferation regime — on the contrary, it will strengthen and complement it and in particular will contribute to the implementation of article VI of the NPT.

Peru also believes that the NPT will be strengthened if the remaining nuclear arsenals are reduced. We therefore urge nuclear-weapon States to comply with article VI and bolster the regime by adopting concrete measures. In relation to the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is also an essential instrument. We therefore emphasize the importance of advancing its universality and early entry into force and urge the States listed in annex 2 to the Treaty to sign and ratify it, as their ratification of that instrument is indeed vital.

In line with our principled position on the nuclear non-proliferation regime, we note with deep concern the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the non-proliferation regime and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In the same context, we hope that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran will not be further eroded and that all parties to the agreement will honour their commitments.

The deterioration of the non-proliferation regime is not unique to nuclear weapons. Lately, we have noted the violations and challenges that confront the chemical weapons non-proliferation regime. In that framework and since the establishment of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we have expressed our commitment to the elimination and non-proliferation of that type of weapon.

We therefore deplore the recurrent use of toxic chemicals as weapons in some countries and reiterate our condemnation of such incidents, which undoubtedly constitute a violation of the spirit of the Convention and an attack on international peace and security. We fully support non-impunity for the perpetrators of those criminal acts.

With regard to the disarmament machinery, my delegation considers the reactivation of the Conference on Disarmament to be a matter of priority, since that forum should be the principal negotiating body for multilateral agreements on matters relating to disarmament and arms control. My country urges all members of the Conference to demonstrate greater political will by adopting and implementing a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Peru also regrets that the United Nations Disarmament Commission did not hold substantive meetings this year. We urge States to put aside their differences and resume substantive discussions next year.

In the current context, new and rapidly proliferating technologies are causing contemporary conflicts to evolve and posing new challenges to international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as to the maintenance of international peace and security.

I refer in particular to unmanned aerial vehicles, which are used as a weapon of war by covert armed forces and non-State actors, and to lethal autonomous weapons systems. In the first case, we consider it imperative for the international community to regulate the use, transfer and proliferation of unmanned aerial vehicles. In the second case, there is an urgent need to define lethal autonomous weapons systems and identify their characteristics as a starting point for an international process for their regulation.

On a different note, this year it is once again my country's turn, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, to present the draft resolution entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean" (A/C.1/75/L.57), the headquarters of which is located in Lima. We trust that, as in previous years, we will have the valuable support of all delegations to ensure that the draft resolution is adopted by consensus.

Finally, I wish to reaffirm Peru's unwavering and solid commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. I therefore wish to reaffirm my delegation's determination to continue our best efforts to contribute to the work of the First Committee and the achievement of its objectives.

Mr. Srivihok (Thailand): The delegation of Thailand joins others in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. We have full confidence in the Bureau under your leadership and extend our support for a successful seventy-fifth session.

Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

A few weeks ago, in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), we all pledged to uphold the international arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and agreements. We also committed ourselves to reinvigorating multilateralism and international cooperation. Thailand believes that, in order to fulfil our pledge, all Member States must work together, engage in constructive dialogue and explore common approaches to disarmament and

non-proliferation, even in the current challenging geopolitical landscape.

Nuclear disarmament remains Thailand's priority, as it forms a crucial pillar for international peace and security. We stand firm in our non-proliferation commitments. At the same time, we call upon all Member States to work in good faith in the pursuit of nuclear arms control and disarmament.

We welcome the good news that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is close to the required 50 ratifications for its entry into force. The Treaty is a clear demonstration of the fact that multilateralism reinforces momentum on the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. As we approach that historic milestone, we recall that our efforts do not end with the Treaty's entry into force. Much work still lies ahead of us to translate the text of the Treaty into the reality of implementation.

Meanwhile, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains of crucial significance for the maintenance of peace in the Middle East and beyond. We call upon the parties to continue to cooperate in good faith and through diplomatic approaches in pursuit of a peaceful solution that is acceptable to all. We also call upon Iran to fully comply with the agreement and undertake the necessary actions to nurture and strengthen it.

We also urge all the parties concerned to resume peaceful dialogue towards the realization of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean peninsula, and we reiterate our commitment to the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Thailand also looks forward to participating in the tenth Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which has been rescheduled for next year due to the coronavirus disease situation. We call upon Member States to constructively engage in dialogue in advance of the Conference with a view to producing a meaningful, tangible and sustainable outcome.

At the same time, Thailand attaches the utmost importance to universal compliance with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the important work of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as nuclear-weapon-free zones. Other weapons of mass destruction, namely, chemical and biological weapons, still require our full attention and cooperation. Thailand calls upon

Member States to fully comply with their obligations under the relevant conventions.

The illicit trade, proliferation and trafficking in conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, continues to pose a serious threat due to their inextricable linkage to transnational crime, terrorism and human rights violations. Thailand therefore attaches great importance to the role of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in curbing their proliferation and promoting responsible State behaviour. We very much look forward in that regard to a successful seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in 2021.

As a country that continues to be affected by anti-personnel landmines, Thailand attaches great importance to addressing the related humanitarian consequences and fulfilling our commitment under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Since August 2019, we have fulfilled our obligations under article 4 of the Convention by disposing of all retained landmines kept for training purposes. We are currently focusing on mine-clearance operations in order to complete our demining tasks by 2023.

Rapid technological developments continue to redefine the nature of our disarmament work. Outer space demands greater attention, and an arms race in outer space must be prevented at all costs. Member States must exercise good faith, transparency and the utmost restraint to ensure the peaceful use of outer space.

We also need to focus more on the rapid advancements in telecommunications technologies, which touch every aspect of our lives. While we appreciate the robust benefits for our people that derive from information and communications technologies, the malicious use of such technologies can gravely affect international security. In that regard, Thailand appreciates the complementary roles played by the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security and by the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International security. Thailand stands ready to entertain all constructive ideas and proposals that contribute to safeguarding information and communications technologies from malicious activities.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Thailand is fully committed to the multilateral disarmament agenda. We believe that, while time may test our resolve and new challenges will continue to confront us, with firm resolution our work here will contribute to a more secure, stable and prosperous world.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein): Let me first express our deep gratitude to you, Mr. Chair, and your team, as well as to the Secretary and her team, for the very diligent work that has gone into the preparation of this year's First Committee under truly unprecedented circumstances due to the coronavirus disease pandemic. The solid organizational set-up has not only been important for the First Committee but has also been beneficial to other Committees in their preparations. We have full confidence in you and in the Bureau to guide us to a successful conclusion of our work. Liechtenstein will support you in that regard as best we can.

The First Committee's mandate encompasses disarmament and international security. This year it meets at a time when people have perhaps never felt more insecure due to an ongoing pandemic, economic hardship, the impacts of climate change and also — very significantly — an unprecedented unravelling of international law in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The world is witnessing an increasingly unchecked arms race, both in traditional and emerging areas, as the increasingly aggressive postures of a few States negatively affect the security of all others. Europe's security has been further weakened by the announced withdrawal of the United States from the Open Skies Treaty, which is only the most recent in a line of now defunct arms control mechanisms. Outer space is at risk of rapid militarization, to the detriment of the important peaceful uses of space technology for sustainable development, information technology and connectivity. The flow of weapons into conflict areas continues unabated, at times in open violation of Security Council arms embargoes. At the same time, regional arms control agreements are under pressure.

In reaction to those developments, the First Committee is well-advised to overcome its traditional silo thinking by recognizing the larger context in which security questions should be addressed in today's world. Legal agreements in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation form an integral part of the international legal framework. Their erosion has

negative effects far beyond their field of application, by challenging the fundamental principle of the rule of law in international relations. Seventy-five years into the United Nations existence, it has once again become urgent and necessary to recall that the primacy of law and the prohibition on the use of force or its threat are the very core of the Charter of the United Nations.

The area with most visibly and rapidly eroding levels of security is that of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is defunct, a New START Treaty extension remains an open question and tensions over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action have reached another lamentable peak that, in addition to the precarious status of the agreement itself, risk undermining the integrity of Security Council sanctions regimes.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea shows no signs of moving towards compliance with Security Council resolutions, let alone taking verifiable steps towards nuclear disarmament, and the long-held taboo over the conduct of nuclear tests is being publicly undermined. With every announcement of plans to stock and modernize nuclear arsenals and lower thresholds for their use, the ultimate purpose of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) fades further into the distance.

The NPT once charted a course towards the elimination of nuclear weapons by making it illegal to acquire them. The lack of its implementation is read by some as an incentive to do the opposite. The nuclear arms race runs directly counter to the obligations of the nuclear-weapon States under its article VI, and thereby threatens the important gains achieved under the non-proliferation pillar. The balance that the NPT originally represented has been continuously shifted in a way that threatens the integrity of the Treaty as a whole. Restoring that balance should be the primary objective of the upcoming Review Conference. Liechtenstein will participate in the Conference with the aim of achieving a substantial result that builds on, and does not backtrack from, past agreements.

Nuclear weapons are not only an existential threat to our planet; their existence is also an inherent challenge to the rule of law. The most fundamental principles of international humanitarian law — necessity, proportionality and distinction — leave no space for the most destructive and indiscriminate weapons of all. The highest legal authority, the International Court

of Justice, in its landmark advisory opinion of 1996, advised States to that effect.

Liechtenstein strongly supports collective efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons and is committed to ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which it signed at the earliest possibility. The Treaty's imminent entry into force will create a much-needed international legal norm against nuclear weapons, thereby changing the legal framework for nuclear disarmament for good and bringing it in line with regimes for other weapons of mass destruction.

There are concerning trends of decreasing respect for international law with respect to other weapons of mass destruction. The absolute prohibition on the use of chemical weapons is openly violated in the Syrian conflict, undermining one of the strongest norms of customary international law. At the same time, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) faces increasing political pressure for implementing its mandate.

In addition, our societies are witnessing a new and aggravated threat from chemical weapons in the civilian context, notably through the reported use of the severe nerve agents known as Novichok, which must be urgently and fully investigated with a view to bringing those responsible to justice. While there is a continued broad consensus that violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention must be fully investigated and justice served, in practice many of those efforts face obstructionism and political attacks.

In that difficult context, Liechtenstein applauds the work of independent bodies such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 and the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team for their concrete and thorough contributions to holding perpetrators to account.

In recent years, we have seen the increasing militarization of cyberspace. Liechtenstein welcomes the fact that cybersecurity is a solid part of the First Committee agenda through its subsidiary bodies, the expertly chaired 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.

Developments in artificial intelligence, pervasive data collection and manipulation, as well as militarized cyberattacks against critical infrastructure, including telecommunications networks, power grids, health programmes and political and judicial systems, undermine democratic norms and expose State institutions and their populations to great risk.

The prohibition on the use of force, except when authorized by the Security Council or carried out in self-defence, must be enforced in all its dimensions, including in cyberspace. Despite a common understanding that international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, fully applies to cyberspace, activities by States and other actors to move the domain of warfare to cyberspace meet with little consequence.

Liechtenstein has explored the role that the International Criminal Court (ICC) may play in the regulation of warfare as it evolves in the twenty-first century, by creating a council of advisers on the application of the Rome Statute to cyberwarfare. The council has extensively discussed how the Rome Statute's provisions defining the crimes under its jurisdiction, including the crime of aggression, apply to cyberattacks. The council's final report is scheduled to be presented at the ICC Assembly of States Parties later this year.

Liechtenstein supports a new regulatory framework for lethal autonomous weapons systems, in the form of legally binding standards to ensure a human component in the decision-making processes of such systems. An element of meaningful human control across the entire life cycle of lethal autonomous weapons systems is essential and helps to ensure compliance with applicable law, including international humanitarian law. The Alliance for Multilateralism has made an important political commitment to advance that agenda with its declaration on lethal autonomous weapons systems, which Liechtenstein fully supports.

In these times of strong nationalist tendencies and hostility towards cooperative and multilateralist approaches to disarmament, such initiatives are welcome vehicles to advance our common objectives. The history of the United Nations is shaped by coalitions of the willing — a reconciliatory perspective on the

seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations in the face of the difficult political odds of today.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): Egypt fully associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, by the representative of Cameroon on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

We gather today against the backdrop of an unprecedented global crisis that serves as a reminder of the urgency of achieving tangible progress on disarmament and international security. The coronavirus disease pandemic has exposed how fragile the international community can be, how interdependent we are and how irrational it is to continue directing invaluable and scarce resources to nuclear arsenals and arms races in several strategic domains. Those arms races do not increase the security of any nation but instead undermine the collective security of all, as well as the prospects for preserving international peace and achieving sustainable development.

Egypt has repeatedly expressed its grave concern regarding the rising levels of international tension in recent years and the alarming trend towards the return of an arms race, which no one can win and goes beyond nuclear weapons to include all types of strategic weapons, especially in connection with the weaponization of outer space, information and telecommunications technologies and other emerging technologies.

Any objective assessment of the progress made towards achieving the relevant agreed commitments undertaken within the United Nations since its establishment would clearly show massive gaps in the area of disarmament and international security, which is the first pillar of the United Nations. The lack of political will on the part of some States continues to block any substantial progress on realizing agreed goals and fulfilling agreed obligations and commitments. The continued reliance on nuclear deterrence by a handful of States can no longer be a morally or politically acceptable norm.

Furthermore, resistance to launching negotiations on legally binding instruments to regulate a number of strategic and emerging technologies and minimize their threats to international peace and security is depriving the United Nations and the international community

of valuable opportunities to rise to the aspirations of the peoples of the world and future generations. It is puzzling that we hear so many strong calls for a rules-based international order, while the proponents of such calls firmly resist the development of any rules in key strategic domains, especially in relation to emerging technologies.

The First Committee has always been the main vehicle for addressing issues related to disarmament and international security. As always, the Committee has before it a number of highly important agenda items and draft proposals. We all share a collective responsibility to ensure that we continue to strive towards the necessary progress and avoid squandering further opportunities.

Addressing the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament continues to be the most pressing priority. In that regard, the Committee has before it a number of important proposals that are aimed at renewing the determination of the United Nations to achieve the agreed goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and generating a positive signal in advance of the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Among the draft resolutions under the cluster “Nuclear weapons” is the annual draft resolution proposed by Egypt on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East (A/C.1/75/L.1) and the draft resolution proposed by the Arab Group on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East (A/C.1/75/L.2). Once again, we have opted to maintain the texts of those two important draft resolutions without any substantive amendments. We count on the continued support of all Member States for the two draft resolutions, and we specifically hope that consensus on the draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East will be restored in a manner that reflects the commitment of our partners to that internationally agreed obligation, especially since the text of the draft resolution remains unchanged since it was last adopted by consensus, in 2017.

In that context, Egypt strongly welcomes the successful 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, pursuant to decision 73/546, under the presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as well as the positive and promising outcomes of

that session as reflected in the report of the Secretary General (A/75/63) on the Conference. We call on all invited States to constructively participate in that important Conference, which aims to elaborate a treaty on the establishment of the zone by consensus.

Regarding the prevention of an arms race in outer space, Egypt and Sri Lanka have proposed their annual draft resolution (A/C.1/75/L.3), which stresses the need for practical measures, dialogue and negotiations on that increasingly important subject, while underscoring and reiterating the necessity of observing all previously agreed commitments in that strategic domain.

With regard to cybersecurity and the international security aspects of information and communications technologies, we strongly welcome the progress achieved thus far in the context of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, which was established by resolution 73/27. Such unprecedented progress in terms of laying down the commonalities and differences in a structured manner was mainly achieved thanks to the active participation of Member States and strong engagement by the relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

We are pleased to note that such a unique and inclusive United Nations process is yielding a promising emerging consensus, constructive new proposals on institutional dialogue and more elaborate rules on States' use of information and communications technologies, which build on international law and recommendations that have already been endorsed by the United Nations with a view to addressing rising threats and existing gaps.

We continue to attach importance to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which represents the only universally agreed framework on that topic. We look forward to successfully fulfilling the agreed mandate of the forthcoming seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held under the presidency of Kenya in 2021.

In conclusion, we certainly hope that the Committee will once more be able to demonstrate solidarity for the cause of disarmament and fulfil its mandate, in spite of these unique and unprecedented circumstances, by properly and responsibly addressing the issues before

it that continue to represent a pressing priority on the international agenda.

Mr. Lam Padilla (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We have full confidence in your leadership. Likewise, we extend a warm welcome to the other members of the Bureau. I assure you that you can count on the full cooperation of my delegation for the smooth conduct of the Committee's work.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Nicaragua on behalf of the States members of the Central American Integration System (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

We find ourselves in an international situation characterized by threats to international peace and security and aggravated by terrorist acts, among other things. Uncertainty also persists owing to the high risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors and the possibility of a new nuclear incident. Spending on armaments continues to rise, while at the same time it is claimed that there are insufficient resources to combat hunger, poverty and disease.

While States must strive to prepare for all possible challenges to the security of their populations, there is no doubt that hundreds of thousands of people are paying the price in 2020 for a disproportionate focus on military requirements. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is evidence that in many respects weapons provide no guarantee of security. Even nuclear weapons — the most expensive weapons — have not been able to save countries from the effects of the pandemic.

According to publicly available statistics, \$73 billion was spent on nuclear weapons worldwide in 2019. It is clear that a small fraction of such spending in the health sector would have made our societies better prepared and more resistant to a pandemic such as the coronavirus disease pandemic.

In addition, nuclear-weapon States are qualitatively improving their weapons, and we are concerned by their withdrawal from international arms control treaties. Their actions — in particular the suspension of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the lack of agreement between the parties with regard to seeking

an extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty — greatly detract from multilateralism efforts and demonstrate a lack of interest in fulfilling nuclear disarmament obligations.

Guatemala urges the First Committee, in its work, to fully endorse the principles upon which it was established and proceed to take effective and action-oriented decisions that demonstrate the strong will of the international community to reaffirm multilateralism as the only way to achieve peaceful and sustainable societies. In its very first resolution (resolution 1 (I)), the General Assembly emphasized the importance of the goal of eliminating all atomic weapons, which are capable of causing collective mass destruction.

My country is firmly committed to the common goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and strongly advocates general and complete disarmament. Guatemala is therefore proud to be a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone.

My delegation reiterates its deep concern regarding the threat to humankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and their use or threat of use, as well as the humanitarian and environmental impact they represent. The only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their prohibition and total elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner and within a clearly defined time frame.

I wish to highlight the intrinsic symbiotic relationship between international security and climate change, as one being at risk can exacerbate the other. The pollution of ecosystems caused by nuclear testing and nuclear waste, let alone the new use of a nuclear weapon, will have consequences for flora, fauna and humankind in general for generations to come. Climate change is usually viewed through the lens of development, but its implications for international peace and security must also be given due consideration.

In keeping with those principles, we welcome the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which constitutes a milestone and a firm step towards nuclear disarmament. Guatemala signed that instrument and is currently in the final internal phase of its ratification. My country reiterates its position that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons complements the objectives of the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and strengthens its three fundamental pillars.

We participated in three preparatory committees for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and, although it has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we look forward to the discussions and outcomes of the preparatory meetings being reflected in the Review Conference. That will help to translate commitments into concrete actions, which are increasingly urgent and necessary in the disarmament architecture.

We reaffirm our strong condemnation of any nuclear test, no matter where or by whom. At the same time, we call on the eight countries listed in annex 2 to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to accede to that instrument in order to enable its entry into force as soon as possible.

We also call for the advancement of a fissile material cut-off treaty in order to prohibit its production and ensure the elimination of stockpiled material, thereby eliminating the necessary element for the production of nuclear weapons.

On another note, my delegation expresses its concern regarding a possible arms race in outer space, taking into account that outer space could become a theatre of military confrontation. Such actions would contravene the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as being excessively tragic for human life.

With respect to chemical and biological weapons, my delegation strongly condemns the use of such weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. There is no justification whatsoever for their use, which must not go unpunished. It is in the hands of the international community to hold those who resort to using those weapons to account through the mechanisms that the international community itself legitimately and legally created for that purpose.

One of the priorities of my Government's agenda is citizen security, which throughout our country's history has been seriously affected by armed violence. That scourge is strengthened by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which threatens the protection and physical and moral integrity of populations and hinders the creation of an environment with adequate conditions to promote comprehensive and sustainable human development. We believe that the Arms Trade

Treaty is an apt instrument capable of guiding States in the effective regulation of the international arms trade, providing clear guidelines to prevent the diversion of arms to illicit markets.

My delegation once again reiterates its satisfaction with the outcome report of the third Review Conference 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. We are particularly pleased to see that the document reflects the issue of ammunition, the gender perspective, the complementarity of the Programme of Action with other relevant instruments on that issue and the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We trust that, at the next Biennial Meeting of States, we will have an opportunity to assess the progress of the instrument.

It is important to note that, while we typically focus our attention on the use of conventional and non-conventional weapons in conflict in the classic dimensions of land, sea, air and space, today it is more than ever necessary to consider technological advances and cybersecurity issues. The COVID-19 pandemic has served to further highlight the fact that across the world the increasing proliferation of new information and communication technologies and the possibility of countless real-time transactions without borders has facilitated the mutation of security into new complex and dynamic scenarios that require global attention and cooperation.

As is the case in all countries, the increased use of information and communications technologies has become widespread in all sectors of our society. The new scenario has led to unprecedented development in the exchange of information and communications but at the same time implies new risks and threats that could affect the security of our populations. We therefore applaud the efforts in that regard of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace and the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

In conclusion, Guatemala calls on all States Members of the United Nations and recalls that the opportunity we have to live peacefully together on this planet depends on our actions and political goodwill. Seventy-five years after the founding of our

Organization, it is necessary that we aim our efforts at achieving a more sustainable world, protecting humankind from unnecessary suffering and securing the future of our generations to come.

Mr. Salovaara (Finland): Let me congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I assure you of the full support of my delegation.

In addition to the statements delivered by the observer of the European Union and the representative of Iceland on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2), allow me to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

The circumstances of our meeting this year are indeed quite exceptional, not only in terms of practical arrangements here in New York but also in terms of disarmament, diplomacy and multilateral cooperation overall. The pandemic has imposed severe restrictions on our work at a time when efforts to maintain international peace and security are needed more than ever.

Against that backdrop, it is all the more important that we take full advantage of the opportunity for direct dialogue provided by the current session of the First Committee. We must focus more than ever this year on what is most essential — securing existing commitments and ensuring their implementation in practice. To that end, dialogue and the trust it engenders are key.

Strengthening the international arms control architecture requires trust and confidence among States, assurance that agreements are complied with and accountability wherever that is not the case. It requires strong multilateral institutions and effective national implementation, supported by international capacity-building efforts. Advancing all those requirements should be our main aim this autumn.

What are the steps that we most urgently need to take? On nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, our focus must remain on ensuring a successful Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Despite practical constraints, work has continued in different forums to prepare the ground for concrete progress at the Review Conference. This session of the First Committee is an opportunity to review the results to date.

For progress on nuclear disarmament, ambition and realism are needed in equal measure. The Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament has managed to successfully combine both approaches. The result is a package of practical and achievable measures that we hope will gather broad support. The Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative has facilitated a new kind of dialogue and engagement among nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. We are pleased to participate in both initiatives and especially welcome the strong focus on risk reduction in both forums.

In a volatile environment, the predictability and stability that effective arms control instruments can bring is more important than ever. The New START Treaty, with its comprehensive transparency mechanisms, is a case in point. We welcome the ongoing dialogue between the United States and Russia and hope it will lead to concrete results, namely, the extension of the New START Treaty and continued dialogue on broader limitations, including on non-strategic nuclear weapons. We encourage China to join in the discussions on future arrangements.

Regarding chemical weapons, our most urgent priority is to uphold the norm against the use of chemical weapons and ensure that those who violate it are held to account. The attempted assassination of Alexei Navalny in Russia is yet another stark reminder of how chemical weapons continue to be used with blatant disregard for international law.

Earlier this year, the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) confirmed the responsibility of the Syrian regime for three attacks in Syria in 2017. We have condemned those attacks and all others — in Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom — in the strongest possible terms, but condemnation is not enough. Actions must have consequences. Those responsible must be held accountable.

The first step towards accountability is attribution. Over the past two years, the OPCW has diligently implemented the task given to it to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in a professional, impartial and objective manner. In that connection, the dedicated OPCW staff deserves our full support and respect. Instead, we have witnessed deliberate attempts to undermine the integrity of the

organization as a whole. That is simply unacceptable. Without strong institutions, there can be no effective treaty implementation. By undermining the independence of treaty organizations, we undermine the treaties themselves.

Going forward, it is our duty to ensure that the OPCW has the support and resources needed to implement its mandate in full, but even then the final responsibility for achieving accountability rests with the Security Council. We have yet to see the Council fully shoulder that responsibility.

On biological weapons, we should use the momentum created by the coronavirus disease pandemic to agree concrete measures to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. A first step should be to improve the implementation of the confidence-building mechanisms already in place under the Convention. We should also consider adopting additional transparency measures in order to increase trust and reduce the risk of dangerous misperceptions.

Raising the profile of conventional arms control is one of the many merits of the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament. On conventional arms, our task is clear: to ensure the effective implementation of commitments made under the various instruments, for which international assistance is often essential.

Finland is pleased to cooperate with United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on weapons and ammunition management and to support the valuable work of non-governmental organizations and civil society on small arms and light weapons, including by funding the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation. We are also currently preparing our first contribution to the new Saving Lives Entity initiative fund.

On the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), promoting national implementation and the universalization of the Treaty remain key priorities. With 110 States parties to date, progress on universalization has been remarkable. In terms of implementation, a continued focus on diversion is called for. The ATT also plays a pioneering role with regard to gender-based violence.

We are very pleased that the importance of combating gender-based violence and mainstreaming gender are being increasingly highlighted in the implementation of other arms control instruments as well. That is a key part of implementing our

commitments under Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). In its twentieth anniversary year, the women and peace and security agenda remains as relevant as ever and is increasingly recognized as such in the arms control sector.

In the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, our aim is an effective normative and operational framework adopted by consensus by all parties to the process. It is an ambitious aim, but one that Finland will fully strive for. The 11 guiding principles are an excellent basis on which States can continue building a practical outcome. With patience and flexibility on all sides, we will be able to reach an outcome that all parties can commit to. We should strive for nothing less.

A new pragmatic approach is also needed to address the growing risk to space security. We need to come together to jointly define what constitutes risks and threats in outer space and seek practical means to address them. To that end, an open and inclusive dialogue is needed, with the participation of all States, whether space-faring or not. That is why we are pleased to support the new initiative on reducing space threats through responsible behaviour.

With our overall objective in mind — strengthening the rules-based international system and the institutions that work to uphold it — we look forward to working with you, Mr. Chair, and all delegations to make this session a success.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your well-deserved election as Chair. We assure you of our full support.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

The pandemic is setting back our efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation in all areas. It has further complicated the prevailing global security environment, which is characterized by increasing polarization and intensifying conflicts. All of those factors combined undermine our efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The pandemic should prompt us to redouble our efforts and continue pursuing forward-looking, action-oriented outcomes to implement the obligations

under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The urgent need for significant and tangible progress is underlined by the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and the socioeconomic costs of perpetuating them. My delegation wishes to highlight the following.

The Philippines continues to support the 13 practical steps and the 64-point action plan agreed upon at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT, respectively. The implementation of article VI of the NPT is crucial, and in that regard action 5 of the 2010 action plan could contribute towards accelerated concrete progress on nuclear disarmament.

We reiterate our call for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban-Treaty.

We are concerned by the deepening mistrust and widening of the divide among States parties, the modernization and refinement of nuclear-weapon capabilities and the lowering of thresholds for the use of nuclear weapons.

We call on nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments under the NPT with sincerity and without conditions. We also call on the relevant parties to reconsider their withdrawal or suspension of obligations from critical landmark agreements.

The Philippines commends the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its invaluable role in accelerating and enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity. In particular, the Philippines attaches great importance to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme as the Agency's main delivery vehicle for the transfer of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology to developing countries.

The Philippines emphasizes the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in reinforcing the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework. Stronger cooperation and coordination between and among them, as well as with nuclear-weapon States, would help affirm that important role.

At the upcoming NPT Review Conference, we hope that Member States take the opportunity to constructively engage and address outstanding issues without delay to ensure the Conference's success.

In addition to the NPT, the Philippines is a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which represents efforts towards the universalization

of global norms against nuclear weapons. It is also in line with the Philippine Constitution and the Bangkok Treaty. The President of the Philippines has asked the Philippine Senate to ratify it.

On other weapons of mass destruction, the Philippines is taking an active role in the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). It is important to ensure the Convention's financial sustainability and to strengthen international cooperation and preparedness, response and assistance, as well as to foster greater synergies between and among the relevant international organizations and with regional organizations.

As a member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Philippines is very much involved in the work of the OPCW. International cooperation for the elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles and their non-proliferation remain an urgent concern. We reaffirm our commitment to the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all its provisions.

We call on all Member States to fully implement the NPT, the BWC and the CWC. At the general debate of the General Assembly held in September, our President stated:

“[N]o aspiration nor ambition can justify the use of weapons that destroy indiscriminately and completely... [Those] weapons of death put us all at mortal risk, especially if they fall [into] the hands of terrorists...” (A/75/PV.4, annex XII).

The Philippines supports the implementation of strong regulations on conventional weapons. Therefore, we attach importance to the Arms Trade Treaty and actively participate in 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.

The Philippines is the President-designate of the twenty-second Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). There is a need to address the threat posed by the use of improvised explosive devices, particularly by non-State actors and we need to strengthen mechanisms for international cooperation in that regard. The

Philippines sees the CCW as the appropriate framework in which to address potential threats arising from lethal autonomous weapons systems, including their possible acquisition by armed non-State actors. There is a need for a robust and future-proof legally binding instrument to address those threats.

Explosive remnants of war and unexploded ordnances such as mines and cluster munitions continue to threaten lives. We urge the international community to pursue mine action in a manner that enhances support for victims and helps to establish solid national capacities for affected countries. The Philippines is deeply concerned about the reported ongoing use of cluster munitions and calls on the relevant countries to become States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. As coordinator for the universalization of the Convention, the Philippines stands ready to assist any country that wishes to complete the steps necessary for acceding to the Convention.

The Philippines is also concerned about the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and will actively participate in international efforts to address that concern.

Outer space has long served as a platform for some States to project their global position. The weaponization of space runs counter to the objective of exploring and preserving outer space for peaceful uses. We call on space-faring nations to respect applicable laws and norms on the use of weapons in outer space and develop appropriate and effective instruments to prevent an arms race in outer space.

With regard to the protection of critical infrastructure from cyberattacks and information manipulation, the Philippines promotes equitable capacity-building, given the various levels of States' development of cyberinfrastructure and of their appreciation of international law. International cooperation must be strengthened to ensure that States have a common understanding of how international law and norms are applied to cyberspace.

There should be close coordination between 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 in order to ensure the efficient use of resources

and produce outcomes that are complementary rather than redundant or competing.

Another important issue before us is the mainstreaming of gender issues in disarmament processes. We advocate stronger collaboration with partner States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and research institutions to pursue and expand relevant initiatives.

The manifestations of paralysis in the disarmament machinery, both of a procedural and a substantive nature, are very concerning. The sessions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission over the past two years have been unduly subjected to a combination of organizational, procedural and political issues, which must be addressed and resolved before the Commission's meeting to be held in 2021.

The Philippines recognizes the important role of the Conference on Disarmament and reiterates its call on the Conference to agree by consensus a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without further delay.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize the critical importance of building trust and confidence in all areas. In that regard, the Philippines encourages the resumption of constructive steps and positive engagement among concerned Member States to address issues on arms control and nuclear disarmament, especially bilateral issues. That ultimately remains our main task.

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

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

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election and on assuming your leadership over the work of the First Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau.

We extend our appreciation to Ambassador Sacha Llorenty Solíz of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the work conducted during the previous session.

Costa Rica aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Nicaragua on behalf of the Central America Integration System (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

Rising tensions and mistrust among the nuclear-weapon States has increased the risk of nuclear confrontation. Stockpile modernization programmes threaten to bring about a new qualitative nuclear arms race based on more sophisticated, faster, more accurate and more lethal weapons. We welcome the recent announcement of the opening of negotiations between the parties to the New START Treaty and hope that it can be extended.

However, any initiative to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons must be accompanied by a parallel initiative to eliminate them in a verifiable, irreversible and transparent manner. Costa Rica is concerned about the apparent lack of urgency and seriousness when it comes to addressing those solemn commitments, particularly in the area of nuclear disarmament. Even more worrying are the attempts to deny or reinterpret the commitments undertaken since the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

At the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Costa Rica hopes that the nuclear-weapon States will reaffirm their unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament and that the outcome document will not imply a regression or reinterpretation of the agreements reached. Costa Rica is confident that nuclear weapons will finally be outlawed with the early entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which needs only four more ratifications. We invite all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify that instrument, which complements and strengthens the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Nuclear-weapon testing not only represents a non-proliferation malpractice but also constitutes a serious challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Costa Rica calls upon States to refrain from planning, undertaking or threatening to undertake any action contrary to the obligations and provisions of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Costa Rica reiterates the importance of the Treaty's early entry into force and urges those States listed in its annex 2 to accelerate the signing and ratification process.

Despite the current pandemic, armed conflicts continue to wreak havoc in many parts of the world. A political declaration to prevent the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in urban areas is

therefore essential. Costa Rica commends Ireland for its leadership of such a process. My country considers it urgent to protect civilians in arms transfers and security partnerships. We need strong safeguards, especially when there are risks of violations by partners.

Let us recall that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was adopted to ensure that conventional arms transfers do not fuel conflict, circumvent Security Council embargoes or facilitate terrorism and are not used to commit serious violations of human rights or international humanitarian law. The express prohibitions in articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty are not suggestions — they are obligations.

It is also imperative to enhance synergies between the ATT and other complementary 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. We hope that at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to be held next year, we will be able to make progress on that and other important issues.

Costa Rica condemns the recent use of cluster munitions in the South Caucasus, as we have done whenever those weapons have been used anywhere by any actor, as such actions constitute war crimes. We call on States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions with a sense of urgency.

Just as we condemn attacks on critical infrastructure in the physical realm, in particular attacks on health infrastructure, we cannot tolerate such attacks in cyberspace. The recent increase in cyberattacks against health-care facilities and other critical infrastructure is not only illegal but completely unacceptable, particularly in the context of the current pandemic.

Armed unmanned aerial vehicles, better known as drones, pose unique challenges due to their low cost, low risk levels and high effectiveness. Measures to increase the transparency, accountability and oversight of unmanned aerial vehicles are urgently needed. Such measures are also needed to address the humanitarian and human rights concerns associated with their use.

Human control over the use of force must always be maintained. We call for the strengthening of our work in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), given that a lack of common rules

and understandings regarding the application of international law increases the risk that we will one day face autonomous weapons systems that cannot be used in accordance with humanitarian principles and international law. Costa Rica reiterates its support for the work of the CCW to adopt a legally binding instrument in that regard.

If we have learned anything from this pandemic, it is that we cannot address security without including human security. Nevertheless, global military spending continues to rise, reaching the absurd level of \$1.9 trillion in 2019, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The growth in military spending in 2019 was the largest annual increase in the past decade and the highest level since the end of the Cold War. To better understand that figure, the International Peace Bureau has calculated that the cost of one tank could treat 26,000 people for malaria and the cost of one aircraft carrier could reforest an area larger than the state of Florida.

Moreover, in the light of Costa Rica's Fund to Alleviate COVID-19 Economics initiative, my country estimates that \$0.5 trillion dollars will be required for the world's undeveloped economies to effectively mitigate the economic contraction produced by this year's events. If only a fraction of the world's excessive military spending were used to invest in global health governance, inject fresh funds into developing countries, bridge the digital divide, empower girls and women economically and politically and finance the transition to a green and resilient economy, we could proudly say that our generation was able to make decisions in favour of human security.

For Costa Rica, it is clear that it is not a problem of scarce resources but rather of priorities — priorities that the permanent members of the Security Council, the world's largest arms producers, should help to redirect in the light of Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations.

This is a critical year for advancing women's equality and empowerment in the field of international peace and security, including disarmament and arms control. As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, the tenth anniversary of resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, Costa

Rica calls for a redoubling of efforts to maintain that promising momentum.

We reaffirm our commitment to promoting women's leadership and their full, equal and meaningful participation in all disarmament processes, including in meetings held in virtual formats, and to strengthening analyses and approaches that take into account the gender impact of different weapons.

Mr. Vorshilov (Mongolia): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your chairmanship of the First Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau on their election. My delegation wishes you every success in fulfilling your important function during this unprecedented and challenging time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Please be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2) and would like to highlight some of the specific issues to which Mongolia attaches key importance.

Mongolia is fully committed to a nuclear-weapon-free world and has consistently supported the efforts of the international community to promote the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and to achieve nuclear disarmament, including the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Mongolia is also continuing our internal process towards joining the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force and the twentieth anniversary of the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Mongolia reiterates the NPT's utmost importance in maintaining and reinforcing international peace, security and stability. As the cornerstone of the global regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the three pillars of the NPT should be implemented in a balanced, transparent and comprehensive manner.

It is disappointing that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the international community was not able to convene the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons last April, as the Treaty celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its entry into force. However, on the other hand, we may

see that postponement as an opportunity to use the time to pursue common ground among States. Mongolia is confident that, even during these unprecedented times, the international community will collectively achieve a successful outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT next year, as it is crucial for us all to agree on further steps towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status make a key contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That is why Mongolia is currently serving as the coordinator of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, to be held in New York in conjunction with the NPT Review Conference. I am confident that Member States will work closely to achieve a constructive outcome of the Conference.

This year also marks the forty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). For the past 45 years, the BWC has been a landmark convention, setting a strong norm against the use of disease as a weapon and banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. However, the global pandemic, as well as rapid advances in science and technology, require the international community to work together to improve biological security and preparedness and maintain peaceful and healthy societies around the world. In that regard, we look forward to the holding of a meaningful Review Conference of the Parties to the BWC in 2021.

Mongolia recognizes the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We commend members of the CD for their collective approach, which led to the adoption of the annual report despite the exceptional circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, greater efforts should be made to break the ongoing stalemate in the CD. We hope that all members of the CD will demonstrate the necessary political will to ensure the commencement of its substantive work.

Mongolia has always been committed to making its contribution to maintaining international peace and security in all parts of the world, in particular North-East Asia. With the aim of facilitating economic integration, the development of common infrastructure, the use of energy resources, the protection of the environment and cooperation in fighting transnational crime, Mongolia initiated the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on

Northeast Asian Security in 2014. The Korean peninsula has to be denuclearized and its outstanding issues in the region have to be peacefully settled through talks and dialogue.

Mongolia will continue its efforts to help lead the way towards a more peaceful and prosperous world by further consolidating its international security and nuclear-weapon-free status.

In conclusion, I wish to announce that our delegation will present a biennial draft resolution, entitled “Mongolia’s international security and nuclear-weapon-free status” (A/C.1/75/L.13). It is our hope that as in previous years, the draft resolution will be adopted with unanimous support.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to deliver the following statement on behalf of the head of our delegation, Mr. Vladimir Yermakov.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election during this seventy-fifth anniversary year. We wish you every success in your leadership of the First Committee during these challenging times, as we all continue to work under the extraordinary circumstances imposed by the coronavirus disease pandemic and the unprecedented restrictions on our activities at United Nations Headquarters. You may rest assured of the constructive cooperation of the Russian delegation.

We wish to consolidate the efforts of all members so that the shared misfortune that has befallen humankind does not divide us but instead obliges us to find mutually acceptable ways to reduce international tensions and prevent the exacerbation of existing threats and challenges and the emergence of new ones. It is important to overcome the acute deficit of trust that has accumulated in recent years, the sharply increased risks of a destabilizing arms race and the dangerous trend towards military confrontation in various parts of the world.

There is a need to reverse the deliberate destructive actions arising from the foreign policy egocentrism of one State, which aims to dismantle the carefully constructed system of international agreements. That system is our common achievement and has reliably guaranteed the maintenance of peace and international security for many decades. One of the most recent negative developments that undermines regional

security was the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies under the false pretext of Russia’s alleged violations of that Treaty. We are exploring all possible options to resolve that situation. Our future policy will depend on the actions of our partners.

We cannot ignore the fact that the United States and its allies continue to harden their doctrinal stances in the field of defence and security, rendering them more aggressive. The role of nuclear weapons is increasing and the threshold for their use is being lowered, while related weapons programmes are being developed and implemented. A new hard-line, competitive approach is being actively imposed, which only serves to reinforce the atmosphere of mistrust and reduce predictability, in particular in the nuclear missile sphere.

Unlike the United States, the Russian Federation is aware of its responsibility for international security and for global and regional stability. We consistently pursue sustaining peace and believe that there must be an end to the promotion of confrontational models that seek to transform the existing models of international relations based on the concepts of “great-Power competition” and “peace backed by force”. We act openly and consistently promote political and diplomatic initiatives and measures aimed at preventing the degradation of existing security and stability safeguards and preserving and strengthening the arms control architecture.

Among the most urgent objectives in that respect is the extension of the Russian-American New START Treaty. We are ready for such an extension without preconditions and invite the United States to do the same without artificially delaying the process. The extension would constitute a reasonable step forward that would buy us time to consider future approaches to arms control.

In the context of the breakdown of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty caused by the Americans, Russia unilaterally pledged not to deploy ground-based intermediate- or shorter-range missiles in those regions of the world until the corresponding United States-made systems were deployed there. We call on all members of the international community to support our efforts to prevent the deployment of new missiles in different regions of the world and adhere to a constructive, balanced policy aimed at strengthening international security and stability.

Nuclear disarmament remains one of the priorities on the international agenda. We are committed to the long-term goal of building a nuclear-weapon-free world and are making a tangible practical contribution to that end. There is no doubt that nuclear disarmament can be achieved only through a step-by-step approach that is based on the principle of equal and indivisible security for all, taking into account all factors affecting strategic stability.

The time has come to seriously consider how to make the nuclear disarmament process more multilateral. All States with military nuclear capabilities should be involved in the dialogue to that end, which requires a consensus-based approach without coercion. The equitable and mutual consideration of the interests of all parties is also essential.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the key international, legally binding instrument in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and a pillar of the modern world order. All States parties to the NPT should do their utmost to ensure that the outcome of the upcoming Review Conference contributes to the strengthening of the Treaty, rather than the intensification of contradictions within its framework.

Russia attaches great importance to the creation of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world and provides security guarantees to States that have concluded agreements on such zones and adhered to the letter and spirit of such agreements. We are in favour of the earliest possible resolution of the issue of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, as stipulated in the decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

We reaffirm our adherence to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to address the issues regarding the Iranian nuclear programme. Unfortunately, that achievement — shared by all countries — was jeopardized by the United States decision to withdraw from the JCPOA. The statements of the United States calls regarding the alleged reimposition of the Security Council sanctions against Iran that had previously been lifted are false and irresponsible. As is well known, the other members of the Security Council rejected the illegitimate claims

by the United States. The policy of maximum pressure has failed.

Russia has consistently advocated for the earliest possible entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the strict compliance of all parties with their basic obligations under the Treaty. We fully support the international regimes banning chemical, biological and toxin weapons and consistently call for their universalization and strengthening.

The totally unacceptable situation in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is cause for serious concern. The desire of certain States to manipulate the work of that once successful multilateral structure in order to serve their geopolitical interests has led to a literal split in the OPCW.

We consider the strengthening of the regime of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) to be a priority objective for the international community and encourage support for Russian initiatives aimed at enhancing the institutional framework of the Convention. We highlight the need to update the principles and procedures of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, which have not been reviewed since their approval in 1990. We intend to submit a draft resolution on that subject (A/C.1/75/L.65) for consideration by members, for which we count on their support and co-sponsorship.

Activities aimed at achieving dominance, military superiority and even total supremacy in outer space are extremely destructive. In accordance with the doctrines of the United States, some other Western countries and NATO as a whole, outer space is increasingly being viewed as an arena in which to conduct military operations, including those of an offensive nature. At the same time, that group of countries is cynically attempting here at the United Nations to initiate a debate on responsible behaviour in outer space. We should not be taken in by such deceitful actions.

In order to prevent an arms race in outer space, we need a legally binding treaty in which all spacefaring States participate and which provides a ban on the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against objects in outer space. An important step forward in that regard is an international initiative for a political commitment on no first placement of weapons in space. We will be submitting a draft resolution on

that issue (A/C.1/75/L.62), as well as a draft resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (A/C.1/75/L.66). We look forward to members' support and co-sponsorship in that regard.

Ensuring international information security is one of the priority areas of our diplomatic activity at the United Nations. In 2018, thanks to the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, the first inclusive, truly democratic and transparent negotiating mechanism in that area was established under the auspices of the Organization. As the mandate of the current Open-ended Working Group expires in March 2021, our primary objective is to maintain the discussion format and ensure the continuity of the international information security negotiation process at the United Nations.

To that end, we will submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session an updated draft resolution (A/C.1/75/L.8) based on the traditional draft resolution on that issue sponsored by Russia, which provides for the convening of a new Open-ended Working Group in 2021 for a period of five years with an unchanged mandate. We call on all United Nations Member States to support our initiative and become co-sponsors.

There is a growing need to unite the international community around a constructive agenda in order to increase the stability of the current arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation system. The achievement of that task would be facilitated by the strengthening of the existing architecture and the consensus-based development of new treaty regimes in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

We will submit a draft resolution on that issue (A/C.1/75/L.64) to the First Committee. Its adoption would constitute an important contribution to creating conducive conditions for the successful convening of a number of significant events in 2021, such as the Review Conferences of the NPT, the BTWC and the Chemical Weapons Convention and the extension of the New START Treaty, inter alia. We hope once again for members' comprehensive support and co-sponsorship of the draft resolution.

It would be most useful for all of us, during the seventy-fifth anniversary year of the United Nations, to remember the life-affirming origins of our

Organization, abandon confrontational approaches and return to productive, equitable cooperation on the entire spectrum of issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. In particular, we call on the host country to strictly comply with its obligations and ensure unimpeded and non-discriminatory access to meetings at Headquarters in New York for all delegations. Russia proposes a constructive, unifying agenda and we count on the support of all States in that regard.

The full version of my statement will be available on the eStatements platform.

Mr. Cho Hyun (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you and the members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support for the Committee's success.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic poses a significant impediment to international peace and security. Uncertainties surrounding the global pandemic have been putting strains on the work of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. The far-ranging implications of the COVID-19 pandemic have threatened hard-won peacebuilding progress.

However, at the same time, COVID-19 has also reminded us of the pressing need for a globally coordinated response. As President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea said in his address at the general debate of the General Assembly held in September:

"A single country can no longer manage the entirety of comprehensive security issues alone. As protecting [the] peace of one country and saving [the] life of one person now requires cooperation that transcends borders, we need to equip ourselves with a multilateral security architecture." (*see A/75/PV.4, annex X*)

In that regard, the Republic of Korea, Canada, Denmark, Qatar and Sierra Leone initiated the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security. We will continue to collaborate with the international community in the guiding spirit of multilateralism and solidarity to address the daunting global security challenges that we now face.

A world free of nuclear weapons is an aspiration shared by all humankind, yet the potential use of nuclear

weapons, whether deliberately, by accident or through miscalculation, remains one of the greatest threats to international peace and security. We strongly believe that in order to get back on track towards a world without nuclear weapons, first and foremost, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should continue to be the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. In that connection, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT should serve as a valuable opportunity to reaffirm our commitments to the Treaty.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty are also of essence. We also welcome all efforts to enhance common understanding between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. In that regard and as one of its co-Chairs, we fully support the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative. We also welcome the Stockholm initiative on nuclear disarmament, which adopts a pragmatic approach.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula has been one of the key issues for the maintenance of international peace and security. Regrettably, however, the Korean peninsula peace process has been stalled for a while. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the milestone agreements reached between the leaders of the Republic of Korea, the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2018 to achieve complete denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

My Government's resolve to advance the peace process remains unwavering and we sincerely hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will return to the negotiating table and that progress can be made to build upon the hard-won breakthroughs we have achieved together.

In that regard, my Government has proposed inter-Korean cooperation to fight COVID-19 and future pandemics. During his speech at the General Assembly last month, President Moon Jae-in also proposed to launch a North-East Asia cooperation initiative for infectious disease control and public health that would unite the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea to that end (see A/75/PV.4, annex X).

President Moon also called for the international community's support for an end-of-war declaration

on the Korean peninsula. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the international community's continued support for the peace process on the Korean peninsula.

The international community has unfortunately witnessed the repeated use of chemical weapons around the world, even in recent years, including in Syria and elsewhere. That is a matter of utmost concern. The Republic of Korea condemns, in the strongest possible terms, any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone and under any circumstances.

Meanwhile, the recent global outbreak of COVID-19 provides insight into the destructiveness and disruptiveness of the potential use of biological weapons. As such, the Republic of Korea reiterates its support for the mechanisms provided under the relevant treaties and by the United Nations Secretary-General, as well as the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

While nuclear weapons pose an existential threat, we should not overlook the threat of conventional arms given that small arms and light weapons continue to be the weapons of choice in armed conflicts and violence around the world. In that regard, the Arms Trade Treaty has been a milestone achievement towards fostering well-regulated and legal trade in arms while preventing their illicit trade and diversion. The Republic of Korea has always been and remains one of its strong supporters.

The Republic of Korea is also fully committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which strikes a balance between security concerns and humanitarian considerations. In particular, we welcome the progress made by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on lethal autonomous weapons systems within the framework of the CCW through the adoption of the 11 guiding principles. We hope that collective efforts through the GGE process will continue until a consensus on normative and operative frameworks on emerging technologies is reached.

Ensuring a peaceful, safe and sustainable outer space environment is an urgent global task. The Republic of Korea, as a space-faring nation, is fully and firmly committed to that common goal. We strongly believe that only a gradual and realistic approach will lead us to our ultimate objective. We welcome the efforts made through the Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space and hope that the international community

will continue to enhance its efforts to identify transparency and confidence-building measures, as well as to reach a common understanding on responsible behaviour in outer space activities.

The Republic of Korea is also committed to promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace. We appreciate the ongoing efforts in the field of cybersecurity in the form 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 and we sincerely hope that those two Groups yield productive and meaningful outcomes. The Republic of Korea will continue to actively participate in the Open-ended Working Group process to produce a consensus outcome.

The empowerment of young people in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation is meaningful not only in terms of enhancing diversity but, more importantly, in terms of nurturing young experts who will lead our collective efforts in the future. Last year, as part of our contribution to those efforts, the Republic of Korea co-sponsored resolution 74/64 on youth empowerment, engagement and education. Together with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, it successfully co-hosted a youth outreach event on the theme “74 years of nuclear disarmament and the contribution of youth beyond 2020” in January.

Another example of Korea’s initiative was the 2020 Youth Model NPT Conference held in July. The Government of the Republic of Korea also supported the launch of the Youth 4 Disarmament website, a dynamic platform dedicated to the interactive participation of young people in that important area. The Republic of Korea will continue to support more inclusive participation of young people in key disarmament and non-proliferation discussions.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, we are confident that Member States will come together under your able stewardship to address those areas of pressing concern. The Republic of Korea remains committed to actively contributing to the work of the First Committee during this session and beyond.

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to the

chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that your able chairmanship will guide the work of the Committee to success.

It is the long-cherished desire of humankind to live a harmonious and stable life in a peaceful world free of war. Notwithstanding the international community’s call for disarmament, the current reality is, on the contrary, heading towards an arms build-up, and the destabilizing factors that endanger global peace and security are increasing. The continuous disruption of legal mechanisms for nuclear disarmament and the lack of a cross-surveillance system for military exercises further increase the risk of accidental conflict due to misperception and error. The arms race between the world Powers, as well as their sophisticated weapons tests and military exercises, are arousing deep concerns in the international community.

Last year, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which prohibited the possession of tactical nuclear weapons by the world’s biggest nuclear Powers, was terminated. This year, the Treaty on Open Skies, which contributed to building confidence and ensuring transparency in the decades after the Cold War, is in jeopardy. The New START Treaty, which will expire in February next year, has very little prospect for extension, due to a conflict of positions among the parties concerned. It is being exploited as a political tool and has deviated from its original purpose of nuclear disarmament.

In order to achieve nuclear disarmament, the countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should take the lead in dismantlement and withdraw any nuclear weapons deployed outside their territories. Confrontation and competition to extend military influence and gain a strategic edge in and around Asia are becoming an ever-more serious threat, obstructing the peaceful development of the countries in the region.

Meanwhile, Japan is rushing to turn itself into a military Power, broadly interpreting its current Constitution and seeking an arms build-up and the overseas dispatch of troops beyond the boundaries of self-defence. Japan’s reckless behaviour has given rise to due apprehension and vigilance on the part of its neighbouring countries.

The delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea stresses that any attempt to bring about a new Cold War and trigger a global arms race should not be

tolerated, as it is an affront to the common aspiration of humankind for a peaceful world.

This year, even in the midst of the turmoil caused by the spread of the pandemic, undisguised acts of hostility threatening peace continued in the southern half of the Korean peninsula, including joint military exercises of a provocative nature and the steady introduction of modern military hardware from outside.

Under the current circumstances, the fundamental guarantee of national security and development lies in strong self-defensive capabilities. We possess a self-defensive deterrent to reliably defend ourselves against any form of high-intensity pressure, military threat or blackmail by hostile forces. We will not halt even for a moment on the road towards building up the most powerful defence capabilities, which no one should dare to challenge.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains consistent in its opposition to biological and chemical weapons.

We also oppose an arms race in outer space, given our belief that outer space should be used only for peaceful purposes. We reaffirm the need to conclude a legally binding treaty prohibiting the militarization and weaponization of outer space at an early date.

In conclusion, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will actively cooperate with all friendly countries in the spirit of goodwill, in accordance with our steadfast position on contributing to the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and throughout the rest of the world.

Mr. Zellenrath (Netherlands): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election. You can count on our support.

In addition to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/75/PV.2), the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

Today we live in a world that is increasingly multipolar and in which new and disruptive technologies continue to emerge. Such developments can have disturbing ramifications for the international security environment, which is further challenged by the far-reaching consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The international community

and our institutions have risen to the challenge posed by the pandemic in a manner that we applaud.

At the same time, however, multilateralism and non-proliferation — and disarmament in particular — must not fall victim to COVID-19. It remains our responsibility to set new goals in order to address the current challenges. Last year, we witnessed the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. This year, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran is under immense pressure. The Chemical Weapons Convention is under strain, as chemical weapons are being used by State and non-State actors as recently as in the case of Alexei Navalny.

Those and other challenges can be successfully resolved only if we use our most effective tool at hand, namely, multilateral cooperation. The pandemic has made it even clearer that we can only do that together. As noted by our Prime Minister, Mr. Mark Rutte, in his remarks to the General Assembly this year,

“all countries [must] take responsibility for the proper functioning of the multilateral system; take a constructive approach; honour the agreements we have made and respect international law”. (see A/75/PV.10, annex V)

First, I would like to elaborate on a number of issues in the field of weapons of mass destruction.

The Netherlands continues to be strongly committed to the strengthening and implementing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We will actively contribute to a successful outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT through our vice-presidency of the Conference and our chairmanship of its Main Committee III.

We also continue to be involved with topics that give substance to our NPT commitments, including the immediate start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, the signing and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the further development of concepts such as nuclear-risk reduction and verification. We encourage the five permanent members of the Security Council to engage in a meaningful and constructive dialogue on those issues.

The Netherlands is closely following the strategic dialogue on the New START Treaty being held in

Vienna and Helsinki between the United States and Russia. We share the United States vision that a more ambitious agreement is needed for future strategic stability. Extending the New START Treaty is a first important step. We call upon all relevant parties, in particular Russia and China, to engage in that regard.

Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which consolidates the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is under increasing pressure today. Iran's nuclear programme must remain under strict international control. We call upon all remaining parties to fully implement resolution 2231 (2015).

We also cannot accept a nuclear Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Until the Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes concrete steps towards complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearization, the international community must maintain pressure on it, including through the full and effective implementation of sanctions by all United Nations States Members, while continuing the dialogue.

We must uphold the global norm against the use of chemical weapons. The Netherlands condemns the recent attack on Alexei Navalny with a nerve agent. We share the conclusion of Germany and France that there is no other plausible explanation for Mr. Navalny's poisoning than Russian involvement and responsibility.

We condemn Syria for using chemical weapons and urge it to fully comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Netherlands has full confidence in the professionalism, impartiality and objectivity of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its Technical Secretariat.

Regarding biological weapons, the COVID-19 crisis has clearly shown us the grave dangers of biological threats. The Netherlands regrets the lack of contributions being paid to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We are committed to the strengthening and implementation of the Convention through confidence-building measures and peer review in order to improve worldwide biosecurity and biosafety.

Secondly, with respect to new technologies, cyberspace, artificial intelligence and technological developments in outer space come with many societal and economic benefits. However, those dual-use technologies can generate security challenges as well. We need collective engagement to address developments in cyberspace, which the Netherlands strongly believes

can be done most effectively by implementing and adhering to the current normative framework. The Netherlands supports multilaterals effort to tackle cybersecurity threats in both 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 (GGE) on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security.

We need a pragmatic and inclusive approach that allows the work of the Open-ended Working Group and the work of the GGE to complement and reinforce one other. The recently proposed programme of action may provide a promising way forward for a permanent, flexible and inclusive process to build upon the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group and the GGE.

The Netherlands also reiterates the essential role of multilateralism concerning lethal autonomous weapon systems, by pointing out that good progress was made within the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems in 2019. In the light of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in 2021, discussions need to move forward so that we can continue to make progress on issues like human-machine interaction.

With respect to outer space, the Netherlands is deeply concerned about the increasing number of intentional threats that have accompanied new approaches towards the space domain, including ground-based systems such as jammers and direct-ascent anti-satellite weapons, as well as intentional in-orbit manipulation and other proximity operations.

International cooperation on space security is crucial, and we must ensure that the inherent dual-use nature of any space activity does not lead to accidents, misunderstandings, miscommunications or miscalculations. We consider transparency and confidence-building measures in that domain to be an important first step towards reinforcing the current normative and legal framework.

Thirdly, with respect to conventional weapons, the vast number of casualties caused by them should serve as a reminder of the need for collective action. As Chair of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Netherlands would like to highlight the fortieth anniversary of the CCW and takes this

opportunity to call on those States not yet party to join that important instrument.

The Netherlands deems it vital that, despite the circumstances imposed by COVID-19, we continue to share views and best practices and address urgent matters under the CCW, such as cooperation on countering the threat of improvised explosive devices under its Amended Protocol II and the clearance of explosive remnants of war under its Protocol V.

The increase in the number of victims of anti-personnel mines, in particular those of an improvised nature, serves as a reminder that those weapons should never be used by any State or non-State actor alike. The Netherlands fully supports the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and will actively contribute towards its implementation, including the recently adopted Oslo action plan. We look forward to chairing the Convention when we host the Meeting of States Parties in the Netherlands in 2021.

In the light of this year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Cluster Munitions Convention, the Netherlands stresses the importance of the universalization and implementation of the Convention. Only through our work in the Convention can we uphold the norm on the non-use of cluster munitions.

We underline the importance of the implementation and universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We call on all United Nations Member States that have not yet done so to join the ATT, which is our only legally binding international instrument to regulate the trade in conventional arms. With regard to small arms and light weapons, the Netherlands calls on States to prevent, combat and eradicate their illicit trade.

Lastly, we should work on improving and modernizing our disarmament machinery. It is a sad truth that the very Conference that produced vital multilateral disarmament treaties has not been able to start negotiations on, for example, a fissile material cut-off treaty. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that the disarmament machinery functions effectively. The weak financial status of the disarmament conventions is of great concern to us because no money means no meetings and no implementation support. We urge all States to meet their financial obligations to those instruments in full and on time.

To wrap up, the Netherlands strongly believes that multilateral cooperation is crucial in order to effectively

tackle the challenges that lie ahead of us. We should not take our security for granted. In today's world that translates to reaching out to other countries for help, sharing information and knowledge multilaterally and maintaining an open dialogue.

Mr. Valtýsson (Iceland): Let me join others in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election, as well as the other members of the Bureau on their elections. I wish you every success during this session.

Having already delivered a statement on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2), I would like to briefly highlight a few key issues from a national perspective.

The current coronavirus disease crisis is a stark reminder that global challenges call for a global response, openness and transparency. Hopefully, this experience will guide our cooperation to counter the growing tensions, distrust and non-compliance that increasingly define the global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

In the nuclear domain, we need to safeguard some of the key multilateral and bilateral agreements that brought us out of the wasteful arms race of the Cold War, not least the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the New START Treaty, which are both up for review.

Having postponed the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, we should make use of the time to better prepare and build bridges. The NPT continues to be effective in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, while safeguarding the benefits of nuclear technology for civilian use. We need to move forward and strengthen the third pillar of the Treaty, on nuclear disarmament. It is incumbent upon all of us to make an extra effort to deliver on the implementation of its article VI.

The New START Treaty plays a crucial role in international stability, limiting the number of strategic nuclear weapons and consequently providing confidence-building measures for the benefit of all. We look forward to positive outcome of the United States-Russia dialogue on strategic balance, including the extension of the New START Treaty. We also encourage China to engage with Russia and the United States on nuclear arms control and disarmament.

Other mechanisms and agreements should be fully utilized, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-

Ban Treaty, which provides a verification system that fosters trust and transparency and is widely supported by the membership of the United Nations. All States that are not yet party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should sign and ratify it, in particular those listed in its annex 2. Iceland reaffirms its strong support for commencing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in order to further cement existing non-proliferation arrangements.

It is regrettable to note the continued threat that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses to global security through its illegal nuclear programme, which is in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea needs to revert to responsible actions and join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and return to the NPT.

Iceland supports the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and we urge Iran to fully comply with the agreement and fulfil its commitments, in full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

As we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, we should work together towards a world without the existential threat of nuclear weapons, pursuing nuclear disarmament based on a mutual, balanced, verifiable and irreversible step-by-step approach.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is currently being tested due to the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons. Today we have an ongoing case with a Russian citizen poisoned in his own country — a tragic event that must be thoroughly investigated without any delay. The use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, is utterly unacceptable. All such incidents need to be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators of such heinous crimes held accountable. In that regard, Iceland firmly commends the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its ongoing investigative efforts, which are guided by strong integrity, impartiality and outstanding expertise.

When discussing weapons of mass destruction, we must reaffirm our commitment to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which will come under review next year. The need to review its implementation is becoming increasingly urgent in the light of rapid biotechnical advances and the current pandemic situation.

The urgency of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation when it comes to weapons of mass destruction is undisputable. However, that must not be to the detriment of work in the field of conventional disarmament and fast-emerging weapons technology. Preserving, universalizing and developing treaties and initiatives in the conventional weapons sphere is no less critical for global security and sustainable development.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to undermine peace, development and human rights. The effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is key to reversing that negative trend, which significantly affects sustainable development. Iceland also welcomes the significant role that those arm control instruments play in preventing gender-based violence in conflict situations.

Iceland welcomes the successful results of the twentieth anniversary Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, held in Oslo last year, at which the goal of a world free from landmines by 2025 was reinforced with solid implementation. Another important stride in the right direction is the attempt to address explosive weapons in populated areas, which Iceland strongly supports.

In recent months, with most societies in lockdown, there has been no doubt about the vital significance of information technology and cyberstability for individuals and States alike. The weaknesses in our systems also make us more vulnerable to irresponsible behaviour, surveillance and attacks by State and non-State actors. We need to streamline and bring together different United Nations workstreams on cybersecurity and stability, building on existing international frameworks and norms. We should also explore how we can best build capacity and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms in the cyberdomain.

New challenges and frontiers in the field of disarmament, including increasing activities in outer space and lethal autonomous weapons, need to be coherently addressed, drawing on existing international law, norms and conventions. Any translation of the growing interest in activities in outer space into an arms race — or, for that matter, the weaponization of space — is unacceptable.

We are encouraged by the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems on emerging technologies in that area, in particular its consensus on the 11 guiding principles. We hope to see concrete results based on those principles in time for the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in late 2021.

It is of deep concern that many of the treaties forming the complex rules-based global disarmament architecture are under serious financial strain. We urge all States to fulfil their financial commitments under the relevant treaties. Investment in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation cannot fail under the current conditions of uncertainty with respect to global security.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations should be used as an opportunity to reinvigorate the United Nations disarmament agenda. We clearly need more resources, creative thinking and inclusivity, not least by making sure that women have an active and equal role in arms control and disarmament in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Let me end by wishing us all a productive and constructive session.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Given that we must end today's meeting at 6 p.m., I will now give the floor to those delegations wishing to exercise the right of reply.

In accordance with the decision taken at the organizational session, the first intervention will be limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Just now, the representative of the United States, in his statement, spread a political virus at the United Nations by attacking and smearing China. That is totally unacceptable.

We have a stern message for the United States: shifting the blame will not serve to cover up the missteps of its fight against the coronavirus disease pandemic, and neither will it fool the international community.

China categorically rejects the baseless accusations by the representative of the United States against China's arms control policies. China has always opposed an arms race, while upholding multilateralism, implementing its obligations under the relevant arms control treaties and agreements and supporting dialogue and cooperation in the field of security.

China's positive contribution to international security and disarmament is widely recognized. I will comprehensively elaborate on China's position at the general debate to be held on 12 October.

In exercising China's right of reply, I have just one point to make. The United States poses the greatest threat to our strategic security and stability. Why? Here are 10 basic facts.

First, the United States is obsessed with military build-up. The United States always ranks first in military expenditure. Its 2019 military spending amounted to more than \$700 billion, accounting for nearly 40 per cent of world's total and more than the next 10 countries combined.

Second, the United States is returning to a Cold War mentality. In its national security strategy report and its Nuclear Posture Review, the United States blatantly defined China and Russia as strategic competitors, exaggerating external threats and stirring up confrontation among major Powers.

Third, the United States is pursuing unilateralism. It withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, "unsigned" the Arms Trade Treaty and adopted a negative attitude towards the extension of the New START Treaty, exposing its complete utilitarianism with respect to bilateral and multilateral arms control treaties and regimes.

Fourth, the United States is seeking to shirk its responsibilities. It has been upgrading its nuclear arsenals and lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. It is ignoring its special responsibility for nuclear disarmament under the pretext of so-called trilateral negotiations and recently even held discussions on resuming nuclear tests.

Fifth, the United States is making political manoeuvres. It applies double standards to nuclear non-proliferation abuses and unilateral sanctions and exploits hotspot issues, such as the Iranian nuclear issue and the Korean peninsula nuclear issue, to serve its own geopolitical agenda.

Sixth, the United States is disrupting the strategic balance of power. It has deployed missile defence systems in Asia and the Pacific and in Central and Eastern Europe. It is also planning to deploy ground-based medium-range missiles in Asia and the Pacific

and Europe with the aim of enhancing its military presence in its pursuit of total dominance.

Seventh, the United States is blocking biological arms control. It is the only country blocking the relaunch of negotiations for a protocol that includes a verification regime to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention, thereby obstructing international efforts to verify biological activities. It is now a stumbling block for multilateral biological arms control.

Eighth, the United States is delaying the destruction of chemical weapons. As the only State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention still in possession of chemical weapons, it has extended the deadline for the destruction of its chemical weapons several times.

Ninth, the United States is relaunching its so-called Star Wars programme. It has created a space force, re-established a space command and accelerated weapon tests and military drills in outer space. Those acts threaten outer space security and seriously contradict the principle of the peaceful use of outer space.

Tenth, the United States is building a hacking empire. It is engaged in massive cyberattacks and surveillance schemes through programmes such as PRISM. It is also developing its cyberwarfare capacity in an attempt to dominate cyberspace.

Those 10 facts provide a glimpse into the negative behaviour of the United States in the field of international security and disarmament. If time permitted, I could certainly provide more examples.

Multilateral arms control and disarmament affects international peace and security and the well-being of all countries. Unilateralism, exceptionalism and bullying will get us nowhere. As the strongest military Power with the most advanced weapons in the world, the United States has a special and primary responsibility in arms control and disarmament. The policy of “America first” should be linked to “compliance first”, “disarmament first” and “dismantlement first”.

We hope that the United States will work in the First Committee in a responsive, frank and transparent manner with all parties to ensure the session’s success, promote the disarmament process and maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to take the floor to exercise its right of reply with respect to the statements

made by the representatives of European countries, South Korea and others. My delegation categorically reject those statements, which are politically motivated and biased.

As we clearly stated, our self-defensive national capabilities serve as a deterrent force in order to reliably guarantee the security and future of our State and our people in response to ever-growing external nuclear threats and blackmail. Thanks to our reliable and effective self-defensive deterrent force, there will be no more war on the Korean peninsula and the safety and future of our State will be secured at all times.

Our self-defensive deterrent force poses no threat whatsoever so long as armed provocations encroaching upon our sovereignty are not perpetrated, our rights are respected and anti-Democratic People’s Republic of Korea forces refrain from intimidation and blackmail in pursuit of a hostile policy against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is a peace-loving nation and historically speaking has never so much as thrown a single pebble onto another’s soil. Moreover, our self-defensive deterrent force could never pose a threat to European countries, which are far across the globe. Instead of clamouring for a world free from nuclear threats or the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea’s nuclear programme, those countries would be well well-advised to take an unbiased and impartial approach with the correct insight into the nature of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

Our position is clear-cut—the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea will never hold back for a single moment from steadily increasing its national defence capabilities in response to mounting pressure and military threats. South Korea should immediately halt all joint military exercises and the import of sophisticated armaments, which aggravate the situation, and should instead approach all matters from a national defence standpoint. The pursuit of diplomacy for solicitation while promoting the issue of the Korean peninsula leads nowhere.

Mr. Shibuya (Japan): I would like to exercise our right of reply in response to the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The claims regarding Japan are groundless. Japan has adhered to the basic precept of maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy under its Constitution. Japan will never change the course it has taken as a peace-loving nation.

Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should work together to bring peace to North-East Asia by overcoming mutual mistrust and deepening cooperation with one other.

Mr. Knight (United States of America): I will be brief.

With regard to the coronavirus disease, I would comment that Beijing had its chance to lead on the virus, but it failed. The world is now dealing with that failure.

The United States is in compliance with its obligations. We are transparent; China is not. We are upholding our nuclear disarmament obligations; China is not. We are engaging in good faith; China is not. We are not the bully — China is. Ask its neighbours.

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation takes the floor to exercise its right of reply for the second time in response to the statement made by the representative of Japan.

Japan must bear in mind that it has a historical responsibility to make a sincere apology and compensate for its past class A crimes against humanity. It must move immediately to liquidate the past as soon as possible. It must also abandon, without delay, its plan for an aggressive arms build-up and attempts at overseas expansion, which undermine peace and security in the region.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): With respect to the statement by the representative of the United States, I want to emphasize that, since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease, the Chinese Government has taken very strict measures to control the pandemic, thereby making a great contribution to the world. Our achievement is well recognized by the international community.

As for the performance of the United States in its fight against the pandemic, all representatives here today live in the United States, in New York City, and I am sure that they have already made their own assessments. I do not believe I need to elaborate further on the matter.

In my first statement in exercise of the right of reply, I listed 10 basic facts on the United States as a threat to international peace and security. I hope that it will provide a written response to those facts so that everybody will know the truth. Repeating a lie 1,000 times does not make it a fact. I hope the United States will remember that.

Mr. Shibuya (Japan): In response to the second statement delivered by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in exercise of the right of reply, I will not repeat my previous remarks or address every point that was raised.

Once again, the claims regarding Japan are groundless. I would like to remind Member States of Japan's sincere and humble effort to contribute to international peace and stability and prosperity over many decades. I would like to call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again to share in that cooperative approach and work together to seek a bright future.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We have exhausted the time available for this meeting.

Before we adjourn, let me remind delegations once more that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close on Monday, 12 October, at 6 p.m. All delegations intending to take the floor should make every effort to inscribe their names on the list before that deadline.

The next meeting of the First Committee will be held on Monday 12 October at 10 a.m. sharp in this Hall to continue the general debate, and I appeal to all delegations to be punctual to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.