



# General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

## First Committee

**11**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Friday, 14 October 2022, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Pieris .....(Sri Lanka)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### High-level exchange on the current state of affairs in the field of disarmament and arms control

**The Chair:** In accordance with its programme of work, the Committee will first engage in an exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, including on follow-up to the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous sessions, and with high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament, as nominated by the regional groups.

Following the exchange, the Committee will begin the second phase of its work, namely, the thematic discussion on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee.

In accordance with established practice, our discussions during this segment of our work will focus on specific issues grouped under the following seven agreed clusters: “Nuclear weapons”; “Other weapons of mass destruction”; “Outer space (disarmament aspects); “Conventional weapons”; “Other disarmament measures and international security”; “Regional disarmament and security”; and “Disarmament machinery”.

It is now my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group has nominated Ambassador Flávio Roberto Bonzanini, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of

Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, to also make a presentation.

I will first give our panellists the floor to make their statements. Thereafter, we will change to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions. I have asked our panellists to keep their statements concise to ensure that we have adequate time for an interactive discussion on the subject.

I now give the floor to the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

**Mrs. Nakamitsu** (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): I welcome this second opportunity to address the First Committee at its seventy-seventh session. As I already provided comprehensive opening remarks, I will refrain from repeating my assessment of the international security landscape. Nevertheless, the main concerns that I raised in my remarks are worth emphasizing once again.

This is no ordinary time. Divisions are deep, rhetoric is inflammatory, and tensions are high. Throughout the general debate, many delegations expressed similar concerns over the deteriorating international security environment. Many States said that the risk of the use of nuclear weapons is unacceptably high. Several delegations lamented the erosion of the norm against the use of chemical weapons. Others referred to a lack of trust and transparency as stumbling blocks to disarmament efforts. Several regretted unconstrained military spending and its opportunity cost for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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As the Committee moves onward to action on draft resolutions and decisions, I urge delegations to proceed constructively and purposefully towards tangible solutions.

The troubling developments before us — not least of which is the unnecessary and devastating war in Ukraine — demand urgent and meaningful responses. Complacency is not an option.

For this high-level exchange, I would like to speak to the cross-cutting topic of a more inclusive and participatory process of disarmament discussions. Gender and enhancing the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control discussions and policy-making is a key part of this issue. But before that, I want to briefly touch upon the question of follow-up on resolutions and decisions adopted at the previous session of the Committee and presentation of reports of the Secretary-General.

In line with recent practice, I will forgo providing a detailed account of the views of Member States received pursuant to requests by the General Assembly. Those details will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in an annex to this statement.

That said, the low levels of response to requests for the views of Member States, including from sponsors and co-sponsors of the mandating resolutions, remain disappointing. For the seventy-seventh session, 18 reports of the Secretary-General were presented to the First Committee pursuant to resolutions that include a mandate to request information or the views of Member States. Two of those reports contain information submitted by Member States relating to military expenditures and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

The number of replies provided to those transparency instruments are 32 and 37, respectively. In recent years, reporting levels for both instruments have consistently remained below 45. Out of the reports presented to the General Assembly that include a compilation of views, the majority received inputs from fewer than 10 States. Eight reports received five or fewer responses.

Among the highest number of inputs — 33 — were those received for the report of the Secretary-General on promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security (A/77/96), a first-time report. For the majority of the reports, the replies have hovered around the same low number for

consecutive sessions, thus raising questions of interest and utility.

I would invite delegations to assess how those reports can contribute to States' consideration of the respective topics and to reflect on the type of information that would best facilitate effective discussions in today's evolving contexts.

A welcome practice of States has been the request to the Secretary-General to prepare a substantive report on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts. This year the Secretary-General submitted the fifth version of that report, with updated information on recent developments in science and technology of relevance to weapons, means or methods of warfare. This year's version (A/77/188) also contains a cross-cutting section on the implications of new technologies for existing legal frameworks related to the use of force. We hope that that report will remain a useful reference document for delegations, particularly for those representatives who might be new to those issues.

Turning to the issue of gender, in this Committee we cannot separate our work from people. Here I speak about both the people affected by our decisions and the people making them.

When we speak of inclusivity, the equal, full and effective participation of women is key. We simply cannot afford to leave parts of our population behind when negotiating our common future. Yet we are still far from parity and diversity in disarmament forums.

This Committee has had only one female Chair in all 77 sessions. Last year in the First Committee, only 25 per cent of representatives taking the floor were women, and the number of women heads of delegations saw a slight decrease from the previous year.

The biennial draft resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control will be submitted at this year's session. It has been 12 years since Trinidad and Tobago first introduced this text, which calls for gender-responsive disarmament policies and programmes and the equal and full participation of women in our field of work.

The resolution as a whole has traditionally been adopted by consensus, with its core message of equality supported by all. I hope that this strong pattern of support will continue. It is also positive that States have supported updates to the text to ensure that it is fit for

purpose. I hope that the resolution continues to evolve to reflect the latest developments.

Since the introduction of that resolution in 2010, we have seen several positive developments on the gender front. It has become broadly unacceptable to hold all-men panel discussions. Over the last 12 years, we have also seen the important trend of an increasing inclusion of gender perspectives across multilateral disarmament forums. There have been working papers and joint statements on that topic, including from civil society.

Member States, the United Nations and other international organizations are regularly implementing projects, programmes, training, side events and research on the nexus between gender and disarmament. We have witnessed a marked increase in gender-related provisions in disarmament instruments and frameworks. Several other First Committee resolutions have incorporated language on gender or women. The increase in gender references has been steep — from three resolutions in 2010 to 19 last year, covering a wide range of areas, from conventional arms to weapons of mass destruction to new and emerging technologies.

The Arms Trade Treaty commits States parties to assess the likelihood of arms being used to commit gender-based violence. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons calls for gender-responsive victim assistance.

In June, at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, new, progressive language on gender was included in the outcome document.

In the first progress report of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (see A/77/275), States underscored the importance of narrowing the gender digital divide and committed to focused discussions on gender dimensions at future sessions. My sincere hope is for those positive trends to continue and further increase. Gender mainstreaming is not an option; it is a necessity.

As members are aware, the biennial report of the Secretary-General on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control tackles the gender dimensions of disarmament. The latest iteration of the report (A/77/122) was prepared for this session of the

First Committee. Allow me to extend my appreciation to States from all regions for sharing their views on ways and means of promoting women in disarmament. I also thank our partners from the United Nations system and other international organizations that provided their input.

The report shows important progress in efforts to implement the resolution, and I hope that it continues to serve as a vehicle for sharing good practice and shedding light on the importance of ensuring the full and effective participation and leadership of women.

I could not speak about inclusive disarmament processes without recognizing the important role played by civil society. As advocates, researchers and experts, members of civil society support States in a variety of ways, from implementing commitments to keeping them informed.

For instance, in June States concluded a multi-year consultative process on the humanitarian consequences that arise from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, achieving a political declaration with important technical and substantive contributions from non-governmental experts. Today advocates in civil society are providing powerful encouragement to States to sign and support the political declaration ahead of its formal adoption in November.

Within the frameworks of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the past year saw broad and active participation by civil society in our collective efforts to sustain and strengthen the nuclear-disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control regime.

I call on every Member State to strengthen the principles of the transparency and inclusivity of the relevant non-governmental actors to support the work of intergovernmental disarmament processes. The same goes for the participation of and contributions made by private-sector and industry actors, as well as young people around the world. Let me be clear: the broad, inclusive participation of diverse actors enriches intergovernmental decision-making.

Diversity brings to us the innovative and creative approaches that are so needed to tackle some of the most difficult disarmament and security challenges of the twenty-first century. Inclusive multilateralism based on strong partnership with diverse actors is

a smart and, indeed, necessary element of today's disarmament negotiations.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, who will be making his statement via a pre-recorded video.

**Mr. Bonzanini** (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean): It is an honour and a pleasure to participate in today's exchange. I am truly sorry that I was not able to attend this meeting in person. However, please be assured that the secretariat of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) is always open and willing to answer any inquiry or clarify any doubts regarding its work.

Today I shall briefly present some perspectives from OPANAL on current trends in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

First, reiterating that the States members of OPANAL remain deeply concerned about the threat posed to humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, their modernization and their possible international use or threat of use, we should not accept as normal the current international context. The threat of nuclear war we currently are facing is something that we have not seen since exactly 60 years ago, during that fateful month of October 1962, when my region, Latin America and the Caribbean, was on the verge of becoming the scene of a nuclear confrontation. It was precisely due to that serious situation that the States of Latin America and, later, the Caribbean decided to establish the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which has served as an example for other international instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and has become one of the essential components of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Secondly, the States members of OPANAL are proud to belong to the first densely populated region on the planet to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone and not only hold nuclear disarmament as a priority but remain committed to the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime established by the NPT.

Furthermore, the OPANAL membership deeply regrets that despite the efforts of President Gustavo

Zlauevini of Argentina, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT concluded without having reached the consensus required to adopt a final document.

Thirdly, more than five decades have passed since the establishment of the international norm that created the nuclear-weapon-free zones pioneered by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco. However, that international norm is more important than ever. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a regional approach to strengthening global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidating efforts towards peace and security.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco in particular established a set of key precedents. The Treaty precedes and goes beyond the NPT. Moreover, it inspired the relevant provisions of the NPT, including article IV, on the rights and obligations of States parties regarding the development of nuclear energy; article VI, on nuclear disarmament; and article VII, on the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In that respect, this session of the First Committee will have for consideration our traditional triennial draft resolution on the Treaty of Tlatelolco submitted by Mexico, highlighting the relevance of the Treaty and its contribution to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Also, considering the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it is OPANAL's intention to submit a draft resolution next year to the First Committee to undertake a comprehensive study of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all their aspects. The initiative of undertaking a new, comprehensive study on nuclear-weapon-free zones stems from the recommendations of the international seminar entitled "Fostering cooperation and enhancing consultation mechanisms among the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones", which took place in 2019 in Astana and in which OPANAL participated. That initiative also aligns with action 5, "strengthen and consolidate nuclear-weapon-free zones", of the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, entitled *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*.

The States members of OPANAL consider that a second comprehensive study will greatly contribute to the promotion of the full implementation of the principles and objectives of the existing treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as support the creation of other zones in regions where they do not exist.



Fourthly, the OPANAL membership is convinced that disarmament and non-proliferation education contributes strongly and effectively to the consolidation of international peace and security. That is why the Agency has been successfully implementing courses on disarmament and non-proliferation as well as other joint initiatives and continues to recognize the tremendous contributions of interns to OPANAL's work by establishing a paid internship programme starting in January 2022 to pay a token amount to all our interns, regardless of their nationality.

Fifthly, moreover, the States members of OPANAL have accorded great attention to the importance of the equal, full and effective participation of all people as an essential aspect of the promotion and maintenance of peace and security. In 2021, for the first time, the General Conference incorporated a resolution on gender, non-proliferation and disarmament, recognizing the valuable contribution of women in the region to the promotion of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and incorporating a gender perspective to support and strengthen the effective participation of women in OPANAL, its bodies and programmes.

OPANAL will continue recognizing and fostering the role of women in disarmament and non-proliferation. Considerations during its work will include upholding the imperative need to ensure gender equality and the full empowerment of women in the process at all decision-making levels around nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

With those actions, OPANAL member States reaffirm their historical commitment to work towards a world free of nuclear weapons by including new perspectives and promoting joint efforts beyond our region.

**The Chair:** In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs through an informal question-and-answer session.

*The meeting was suspended at 3.35 p.m. and resumed at 3.40 p.m.*

**The Chair:** On behalf of all delegations, I would like to thank all panellists for their participation here and Mrs. Nakamitsu for being with us this afternoon.

There is one other matter that we need to deal with: the late submission of a draft proposal. Before proceeding further, I would like to inform the Committee that 76 draft proposals have been submitted for the consideration of the Committee this session. The secretariat circulated the list of those proposals yesterday. I have been informed that the annual proposal entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them" (A/C.1/77/L.76) was submitted after the known deadline. In that regard, does the Committee agree to accept the draft resolution at this time so that it is available for action during the action phase of the work of the Committee?

*It was so decided.*

#### **Agenda items 90 to 108 (continued)**

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

**The Chair:** The Committee will now begin the second phase of its work, namely, the thematic discussions on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee. The thematic discussions will run from today, 14 October, to Thursday, 27 October, for a total of 10 meetings.

In accordance with established practice, our discussions during this segment of our work will focus on specific issues grouped under the seven agreed thematic clusters. I would like to remind all delegations that the time limit for statements during the thematic segment is five minutes when speaking in one's national capacity and seven minutes for statements on behalf of several delegations. In keeping with the indicative timetable for our thematic discussions, the Committee will now take up the cluster "Nuclear weapons".

**Mr. Koba** (Indonesia): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

NAM reiterates its concern at the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons as well as by the lack of progress shown by nuclear-weapon States in eliminating their nuclear weapons. NAM expresses concern at the sustained

modernization of nuclear weapons, the continuous improvements in existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons.

NAM is also concerned that the strategic dialogue between the nuclear-weapon States has remained limited. NAM strongly calls upon them to comply with their legal obligations and undertakings urgently and to eliminate their nuclear weapons totally in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. All modernization or extension to their nuclear-weapons-related facilities should also cease immediately.

NAM States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) express their disappointment over the consecutive failure of the ninth and tenth Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to adopt a consensual outcome document despite the constructive engagement of NAM States parties to the NPT.

NAM States parties to the NPT also call on all nuclear-weapon States to promptly implement their long-overdue obligations under the NPT and the commitments agreed by consensus at the NPT Review Conference without further delay.

NAM notes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January 2021 and the convening of its First Meeting of States Parties from 21 to 23 June 2022, which adopted a declaration and an action plan. NAM hopes that it will contribute to furthering the global objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

NAM welcomes the convening of the first and second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons, according to decision 73/546, and looks forward to the third session of the Conference. NAM States parties to the NPT stress that the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT remains valid until the objective has been achieved and that the implementation of decision 73/546 is without prejudice to the validity of the aforementioned resolution and decisions and shall not also be construed as their replacement.

NAM reiterates its full support for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981), paragraph

14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

NAM calls upon all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps towards the fulfilment of the proposal initiated by Iran in 1974 for the establishment of such a zone. Pending its establishment, NAM demands that Israel renounce possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without preconditions or further delay, place promptly all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards and conduct its nuclear-related activities in conformity with the non-proliferation regime.

NAM expresses great concern over the acquisition by Israel of nuclear capability, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and condemns Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals. NAM condemns the statement made by the then Prime Minister of Israel on 11 December 2006 related to the possession of nuclear weapons by Israel. NAM also calls for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material and facilities, resources or devices and the extension of assistance in the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields to Israel. NAM expresses its serious concern over the continuing development whereby Israeli scientists are provided access to the nuclear facilities of one nuclear-weapon State.

NAM reiterates its firm belief that non-proliferation policies should not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire, have access to, import or export nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

NAM recognizes that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety and nuclear security rests with individual States. Any multilateral norms, guidelines or rules in nuclear security should be pursued within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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

NAM is submitting an updated draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament"

(A/C.1/77/L.7). NAM would appreciate the support of all Member States therefor.

Finally, while noting the statements by nuclear-weapon States of their intention to pursue actions in achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, NAM reaffirms the need for urgent concrete action on their part to achieve that goal in accordance with their nuclear-disarmament legal obligations and commitments. NAM remains committed to cooperating for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Jackman** (Barbados): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. That was the position reaffirmed by the five nuclear-weapon States at the beginning of 2022. Yet before the year has expired, the Secretary-General has had cause to warn that we are in a time of nuclear danger not seen since the height of the cold war and that humankind is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation.

CARICOM is very concerned that despite our declared intentions as Member States, we are no closer to the goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. What is even more worrisome is that we do not appear to still be in a state of stasis but, rather, slipping towards a cliff's edge. We need urgent commitments to de-escalate and dial back tensions.

CARICOM urges all nuclear-weapon States and others that have such weapons and their allies to reaffirm their assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use of those weapons and to resume in earnest effective steps towards denuclearization through complete and verifiable disarmament.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear-disarmament architecture. Despite the failure of its tenth Review Conference to arrive at a consensus outcome document this year, we urge all States parties to consider voluntarily pursuing those commitments that were contained in the final draft. We emphasize that it is the political will of each of us that will create the environment for the security of all of us.

CARICOM is concerned that nuclear weapons continue to figure as a key component of the security doctrine of some States. The promotion of or reliance on nuclear deterrence as a security strategy merely

perpetuates the false notion that we are safer by the assurance of mutual destruction. CARICOM resoundingly rejects that approach and recalls that the very existence of nuclear weapons continues to present an unacceptable risk to both people and planet.

It is for that reason that CARICOM member States support the implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which entered into force in 2021. We are pleased that the First Meeting of States Parties was convened in Vienna this year and note that the meeting adopted a plan of action to promote the goals of the Treaty. All CARICOM member States are either parties, signatories or in the process of acceding to the TPNW.

As parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, CARICOM States are proud to be part of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone encompassing a highly populated region — Latin America and the Caribbean. We remain committed to ensuring that the Americas remains a zone of peace and that to the greatest extent possible, we can safeguard the security and well-being of our citizens against the incalculable devastation that would be occasioned by any nuclear detonation in the region.

We use this opportunity again to decry the undue and unconscionable expenditure made on nuclear weapons and systems. Countries are continuing to increase spending on their nuclear arsenals, including for modernization and updating, contrary to commitments to disarm, decommission and destroy them. According to research, nuclear-armed States spent approximately \$82 billion on their nuclear arsenals last year. Trillions are being budgeted for upgrades. On the other hand, development goals and pledges remain unfulfilled — the Sustainable Development Goals are underfunded, and climate financing is scarce.

CARICOM once again reiterates the call for nuclear-weapon States to take urgent steps to reverse the role of nuclear weapons in their security strategies and instead direct funding to policies that focus on prevention, peace and sustainable development. Investing in those areas will deliver greater security guarantees for all.

CARICOM also views the nuclear-disarmament imperative through the humanitarian lens. The consequences of intended or accidental use or detonation are incalculable. There remain today so many who have suffered and continue to suffer from the effects of testing and use, and, to an extent, we may never really know the full effect that those have

had on our environment and the ripple effect on us over generations.

To think that modern weapons are up to 30 times more destructive than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki should give us more than pause; it should compel us to a halt. Imagine the unfathomable destruction and harm to life. CARICOM believes that there should be due accountability to victims and supports the positive obligations entailed in the TPNW.

To conclude, I reiterate CARICOM's absolute opposition to the development, deployment, testing, upgrading, hosting and use of nuclear weapons. We reaffirm our commitment to working towards a world free of nuclear weapons. That is not only an ideal but also a prerequisite to truly deliver any guarantee of peace and security for the peoples of our United Nations.

**Mr. Bandiya** (Nigeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States. The Group associates itself with the statement made by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and wishes to make the following remarks.

Nuclear weapons represent a grave existential threat to humankind, and, if nuclear-weapon States continue to possess and modernize such weapons of mass destruction, our collective security cannot be ensured. The Group therefore welcomes and underscores the importance of resolution 70/34 as an integral part of the multilateral disarmament effort.

The African Group supports the principle of complete nuclear disarmament as a prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security. The Group insists that achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons should be the overall objective of the United Nations.

Regrettably, the slow pace of progress by the nuclear-weapon States in accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the various relevant agreed outcomes of the NPT Review Conference, remains worrisome. The Group therefore insists on the implementation of all agreed measures and undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States in the context of the Treaty.

In that regard, the African Group is deeply disappointed at yet another failed NPT Review Conference, which could not agree to any tangible

progress on the implementation of agreed commitments. The tenth Review Conference was an opportunity for the nuclear-weapon States to recommit to fulfilling their unmet commitments to rid themselves and the world of nuclear weapons and to save humankind from the possibility of the devastating humanitarian impact of a nuclear detonation or nuclear war.

The African Group reaffirms the central role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT as well as in their contributions to addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world.

In that context, the African Group remains committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba, reaffirming the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and providing a shield for the African territory.

The African Group reiterates its deep concern regarding the lack of implementation of the commitments and obligations of the 1995 NPT Review Conference resolution on the Middle East regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

In the same vein, the Group recalls the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, pursuant to decision 73/546. The Group welcomes the convening of the first and second sessions of the Conference. The African Group calls on all invited parties to constructively continue to engage in good faith in order to negotiate a legally binding treaty that satisfies the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

The African Group underscores the importance of continued respect for the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and stresses the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in continuing to ensure the commitment of States to the implementation of safeguards agreements and in the provision and promotion of technical support and cooperation, as well as maximizing the use of science and technology for socioeconomic development.

The African Group emphasizes the humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons at this session, particularly the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use or detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or as a deliberate action. The Group notes the strides made



by States and continues to call on all States, especially nuclear-weapon States, to have in their consideration the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources, among others, as well as to take the necessary measures and steps to ensure the dismantling and renunciation of those weapons.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. In that context, the Group reiterates the urgent need for our planet to be free of nuclear weapons, as their presence constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security and an existential threat to humankind.

Africa supports the objective of complete nuclear disarmament as the utmost prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security. It is in that spirit that the African Group recalls the historic entry into force of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January 2021.

The Group reaffirms its full support for the adoption of the Declaration of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, entitled, "Our Commitment to a World Free of Nuclear Weapons", which reaffirmed the determination to realize the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Group also reaffirms its support for the Vienna Action Plan adopted during the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty, held in Vienna from 21 to 23 June 2022, to facilitate the effective and timely implementation of the TPNW and its objectives and goals.

In that regard, the Group wishes to urge all members of the international community, especially nuclear-weapon States and those under the so-called nuclear umbrella, to seize the opportunity to sign and ratify the Treaty at an early date and to pursue the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons does not guarantee security; it is an affirmation of the risks of their potential use. It is in that context that the Group stresses the need for the nuclear-weapon States to cease the further modernization, upgrading, refurbishment or extension of the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

The African Group wishes to reiterate the importance of achieving universal adherence to the

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), taking into account the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States. The Group believes that the CTBT offers hope of halting further modernization and development or vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Dang (Viet Nam):** I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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

We are discussing the issue of nuclear weapons this year in the face of a challenging environment. The heightened tensions between major Powers and the modernization and expansion of nuclear arsenals have sparked new concerns of an arms race. The Secretary-General has warned of a nuclear danger not seen since the height of the cold war. Against such an unsettling backdrop, solidarity in our efforts to ensure the total elimination of nuclear weapons must remain a paramount priority. ASEAN is convinced that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are best addressed through multilateralism, with all countries fulfilling their obligations and commitments responsibly.

On our part, ASEAN supports the common efforts of the international community to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. ASEAN remains concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and the risks posed by their continued existence. ASEAN reiterates that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to guarantee against their use and threat of use.

ASEAN reaffirms its recognition of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global regime of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. ASEAN therefore welcomes the convening of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT last August, after it was postponed four times. However, we regret the consecutive failure of the ninth and tenth Review Conferences to adopt a consensus outcome document that could have provided much-needed additional momentum towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The hard work must continue, and ASEAN recognizes the important role of the NPT

for peace, security and sustainable development in the twenty-first century. Therefore, ASEAN reiterates its call on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitments to the full and effective implementation of their NPT obligations and commitments, particularly those concerning the realization of article VI of the NPT.

ASEAN also calls on all nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT to fulfil all of their nuclear-disarmament obligations and emphasizes the need for them to adhere to accountability through benchmarks, concrete, measurable and time-bound actions on nuclear disarmament with established deadlines, and to report their implementation of their obligations until the goal of total elimination is achieved, in a structured manner that allows non-nuclear-weapon States to engage constructively on their reports.

ASEAN reaffirms its collective position against nuclear tests and continues to stress the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) without delay. All ASEAN member States have ratified the CTBT, reflecting our strong commitment to the international norms against nuclear testing. ASEAN welcomes the fact that the CTBT now has 186 signatories and 176 ratifications but continues to call upon the remaining States listed in annex 2 of the CTBT to sign and ratify it as soon as possible for its early entry into force.

ASEAN also recognizes that the dangers of nuclear testing continue to be of utmost concern. Therefore, the situation in all regions that underwent nuclear-test explosions will not be forgotten. We encourage the international community to assist those regions.

ASEAN maintains that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a historic agreement that contributes to global nuclear disarmament and complements other existing nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, including the NPT, the CTBT and nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. Having entered into force on 22 January 2021, the TPNW provides that each State party undertakes never, under any circumstance, to develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We note the adoption of the Declaration and Action Plan of the First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, held in Vienna in June 2022. In line with the foregoing, ASEAN supports the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament as a comprehensive step to

advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in a concrete, holistic and integrated manner.

Such a comprehensive approach must also emphasize the importance of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. ASEAN supports every effort to create and enhance the role and contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including in the Middle East.

ASEAN continues to uphold its commitment to preserve the South-East Asia region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). To that end, we agreed to extend the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone for another five-year period (2023-2027) and reaffirm our commitment to continuously engaging the nuclear-weapon States and intensify the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty.

We would like to stress that it is necessary for the nuclear-weapon States to provide unconditional, legally binding negative security assurances against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States in the zones, as well as to reduce and eliminate the risk of the unintentional and accidental use of such weapons, pending the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

ASEAN reiterates that every State has the right to the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology, in particular for its economic and social development. Commending the efforts by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in its technical cooperation programmes with States towards that end, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our cooperation with the IAEA. In that regard, we would like to highlight the annual meetings of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy with the assistance of the IAEA, including the most recent meeting, held in August 2022. ASEAN is pleased with the progress made in the implementation of the 2019 practical arrangements on cooperation in the areas of nuclear science, technology and applications, and nuclear safety, security and safeguards between ASEAN and the IAEA.

Let me conclude by reiterating ASEAN's commitment to the important work of the Committee

in realizing the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Bahr Aluloom** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to note that the Group of Arab States aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group reiterates its principled positions regarding disarmament and international security and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime at the international level.

The Arab Group expresses regret at the failure of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT, for the second time in a row, namely, the ninth Conference of 2015 and the tenth Conference of 2022, to agree on a final document. That failure reflected adversely on the disarmament and non-proliferation regime at the international level.

The Arab Group calls for making efforts to ensure the success of the eleventh Review Conference in agreeing on a comprehensive and balanced final document that includes clear measures to promote the credibility and sustainability of the Treaty through implementing the agreed commitments, particularly with regard to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, achieving the universality of the Treaty and establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

The Arab Group also stresses the importance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW); the Group actively participated in the negotiations leading to its conclusion. That Treaty represents a new customary source of international law regulating disarmament and considers that possessing, using or even threatening to use nuclear weapons runs counter to the most basic rules of humanitarian international law and poses a direct threat to international peace and security.

The Arab Group also emphasizes that the entry into force of the TPNW would bridge a major gap with respect to equating nuclear weapons with other weapons of mass destruction prohibited by binding conventions pursuant to the basic rules of international humanitarian law. The Arab Group stresses that the TPNW does not run counter to the NPT. On the contrary, it complements it and gives the NPT impetus to fully achieve its goals.

The Arab Group underscores once again the importance of supporting international efforts to promote the universality of multilateral conventions and treaties on nuclear disarmament and other weapons of mass destruction, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We call on all States to accede to that Treaty, including the annex 2 States.

We reaffirm the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States in accordance with action 10 of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, as well as countries that have nuclear programmes and activities that have not been declared and raise questions about their peaceful nature, in addition to other countries and parties that have not yet acceded to the NPT.

The Arab Group stresses the need to continue international and regional efforts to facilitate the entry of the CTBT into force more than twenty-five years after it opened for signature. We express concern at the continued failure to achieve tangible progress at the level of nuclear disarmament and the repeated failure to comply with the commitments of the NPT Review Conferences of 1995, 2000 and 2010. Nuclear-weapon States are avoiding the adoption of specific time frames to implement those international commitments for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Arab Group rejects the continued adoption of military doctrines by nuclear States that permit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States, as well as the endeavours of certain States to develop and increase their nuclear weapons in our tense world. In that context, the Arab Group emphasizes that the total and indefinite elimination of nuclear weapons pursuant to article VI of the NPT, in an internationally verifiable manner, is the only guarantee of the non-use of such weapons, which run counter to international humanitarian law, either by States or non-State actors.

We also stress that the responsibility to free the Middle East from nuclear weapons is a collective international responsibility. The Arab Group has borne its share of that responsibility and looks to other parties to do the same; otherwise the credibility of the NPT will be brought into question in a manner that undermines the non-proliferation regime as a whole.

The Arab Group stresses the need to take practical steps and immediate measures in that regard, as called for in the annual draft resolution submitted by the Group of Arab States, entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East” (A/C.1/77/L.2). We

also express concern about the continued security threat due to Israel's continued refusal to accede to the NPT, as it is the only one in the Middle East that did not join the Treaty. Israel continues to refuse to put all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive nuclear safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We reiterate that the continued delay in the implementation of the international commitment stemming from the 1995 resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), annex) is a serious setback that is obstructing progress in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and constitutes a threat to sustained peace and security in the region and the world, as does the repeated failure to implement the commitments of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

Due to time constraints, we will post our full statement on eStatements.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

**Mr. Dvořák** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Georgia, Monaco and San Marino align themselves with this statement, the full version of which will be distributed in writing.

The current complex security environment, which is marked by increased tensions and continued proliferation crises, underscores the need to preserve and further strengthen general arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes. A full-fledged war is taking place in Europe.

The European Union (EU) strongly condemns the unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Russia's provocative, dangerous and escalatory threats to use nuclear weapons in that war of aggression are entirely unacceptable. At the beginning of this year, the leaders of all five nuclear-weapon States committed to the prevention of nuclear war and to avoiding arms races and reaffirmed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

We deplore Russia's threatening statements and its raising of nuclear-alert levels, which undermine the credibility of its commitment to the January declaration. The EU calls on Russia to immediately de-alert its

nuclear forces and to refrain from any threats of the use of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, the Russian occupation of the Chornobyl and Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plants and Russia's military operations conducted in the vicinity of civilian nuclear facilities in Ukraine are unacceptable and add to the gravity of the situation. The EU condemns those irresponsible acts, fully supports the efforts by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and welcomes the recent IAEA inspection visit to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We call on Russia to immediately implement the IAEA Board of Governors resolutions in that regard.

The constitutional change to renounce Belarus's nuclear-free-zone status is another worrisome development that adds to the unacceptable attempts to redefine the rules-based European security architecture.

We regret that it has not been possible to achieve consensus on a final outcome document of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The EU stresses the importance of universalizing the NPT and calls on all States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and to adhere to its terms.

The EU strongly supports all three pillars of the NPT and will continue to promote the comprehensive, balanced and substantive full implementation of the 2010 Review Conference Action Plan. We stress the need to implement all obligations under the NPT and the commitments made during previous Review Conferences.

The EU member States remain committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the NPT. In that regard, we welcome the agreement reached between the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the New START Treaty for an additional five years. The reduction of deployed strategic nuclear arsenals under the New START Treaty contributes to the implementation of article VI of the NPT through the overall reduction in the global stockpile of deployed nuclear weapons.

Recalling the obligations for all nuclear-weapon States arising from article VI of the NPT, we underline that the two nuclear-weapon States with the largest arsenals hold a special responsibility in the area of nuclear disarmament and arms control. The EU



strongly encourages them to seek further reductions of their arsenals and to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, risk reduction and verification activities, laying the ground for even more robust and ambitious future arms-control agreements and reporting. We call on China to actively contribute to those processes.

Furthermore, the EU acknowledges the efforts of France to demonstrate increased transparency on its doctrines and the nuclear weapons it possesses. The EU recalls action 5 of the 2010 NPT Action Plan, which, *inter alia*, calls upon nuclear-weapon States to enhance transparency and increase mutual confidence.

The EU acknowledges the importance of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones for peace and security and encourages nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The EU also recognizes the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in receiving unequivocal security assurances from nuclear-weapon States as part of binding and agreed security arrangements. Negative security assurances can be an important confidence-building measure that strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime, contributes to nuclear disarmament and enhances regional and global security, in line with the goals and objectives of the NPT.

In that regard, we recall that Russia has blatantly violated its commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.

Promoting universal adherence to and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a top priority for the EU. We call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the CTBT without preconditions or further delay.

The EU reiterates its resolute commitment to and continued support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The JCPOA is a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, endorsed unanimously by the Security Council.

The EU regrets that Syria has yet to remedy its non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement by cooperating as a matter of priority and transparently with the IAEA to resolve all outstanding issues and calls on Syria to sign, bring into force and implement

in full an additional protocol with the IAEA as soon as possible.

The EU strongly condemns the illegal launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the intermediate-range ballistic missile in October that flew over the territory of Japan amid multiple ballistic-missiles launches over the past week and in unprecedented numbers since September 2021. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues its pursuit of unlawful weapons systems.

The EU further condemns the renewed activities in several nuclear sites in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the intention to prepare another nuclear test. The EU urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, return to full compliance with its obligations under the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State, comply fully with the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement and bring into force the additional protocol to that agreement.

The EU and its member States reiterate their long-standing support for an immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and we support starting such negotiations.

We will continue to support the actions taken by a number of States, including EU member States, to consider the role of nuclear verification in advancing nuclear disarmament and firmly support further efforts in all relevant forums. While verification is not an end in itself, further development of multilateral nuclear-disarmament verification capabilities would assist in the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

As I noted earlier, owing to time constraints, we will circulate the full version of our statement in writing. I strongly encourage countries to read that statement in order to learn about our positions.

**The Chair:** They say that time never runs out; it is we who run out of time.

**Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico)** (*spoke in Spanish*): The uncertainty, insecurity, threats of all kinds, distrust and the breakdown in communication among nuclear Powers show clearly the dangers that looms over humankind. The nuclear Powers have a responsibility that is proportionate to the infinite

madness of their deterrence doctrines and their incessant arms race. The nuclear Powers try to tell us that they are acting responsibly, with the argument that nuclear arsenals have a smaller number of nuclear warheads compared with what we saw at the height of the cold war. Because there are only nine countries with those kinds of weapons, does that mean that we should be eternally grateful to them for their contribution to maintaining security in the world?

The truth is that nuclear-weapon States are announcing that they will be increasing their arsenals, that they are improving their weaponry and that they are more than ready to use them. More and more non-nuclear-weapon States are also invoking the protection of those weapons and justifying their existence.

However, all other States — 184 to be exact — are fulfilling day after day their international commitments and obligations in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament, without getting anything in return, just a vision of the total annihilation of all life on Earth.

How have we arrived at this situation where we could potentially be killing ourselves when science has given us so many reasons to live longer and better? So long as we have a voice, we will continue to say that the only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their elimination. That voice — that of Mexico and that of 184 States of goodwill — has been able to reintroduce into this forum a discussion of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and an updated understanding of the devastating effects that they would have, given the no longer remote possibility that they could be used deliberately, by accident or by mistake. Therefore, the prevention of any humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is the *raison d'être* of our work in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Time and again we will tell the world that deterrence or the false claim that nuclear weapons guarantee world security is simply unsustainable. It is intrinsically immoral and an insult to our intelligence. Nine States have claimed the right to decide the life and death of not just the other 184 States but all 193 of us here at the United Nations.

They have the weapons, and five of them have the so-called right to veto. But we have a voice and the human motive as well as the votes in the General Assembly to establish the prohibitions that will protect us from catastrophe. That human motive gave rise to the norm

that is the backbone of international humanitarian law, the one that provides, in article 1, paragraph 2, of the 1977 Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, that under all circumstances

“civilians and combatants remain under the protection and authority of the principles of international law derived from established custom, from the principles of humanity and from the dictates of public conscience”.

That is why we have proudly promoted and will continue to promote the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The Treaty is complementary to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a tangible expression of the obligations enshrined in its article VI. In other words, both Treaties are completely compatible and mutually reinforcing, and the nuclear Powers have been unable to prove the contrary, despite how hard they have worked to do so. The TPNW is getting more and more signatures and ratifications and is moving inexorably towards universality.

In sum, the norm has been established and contributes daily to the consolidation of that norm from the perspective of customary international law.

The First Meeting of States Parties this year was a success, with the adoption of a political declaration and the Vienna action plan. It is also a tremendous honour for Mexico to be chairing the Second Meeting of States Parties, in 2023, at United Nations Headquarters.

The international community had great expectations of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Regardless of the outcome, or the absence of an outcome, we believe that we were able to actually come to various understandings that we should be able to capitalize on in one way or another. The NPT remains in effect, and the implementation of previous agreements is not subject to any conditions or contexts that some can change at will. All its provisions, including those in article VI, must be fulfilled unconditionally.

In sum, the modernization of nuclear weapons and their growing role in military doctrines as well as the threat that they pose lead us to conclude that nuclear disarmament is the only way to save humankind from destruction.

**Mr. Fetz (Canada):** It will come as no surprise that Canada is of the view that nuclear weapons should

never be used again and must be eliminated. Indeed, that will be the common refrain of many delegations over the course of this session in the First Committee, as it has been in the past. And yet, action on verifiable progress towards nuclear disarmament has remained elusive for a long time. China is rapidly increasing its nuclear arsenal, and Russia's threats concerning the use of nuclear weapons in the context of its war of aggression against Ukraine are reckless.

Nonetheless, all of us share a vision of a world without nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is one issue that continues to unite us despite the outcome of the most recent Review Conference, which was deeply disappointing to many, including Canada. In spite of Russia's blocking of a consensus, the overwhelming majority of States reaffirmed the Treaty as the essential foundation for pursuing our shared objectives. We coalesced around several key mechanisms for non-proliferation and disarmament, many of which were proposed by non-nuclear-weapon States, including through the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, the Stockholm Initiative, the Vienna Group of 10 and the New Agenda Coalition. Those proposals offer clear and practical opportunities for convergence. We are pleased that a working group to strengthen the NPT review process has been established and encourage all NPT States to contribute ideas for more effective implementation of NPT commitments.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty, which commands overwhelming support, is also an issue that unites us. The growing list of States who have joined the Treaty is a testament to that. We welcome the six new ratifications concluded in 2022 by Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Sao Tome and Principe, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu. Urgent action is needed by China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States of America to see the Treaty enter into force.

Similarly, support for an international treaty to prohibit fissile material production for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices remains overwhelming. We call on all States to support the draft resolution on a fissile material cut-off treaty (A/C.1/77/L.47). A group of governmental experts and numerous technical and political research papers have paved the way for the long overdue negotiations to commence. Procedural obstruction continues to paralyse the Conference on

Disarmament, and we must explore all innovative solutions to start negotiations.

*(spoke in French)*

Work must also continue to make progress on nuclear disarmament verification capabilities. Canada is pleased to be part of the group of governmental experts that considers the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. We are also pleased to contribute financial support and technical knowledge to the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. While not a substitute for nuclear disarmament, steps on nuclear risk reduction must be taken immediately. Those States possessing nuclear weapons bear special responsibility to take credible, progressive steps towards nuclear disarmament.

When reflecting on the slow progress made on nuclear disarmament, we must recognize the importance of promoting diversity, including by fostering the engagement of young people and advocating the meaningful participation of women in nuclear forums. More diverse perspectives lead to more innovative ideas that can help us to resolve issues, such as disarmament. In that regard, Canada is proud to co-sponsor First Committee draft resolutions that recognize and advance diversity, equity and inclusion in this space.

**Mr. Chindawongse** (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In its very first resolution (resolution 1 (I)), the General Assembly identified nuclear disarmament as a primary goal of the United Nations. In one crucial respect, our multilateral architecture has proven successful. Nuclear weapons have not been used again during the past 77 years. But the threat of their use still hangs over all of humankind, like the proverbial sword of Damocles. Unfortunately, their power to destroy all people and our planet is many millions of times more devastating. Today the situation regarding nuclear weapons as a whole is less stable than ever before. It is even more dangerous in the view of some. Look at the growing perception of the rising risks of nuclear weapons being used because of heightened geopolitical tensions and conflict. There is also growing questioning of the effectiveness of the long-standing agreements on nuclear weapons that have helped underpin global nuclear stability for decades.

Look at the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — the bedrock of the global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses regime. Yet again, the NPT Review Conference failed to adopt an outcome document. Is that the new normal for the NPT review cycle? Look at the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Despite ratifications to the Treaty in recent years, there has been no progress in ratification by annex 2 countries. It is still therefore not in force, almost three decades after the General Assembly adopted it. When can we expect light at the end of the tunnel?

There is also declining trust and confidence among some nuclear-weapon States. How can that bode well for hopes of accelerated reductions in and elimination of nuclear stockpiles, either unilaterally or through arms control agreements? The situation is certainly disheartening. But we cannot lose heart, because we have no choice. The First Committee is one of many platforms that we, the international community, can use to advance our common agenda on the nuclear issue. So, in contributing to that common agenda here, Thailand will be guided by the following three beliefs and approaches.

First, the only guarantee for the safety of humankind against the dangers of the use of nuclear weapons is the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Thailand will therefore work systematically with others to advance that goal, including by promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, its universalization, and its complementarity with the NPT and other relevant frameworks.

Secondly, in achieving the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, Thailand believes that different initiatives can make contributions, and they should therefore be seen as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. From the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace to the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and other initiatives, Thailand welcomes cooperation with them, whether they seek to reduce strategic risk or set a time frame for nuclear weapons elimination, for example. We will therefore study the various draft resolutions with an open mind, a pragmatic eye and a strong belief in our principles.

Thirdly, in taking forward the efforts in the areas of both non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, regional ideas matter, and therefore regional action should be promoted. However, such action should

interface effectively and in a complementary manner with global undertakings. On that point, Thailand will continue to cooperate closely with ASEAN partners to implement effectively the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and its Plan of Action and thereby contribute to nuclear non-proliferation. Thailand will also support the development and effective functioning of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other regions, including in the Middle East, recalling General Assembly decision 73/546 and the 1995 resolution of the NPT on that matter. Similarly, there must be a strong interface between regional cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, such as through the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy, and global cooperation through an effective International Atomic Energy Agency, whose role in nuclear safety, security and safeguards, as well as in human and institutional capacities, remains indispensable and should be reinforced.

Let me close by imagining the bigger picture for a moment, drawing inspiration from John Lennon's iconic song "Imagine". As the United Nations undertakes global tasks of critical priority to humankind, whether in rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals, addressing the climate change challenge or preparing for the Summit of the Future, perhaps we should ask the question: how much more would those global efforts benefit from reduced risks of nuclear conflict, a reduced fear of nuclear accidents and a reduced strain on the budget thanks to the forgoing of nuclear weapon development? Our work is relevant indeed.

**Mr. Koba (Indonesia):** Indonesia associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Our commitment to the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons is uncontested. However, in the seventy-seventh year of our work on pursuing nuclear disarmament, its status remains inadequate. The risk of using nuclear war remains ever present. Nine countries maintain possession over 13,000 nuclear weapons, while a handful of States host nuclear weapons in their territories, allowing their potential use on their behalf. At the same time, the advancement and modernization of nuclear weapons and delivery systems continues. The lack of commitment on the part of the nuclear-weapon States is apparent. They continue to reject timelines or benchmarks, as well as any meaningful and ambitious commitment. Nuclear-weapon States also continue to



use the international security environment as a pretext for maintaining their possession of nuclear weapons. Trust among Members States continues to decrease, as the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) yet again failed to achieve a consensus. In that context, we are pleased to recognize the successful first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the adoption of its outcome document. That success offered hope in the nuclear disarmament landscape.

Allow me to highlight three important points. First, nuclear disarmament is an enabler of international security and stability. The current challenging situation should not justify the continued possession of nuclear weapons, or the use or threat of use of such weapons. We would like to make it clear that Indonesia condemns unequivocally any and all nuclear threats, irrespective of the circumstances.

Secondly, urgent and concrete actions should be pursued towards nuclear disarmament. Nuclear armed States have the responsibility to immediately step up their efforts to advance nuclear disarmament. Relevant States should also take steps to stop hosting nuclear weapons in their territories and reject the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons on their behalf.

Thirdly, we all need to reignite efforts towards the long-overdue realization of the following: a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons; legally binding instruments on effective international assurances for non-nuclear weapon States against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons; a balanced treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; institutionalized nuclear-weapon-free zones in which such weapons cease to exist; the immediate entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and strengthened relevant measures, such as verification and transparency, which contribute to a world without nuclear weapons.

This year, the First Committee will once again discuss a number of draft resolutions on nuclear weapons. Let me assure members that Indonesia will continue to extend our support to those draft resolutions with a view to advancing nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament machineries suffered enough this year. We cannot afford another setback. The First Committee should reverse that trend in order to mitigate the

catastrophic risks posed by nuclear weapons in the interests of the very survival of humankind.

**Mr. Elhomosany (Egypt):** Egypt reiterates its concern over the grave threat posed to humankind and international security by the continued possession of nuclear weapons by a few States and reaffirms that the total, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their proliferation, use or threat of use.

Arguments that set preconditions for, or artificial impediments to, the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations will only lead to the gradual demise of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), taking into consideration the failure of the tenth NPT Review Conference. The rising levels of tensions at the global level, coupled with rapid technological developments, have placed the risk of intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons at one of its highest levels since the Cold War era.

The intensified competition among a number of States to develop, test and deploy faster and more powerful delivery systems, such as hypersonic missiles or nuclear-powered missiles, in combination with the rising levels of malicious uses of cyber and outer-space technologies, exponentially raises the risk of triggering a nuclear war either intentionally or by mistake. Immediate progress is necessary to restore trust and faith in the current regime by reconfirming the validity of all previous obligations and reaffirming the commitment of all States parties to the NPT to implement those obligations without any conditionality and to further build on them through practical time-bound measures.

The decades-long stalemate in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and countless similar resolutions is eroding the credibility and sustainability of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and multilateral norms, as well as the rule of law at the international level. That stalemate is one of the root causes of the instability and lack of security in a region that already suffers from chronic military conflicts and an arms race. In that regard, we believe that the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East represents an important step towards the full and effective implementation of the 1995 resolution, through an institutional, inclusive and consensus-based process. The Conference successfully convened its first session in November

2019 under the presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and its second session in November 2021 under the presidency of the State of Kuwait. We look forward to the third session of the Conference, to be held in November under the presidency of the Republic of Lebanon. We reiterate that the Conference aims to reach arrangements that are freely arrived at by the States of the region on the basis of consensus. It is a genuine attempt to achieve a long-standing agreed international commitment in a non-discriminatory manner that does not aim at singling out any State in the region. At the holistic level, that process could serve as a platform for addressing all regional disarmament and non-proliferation challenges. We sincerely hope that all invited members and observers will participate in future sessions of the Conference, which could lead to a major contribution to strengthening the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and a breakthrough in addressing the deteriorating security conditions in the region.

In the same vein, we also count on the continued support of all Member States for the Conference, as well as for the draft resolution that Egypt submits annually on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East (A/C.1/77/L.1), which was adopted by consensus until 2017, and the draft resolution that we submit annually on behalf of the Group of Arab States on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East (A/C.1/77/L.2). We consider the support of all Member States for our draft resolutions to be proof of their commitment to nuclear disarmament, collective security and sustainable peace in the Middle East and to achieving the agreed upon obligations in that regard.

**Ms. Petit (France)** (*spoke in French*): The current session of the General Assembly is being held against a very serious backdrop. France condemns in the strongest terms the provocative, dangerous and irresponsible attitude of Russia, in particular the aggressive nuclear rhetoric it uses in support of the war it is waging in Ukraine, as well as the threats against the security and the safety of Ukrainian nuclear installations. France once again calls on the Russian Federation to respect the commitments it has made to the international community, including the security guarantees granted to Ukraine in the framework of the Budapest Memorandum. I also recall the political commitment to which the Heads of State of the five nuclear-weapon States subscribed last January, recalling that nuclear weapons, as long as they exist, must only be used for

the purposes of defence, deterrence and prevention of war, and not as tools of intimidation or coercion. We also regret Russia's obstruction at the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which — as the Committee is aware — thwarted the adoption of an outcome document.

In that context, France remains fully committed to the implementation of the NPT, which is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regimes and is one of the most universal treaties in the world. For more than 50 years, it has been the only instrument enabling the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation, while providing everyone with the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. For those reasons, France will continue to combat all attacks on the authority and primacy of the NPT.

In the context of the NPT and the obligations under article VI thereof, France has taken considerable and unparalleled unilateral measures in the field of disarmament, such as the irreversible dismantling of production facilities for fissile materials for nuclear weapons; the complete dismantling of our ground-to-ground nuclear component; the reduction by half of the number of nuclear weapons and the reduction by one third of the oceanic and airborne components; and the irreversible dismantling of the Pacific test site. France intends to continue that commitment, focusing on a concrete and ambitious nuclear disarmament agenda that includes: the preservation of the primacy and centrality of the NPT for our international security architecture; the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and the launch of negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty within the Conference on Disarmament. Pending such negotiations, France calls on all States concerned to implement a moratorium on the production of those fissile materials. The responsibility of working collectively to reduce any possibility of nuclear confrontation lies with us all. France will spare no effort to contribute to the goal of a safer world. In that regard, France remains committed to reducing strategic risks and combating the erosion of arms control instruments. France is of the view that such unfailing commitment to nuclear disarmament should be progressive, anchored in the shifting strategic realities and based on the principle of undiminished security for all. That commitment is also part of a balanced approach to the three pillars of the NPT. In that regard, France remains fully mobilized to

respond to the nuclear proliferation crises weighing on our strategic environment.

France regrets Iran's choice not to take up the coordinator's proposal in early August for a return to the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We call on Iran to end its nuclear activities that are contrary to its commitments and to cooperate without further delay with the International Atomic Energy Agency on the safeguards file, in accordance with its international obligations. Our objective remains constant: Iran must never acquire nuclear weapons. France also remains concerned about North Korea's continued proliferation activities. We must continue our efforts to ensure the strict, full and universal implementation of those sanctions so that the North Korean regime finally accepts dialogue and abandons its proliferation programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We remain committed to pursuing those priorities in view of the new NPT review cycle and in international disarmament forums.

**Ms. Cho** (Singapore): Singapore aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and would like to add the following.

As the Secretary-General said at the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September, "we need a new vision for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation". The historic gains that we have made on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as we have said before, are at risk of unravelling. While it was disappointing that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to adopt a final document for the second consecutive time, we must continue to engage in open and constructive dialogue, press on to rebuild mutual trust and make progress on all three pillars of the NPT. We propose four key steps in that regard.

First, it is imperative that we safeguard the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We urge all States parties to fulfil their obligations under the NPT, apart from rhetorically reaffirming commitments. Nuclear-weapon States must do more to fulfil their disarmament commitments under article VI of the NPT, including by

reducing their nuclear arsenals and ending the testing and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons.

Secondly, we must continue working towards the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are encouraged by the current positive momentum, with six Member States ratifying the CTBT this year. We urge the eight remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay. We should also urgently commence the long-overdue negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Thirdly, we must support the establishment and maintenance of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which represent concrete steps towards establishing a world free of nuclear weapons. Singapore reaffirms its commitment to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). We will continue to work closely with nuclear-weapon States to resolve outstanding issues concerning their signing and ratification of the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty without reservations. We also encourage efforts to achieve a genuine and lasting peace in a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East through open and constructive dialogue involving all relevant parties.

Fourthly, we call on all Member States to support the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in its efforts to discharge its mandate effectively. The IAEA plays an indispensable role, not just in verifying that non-nuclear-weapon States abide by their non-proliferation obligations under the NPT but also in ensuring high standards of nuclear safety and security. As a Member of the IAEA's Board of Governors for the 2022–2024 term, Singapore will continue to support the IAEA's important work. We also reaffirm our commitment to deepening our cooperation with the IAEA, including by renewing the third Singapore-IAEA country training programme and through the 2019 IAEA-ASEAN practical arrangements.

A new vision for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as articulated by the Secretary-General, can only be achieved if Member States demonstrate the collective political will to overcome long-standing and new challenges. Singapore reaffirms its commitment to working constructively with the international community to achieve such meaningful outcomes.

**Mr. Khalil** (Pakistan): The global arms control landscape today, especially in the nuclear realm, presents a precarious picture normatively, institutionally and

operationally. The divisions in approaches, perspectives and priorities are sharpening. The international consensus reached at the first special session on disarmament (SSOD-I) to systematically pursue nuclear disarmament has virtually broken down. Nuclear disarmament obligations remain largely unfulfilled, as evidenced by the constant shifting of goalposts towards additional non-proliferation measures. The integrity of long-standing principles, norms and rules continues to be eroded by the carving out of exceptions and the pursuit of discriminatory policies.

The build-up of arms in the strategic realm is on the rise. Military capabilities are assuming a force-multiplier character owing to the growing weaponization and integration across the nuclear, outer space, cyber, conventional and artificial intelligence domains. Consequently, political and military tensions and strategic asymmetries are growing in many regions. Nuclear dangers are rising, and the prospects of a nuclear war are back within the realm of possibility. In that worsening international and regional security environment, a handful of States seem determined to perpetuate the status quo to their continued strategic advantage. The impacts of these troubling developments on the machinery of disarmament are obvious. Many of those troubling trends are manifest in South Asia, where the largest State continues to be a net beneficiary of nuclear exceptionalism and discrimination in the application of international norms and legality. It also remains a recipient of generous supplies of conventional and non-conventional weaponry, technology and platforms. The effects of those developments in South Asia are clear: they are eroding strategic stability in the region; abetting the hegemonic ambitions of the largest State; aiding its relentless pursuit of strategic domination, its aggressive designs and the operationalization of its dangerous doctrines; and enabling its defiance of international law, including Security Council resolutions.

A number of new drivers are shaping the global and regional strategic environment. Nuclear weapons and their delivery systems no longer exist in isolation. Those weapons and platforms co-exist with other advanced weapon systems in different domains. Therefore, the conversation on nuclear disarmament can no longer be oblivious to the mutually reinforcing relationship of various weapon systems and their collective impact on the security of States, particularly in situations of asymmetry in conventional and nuclear capabilities.

Given that state of nuclear affairs, there is an evident need for rebuilding a more enduring and equitable international security architecture, anchored in the following seven principles.

The first principle is full and consistent respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, Security Council resolutions and international law, especially with respect to the non-use of force and the peaceful resolution of disputes. The second principle is implementation of the assurance in the SSOD-I Declaration that every State has an equal right to security. The third principle is faithful compliance with, and fulfilment of, nuclear disarmament obligations by the respective States. The fourth principle is reinvigorating the pursuit of conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels. The fifth principle is eschewing double standards and pursuing non-discriminatory measures in the nuclear and other domains. The sixth principle is commencing negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and concluding a legal instrument on negative security assurances. The seventh principle is strengthening the existing international legal regime to prevent the militarization of outer space and bringing cyber and autonomous weapons under effective international control.

Pakistan remains committed to the goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner. That objective can only be advanced by faithful adherence to, and implementation of, the cardinal principles enshrined in SSOD-I. To that end, Pakistan also reiterates its call for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention. Proposals for negative security assurances have been on the CD's agenda for the longest duration. Pakistan believes that the issue is most ripe for treaty negotiations and has the significant potential to create the necessary environment for confidence-building and the easing of tensions.

Treaty proposals that are cost-free for the proponents but disregard the legitimate security needs of others will remain a non-starter, as is clear from the deadlock over the commencement of the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) negotiations. The time for an FMCT that will freeze the existing asymmetry in nuclear arsenals and fissile material stocks held by some nuclear-weapons States has long past. That outdated proposal does not have any added value for nuclear disarmament either, as is evident from the increase in



nuclear arsenals by States that are ostensibly committed to the so-called moratoriums on fissile material production. For those reasons, Pakistan will continue to oppose the FMCT. We have instead proposed a fissile material treaty that addresses the issues in all their dimensions — comprehensively, effectively and verifiably — and that explicitly incorporates fissile material stocks in its scope. During the current session, Pakistan will submit its traditional draft resolution on negative security assurances (A/C.1/77/L.36) on behalf of a large number of co-sponsors. We look forward to its adoption with the widest possible support.

**Mr. Baumann** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Several developments in the area of nuclear weapons are cause of grave concern. The nuclear dangers resulting from Russia's military aggression against Ukraine are foremost among those concerns. We strongly condemn Russia's multiple nuclear threats this year, as we do any and all nuclear threats, and we once again urge Russia to refrain from unacceptable, dangerous and provocative rhetoric. We equally deplore the recent apparent change in the Russian declaratory policy, opening the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons. We emphasize that any use of nuclear weapons would be catastrophic — with transboundary effects.

The failure of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt a final document is also of great concern. We regret that despite efforts to find a compromise, one delegation blocked consensus. While the draft final document was limited in its ambition concerning nuclear disarmament, it would have been important to agree on and recommit to what unites us — the common NPT objectives — despite the current difficult situation. Those developments are occurring in a broader environment that is marked by an overall lack of progress in nuclear disarmament.

The vast majority of disarmament commitments remain to be fulfilled, while steps are taken in the opposite direction. In the area of nuclear non-proliferation, we also observe a lack of progress with respect to the full and mutual return by all parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, while Iran continues its activities, exceeding a number of key limits set out in the agreement. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to develop its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme while leaving open the possibility of resuming nuclear weapons

testing. We condemn the missile tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We need to reverse those negative trends. Let me underscore that the NPT must be at the centre of such efforts. The NPT continues to play an essential role as the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The obligations and commitments made under that instrument remain entirely valid. Proposals made to accelerate progress, such as the Stepping Stones Approach introduced by the Stockholm Initiative, remain pertinent as the new NPT review cycle begins. Switzerland will continue to engage on an entire range of proposals, including transparency, nuclear disarmament verification and the issue of irreversibility. In particular, we deem it important to advance the issue of accountability and measurability in order to better track progress in the realization of the NPT commitments and obligations to make up for the shortcomings in that area.

The last review cycle saw the widest possible agreement on the urgent need for nuclear risk reduction. Nuclear risks will persist as long as nuclear weapons exist and their complete elimination is the only way to eliminate fully the risks that they pose. But specific short- and medium-term measures are required immediately, given the elevated risks of nuclear weapon use and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any such occurrence. For its part, Switzerland stands ready to continue supporting efforts in that area and to cooperate with all stakeholders, in particular the nuclear-weapon States.

Before concluding, we also reiterate our deep concern about the safety and security situation of Ukrainian nuclear facilities, in particular at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Switzerland condemns all attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and calls for the withdrawal of Russian armed forces from the power plant. All parties to the conflict must respect the special protection afforded to nuclear power plants under international humanitarian law. In that context, Switzerland welcomes the tireless efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including a continued IAEA presence at the nuclear plant, as well as the IAEA's recommendations, such as the creation of a safety and security protection zone around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We also strongly support the IAEA Director General's seven indispensable pillars of nuclear safety and security.

In addition, earlier this year, Switzerland participated as an observer in the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and was able to get an idea of the implementation of that new Treaty, including regarding its positive obligations related to victim assistance and environmental remediation. Switzerland will re-evaluate its position on the Treaty, bearing in mind developments regarding both the NPT and the TPNW, as well as broader considerations, in particular the current security situation.

**Mr. Den Bosch** (Netherlands): In addition to the statement delivered previously on behalf of the European Union, the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Those words embody a common-sense principle, one that leads inevitably to two other common-sense principles — that the only road forward is the one towards a nuclear-weapon-free world and that the only vehicle that can get us there is consensus. We therefore regret that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) could not reach a consensus on a substantive final document.

We never expected it to be easy. The security situation has dramatically deteriorated since 24 February. The arms-control architecture is unravelling with the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty. Negotiations on a return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) seem to be in limbo. The risk of nuclear conflict is greater than it has ever been since the Cuban missile crisis, thanks to Russia's dangerous and irresponsible nuclear rhetoric. Furthermore, Russia's attacks on and seizure of Ukrainian nuclear facilities pose serious threats to nuclear safety and security.

Against that background, a positive outcome for the NPT Review Conference would have sent a strong message. While that did not materialize, we believe we should continue the substantive discussions we had at the Review Conference in August. We know that 190 States parties remain deeply committed and were willing to compromise for the sake of the NPT and multilateralism in general. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the international architecture for disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. The Netherlands, as coordinator of

the cross-regional Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, will continue to build bridges and seek common ground. But our mission is under pressure. We need all nations to return to responsible behaviour, including in their messaging. We need tangible progress on nuclear disarmament and greater transparency and enhanced reporting on nuclear arsenals, as well as an inclusive dialogue on nuclear doctrines. Nuclear risk reduction should be an integral part of nuclear policy, posture and practice, and without any intentions aimed at substituting it for disarmament efforts. The nuclear-weapon States share a special responsibility for reaching these objectives. In addition, the current nuclear safety, security and safeguards risks are completely unacceptable. We must all therefore reaffirm and strengthen the essential role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding safeguards and the safe and secure peaceful uses of nuclear technology. The IAEA can only do its work properly when both comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols are in place.

I want to underline the importance of improving access to nuclear energy, science and technology for all States parties. The Netherlands welcomes the concrete proposals connecting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology to the Sustainable Development Goals. We also support pragmatic and inclusive measures, including the universalization of the NPT, the achievement of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The groundwork for that has already been done. There is no valid reason to block the start of negotiations.

We are extremely concerned about Iran's activities with regard to enlarging its uranium stockpiles and expanding its enrichment capacity without any plausible civilian justification. Furthermore, it has ended the oversight that existed under the JCPOA. Apart from the issues related to the JCPOA, we strongly urge Iran to clarify the outstanding safeguards questions and cooperate in good faith with the IAEA.

Finally, we are deeply concerned about the escalation of missile tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its growing nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes. We strongly condemn these activities, which pose a serious threat to regional and international peace and security.

Ultimately, we want to eliminate nuclear weapons, and as we work for that goal, we will need interim measures such as strong safety standards, nuclear-risk reduction, a return to the norm of the non-use of nuclear weapons and the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Let us profit from the approach exemplified in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, the Stockholm Initiative, the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative, the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification. Based on a Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative proposal, the parties to the NPT approved a working group to examine the effectiveness and transparency of the review cycle. We have to seize that opportunity and ensure that it will deliver concrete, actionable recommendations.

We also emphasize the need for disarmament initiatives that recognize the importance of inclusivity and diversity, especially through the equal, full and effective participation of women and men. Now more than ever, we need to create a safer world, free from the risk of nuclear warfare. To paraphrase Dag Hammarskjöld, this may not take us to heaven, but it will save us from hell.

**Mr. Aidid** (Malaysia): Malaysia aligns itself with the statements delivered previously by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Viet Nam, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Like a majority of Member States, Malaysia has consistently advocated for urgent action aimed at achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. As trustees for present and future generations, the realization of that ideal is a pressing imperative for us. In reality, it will not require herculean efforts if all are fully and truly invested.

While the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, its continued effectiveness is by no means guaranteed. The NPT States parties are now in uncharted territory, following the consecutive failures of the ninth and tenth Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to adopt substantive outcomes. The Treaty is arguably in a state of crisis that if not quickly remedied may result in the erosion of its integrity and credibility. It is time

for its States parties to reflect seriously on the future of this integral instrument. All NPT obligations and commitments, particularly those of the nuclear-weapon States under article VI of the Treaty, should be fulfilled without delay. Moreover, States under so-called extended nuclear security guarantees cannot absolve themselves of their responsibility for eliminating the role of nuclear weapons in their military and security concepts, doctrines and policies.

Against a backdrop of heightened tension and renewed major-Power rivalry, Malaysia is deeply concerned about the fact that qualitative improvements and quantitative increases in nuclear weapons continue unabated. We also condemn unequivocally all nuclear threats, explicit or implicit, and irrespective of their circumstances. And yet in spite of such disconcerting trends, there are glimmers of hope. The entry into force in 2021 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), and the successful convening of its first Meeting of States parties in June of this year, are evidence of increasing momentum towards freeing the world of the scourge of nuclear weapons. Together with South Africa, Malaysia is proud to serve as co-Chair of the informal working group on the universalization of the Treaty. The TPNW's growing success should motivate us to revitalize other key instruments and platforms.

In our region, Malaysia will work tirelessly with our colleagues in ASEAN to resolve all outstanding issues, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, pertaining to the signing and ratifying of its Protocol as soon as possible, in line with the aspirations of ASEAN leaders. The provision of legally binding negative security assurances by nuclear-weapon States is essential to ensuring peace and security in South-East Asia. We also urge the remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enable its entry into force as soon as possible.

Malaysia is gravely concerned about developments on the Korean peninsula. We are troubled by the recent escalation created by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of a ballistic missile over Japan last week, as well as its reported firing of a short-range ballistic missile yesterday. My delegation reiterates the importance of self-restraint on the part of all concerned and the need for a resumption of dialogue aimed at achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the peninsula.

The scars of generations of victims and survivors of the use and testing of nuclear weapons bear tragic witness to the devastating humanitarian effects that these weapons are inherently able to inflict. It is inconceivable that humankind should have to live indefinitely in the dark shadow cast by such instruments of war and destruction, which represent a present-day sword of Damocles hanging over our world. Let us advance steadily, with renewed resolve, to herald the dawn of a nuclear-weapon-free age.

**Mr. Dzwonek** (Poland): Poland fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union, and I would also like to highlight several key issues in my national capacity.

We entered this year with some cause for optimism. In January, we were just about to start the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which had been postponed for almost two years. Furthermore, a positive context was set at that time by the joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States on preventing nuclear war and avoiding an arms race. Yet today we definitely have no reason for optimism. On the contrary, the joint statement has been already breached by Russia in the course of its illegal and unjustified aggression against Ukraine. Moreover, the Review Conference failed to produce a tangible outcome, thanks to the veto of a single country, which chose isolation over cooperation and multilateralism. Those developments are examples of a bigger, more fundamental problem of a strategic nature. The Russian aggression against Ukraine challenges the whole of the global security architecture, including in the nuclear domain.

I want to stress one more time that the Russian invasion is a blatant violation of the Budapest Memorandum. It is an open rejection of a willingness to undertake substantial dialogue on nuclear issues that should increase transparency and reduce risk. Amid a full-fledged conflict in Europe, Russia has continued to threaten the international community with the possibility of using nuclear weapons and to put its strategic forces on high alert. Russian armed forces are forcibly seizing control of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, sending Russian missile strikes and artillery shelling in their vicinity. Russian troops are occupying the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, terrorizing its personnel and deploying heavy military equipment

at the centre of the plant. It is Russia that is putting nuclear security and safety in Ukraine at risk.

And in a broader sense, it is clear that Russia has been breaching article VI of the NPT for years. It has done nothing regarding nuclear disarmament. It has no desire to work with every other State to create a security environment more conducive to progress on disarmament. It is not interested in diplomatic approaches to increase mutual understanding and confidence. As we can see today, Russia's nuclear strategy and modernization of its nuclear weapon systems, including increasing its supplies of non-strategic nuclear weapons, support an increasingly aggressive posture of strategic intimidation. To further complicate this gloomy picture, Belarus recently renounced its own nuclear-free status, following amendments to its Constitution and other signals and declarations regarding the possibility of hosting Russian nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory. This worrisome context will colour our efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation within this body in the next few weeks.

First and foremost, we need to do our utmost in order to uphold and strengthen the NPT. It should remain the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential foundation for the pursuit of effective, verifiable and irreversible disarmament in accordance with its article VI.

Secondly, we need to help strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system and the role of the Agency, which is a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The stronger it is, the stronger the message we deliver to people in various regions of the world who may be encouraged by the aggression of one of the European nuclear-weapon States to undermine the international security architecture and obtain nuclear weapons. The Agency is also important for ensuring nuclear security and safety, and because of that, we call on Russia to immediately cease all its actions directed against Ukraine's peaceful nuclear installations and facilities and withdraw its military and other personnel, including from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. It is essential to enable the Ukrainian authorities to resume their sovereign responsibilities and the Agency to fully and safely conduct safeguards verification activities in Ukraine. The resolution of the IAEA Board of Governors in that regard must be implemented fully and immediately.



Last but not least, we need to address the future of the global arms-control system. Its current state has been a source of concern for some time. The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty is the only non-conventional arms-control mechanism in place. While it should contribute to maintaining overall strategic stability, it should primarily lead to a broader follow-up treaty that covers all nuclear weapons, including non-strategic weapons in Europe and their new types. China should constructively engage in those efforts.

In conclusion, we strongly believe that our deliberations will result in important and significant outcomes for our overall arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. In the current security environment, marked by a full-fledged war in Europe and the resulting drastic deterioration of the global security architecture, we need that more than ever now if we are to preserve our existing critical arms-control and non-proliferation processes.

**Mr. Andersen** (Norway): We find ourselves in an unprecedented situation. One of the permanent members of the Security Council has threatened the use of nuclear weapons. Such reckless signalling is totally unacceptable. It represents a direct threat to international security and stability and seriously undermines the joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States, which declared that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Norway encourages all nuclear-armed States to confirm their support for that statement and commends those that have already done so during our deliberations. Dialogue and communication are crucial, especially in times of crisis. We would welcome a continued strategic stability dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation. We also encourage China to engage in a dialogue that could lead to cuts in all categories of nuclear weapons. That would benefit our common security.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Like many other States, we were disappointed by the lack of concrete commitments on disarmament in the draft final document of the tenth NPT Review Conference. However, the fact that all States but one were willing to accept the draft highlights the commitments to the NPT that we share. We should build on the fact that a lot of common ground was found on several divisive issues before Russia blocked consensus.

Credible verification to support future disarmament agreements in which all States can have confidence remains a high priority for Norway. We will continue our leadership in the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and appreciate that its work is moving forward. Together with partner countries, we will again be introducing a draft decision on nuclear disarmament verification in order to keep the item on our agenda. We are continuing our active participation in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership, focusing on technical and scientific work. Together with the United Kingdom, Norway has also proposed a new initiative on multilateral dialogue on irreversibility. That is an established principle for disarmament, but there is no clear common understanding of what it entails. Multilateral work is therefore needed.

Risk reduction remains another priority for Norway. Indeed, it seems even more urgent in the current security situation. Norway also promotes a fact-based approach to the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. That perspective should guide our nuclear disarmament efforts, as it focuses on the catastrophic consequences for people and the environment of any use of nuclear weapons.

Norway welcomes the recent ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Sao Tome and Principe, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Dominica. With the last of those, there is now universal adherence to the Treaty across Latin America and the Caribbean, which is an important step in support of international peace and security. Norway urges all States to ratify the Treaty without delay, and especially those needed for the Treaty to enter into force. Progress must also be made on the negotiation and conclusion of a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. A solution would have to address the issue of existing stocks.

Norway will continue its efforts to promote gender equality and diverse participation in disarmament processes, and supports initiatives to include the younger generation.

**Mr. Bencini** (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Italy fully shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. In that context, the ongoing unjustified and unprovoked aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the rules-based international order. We condemn Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, the betrayal of the security assurances given at the time of Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the threat posed to Ukraine's nuclear infrastructure. We also consider the constitutional change in Belarus enabling it to renounce its nuclear-free zone status as an unacceptable attempt to redefine the rules-based European security architecture.

We deeply regret that at the recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons it was not possible to adopt a final outcome, owing to the fact that Russia blocked a consensus. Although the draft text was a compromise, it would have represented an important milestone, particularly in the current strategic context. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the international disarmament regime, with its three mutually reinforcing pillars. The Treaty must be upheld and preserved. We therefore invite States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, without delay and without conditions.

The NPT provides the only realistic legal framework for achieving a world without nuclear weapons in a manner that promotes international stability consistent with the principle of undiminished security for all. That goal can be achieved only through a gradual approach, by taking effective measures that involve all the stakeholders in a consensus-based perspective. We are striving for true progress on nuclear disarmament because of our deep concern about the potentially catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. One measure we are pursuing is the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As a staunch supporter of the Treaty, in line with its current role as article XIV co-Coordinator, Italy invites all States that have not yet done so, particularly the remaining eight annex 2 States, to sign and ratify it without further delay. In the meantime, we call on all States to continue to respect the voluntary moratorium on nuclear test explosions and to refrain from any actions that could undermine the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

Another key priority is for the Conference on Disarmament to immediately start negotiations on a treaty on fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Pending its conclusion, all States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We also support a resumption of substantive discussions on negative security assurances, within the context of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, with a view to formulating recommendations dealing with all their aspects, not excluding an international legally binding instrument. In that regard, we also want to reiterate our support for the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Italy values all initiatives undertaken in the area of nuclear disarmament verification as important tools for building trust and confidence among nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. We stress the relevance of risk reduction, which can contribute to the alleviation of tensions and build the necessary trust and confidence.

Nuclear-weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities for the implementation of article VI of the NPT. While Italy welcomed the agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and establish a bilateral security dialogue, as well as the efforts of the five permanent members of the Security Council, we continue to call on the nuclear States with the largest arsenals to take concrete steps towards effective nuclear disarmament through further reductions, and to actively engage in strengthening the entire disarmament architecture.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons continues to pose a major threat to international security. The comprehensive safeguards agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), together with their additional protocols, remain fundamental to ensuring our security and are a core component of the NPT. The Agency's system of safeguards is crucial to ensuring the peaceful character of nuclear activities. Italy calls on Iran to comply fully with its safeguards obligations and to refrain from further activities related to uranium enrichment, in violation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as well as to continue to work with the IAEA to ensure the correctness and completeness of the required declarations. In parallel, we call on all the parties involved in the Vienna talks to continue to invest in dialogue and to spare no effort to revive the deal.

Italy is gravely concerned about the increasing number of ballistic-missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, recently including two intercontinental ballistic missiles, which seriously jeopardize international security and the global non-proliferation regime. We consider unacceptable the recent enactment of a domestic law codifying the right to launch pre-emptive nuclear strikes. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in good faith in diplomatic talks for complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization. In the meantime, the international sanctions regime must remain in place and be effectively implemented.

**Mr. Bandiya** (Nigeria): Nigeria aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States.

Nuclear weapons and their proliferation are threats to international peace and security. Their elimination is therefore a common goal that we should unite to achieve. That has never been more urgent than it is now. While my delegation remains committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and continues to promote it, my country deplores the failure of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, held in New York from 1 to 26 August, to produce a consensus final outcome document assessing the implementation of the Treaty. It has now been 12 years since the adoption in 2010 by a Review Conference of an outcome document. In that regard, Nigeria would like to emphasize that the Treaty is an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the key instrument in our efforts to halt the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. In line with its position on the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Nigeria will therefore continue to call for the full implementation of all NPT commitments and the unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals assumed by the nuclear-weapon States at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

My country was honoured to join other countries in the core group sponsoring resolution 71/258, which led to the adoption in 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and its entry into force on 22 January 2021.

In that regard, Nigeria welcomed the convening of the first Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty, held in Vienna from 21 to 23 June. We reiterate our support for the Meeting's adoption of a declaration on "Our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons". It reaffirms our commitment and our determination to realize the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We reaffirm our support for the Vienna Action Plan, also adopted at the Meeting, for facilitating the effective and timely implementation of the Treaty, including its objectives and goals. It is therefore in the light of our collective obligation and unceasing efforts to end the proliferation of nuclear weapons that I congratulate Member States on the adoption of the TPNW Action Plan. Our hope is that the entry into force of the Treaty will herald an era in which we see the total elimination of nuclear weapons, something that is critical to international peace and security. We therefore urge Member States that have yet to sign and ratify the Treaty to follow suit. We also reiterate the need for all the prohibitions identified in the Treaty to be observed by all States Members of the United Nations without reservation.

While we remain resolute in our support for the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, we also remain mindful of the beneficial uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and reaffirm the right of all States to use nuclear technologies for their development aspirations, consistent with the relevant articles of the NPT as well as the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the IAEA's lead role in the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and its central role in promoting nuclear security and safety standards, as well as verification and safeguards.

Finally, Nigeria reiterates its call for the implementation and enforcement of all treaties on the elimination of nuclear weapons and reaffirms its principled position in support of a world free of nuclear weapons.

**The Chair:** The right of reply has been requested. I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to five minutes for the first intervention and three minutes for the second.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation rejects all of the

baseless accusations that have been made about it by a number of delegations. We have responded with quite detailed explanations to the statements made about the Russian Federation's nuclear declarations, and I see no point in repeating our position yet again. What I mainly would like to do today is to respond to the accusations, which are essentially divorced from reality, regarding the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and Russia and Belarus's steps in the nuclear arena. We have discussed the issue of the INF becoming irrelevant because of the United States withdrawal many times in this room. I will therefore confine myself to pointing out that in its propaganda frenzy the Polish delegation of Poland is essentially stomping on the ashes of an agreement that it actively helped to destroy. Considering that the INF no longer exists, what it should be doing instead of calling for the prevention of an arms race and for predictability and restraint where missiles are concerned.

We proposed a solution to the problem long ago, based on Russia's initiative on establishing reciprocal moratoriums with NATO on the stationing of intermediate and shorter-range ground-based missiles in Europe. However, judging by the United States' missile programmes, our initiative's chances of success appear to be zero, and Poland also seems likely to want to bury it through its increasingly intensive purchases of ever more advanced missile systems from the United States.

The measures taken by Russia and Belarus to ensure the security of the Union State in these new conditions constitute a response compelled by NATO's long-standing policy of destabilization. I am talking about the practice of so-called joint nuclear missions using mainly United States nuclear arms stationed on the territory of non-nuclear NATO States, which runs counter to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We have long shown restraint about that. We tried for years to persuade Washington to return all of its nuclear weapons to its national territory and stop training non-nuclear States to use them, but all of that was rejected. And on top of that, the calls for potentially deploying NATO's nuclear infrastructure farther east are becoming louder. For instance, in Poland they have been talking about their wish to be fully involved in so-called joint nuclear missions for several years now. Warsaw has significantly beefed up its activity on that front recently, and that has unquestionably

figured into Russia and Belarus's calculations when considering countermeasures. We are carrying out the practical realization of those measures in strict conformity with Russia and Belarus's obligations under the NPT. The current stage consists exclusively in transferring dual-equipped Iskander-M complexes with conventional missiles to Belarus and equipping some Belarusian Su-25 planes with the technology enabling them to carry nuclear weapons. However, there are no plans to transfer technologies for converting aircraft to nuclear-weapon carriers. At the moment we are not planning to physically equip Belarusian planes with nuclear warheads or transfer them to Belarusian territory. Nor do we envisage establishing facilities in Belarus for storing nuclear warheads, which we will continue to keep in central storage facilities within Russian territory.

We will train Belarusian military personnel in Russian training centres based on programmes that do not include the use of nuclear warheads. Further steps will be commensurate with the activities of NATO member States. In particular, we are carefully following the development of the situation in the wake of the Polish leadership's recent statement about its official request to the United States about the stationing of American nuclear weapons on Polish territory. That is obviously a highly destabilizing step. If the political and military situation in the region gets significantly worse and the nuclear threats expand, we reserve the right to take additional measures to ensure the security of the Union State.

**Mr. Elhomosany** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to exercise my right of reply to the statement by the delegation of Canada requesting Egypt to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Egypt would like to stress at the outset its full support for the Treaty. We participated seriously and actively in the negotiations leading to the CTBT and have signed it. It should be noted that the reason that Egypt has not ratified it is owing to the continued imbalance in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime in the Middle East region. So far not all the States in that region have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nuclear facilities continue to be operated outside the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Step 10 of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons



states that ratification of the CTBT is a primary responsibility of nuclear-weapon States and thereby encourages countries that have not yet acceded to the NPT or that are operating nuclear facilities outside the comprehensive IAEA safeguards regime to sign and ratify that Treaty.

Furthermore, all of the NPT Review Conferences have affirmed the importance of the universalization of the Treaty, which has yet to be achieved. Egypt therefore urges all States to uphold their commitment to achieving the universality of the NPT and fulfilling the provisions of step 10 of the 2010 action plan.

**Mr. Al Ashkar** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I felt obliged to take the floor to clarify certain aspects of the representative of the European Union's statement regarding Syria's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We reject his comments claiming a lack of commitment on Syria's part to its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and want to emphasize that Syria has cooperated constructively with the IAEA, showing enormous flexibility and sparing no effort to resolve pending issues, including an agreement on an action plan to settle them. The IAEA's annual reports on the implementation of the safeguards regime, most recently for 2022, recognize Syria's full adherence to its commitments under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, including fulfilling all inspection missions on time, the latest of which took place on 10 May despite difficulties related to the spread of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

With regard to the Additional Protocol, which was also mentioned in the statement, my delegation would like to stress the importance of not confusing legal obligations under the Treaty with voluntary measures. I also want to emphasize that anyone advocating for the upholding of the non-proliferation regime should not ignore the fact that a party in the region possessing a large arsenal of nuclear weapons has not joined the NPT and does not subject its weapons and facilities to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime.

**Mr. Kim In Chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation feels compelled to exercise its right of reply in response to the statements made on behalf of the European Union (EU), France and others. We totally reject the Western countries' hackneyed statements. It is ridiculous and shameful of the EU, France and others to continue to dance to the tune of the

United States in pursuit of a heinous and hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and without any sense of independence in foreign policy.

We reiterate that it is the legitimate sovereign right of our State to steadily build up its military capabilities to cope with the political and military landscape created on the Korean peninsula by the United States, which is running amok in its efforts to strangle our Republic. Our exercise of the right to reply fully accords with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The security landscape on the Korean peninsula is caught in a vicious cycle of tensions and confrontation owing to the growing hostility and presence of foreign forces against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the situation has recently been heading into a much more dangerous phase.

This year alone the United States has staged a series of massive joint military drills targeting my country with the uninterrupted introduction of various nuclear assets and sophisticated weaponry. On top of that, the United States, as a follow-up to its agreement on enhanced deterrence with South Korea and in response to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's enactment of a law on its State nuclear forces policy, deployed the task force of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *Ronald Reagan* in the waters off the Korean peninsula to stage joint naval drills with South Korea in the East Sea of Korea from 26 to 29 September and joint submarine drills with Japan and South Korea on 30 September. The United States even openly threatened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea militarily by again dispatching the nuclear carrier task force in the East Sea of Korea to stage a combined missile defence exercise on 6 October and a combined naval mobile exercise on 7 and 8 October.

In those unsettling circumstances, we were forced to decide to organize military drills simulating different levels of an actual war in order to check and improve the reliability and combat power of our war deterrence and to send a strong military warning to the hostile forces. It is indeed the United States and its vassal States that are posing a grave danger to the global non-proliferation regime with the establishment of the AUKUS security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. They are also undermining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region by dispatching nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and various warships to the region. The more the United States maintains its pressure campaign on the Democratic People's Republic

of Korea by rallying its vassal States, the more we will ramp up our self-defence measures.

We have been keeping a sharp eye on the precarious security environment on the Korean peninsula and on all the military moves of the United States and the forces hostile to us, and we will be firm in taking any military countermeasures that may be necessary. Until the hostile forces abandon the deeply ingrained delusion that they might someday completely disarm the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and make our system collapse by employing such obvious tools as threats and intimidation, we will continue on our course.

**Mr. Den Bosch** (Netherlands): The Netherlands would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the unfounded accusations by the Russian Federation that NATO's nuclear-sharing arrangements could be in breach of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The fundamental purpose of NATO's defensive nuclear capability has always been to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. Our allies have always adhered to their obligations under the NPT and will continue to do so.

NATO's nuclear arrangements continue to be fully consistent with the NPT and were put in place well before the NPT entered into force in 1970. That resulted in the seamless integration of NATO's nuclear-sharing arrangements into the NPT, which has long been accepted and publicly understood by all States parties to the NPT. As part of NATO's nuclear-sharing arrangements, the United States maintains full custody and control of its nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe, in full conformity with articles I and II of the NPT.

Let me conclude by saying again that the NATO allies have always adhered to their obligations under the NPT and will continue to do so.

**The Chair:** We have exhausted the time available to us this afternoon. I would like to take one minute of the Committee's time to leave members with another thought, as I did last Friday (see A/C.1/77/PV.5). It was Einstein himself who said,

"The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift towards unparalleled catastrophe". He went on to say, although perhaps he did not know then about nuclear weapons, "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones."

That is all that would be left of the planet. Some say that Einstein said if only he had known, he would have become a watchmaker. Let us think about it and try to change our course. Let us chart a course for peace. We are entitled to it. Surely our future generations are entitled to it, as our young people reminded us this very morning when they presented the Pitching Peace Youth Music Challenge, expressing their passion for peace through music. I took the liberty of promising them on the Committee's behalf that we will work for peace. We cannot let them down. The young people of today will soon be young no more. So let us hurry up and think about it.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, 17 October at 10 a.m. in this conference room. In accordance with the programme of work, we will continue the thematic discussion on the nuclear weapons cluster.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*