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First Committee

12th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Pieris(Sri Lanka)

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

Agenda items 90 to 108 (continued)

Thematic discussion on specific subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: I would like to welcome 22 young leaders from 19 countries, who are located to my right. They are observing the work of the First Committee from the gallery today. Those young leaders are in New York to participate in the Leaders for Tomorrow workshop, a project launched by the Youth for Disarmament Initiative of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and to present their ideas and initiatives at a First Committee side event on the theme “Disarmament education as a solution to peace”, which will be held on Wednesday, 19 October. I thank them for being with us.

The Committee will now continue its thematic discussion on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted under the agenda items allocated to it. In keeping with the indicative timetable for our thematic discussions, we will continue our discussion on the nuclear weapons cluster.

Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations that the time limit for statements during the thematic segment is five minutes when speaking in their national capacity and seven minutes for statements on behalf of several delegations.

Ms. Stewart (United States of America): Earlier this year, the United States completed a review of its nuclear weapons policies and posture. While the release of the unclassified report is forthcoming, President Biden outlined a number of priorities that shape that nuclear policy, including but not limited to a declaratory policy that reflects a sensible and stabilizing approach to deterring a range of attacks. The policy states that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the fundamental role of United States nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attacks on the United States, our allies and partners. The policy prioritizes strategic stability, the avoidance of costly arms races and the pursuit of risk-reduction and arms control arrangements, where possible. And importantly, it reflects the fact that the United States will continue to take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons, while ensuring that its nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure and effective and that the deterrence commitments extended by the United States to our allies remain ironclad.

In a step towards collectively reducing the salience of nuclear weapons, the United States, together with the other Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) nuclear-weapon States, released a joint statement in January affirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought and that nuclear weapons should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression and prevent war. Unfortunately, Russia’s nuclear sabre-rattling and its brutal war on Ukraine casts doubt on its commitment to that statement. The United States, however, remains committed to pursuing risk-reduction measures and arms-control arrangements that reduce the risk of nuclear war and

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avert destabilizing arms races. The United States is committed to the full, effective implementation of the New START Treaty, including through the resumption of onsite inspections, which were paused in March 2020 owing to the coronavirus disease pandemic. And as President Biden stated at the NPT Review Conference held in August, the United States is ready to expeditiously negotiate a new arms control framework in order to replace the New START Treaty when it expires in 2026. But such negotiation requires a willing partner operating in good faith.

Russia's brutal and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine has shattered peace in Europe and constitutes an attack on the fundamental tenets of the international order. That attack has led to the deterioration of the global security environment. Simultaneously, the People's Republic of China is rapidly building a larger, more diverse nuclear arsenal, but remains reluctant to substantively engage in risk-reduction measures or transparency. Last year alone, China launched more ballistic missiles than the rest of the world combined, and it dangerously deviated from the behaviour of responsible nuclear Powers by generally rejecting the practice of notifying others of those launches, despite its pursuit of a launch-on-warning posture. The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation is a unique multilateral confidence-building and transparency instrument that contributes to our collective security. But Beijing resists joining the Hague Code of Conduct, which would promote stability and reduce the risks of miscalculation. Instead, China has limited its missile launch notification cooperation to Russia, while Moscow is launching indiscriminate missile attacks on civilians in Ukraine. That is not the behaviour of a responsible nuclear Power, and we call on China and Russia to pursue measures that reduce nuclear risks.

In order to further enhance collective security and stability, the United States has joined the other permanent members of the Security Council, with the noted exception of the People's Republic of China, in declaring and adhering to a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in order to cap potential growth in nuclear stockpiles. In addition, the United States continues to support the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty on the basis of consensus and with the participation of all key States. Another crucial step towards nuclear disarmament is maintaining the

international norm against nuclear explosive testing. The United States supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and is committed to working to achieve its entry into force, recognizing the significant challenges that lie ahead in reaching that goal. The United States has also engaged in a number of cooperative initiatives designed to lay the groundwork for future nuclear disarmament. The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative are two prime examples, which bring together diverse groups of States with and without nuclear weapons to work collaboratively on issues that are vital to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In this difficult global security environment, we must increase the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making processes, including those related to conflict, crisis and security. Such increased participation leads to better and more sustainable outcomes — not only for women but also for entire communities and countries.

Mr. Domingo (Philippines): My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered, respectively, by Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and by Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.11).

The position of the Philippines on nuclear weapons is ironclad. It finds anchor in our constitutional renunciation of nuclear weapons and our commitment to maintaining South-East Asia as a region free of nuclear weapons. That was reaffirmed by our President when he encouraged the General Assembly last month to reject the notion of deterrence and remain committed to decreasing the global stockpile of nuclear weapons (see A/77/PV.5). Nuclear weapons continue to pose an existential threat despite our efforts to build norms and legal rules that resoundingly prohibit them, including those enshrined in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the States parties to which convened their first meeting in June, at which they adopted the Vienna Declaration and Action Plan. We remain committed to those instruments and call on all States that have not done so to accede to that Treaty. No number of ambitions or aspirations can ever justify the catastrophic humanitarian impact of all nuclear weapons, whether tactical or otherwise. We support efforts to pursue victim assistance and environmental remediation in the context of nuclear

tests. The onus should be on the States that conducted such tests, rather than on the States that are victims of their reverberating impacts.

The Philippines regrets the failure of States parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt an outcome document during its Review Conference held in August. The onus remains on nuclear-weapon States to undertake concrete steps towards the complete elimination of their nuclear weapons. While disappointed that the tenth NPT Review Conference failed to achieve consensus on a final outcomes document, we welcome the consensus decision to establish a working group on strengthening the Treaty's review process, which offers a timely opportunity to systematically examine the review process with a view to ensuring that it continues to meet all of our needs.

In fulfilment of the so-called "grand bargain" that underpins the Treaty, the non-nuclear-weapon States, including the Philippines, have endeavoured to fulfil our stringent non-proliferation obligations. Fairness and equity demand that nuclear-weapon States be held equally accountable for their own disarmament obligations, which they must undertake through benchmarks and actions that are concrete, measurable and time-bound. They must commit to reporting on their fulfilment of those obligations in a structured manner that allows non-nuclear-weapon States to engage constructively on their reports, which must contain comparable information, including the number, type and status of nuclear warheads, the number and types of delivery vehicles, the amount of fissile material produced for military purposes and the measures taken to reduce the role and significance of nuclear weapons in their doctrines and policies.

We appeal to all relevant States that possess nuclear weapons to cease the qualitative and quantitative — as well as the vertical and horizontal — expansion of their nuclear arsenals and to commit to a moratorium on fissile material production and measures in order to reduce the risks of nuclear weapons use. Such measures must include strategic dialogue mechanisms between and among nuclear-weapon States, as well as between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. We continue to assert, however, that all nuclear risk-reduction efforts are mere intervening measures pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons — they do not legitimize the continued existence of nuclear weapons, which imperils us all.

We join the nuclear-weapon States that reaffirmed at the start of the year that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought. We appeal to all parties to refrain from undertaking dangerous rhetoric. We must reject any threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, all nuclear-weapon States must honour and respect all existing security assurances undertaken by them without any precondition. They must commit to legally binding negative security assurances.

Ms. Goolab (South Africa): South Africa associates itself with the statements delivered, respectively, by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.11).

We convene against the backdrop of a second failed Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Having two failed Review Conferences plunges us into uncharted and dangerous territory. Those 12 years of failure are a stark reminder of the lengths to which nuclear-weapon States will go to retain their nuclear weapons unchecked, putting their narrow interests ahead of the collective peace and security of us all. While the NPT remains the cornerstone for non-proliferation and disarmament, without meaningful reviews of its implementation, in particular with regard to disarmament, its indefinite extension is questionable. South Africa stresses the validity of the outcomes of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, as well as the extensive Action Plan aimed at accelerating the implementation of the NPT provisions under all three pillars. Now more than ever, urgent action is required to fully implement the commitments and undertakings from those Review Conferences.

Article VI of the NPT is continually undermined by weapon-modernization programmes, policy pronouncements on stockpile increases and the continued reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines. An especially growing concern is the increase in the number of States that emphasize the value of nuclear deterrence and place greater reliance on nuclear weapons in their military and security doctrines. The call for disarmament while under extended nuclear deterrence guarantees needs to be assessed, especially as the inclusion of nuclear weapons in security doctrines implies a vested interest in the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. South

Africa calls on all States that rely on the utility of those inhumane and devastating weapons for their security interests to take urgent and clear steps towards the total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

The NPT is complemented by numerous other international and regional instruments, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons finally bans the only category of weapon of mass destruction not yet subject to a global prohibition, as is the case for biological and chemical weapons, and it does so with a pronounced humanitarian approach. The convening of the First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW earlier this year was a welcome start to its implementation. The moral and ethical imperatives that inspired and motivated the creation of the TPNW must be emphasized, especially the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, which cannot be adequately addressed and pose grave implications for human survival. We hope the TPNW will serve as a catalyst for much overdue progress in the area of nuclear disarmament. We encourage all States that have not yet done so to ratify the TPNW and join the nations that are committed to a world free of nuclear weapons.

The CTBT is a crucial pillar in the maintenance of international peace and security. While the Treaty has not yet come into force, it has successfully created the norm of a voluntary moratorium on nuclear-weapons testing. South Africa is a strong proponent of the CTBT. As co-President of the Article XIV Conference and following the appointment of our Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation to the Group of Eminent Persons, we champion its entry into force. While the number of ratifications of the CTBT has grown, we remain concerned that some States have delayed the Treaty's entry into force to serve their own purposes. We strongly call on all annex 2 States to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay, paving the way for its entry into force. The production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices must remain a priority for the international community and must be both credible and feasible. A ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons would reinforce the ideals enshrined in the NPT and complement the CTBT, as well as the TPNW.

Finally, we reiterate that nuclear weapons are inhumane weapons, and it is inconceivable that their

use, under any circumstances, would ever be consistent with international law, particularly international humanitarian law. Nuclear disarmament is not only a legal obligation but also a moral and ethical imperative. It is with that in mind that my delegation has the honour to submit draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.46, entitled "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world", which we hope will once again receive wide support.

Ms. Morriss (New Zealand): Nuclear disarmament has been a priority for the United Nations since its inception, and the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)) was dedicated to that existential issue. Seventy-seven years on, its priority has not diminished, and it has become even more urgent. This year commenced with the recognition by all five Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) nuclear-weapon States that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Just weeks later, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine demonstrated a flagrant violation of international law, causing catastrophic and ongoing devastation. Alongside its thinly veiled nuclear threats, Russia's aggression has hollowed out the concept of negative security assurances and recharged the international debate about nuclear deterrence and mutually assured destruction.

Against that backdrop, the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was a rare bright spot and a timely opportunity to reiterate our unequivocal rejection of nuclear weapons. Through the Declaration and Action Plan adopted at that meeting, New Zealand joined the TPNW membership in condemning all nuclear threats and agreeing to concrete and time-bound actions to implement the TPNW, including actions to address the painful legacy of nuclear testing in the Pacific and other regions. We urge all countries to join the TPNW and pursue its objectives with us. As noted in the Vienna Declaration, we have no illusions about the challenges and obstacles that lie before us in realizing the aims of this Treaty. But we move ahead with optimism and resolve. In the face of the catastrophic risks posed by nuclear weapons and in the interest of the very survival of humankind, we cannot do otherwise.

Those same humanitarian and security concerns motivate our engagement in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, New Zealand has been pleased to celebrate the many new CTBT ratifications achieved this year, bringing

the norm against nuclear testing even closer to being universal. In addition to urging all outstanding States to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay, we call on all States to sponsor and support draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.52 on the CTBT, which was submitted by Australia, Mexico and New Zealand.

The NPT Review Conference held in August was an opportunity for almost the entire international community to come together in the pursuit of progress on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. While it was always clear that the Conference would be a challenging one, New Zealand was disappointed that Russia blocked the adoption of the outcome document, preventing agreement on even the smallest of gains. The Review Conference highlighted for us the ongoing and growing gap between the disarmament obligations and the commitments entered into by the nuclear-weapon States and their implementation. Urgent steps are needed to close that gap — steps that New Zealand does not view as dependent on an improved international security environment, but rather as contributing to it.

Indeed, it is clear that the need for progress has never been more urgent. Russia's military aggression and nuclear threats, the continued ballistic missile and nuclear programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the unresolved questions about Iran's nuclear programme are all deeply concerning. Nuclear arsenals are being modernized, and there are signs of a renewed arms race. Experts tell us that the risk of nuclear weapon use has increased dramatically, as has dangerous rhetoric and exercises threatening such use. Efforts to reconcile those developments with the obligations contained in article VI of the NPT, or to justify them as being necessary for global peace and security, are becoming increasingly incongruous and internally inconsistent. They are undermining non-proliferation efforts and putting further and unsustainable pressure on the NPT. In the absence of any agreed outcomes since 2010, the NPT community must come together over the coming review cycle to refocus on Treaty implementation and pursue it in a transparent and accountable way.

New Zealand has made clear our strong view that the legacy of Russia's invasion of Ukraine must not be an arms race or a more polarized and dangerous world. What is needed is an equal commitment to international institutions, multilateral forums and disarmament. We urge all countries to demonstrate that commitment here

at the First Committee and assure you, Mr. Chair, of our own commitment to doing so.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.11), and we would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

Today is the 236th day of the full-scale invasion unleashed by terrorist Russia against my country. Critical infrastructure facilities, public and residential areas, and even schools and hospitals are all under regular missile and drone attacks. Thousands of educational and medical institutions, water and electricity networks have been damaged or destroyed. In recent weeks, Russia has intensified its attacks against both critical infrastructure and residential areas in different regions of Ukraine. As a result of the attacks by Iranian combat drones on Kyiv this morning, four people were killed, among them a pregnant woman. All those attacks are the desperate actions of the country that is losing its war against Ukraine.

Ukraine consistently supports a multilateral approach to disarmament and the international security agenda. We recognize the difficulties in the implementation of the existing international treaties and in bringing others into force. Nevertheless, my country remains fully committed to maintaining and further strengthening the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

We share the view that the use of nuclear weapons is the most serious threat ever faced by humankind. For many years, Ukraine has been consistent in its call for fostering the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and stepping up nuclear disarmament efforts. Ukraine continues to render its support to the effective implementation and universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a fundamental element of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. However, since 2014, the issue of NPT efficacy and integrity has become much more complicated. The Russian military aggression against Ukraine has provoked a dangerous imbalance in the existing international arms control and non-proliferation architecture and has undermined the effectiveness and reliability of weapons-of-mass-destruction non-proliferation regimes. By occupying Crimea in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a number of international agreements,

including the Budapest Memorandum, Russia has demonstrated that the legal obligations of a nuclear Power to respect the independence and sovereignty of a non-nuclear State, as well as to refrain from the threat or use of force against a State's territorial integrity, are worth nothing.

The non-proliferation regime was undermined as Russia de facto expanded the geographic area of its nuclear arms deployment after the occupation of Crimea. Moreover, Moscow has already fired missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads over Ukrainian cities from the territory of Belarus. Today Russia is threatening to use nuclear weapons. Earlier this year, Russia also raised its nuclear alert levels, thereby undermining the credibility of its commitment to the January declaration on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races.

Ukraine strongly condemns the recent intercontinental ballistic missile launch conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the series of other ballistic missile launches conducted by Pyongyang throughout 2022, in blatant violation of relevant Security Council resolutions. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully implement and respect all Security Council resolutions related to its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes, and to immediately return to compliance with the NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. The issue of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains of international concern and still depends on Iran's compliance with its nuclear-related commitments.

The universalization and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains one of the key objectives of the multilateral efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We support the signing of the Treaty and its ratification by all States. Nuclear test moratoriums voluntarily declared by different States play a necessary but insufficient role — as they will never replace the legally binding nature of the CTBT. Therefore, Ukraine calls upon the States that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so without delay. One of the important elements of the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regimes is the fissile material cut-off treaty. Ukraine continues to support the need to negotiate and conclude such a treaty, which will be

essential both to constrain nuclear proliferation and to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, the erosion of the existing world order, the continuous breaches and the unaddressed violations of international law continue to weaken the global security architecture as a whole. It is crucial to find practical ways to ensure that the international legal norms related to non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control do not remain on paper but are also properly enforced and fully respected. The international community should act in a united and decisive manner to prevent any attempts and counter every action to endanger the relevant international instruments through either aggressive policy, violation of State sovereignty and territorial integrity, or the blocking of important decisions to be adopted by the United Nations or its bodies.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina prioritizes the issue of nuclear disarmament and has made significant efforts in that area, which reflects our clear and sustained commitment to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Our country has an exclusively peaceful and substantial nuclear programme that is in strict compliance with the norms enshrined in the Treaty on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For Argentina, the NPT is the cornerstone of the regime for disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As we said in the general debate (see A/C.1/77/PV.4), we regret that despite the efforts of the President of the tenth NPT Review Conference, for the second consecutive time the Review Conference was unable to adopt a final document or recommendations to advance the implementation of the Treaty.

The 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco has made a real and effective contribution to peace and security at the regional and global levels. Argentina once again calls on the nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all interpretive declarations of Protocols I and II of the Treaty and to respect the denuclearized nature of Latin America and the Caribbean. At the regional level, Argentina's commitment to non-proliferation is also evidenced through the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, which is part of our State policy. Argentina and Brazil created the Agency in 1991 for the purpose of establishing mutual safeguards, thereby fostering confidence between both countries and the international community regarding the exclusively peaceful nature of our respective nuclear

plans. The Agency marked its thirtieth anniversary in 2021. We have shared the results of this experience because we are sure that it can serve as an inspiration for other regions of the world, as was recognized in the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 76/52.

We will be able to make progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons only when we can marshal the political will and flexibility of all Member States. In that context, we reiterate the relevance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we believe is a concrete measure that will build confidence and make it possible to advance towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. If we are to achieve that, the CTBT's entry into force as soon as possible is essential, and that requires that all annex 2 countries sign and ratify it without preconditions. We also once again reiterate our firm condemnation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear tests. We urge it to comply with Security Council resolutions, to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to rejoin the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Argentina hopes to see the negotiations on the full compliance of all parties with the Joint Comprehensive Action Plan (JCPOA) conclude soon, and we trust that the sense of responsibility and the negotiating spirit that originally led to the JCPOA's conclusion will prevail. We once again reiterate our strong support for the crucial role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Iran. I would also like to say that my country maintains an unwavering commitment to non-proliferation and the IAEA safeguards system. Its work is crucial in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and energy. It is therefore vital to continue supporting the Agency and its centrality in terms of the commitments established in article III of the NPT.

Finally, we are concerned about the risks that sites containing nuclear or radioactive material in Ukraine may be affected by the war going on there, and we call for an end to the hostilities. In that regard, we also support the work of the IAEA and its independence, as well as its reports on technological safety, physical security and safeguards, including analysis based on the seven essential pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict.

Mr. Kmentt (Austria): We are meeting in unprecedented times. A brutal war is taking place in Europe. While it is the people of Ukraine who are suffering most immediately, the war is having a severe global impact. Moreover, we are all threatened by the presence of the highest risk of the use of nuclear weapons in decades and their potentially global catastrophic impact. Those nuclear threats have been made by Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council and a depository State of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in the context of an aggression against a non-nuclear-weapon State and in breach of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Austria unequivocally condemns any and all nuclear threats, explicit or implicit, and irrespective of the circumstances. We are deeply concerned about increasingly strident nuclear rhetoric. We hear irresponsible talk about the use of tactical nuclear weapons as if that would somehow not be so bad. We run the risk of seeing the use of nuclear weapon normalized. We urge for the utmost restraint regarding any talk about the use of nuclear weapons.

As the risks of nuclear escalation increase, so do the risks of nuclear miscalculations and accidents. We are one miscalculation away from nuclear Armageddon, as the Secretary-General said recently. That is an existential concern for all humankind. We know that the humanitarian and environmental impact of a nuclear conflict would be catastrophic and possibly end human civilization. Where is the legitimacy in imposing these existential risks on all humankind and its future generations?

The current acute crisis demonstrates the unacceptable risks that nuclear weapons represent for us all and the fragility and highly precarious nature of the foundation for the theory of nuclear deterrence. We cannot mitigate the catastrophic consequences of even a limited nuclear war. The only option is to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again in any circumstances. Abandoning the ill-fated belief in the theory of nuclear deterrence is central to that. We need to stop assuming that the threat represented by nuclear weapons will ensure their continued non-use. Nuclear deterrence rests on the readiness and the reassertion of that readiness to actually use nuclear weapons — a readiness to inflict catastrophic humanitarian consequences and mass killing of civilians on an unimaginable scale. That is abhorrent to anyone with a sense of morality or ethics and would

be a clear violation of the Charter and international law. Moreover, nuclear deterrence is fraught with uncertainties and rests on many ultimately unproven assumptions. The argument that it prevents wars has always been shaky.

Weighing the uncertainties and risks of nuclear deterrence against the increasing body of new evidence on the scale of the potential humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons is the conversation we need urgently if we are to step back from the brink of nuclear madness. We need a paradigm shift away from nuclear-use doctrines, and we need to renounce the development of new nuclear weapons and vast investments fuelling a new nuclear arms race. Nor can we afford to continue to erode key treaties such as the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the nuclear regime. Its full implementation is imperative, and Austria fully supports it despite the recent failure of the latest Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty.

We can find new momentum in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which draws a clear legal line in the sand and is based on new evidence of the risks and humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. The TPNW strengthens the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We call on all States to join it and to strengthen the nuclear taboo. We also call on all States to engage constructively with the TPNW, including with regard to victim assistance and environmental remediation.

Together with co-sponsors, we have introduced two draft resolutions that are even more topical at this session of the General Assembly. The first draft resolution is on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/77/L.16) and the second is on the TPNW (A/C.1/77/L.13). We encourage all States to sponsor and support them. In addition, my delegation reiterates its support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, whose entry into force remains urgent and vital. We also call for negotiations on a fissile material treaty and for urgent negotiations on a successor agreement to the New START Treaty. Austria reaffirms its continued support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and shares the concern about actions by Iran that are inconsistent with its obligations under the JCPOA. We are also deeply concerned about the development of nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as its recent launches of ballistic missiles.

In the interests of time, I would like to refer the Committee to the more detailed statement on these issues delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.11), with which Austria is fully aligned. Austria looks forward to working with all delegations in making concrete progress on nuclear disarmament and achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Practical progress on the nuclear disarmament track can only be achieved on a basis of consensus and adherence to the tried and tested approach of gradual reductions in the context of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the imperative of maintaining a strategic balance based on the principle of equal security. In actual fact, non-nuclear and nuclear-weapon States alike need to facilitate an overall reduction in international tensions and to craft a realistic global disarmament agenda. Russia has unfailingly and fully complied with its commitments under the NPT. In firmly pursuing that path, we have developed and concluded a number of international agreements on reducing and limiting nuclear weapons, as well as taking significant unilateral steps in that area. As a result, Russia has reduced its strategic weapons capacity by 85 per cent in comparison with the peak levels of the 1980s and its non-strategic nuclear weapons by three-quarters compared to the Soviet Union's levels in 1991.

In February 2021, at Russia's initiative, the New START Treaty was extended by five years. In July 2021, pursuant to the agreement of the Presidents of Russia and the United States, we initiated an integrated dialogue on strategic stability. However, the United States has devalued those efforts. In principle, we remain open to working to reduce tensions, prevent an arms race and minimize strategic risks. But that will be possible only on the basis of equality and respect for Russian interests. For decades Russia has consistently and steadily reduced the place and role of nuclear weapons in its military doctrine. Our nuclear deterrence policy is purely defensive. The conditions for the use of nuclear weapons are limited to extreme circumstances, which are clearly defined and determined in publicly available Russian policy documents.

However, so far the possession of nuclear weapons remains our country's only possible response to certain concrete external threats. Developments in Europe have confirmed the validity of our concerns. In a gross violation of the principle of equal and indivisible

security, NATO gambled on a policy of unchecked hostile expansion towards our borders, which is damaging to Russia's security. Our initiative to develop binding agreements that would have guaranteed predictability and stability on our Western borders and in the European space generally was rejected. When we felt obliged to take responsive measures to protect our external security arena, the United States and NATO used it as an excuse for moving towards an all-out confrontation with us and close to the brink of a direct military conflict.

Restrained and responsible conduct on the part of the nuclear Powers is now more than important than ever. Russia is firmly committed to the principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. On 3 January that position was affirmed by the leaders of the five nuclear States in a joint statement. As the Ukrainian crisis has worsened, thanks to the Kyiv regime and its Western patrons, the message of that document has not only remained relevant but has acquired additional significance. The NATO bloc, which openly opposes us, defiantly defines itself doctrinally as a nuclear alliance. United States nuclear weapons are being deployed on the territory of non-nuclear allies of the United States. Just in the past few days practical scenarios for using those weapons have begun to be developed with the involvement of military personnel of non-nuclear countries. They do not conceal the anti-Russian direction of these measures in publicly permitting the potential for this capability to move closer to our borders. These irresponsible actions increase the strategic risks, including nuclear risks, and hinder disarmament efforts.

Russia views the NPT as the cornerstone of the international security architecture. In the past few years the NPT regime has been seriously tested. Against the background of a breakdown in existing arms-control agreements, disagreements between Member States on how to implement the Treaty have been increasing. The lack of an outcome for the tenth NPT Review Conference is further proof of that. During work on the draft report, disagreements between delegations on serious issues regarding all three pillars of the NPT prevented consensus from being achieved. A number of delegations used the Conference to settle political scores and demonstrated their inability to take account of the interests of all State parties. That is why the final document was blocked. Nonetheless, the fact that the States parties to the NPT were able to exchange

opinions on the entire spectrum of issues related to the NPT was of itself very valuable, considering the current challenging geopolitical conditions.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): A second consecutive review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has passed without the adoption of an outcome document. Instead, nuclear-weapon States have spent the last seven years flouting the provisions of the NPT by conducting a broad modernization of their nuclear programmes. Rather than engaging in multilateral nuclear disarmament aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons, nuclear-weapon States have invested billions of dollars in strengthening and increasing their arsenals with the latest technologies. Some are developing and building new delivery systems. The possibility that nuclear weapons might be used has grown to terrifying proportions, especially as offensive cyberoperations and artificial intelligence have introduced unprecedented levels of uncertainty into international security.

However, we can find some solace in the continuing progress that is being made by non-nuclear weapon States. The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017, its entry into force in 2021, the First Meeting of State Parties to the Treaty, held this year, and the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action are all clear examples of our continued belief in the ability of international law to create meaningful and substantial change. Furthermore, the joint statement on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons that Costa Rica delivered on behalf of 145 Member States during the tenth NPT Review Conference is the outcome document of this review cycle, as was the case in the previous review cycle in 2015.

We must overcome the misogyny of militarism. We must end the chronic underrepresentation of women in non-proliferation, disarmament and arms-control negotiations. The lack of inclusion is at the root of the nuclear problem. The urgent need to adopt a more intersectional approach focusing on the question of upending the nuclear patriarchy and the importance of addressing the gendered discourse that is the foundation of the nuclear narrative is our only path towards progress for all. In failing to incorporate a gendered lens into all policymaking mechanisms, we risk never fully understanding the gendered impacts caused by exposing women, girls and unborn babies to ionizing radiation. This why draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.18,

on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, introduced by Trinidad and Tobago, is crucial. It is the first draft resolution in the First Committee to officially acknowledge the importance of the disarmament agenda to fight gender-based violence.

To reframe the nuclear discourse, we must reframe our understanding of human security. Human security is shifting away from national security priorities and requires international cooperation rather than projections of power and competition. As Rosanagh Fuller, Robyn Harris and Marissa Conway have noted, the TPNW's main impact consists of raising critical awareness among the international community on the issue of how common security is articulated. They are asking who defines and constructs the practices of global security and by what means. They are asking how women and men are affected differently by the nuclear arms race, and most significantly, what the human costs of nuclear weapons are.

Achieving nuclear disarmament requires more than agreeing on an outcome document in every review cycle. It requires a rethinking of military-dependent economies and their environmental consequences, as well as the elimination of gendered language that uses the masculine-feminine dichotomy in reference to militarism and disarmament, and consequently in reference to States that do or do not possess nuclear weapons.

Ms. Kesse Antwi (Ghana): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on this cluster by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/77/PV.11), and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

Ghana would like to remind the Committee that in 1996 the International Court of Justice, as part of its advisory opinion on the legality of nuclear weapons, underscored an obligation to pursue in good faith and to conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Ghana does not stand alone in its view that the threat or use of nuclear weapons should never be considered in any circumstances, given the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences notoriously associated with that use. While a majority of States have persistently called for a world free of nuclear weapons, the state of our global security climate nonetheless suggests a lack of respect

for disarmament and non-proliferation obligations. Instead of seeing concrete steps taken towards disarmament, we continue to witness nuclear-weapon States making advances in replacing, modernizing and maintaining their nuclear warheads and tactical nuclear weapons, missile and aircraft delivery systems and nuclear-weapon production facilities, as well as their capabilities and testing.

We cannot claim to want a peaceful world yet act in ways that are against peace. If we do not act now to reverse our steps along the wrong paths, it may be too late to pull back. In that regard, Ghana calls urgently for strengthening our collective efforts towards initiatives that will fast-track processes leading to the objective of a world without nuclear weapons. We urge nuclear-weapon States and their allies to reconsider their mantras on nuclear security doctrine and to unite around approaches that will ultimately guarantee a safer world. We reaffirm the significance and continued validity of the commitments of State parties to the outcomes of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and hope that future NPT Review Conferences will overcome the setbacks that resulted in the failure of the ninth and tenth sessions.

Ghana believes that a balanced implementation of the three pillars of the NPT in their entirety represents an indispensable pathway towards a world without nuclear weapons and with sustainable development. We also wish to underscore the inalienable rights of State parties to develop and use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes as envisaged by the NPT. We maintain, however, that such activities must be conducted under strict International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supervision and in compliance with the Agency's safeguards, additional protocols and verification regime.

With regard to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Ghana welcomed its entry into force on 22 January 2021 and the convening of the First Meeting of States Parties in June 2022. We acknowledge the Treaty as the only legally binding global agreement that outlaws nuclear weapons and addresses the existing loopholes in international law regarding the development, testing, production, acquisition, possession, stockpiling and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, nuclear-weapon-free zones, as embodied in the Treaties of Pelindaba, Tlateloco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and

Central Asia, also remain important mechanisms in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, since they provide a framework for prohibiting the testing, stationing, development or use of nuclear weapons within designated territories. We have always called for the establishment of such zones in parts of the world where they do not exist and are therefore encouraged by the convening of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction and hope that those efforts can culminate in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region.

The moratorium on nuclear testing under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a possible legally binding fissile material cut-off treaty are also essential for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We therefore renew our call on annex 2 States that have yet to ratify the CTBT to fast-track the process of ratification and urge the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament.

In conclusion, we reiterate that nuclear weapons have no usefulness for humankind. Their continued existence remains a peril to us all. Nuclear deterrence doctrines only increase the risk of nuclear weapons proliferating and falling into the wrong hands, such as those of terrorists, and the failure to abolish them fuels fear and distrust between countries. We emphasize that there is no comparison between the cost of rebuilding in the aftermath of a nuclear detonation and the cost involved in preventing its occurrence in the first place.

Mr. Göbel (Germany): Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made previously on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.11).

Two months ago, at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Germany's Foreign Minister, Annalena Baerbock, spelled out the three most fundamental commitments with regard to nuclear weapons, which are preventing their spread, ensuring that they are never used again and working towards a world free of nuclear weapons. That task was never going to be easy. But since February those efforts have come under even bigger strain, owing to Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Russia is trying to use nuclear threats to shield its attack on a country that voluntarily gave up its nuclear arsenal when it acceded to the NPT. The threats also

put into question Russia's commitment to the 3 January declaration by the leaders of all five nuclear-weapon States, which reaffirmed the central principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Moreover, the Russian occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Unfortunately, the tenth NPT Review Conference in August was unable to adopt a final outcome document because Russia blocked a consensus that all other NPT States parties were ready to join. Even if it had shortcomings for many NPT members, it would still have provided a good basis, and in some areas even substantial progress, to enable us to build on our joint efforts in the next review cycle. The Review Conference is now behind us, but the task ahead stays the same. We have to reduce the risk of nuclear escalation and see how we can open up the diplomatic space for new steps on nuclear arms control and disarmament measures, taking into account the current security environment. Together with our partners in the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we have proposed many concrete steps that could serve as a catalyst for nuclear disarmament, such as nuclear risk reduction.

Germany will also continue to contribute to a more conducive environment for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation diplomacy that gives equal weight in the NPT community to the countries of the North and the South. Germany participated as an observer in the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Being an observer did not, and will not, modify our legal position on that Treaty. We do not deem the TPNW to be an appropriate framework to make tangible progress on nuclear disarmament, and we will not accede to it. But we want to continue to improve dialogue on nuclear disarmament with all interested stakeholders, hold an honest debate on how we can realistically create the conditions necessary for concrete steps towards disarmament and explore cooperation, especially with regard to addressing the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, victims' assistance and environmental remediation.

Twenty-six years after the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was opened for signature, the Treaty has yet to enter into force. We welcome the new

Member States, and we renew our call on all States that have not yet signed and ratified the CTBT — in particular those listed in annex 2 — to show leadership and do so without delay.

On a fissile material cut-off treaty, we have been biding our time for far too long; it is high time to start negotiations. Differences on certain issues must no longer serve as a pretext not to move forward. For all nuclear-weapon States, declaring or maintaining existing moratoriums on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in the next NPT review cycle would be a substantial step. Other courageous steps are also needed.

We also need to make progress on non-proliferation. North Korea's continuous development of its illegal nuclear weapons programme and ballistic missiles arsenal constitutes a huge proliferation challenge and must be met with unity and resolve. We fully support the efforts of the United States of America and South Korea to establish dialogue and negotiations with North Korea. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to positively react to those initiatives.

Germany also remains fully committed to the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). We strongly urge Iran to accept the viable deal available to restore the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and to reverse all nuclear activities inconsistent with the JCPOA. Iran is obliged by law to clarify and resolve the open NPT safeguards issues. Germany calls upon Iran to ratify the IAEA's additional protocol and the CTBT. We reiterate our strong call on Iran to refrain from activities with ballistic missiles that are capable of delivering nuclear weapons and to cease the transfer of advanced weaponry to armed groups in particular. Germany condemns Iran's supply of unstaffed combat aerial systems in support of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The IAEA safeguards system is a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Comprehensive safeguards agreements, along with the additional protocol, constitute the current IAEA verification standard, and we strongly support its universalization.

We acknowledge that Russia and the United States have signalled their commitment to fully implementing the New START Treaty and to pursuing a follow-up agreement. Maintaining the New START Treaty and further developing it into the future would preserve the most substantial nuclear arms control treaty apart

from the NPT and rein in existing nuclear tensions. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. Only by continuing to work on its universalization and full implementation can we advance towards our common goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Kim In Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Despite the efforts of the international community to achieve world peace and security and sustainable development and prosperity, nuclear disarmament exists in name only today. On the other hand, the nuclear arms race is in full swing, owing to the arbitrariness and high-handedness of the specific forces resorting to the use of force in pursuit of hegemony. At present, the main culprit that undermines the foundation of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation regime is the United States. That country is hell-bent on engaging in nuclear threats and the blackmail of sovereign States and, under the pretext of strengthening its alliances, does not hesitate to proliferate nuclear weapons to a non-nuclear-weapon State, in a blatant violation of international law. The United States consistently pursues nuclear supremacy, with an astronomical financial investment in the modernization of nuclear weapons every year. Worse still, the United States is increasingly overt in its dangerous attempt to replicate the NATO nuclear-sharing model in the Asia-Pacific region. In order to achieve nuclear disarmament, the United States, which possesses the biggest and most advanced nuclear arsenal in the world, should be the first to halt the incitement to a nuclear arms race, withdraw all its nuclear assets deployed overseas and take practical measures to cut down nuclear arms.

At the seventh session of the fourteenth Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was held recently, the law on the policy of national nuclear forces was adopted in reflection of the unanimous will of the Korean people. As the hostile policy and military blackmail by the United States of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is escalated, our capacity to contain that country is bound to continue to grow proportionately. The United States compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to adopt the law on the policy of nuclear forces in defiance of the former's hostility. The United States should clearly understand that its heinous, hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over the past 30 years has brought about today's reality. It should ask

itself and reflect on how far it will drive that situation in the future.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea expresses grave concern at the irresponsible and selfish decision of Japan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the ocean, in defiance of strong opposition at home and abroad. The international community should not overlook the dangerous decision of Japan to harm the existence of humankind and the ecosystem of the ocean by discharging nuclear-contaminated water, and it should restrain it by taking concerted action. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains committed to maintaining a peace-loving position in support of the total elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide and will make serious and strenuous efforts to that end.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has always stood for the complete prohibition and comprehensive destruction of nuclear weapons and the ultimate realization of a world without nuclear weapons. China is committed to the path of peace for development and firmly pursues an independent foreign policy based on the pursuit of peace and a national defence policy that is defensive in nature. China's nuclear strategy and policy have been long-standing and consistent, with a high level of stability, continuity and predictability. It is unique among nuclear-weapon States for being the most responsible and transparent. Since the first day of its possession of nuclear weapons, China has solemnly committed itself to no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances and to unconditionally not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China always keeps its nuclear capabilities at the minimal level required for national security. It does not engage in any nuclear arms race with any other country. Certain countries, for ulterior motives, have made unwarranted speculations and accusations against China's nuclear policy and the development of its nuclear capabilities. I wish to stress that the relevant policy and practice of China are transparent and stable. They have in themselves made a historic contribution to the international nuclear disarmament process and will continue to contribute constructively to it.

Currently, the global strategic security environment continues to deteriorate. Notions, policies and paradigms such as hegemony, the Cold War mentality, competition

among the great Powers and bloc confrontation seriously threaten international peace and security. Issues such as the role of nuclear weapons and the risk of nuclear war have once again attracted much attention from the international community. The United Nations needs to determine where nuclear disarmament is headed. China proposes the following.

First, the international community should practice true multilateralism and pursue the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. Nuclear-weapon States should abandon the mind set of strategic competition and bloc confrontation, discard their obsession with exclusive and absolute security, refrain from putting their own security above that of others and desist from seeking hegemony and supremacy or bullying and coercing non-nuclear-weapon States with nuclear weapons.

Second, the United States of America and Russia should continue to fulfil their special and primary historic responsibilities towards nuclear disarmament and should make further significant and substantive reductions in their nuclear arsenals in order to create the conditions for the ultimate realization of general and complete nuclear disarmament. The nuclear-weapon States are vastly different in their nuclear policies, nuclear capabilities and security environments. Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all format for nuclear arms control, nuclear reduction and nuclear transparency. They should follow such principles as maintaining global strategic stability and an undiminished security for all and advance them progressively.

Third, nuclear-weapon States should effectively reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies, be committed to the principle of no first use of nuclear weapons, refrain from listing any country as a target for nuclear strike and be committed unconditionally to not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China calls upon the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) to conclude a treaty on mutual no first use of nuclear weapons and calls on the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument on negative security assurances.

Fourth, nuclear sharing runs counter to the purpose and object of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Therefore, it should not be

encouraged and must not proliferate. Non-nuclear-weapon States in alliance with nuclear-weapon States are significantly different from other non-nuclear-weapon States and do not have completely identical security demands. Those countries are also duty-bound to shoulder their responsibilities and to make efforts to effectively reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security strategies and collective security strategies.

Fifth, in January the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States issued a joint statement on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races, which is of great and profound significance for preventing nuclear war and maintaining global strategic stability and must be honoured conscientiously. The P5 should further enhance communication on issues such as strategic stability, the reduction of nuclear risks and the broader issues of strategic security in order to rebuild trust and enhance cooperation.

Sixth, a number of nuclear-weapon States have placed geopolitical interests above nuclear non-proliferation. They carry out nuclear submarine cooperation with a non-nuclear-weapon State, in violation of the purpose and object of the NPT, and intend to replicate nuclear sharing in the Asia-Pacific region. The international community should unequivocally oppose such acts of nuclear proliferation and jointly create international and regional security environments conducive to securing progress in nuclear disarmament.

Seventh, States parties to the NPT should seize the opportunity of the new review cycle to firmly uphold the authority and effectiveness of the Treaty and work for the NPT to serve peace and development. We should strive for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and honour the commitment to establish a moratorium on nuclear testing. We should support the launch of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty at the CD on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work in order to achieve the cut-off of the production of fissile materials in a legally binding manner.

The full version of my statement will be made available on the Secretariat's website.

Mr. Angora (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this thematic debate, which focuses on the most serious security challenge currently facing our world, namely, the threat of nuclear weapons.

Côte d'Ivoire does not possess nuclear weapons and has never ceased to promote a world that is free of those weapons and forever protected from the devastating consequences of their use. Our commitment is rooted in the essential principles underlying that ideal, namely, the recognition of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons as an ethical imperative; the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; the prohibition of all forms of nuclear testing; the promotion of nuclear-weapon-free zones in order to strengthen global and regional peace and security, in particular in region afflicted with tensions; general and complete disarmament; the total elimination of nuclear weapons as an absolute guarantee against the threat or use of those weapons; and multilateralism as a framework for promoting disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. My country has always endeavoured to make its actions consistent with all those principles.

With regard to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, Côte d'Ivoire has always joined efforts aimed at increasing awareness of their catastrophic effects on the survival of humankind. That is why we joined the Humanitarian Initiative on the Impact of Nuclear Weapons and why we support, as a co-sponsor, the annual draft resolution on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We call for the consolidation of efforts in that area in order to achieve concrete progress in disarmament.

Côte d'Ivoire is of the view that there is a sound legal basis for prohibiting the threat or use of nuclear weapons, based on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*. That conviction is at the root of my delegation's support, for several years now, for the resolution on the follow-up to that advisory opinion. With regard to the prohibition of nuclear tests, including experimental explosions in nuclear weapons laboratories, Côte d'Ivoire signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty the day after its opening for signature and ratified it in 2003. Since then, my country has tirelessly promoted the entry into force of that important tool for vertical and horizontal non-proliferation. That is reflected in particular in our sponsorship for more than five years of the resolutions relating to that treaty. Furthermore, the recognition by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire of the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the progressive establishment of a world free of such weapons, in particular in regions prone to tensions, has remained

unaltered over the years. Our accession to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which established such a zone in Africa, is a tangible expression of that recognition.

Côte d'Ivoire also participates in initiatives aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which it joined in 2007 and which aims to prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear and radioactive materials. It has also entered into a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, in accordance with its nuclear non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Furthermore, my country fully subscribes to the principle of general and complete disarmament enshrined in the NPT. That is why it constantly calls for strict compliance with nuclear disarmament commitments, in particular under article VI of the NPT. We are also in favour of the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials and of all initiatives to limit nuclear armaments.

Moreover, the total elimination of nuclear weapons, an absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of these weapons, is the ultimate objective that guides the actions of my country. That is the fundamental reason for my delegation's commitment to their prohibition via a legally binding treaty, namely, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As one of the first States to sign that instrument, in 2017, Côte d'Ivoire is honoured to be an active contributor to the promotion of its universalization and implementation, as evidenced by our co-sponsoring of the resolution and other related resolutions.

Finally, Côte d'Ivoire is convinced that a multilateral approach is the only alternative for building the world without nuclear weapons that we want. In the context of current tensions, which have also revealed the intricacy and transnational nature of global challenges, such an approach has become imperative. That is why we continue to reiterate our plea for strengthening multilateralism in order to effectively address the issue of the nuclear threat. My delegation therefore hopes that our deliberations in the First Committee, which is essentially a multilateral space, will truly reflect the gravity of that important issue.

Mr. Muhith (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned

Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.11). Allow me to speak in my national capacity.

Nuclear weapons continue to pose the greatest threat to humankind. The humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons are endless. Yet our present and future generations continue to live under the constant fear of nuclear catastrophe. Our position towards nuclear weapons is unambiguously clear. We believe that those weapons secure no one; instead, they endanger everyone's security. Hence the ultimate guarantee of security lies only in the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It was from that conviction that we ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). We welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on 22 January 2021 and the convening of the first Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, held from 21 to 23 June and where a political declaration and an action plan were adopted. We would like to see, as a matter of priority, its full implementation by all, including the nuclear-weapon States.

We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the fundamental foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. My delegation expresses deep disappointment over the consecutive failures to adopt a consensual outcome document at the ninth and the tenth NPT Review Conferences. We remain concerned at the sustained modernization of nuclear weapons, the continuous improvements of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons. We reiterate the urgent need for systematic, progressive, verifiable, irreversible and time-bound nuclear disarmament in line with the spirit of article VI of the NPT. We urge the international community to unite against the perpetual holding of nuclear weapons by a handful of States, in total disregard of the safety and security of humankind. We call upon the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate their genuine political will to enable the eleventh NPT Review Conference to produce a meaningful, tangible and sustainable outcome in order to further strengthen the NPT regime. Bangladesh believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zones under article VII of the NPT is a practical step to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Bangladesh reaffirms that nothing should undermine the inalienable rights of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including for power generation, health care and agriculture, with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We believe that such rights come with a number of responsibilities. We are deeply conscious of our responsibilities and are proceeding in line with the highest International Atomic Energy Agency standards as we build our nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.

We reiterate our support for commencing negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on an effective, non-discriminatory, legally binding and internationally and effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. We reaffirm our support for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We also strongly support the adoption of a legally binding instrument providing assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States.

The nuclear-weapon States spent about \$82.4 billion on their nuclear weapons in 2021, amid the economic toll of the pandemic. Could we take a moment to ponder what we could have achieved with that amount in the field of development, particularly in the fight against poverty and climate change, which have become more challenging than ever owing to the coronavirus disease and conflict? Let us make the right choice in order to be on the right side of history.

Mr. Gaye (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation endorses the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/77/PV.11), and looks forward to taking part in this thematic debate, which rightly focuses the attention of the international community on the risks associated with competition and growing tensions in the field of nuclear weapons.

This situation is all the more critical in that the nuclear disarmament bodies are in a state of chronic lethargy, the latest illustration of which is the inability to achieve a consensus outcome document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That failure should spur us to greater awareness and efforts to move positively towards our common goal of the

complete, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, which is the only option to protect the world against the devastation and the misery that could result from the use of nuclear weapons. In that context, we welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the holding of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty in June, at which a declaration and action plan were adopted. That Treaty, it should be recalled, reinforces the nuclear disarmament pillar of the NPT and deserves the support of the entire international community. However, it is primarily up to the nuclear-weapon States to agree on an irreversible, verifiable and more ambitious programme to eliminate their arsenals.

It is also important to keep in mind that the realization of such a programme cannot be viable if, in addition to the existing nuclear Powers, other countries aspire to acquire nuclear weapons. For it must be remembered that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two equally important and interdependent objectives. In that respect, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has a leading role to play in the adoption of effective measures capable of curbing the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Its legitimacy, authority and capacity for action must be strengthened. In the meantime, a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument aimed at guaranteeing all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of those weapons must be concluded as a matter of priority.

The universalization of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an urgent matter, in that it constitutes an important step towards the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons and therefore strengthens global and regional peace and security. It is for that reason that my delegation reiterates its commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which reaffirms Africa's status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In the same vein, we renew our call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We therefore call on all the States concerned to participate actively and in good faith in the third session of the conference on that issue.

Furthermore, ridding the world of the scourge of nuclear weapons requires a complete ban on nuclear testing, as advocated by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the conclusion of a universal instrument prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; consideration of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons; and the

promotion of civilian nuclear power. Specifically in that regard, non-proliferation measures should in no way impair the inalienable right of all States to acquire, transfer and use nuclear materials, equipment and technology for development purposes. Accordingly, the implementation of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme must be continued and strengthened.

Pending significant progress in those areas, we call on all States to show great diplomacy and a greater sense of responsibility to preserve the gains made, particularly within the framework of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iranian nuclear power, agreements on the limitation of strategic offensive arms in Europe, and the Korean peninsula denuclearization process. Similarly, strong political will and greater commitment from all Member States are required to ensure the success of the next NPT review cycle.

Mrs. Balázs (Hungary): As this is the first time I take the floor, please let me congratulate you, Sir, on your chairmanship of the First Committee and assure you of my delegation's full support.

Hungary aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). As such, I would only like to make a few remarks from our national perspective.

As we stated in our general statement, Hungary considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be not only the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime but also the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with its article VI. It was our strong hope that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT would be able to adopt a comprehensive final outcome document. Although we held very complex and substantive discussions, unfortunately we were not able to reach consensus in the end. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to do our best to make a success of the next NPT review cycle, which will start as soon as next year, and to preserve and strengthen the relevance and integrity of the NPT. To do so, we need to concentrate on issues that unite us, and not on the divisive ones, in all the three equally important and mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty.

Hungary shares the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and does its utmost to that end. However, in our view, that goal can be achieved only if our respective efforts contribute to the creation of a safer and more secure world. In that regard, we

welcome the fact that the United States and the Russian Federation extended the New START Treaty for an additional five years, and that at the beginning of this year the five nuclear-weapons States reaffirmed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. We hope that, sooner rather than later, the United States and the Russian Federation can resume their strategic stability talks and that those talks will lead to new arms control agreements.

Unfortunately, due to the military conflict in Ukraine, the risk of nuclear weapons being used is higher than ever. The already rather complex and challenging security environment has deteriorated further. Nevertheless, the fact that the current conditions are not conducive for that does not mean that nuclear disarmament — and disarmament in general — is not as relevant as ever. On the contrary, we have to unite and redouble our efforts to bring forward that noble cause by making tangible progress. However, there is no fast track in that area. In order to achieve tangible results, we need to pursue a progressive and inclusive incremental approach, consisting of gradual and concrete building blocks and engaging nuclear-weapon States. To do so we need to focus on those pragmatic “stepping stones” that unite us, and not on the divisive issues.

One of those steps is the long-overdue entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which should be a high priority for all of us, because there can be no meaningful nuclear disarmament without a comprehensive and total ban of nuclear testing. The effectiveness of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization Monitoring System, which is constantly being strengthened, is unanimously acknowledged. Therefore, the CTBT is more relevant, and its entry into force is more needed, than ever. We attach great importance to promoting its universalization and convincing annex 2 States to join and ratify it. In that respect, we welcome the recent increase in the number of States parties to the CTBT. The next logical step towards nuclear disarmament would be a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear-explosive devices. A fissile material cut-off treaty would not only constitute a significant contribution to both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation but also, by limiting the amount of direct use materials, contribute to the implementation of NPT article VI obligations.

Another essential element of the incremental approach is the development of effective and reliable

verification and monitoring mechanisms and instruments. We share the view that nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States should work together to create such a verification toolbox. Therefore, Hungary is honoured to participate in the work of the second Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) tasked to examine the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. We trust that the GGE will be able to reach consensus on a substantive report, enabling further work in that area. We are also actively engaged in the work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, focusing on the technical aspects of and capacity-building for verification.

Finally, let me underline that strategic nuclear risk reduction, transparency and confidence-building are also potential areas in which tangible progress can be made. While it is not a substitute for nuclear disarmament, nuclear risk reduction can contribute to alleviating tensions, building confidence and enhancing trust and transparency, thereby representing an important step towards nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.11).

Nuclear disarmament has been on the international agenda since 24 January 1946, when the General Assembly adopted its first resolution (resolution 1 (I)) calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons adaptable to mass destruction. Also, when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force in 1970, the nuclear-weapon States undertook a legal obligation to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and on nuclear disarmament. However, 72 years after the adoption of that historic resolution, nuclear-weapon States continue to maintain nuclear arsenals in excess of 13,000 weapons, with the number and quality of those destructive weapons set to increase in the coming years. The United States of America and the United Kingdom, in particular, are at the forefront of that haste.

While all nuclear-weapon States are actively modernizing their nuclear arsenals and delivery systems, none are engaged in disarmament negotiations. All have long-term plans for retaining those forces, and

all are explicitly or implicitly justified by the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. Global concerns over that status quo far exceed the mere numbers involved. Added to that are the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons, and then the additional concerns over the substantial economic cost of those arsenals. I should also add that the concept of creating the environment for nuclear disarmament, which was introduced by the United States, as well as the approaches initiated by some nuclear umbrella States over the years and under different names, have not had any meaningful impact in advancing nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, the United States withdrawal from the Treaty on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces in 2019 spelled an end to the commitment to eliminate an entire class of nuclear missiles.

Together with the lack of political will, the growing nuclear disarmament deficit by way of the non-compliance of the nuclear-weapon States has been reflected in the failure of two consecutive NPT Review Conferences. As such, the NPT faces serious challenges that will affect its credibility and viability in the long term. Enough is enough. The nuclear-weapon States and the so-called umbrella States must be held responsible. They must uphold their obligations by developing a time-bound, updated disarmament action plan, with specific benchmarks as well as furtherance of the existing bilateral agreements. It is worth mentioning that the nuclear-weapon States declaration in January should be reflected in their military doctrines and deterrence policies, with the first and foremost change being a pledge on nuclear security assurances. It is important to highlight that the nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and they should mainly be addressed in that regard.

It should be underlined that the regional aspect of the cause has been facing a serious impediment in the Middle East. With the support of the United States, the Israeli regime not only defies the international calls to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party without any precondition or further delay, despite its clandestine nuclear arsenal, but it also refuses to join the countries of the region in the elaboration of a treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The weapons of mass destruction in the possession of that aggressor, occupier, apartheid regime and violator of international law are increasingly harrowing, as that regime consistently threatens other

countries with nuclear annihilation. We join others and reiterate our call for that regime to abide by those international calls and renounce its possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT and put all its nuclear activities under the full safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

On another note, the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, as well as its unwillingness to return to it, have caused immense damage to international efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation. We remind delegations, such as France and Germany, that Iran respects its international commitments on the JCPOA and other issues. These delegations should instead address and request the United States and the European participants of the JCPOA to uphold their end of the bargain. In reality, while we continue to reject all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, it serves no purpose to reiterate that Iran should not develop nuclear weapons. It is our view that the use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law and is a crime against humanity. We strongly support the proposal by the Non-Aligned Movement to commence negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention on the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Khaldi (Algeria): Nuclear disarmament will remain our highest priority as long as the threat posed by nuclear weapons exists. The dangers of nuclear weapons have been demonstrated through their past use and testing, and their potential catastrophic humanitarian consequences have been reflected in multiple United Nations resolutions, including the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly, in 1946 (resolution 1 (I)) and the first special session on disarmament, held in 1978. Nuclear disarmament is not only a legal obligation, as declared by the International Court of Justice legal opinion back in 1996, but also an ethical imperative.

The continued lack of progress on implementing nuclear disarmament obligations, despite the unrelenting efforts of the majority of Member States to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, is a matter of great concern. Against that backdrop, Algeria wishes to underline the following position on nuclear disarmament.

First, Algeria remains fully committed to all the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and continues to advocate for the full, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of its three pillars. While we urge all parties outside the NPT to join it without delay or condition, we call on the nuclear-weapons States, which bear the primary responsibility in achieving nuclear disarmament, to fulfil their obligations under article VI of the Treaty and translate into facts their unequivocal undertakings related to nuclear disarmament. In that respect, Algeria expresses its deep concern over the failure of the tenth NPT Review Conference and calls on all the NPT State parties, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to engage meaningfully and in good faith in the next review cycle of the NPT in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and thereby preserve the credibility of the Treaty.

Secondly, Algeria welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and further welcomes the convening of the first Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW last June. Algeria is encouraged by the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and the Action Plan, as ambitious steps towards facilitating an effective and timely implementation of the Treaty.

Thirdly, Algeria remains convinced of the vital necessity of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a core element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We call on the remaining eight annex 2 countries to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay in order to reap the benefit of that significant instrument.

Fourthly, Algeria strongly supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones all over the world as a concrete measure towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. My country, which was among the first African States to ratify the Pelindaba Treaty, establishing a nuclear weapon-free zone in Africa, continues to provide strong support for its wide implementation. Furthermore, my country reaffirms the vital importance of the establishment of the Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which remains a legitimate demand and a priority for a sustaining peace both regionally and globally. In that context, Algeria welcomes the successful convening of the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. We call on all invited parties to constructively participate in its third session,

to be held in November 2023, in order to negotiate a legally binding Treaty that satisfies the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

Fifthly, Algeria stresses the urgent need for the conclusion of a legally binding and irrevocable instrument on negative security assurances to all non-nuclear weapons States.

Sixthly, Algeria stresses the urgent necessity of negotiating and bringing to a conclusion a non-discriminatory, multilateral and verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material, in accordance with the mandate of Conference on Disarmament document CD/1299.

Finally, my delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and of Iraq, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/77/PV.11).

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom remains committed to achieving our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons, with undiminished security for all. We believe the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to play a pivotal role in achieving that vision and promoting long-term stability, peace and security. It has extended the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, provided a framework for substantial disarmament and minimized the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom is proud of its contribution to the reductions in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons. Since the end of the Cold War, the United Kingdom has approximately halved its stockpile, and we are the only nuclear-weapon State to have reduced our deterrent capability to a single delivery system. However, we cannot ignore the grave deterioration in the international security environment and the challenges that poses to disarmament.

Russia's unprovoked and illegal war in Ukraine and its deeply irresponsible nuclear rhetoric cast a dark shadow over the international disarmament negotiations. We face a growing challenge from major nuclear-armed States willing to flout international norms of behaviour. We also remain deeply concerned about the proliferation activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran. The United Kingdom was deeply disappointed that Russia alone blocked the adoption by consensus of a final document

at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, held in August, in order to avoid acknowledging the grave consequences of President Putin's war in Ukraine. Nonetheless, there are reasons for optimism. The fact that every country, bar one, was prepared to join the consensus on the draft final document was an expression of the determination of States parties to strengthen and bolster the NPT. We welcome the decision to establish a working group on strengthening the review process of the Treaty. The important discussions held at the Review Conference provide a positive basis for progress in the coming cycle, and we will continue to work with all partners in a constructive spirit to strengthen the NPT.

Against that challenging security backdrop, the United Kingdom considers reducing strategic risks to be one of our foremost responsibilities. Risk reduction is not a substitute for progress on disarmament, but it is consistent with our efforts to foster the trust and security necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom, alongside France and the United States, produced a working paper for the Review Conference on the principles and responsible practices for nuclear-weapon States, which sets out the ways in which our Governments are working to implement the statement on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races published by the leaders of the nuclear-weapon States in January.

The United Kingdom is leading serious work on transparency, verification and irreversibility, the three principles that underpin our collective work on disarmament. The United Kingdom plays a leading role on nuclear disarmament verification through our national programme and our work in the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership, as well as through international initiatives such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We also co-authored a paper with Norway on the principle of irreversibility, and the United Kingdom will shortly commence new research in partnership with other States on how the principle of irreversibility can be applied to support disarmament. The United Kingdom continues to champion transparency in order to improve trust and build confidence and provide accountability on the implementation of our NPT obligations.

In addition, we continue to support efforts to strengthen the multilateral framework for nuclear disarmament. The United Kingdom played a central

role in the negotiation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We continue to campaign vocally for its entry into force and provide extensive technical, financial and political support. The United Kingdom also continues to press for the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. The United Kingdom supports the creation of nuclear-weapon free zones wherever States of a given region are able to agree on such arrangements. We have signed and ratified the protocols to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Africa and Central Asia, and stand ready to do the same in South-East Asia. We reaffirm our existing negative security assurances. In the face of a grave international security situation, it is more important than ever that we strengthen the NPT as a fundamental pillar of international security. We remain determined to build on the constructive spirit shown by delegations at the Review Conference to strengthen the NPT, reinvigorate our efforts to make progress across all three pillars and achieve our shared goal of a safer and more stable world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.11). The following remarks are made in our national capacity.

Today's thematic discussion on nuclear weapons is being held in a complex and chilling geopolitical setting. A full-fledged war is being waged in Europe. A nuclear-armed State invaded a non-nuclear armed State in violation of previously granted security assurances. Slovenia once again strongly condemns the unprovoked and unjustifiable war of Russia against Ukraine. The Russian threat of using nuclear weapons is dangerous, irresponsible and unacceptable. It goes against the commitments of the declaration made by the five nuclear-weapon States in their January declaration. We call on Russia to refrain from making any threats with nuclear weapons and to de-alert the status of its nuclear forces. Furthermore, we would like to recall that any armed attack on and threat against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes constitutes a clear violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including the nuclear safety standards and nuclear security guidance of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

As already stated by Slovenia during the general debate (see A/C.1/77/PV.8), we regret that consensus

was not achieved on an outcome document of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held last August. Slovenia reaffirms its full support for the NPT and its three mutually reinforcing pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We underline that the NPT is a cornerstone of the international efforts on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, as envisioned in article VI of the Treaty, should continue to be a final objective, including through the full implementation of the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan.

My country is concerned by the latest ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since September 2021. We join others in condemning the renewed activities at several nuclear sites in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its intention to prepare for another nuclear test. Those actions are not conducive to peace and stability in the region. Peace and security in the region can be achieved only by pursuing the goal of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

This year, Slovenia joined the group of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament. As a State aligned with the Stockholm Initiative, we stress the importance of taking actions to reduce nuclear risk. We join others in calling on the nuclear-weapon States to maximize transparency on their nuclear arsenals, take practical measures for the further reduction of their arsenals and show nuclear restraint at the highest political level. Along those lines, we welcome the extension of the New START Treaty for an additional five years. We also welcome the steady progress of the ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and are committed to continue the promotion of universal adherence to and the entry into force of the CTBT.

Mr. Al-Taie (Iraq): As this is the first time that I take the floor in the First Committee, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I wish you all the best.

(spoke in Arabic)

At the outset, my country's delegation would like to endorse the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by my own country, Iraq, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/77/PV.11).

Iraq believes that strengthening the universality of conventions and treaties on disarmament, especially those related to the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, foremost of which are nuclear weapons, is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of those weapons. That is true given their destructive nature for people and the environment alike. In that context, Iraq stresses the need to keep the issue of nuclear disarmament at the forefront of international priorities until the final objective of totally eliminating nuclear weapons has been achieved.

Half a century after the conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), there have been imbalances in its implementation, and nuclear-weapon States have not in practice implemented their nuclear disarmament commitments. They have continuously sought to develop new types of nuclear weapons and have preserved the role of those weapons in their security and military doctrines. Iraq is disappointed by the failure of the 2015 and 2020 Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT. We stress the need for political will and the necessary flexibility to overcome the challenges and obstacles faced by previous conferences. At the same time, we welcome efforts to establish an agreed working group to facilitate the work of the upcoming eleventh Review Conference.

Iraq has reiterated its warning against the danger of delaying the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East contained in the annex to document NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), which negatively affects the credibility and the universality of the NPT. Iraq calls on the international community in general, and the three co-sponsors of that relevant resolution in particular, to accelerate the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, pursuant to paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991), relevant General Assembly resolutions and the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Iraq also calls for support to be provided for international efforts to create that zone, and we welcome the successful outcomes of the first and second sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. Iraq also calls on all stakeholders to continue their support to ensure the success of the third session of the Conference, to be held in November. We reiterate our position on the need for those efforts and outcomes to be made in parallel with the international and United Nations efforts to create that zone. Iraq also

believes that there is no way to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East without the adherence of the Israeli entity to the NPT as a non-nuclear party, thereby ensuring its nuclear disarmament and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Nuclear terrorism is one of the most major and serious threats that the international security is facing. Strengthened nuclear-security measures are needed in order to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the hands of terrorists and other parties that are not authorized to possess them. Indeed, some terrorist groups have the desire and the capacity to cause massive nuclear destruction if they are able to obtain nuclear technology on the black market.

In conclusion, the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is increasing on a daily basis. Today the international security environment is characterized by increasing regional and international tensions. That highlights the urgent need for that Treaty to expeditiously enter into force. Iraq therefore calls upon those States that have not yet done so to ratify it, notably the eight annex 2 countries. That would eliminate the dangers and threats posed by nuclear tests, thus leading to a world free from nuclear weapons and ensuring a world of peace and prosperity for our future generations.

Mr. Gunaratna (Sri Lanka): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.11). I wish to make the following points in my national capacity.

As someone once said, ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than about peace, more about killing than about living. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. That is a tragedy of our times.

It has been said ad nauseam in this Committee as well as elsewhere that nuclear weapons constitute the most destructive, non-discriminatory, inhumane weapons ever invented. In fact, their destructive potential was so evident after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that the first United Nations resolution, adopted on 24 January 1946 (resolution 1(I)), was on the establishment of a commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy. While we have come a long way since then,

with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) gaining near-universality, with much substantive progress made on non-proliferation and its verification regimes, the disarmament pillar of the NPT remains stagnant, posing a continued threat to humankind and its very existence.

Sri Lanka's principled position on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has been strong and consistent. Therefore, it is a matter of disappointment that two consecutive NPT Review Conferences failed to adopt a consensual outcome, adding to the heightened tensions in the current international security environment. We continue to emphasize the need for nuclear-weapon States to comply with their legal obligations and to eliminate nuclear weapons totally in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable process.

Any attempt to modernize and develop new types of nuclear weapons, including new delivery vehicles, go against the fundamental principles of the disarmament pillar of the NPT, which, unfortunately, the nuclear-weapon States have observed in the breach, putting in peril our collective existence. We underscore the fact that non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from disarmament and that the lack of it erodes the credibility of the current non-proliferation regime.

Sri Lanka also continues to underline the importance of a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, it is a matter of concern to hear nuclear threats being made, implicitly or explicitly, against non-nuclear-weapon States.

I am reminded of what Arundhati Roy said in *The Cost of Living*:

"It is such a supreme folly to believe that nuclear weapons are deadly only if they are used. The fact that they exist at all, their presence in our lives, will wreak more havoc than we can begin to fathom. Nuclear weapons pervade our thinking, control our behaviour, administer our societies, inform our dreams. They bury themselves like meat hooks deep in the base of our brains. They are purveyors of madness. They are the ultimate colonizer".

The elimination of nuclear weapons is therefore a *sine qua non*.

Sri Lanka welcomes all attempts to create nuclear-weapon-free zones, which furthers the cause of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and strengthens our collective security. In that regard, Sri Lanka also joins others in welcoming the convening of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons, under the presidency of Jordan, and the second session, under the presidency of Kuwait. We welcome the anticipated further progress at the third session of the Conference, scheduled to be held in November.

Sri Lanka is also of the firm belief that non-proliferation policies should not in any way inhibit a State's right to access, produce, import, export or use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is the inalienable right of each State to research, develop, produce and use nuclear energy in keeping with its energy priorities. Given the current challenges faced by States in accessing cheap energy, it is imperative that access to the full nuclear fuel cycle be made available, in line with the relevant international safeguards.

Sri Lanka's involvement with nuclear science and atomic energy began in 1957, when it became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and established the Atomic Energy Authority in 1969. Under the Atomic Energy Act of Sri Lanka, all nuclear activities are carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes and in compliance with the relevant international obligations. We value our cooperation with the IAEA, including the existing cooperation through the safeguards agreement. We emphasize that while the primary responsibility for nuclear security lies with individual States, multilateral norms and guidelines should be pursued strictly within the framework of the IAEA and should not be arbitrary and restrictive.

Finally, we reiterate the need for a results-oriented multilateral engagement that seeks to achieve the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and removes the constant threat that continues to hang over the existence of humankind, for protecting our planet and preserving the human race is the responsibility of every rational human being.

Ms. Hill (Australia): President Putin's nuclear threats underline the danger that nuclear weapons pose to us all and the urgent need for progress on nuclear disarmament.

Australia has always pursued the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and we will redouble our

efforts to that end and towards strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to deliver tangible security benefits for us all, and we cannot be deterred by the bad-faith actions of one State. We are now entering a new NPT review cycle and need to use that time effectively to advance key areas of convergence from this year's Conference.

There is, for example, growing recognition of the need for practical measures in the area of nuclear risk reduction. While not a substitute for disarmament, risk reduction initiatives can make a genuine contribution to our security and thereby assist in creating conditions conducive to progress on disarmament. Australia, along with the Philippines, will co-chair an Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum workshop on nuclear risk reduction early next year in Australia. We hope that outputs from that workshop can be injected into the new NPT review cycle.

Transparency regarding nuclear weapons remains a core objective for Australia as an important step towards disarmament. Australia, along with our partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), will continue to engage with States parties on more transparent reporting throughout the review cycle.

Australia welcomed the decision of the Review Conference to support the NPDI proposal on the establishment of a working group to focus on strengthening the review process. We will be fully engaged when the working group convenes next year and encourage others to do likewise.

Australia recognizes that there are no shortcuts to nuclear disarmament. In that context, we are dedicated to continuing to work with the international community to identify, advocate for and implement practical measures that bring us closer to our ultimate objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Australia sees the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a vital step on the path to nuclear disarmament. We renew our call on all remaining annex 2 States to ratify without delay and encourage States to co-sponsor this year's CTBT draft resolution (A/C.1/77/L.52). As a country that has experienced the consequences of nuclear testing, Australia supports the greater attention

being given to nuclear legacy issues in our own region and beyond, including in the Pacific Islands Forum.

Australia also urges all States participating in the Conference on Disarmament to agree to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty at the earliest opportunity. An immediate step that can be taken is the direct declaration and maintenance of a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. That is a vital contribution that can be made to global disarmament efforts unilaterally.

Another necessary step on the path to a world without nuclear weapons is the development of the tools and processes necessary to give all States confidence that nuclear disarmament can be credibly verified. To that end, Australia is pleased to be contributing to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and is looking forward to hosting this year's conference of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, to be held in Sydney in December.

Australia condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ongoing development of its illegal and destabilizing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. We urge it not to resume nuclear testing and to comply fully with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We also remain deeply concerned by Iran's failure to resolve outstanding NPT safeguards issues in a full and technically credible manner. We emphasize Australia's strong support for the professional work of the Director General and staff of the International Atomic Energy Agency as they seek to implement NPT safeguards in Iran.

The security environment we now find ourselves in demands that we make progress on all those issues. In doing so, we must recognize the value of including diverse perspectives and working cooperatively to bridge divides. The Committee can rely on Australia to play a constructive role in that endeavour.

Mr. Miranda de la Peña (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.11) and wishes to add the following comments in our national capacity.

The nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime is facing one of the greatest crises in recent decades. We are concerned by and condemn the

irresponsible and unjustified nuclear rhetoric used by the Russian Federation in the context of its aggression against Ukraine. That rhetoric is a huge step backwards and constitutes a concrete threat to international peace and security, to which the international community must provide an unequivocal response.

We also deplore the blocking by Russia of the final document of the recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which makes clear the fragility of the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. That final document, which that was acceptable to the rest of the delegations present, made it patently clear that almost all the international community wishes to strengthen the NPT from different political perspectives.

During the next review cycle, Spain will remain committed to strengthening the NPT, which is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and the basis on which we can promote nuclear disarmament and the contribution of nuclear technologies to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We reaffirm the relevance of the three pillars of the NPT as well as the need to make progress across all three in a balanced manner. We will work to ensure that at the 2026 Review Conference, the necessary consensus will be achieved. To that end, we must take firm strides towards nuclear disarmament, without prevarication. All nuclear-weapon States must comply with their commitments under article VI of the Treaty, staving off the spectre of nuclear war through concrete negative security assurances, transparency and risk-reduction efforts.

The contributions of groups of States such as the Stockholm Initiative, a group of which Spain is a part, are very valuable to achieving consensus on concrete, progressive measures towards disarmament. Spain deems it a matter of priority to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, and we call for a moratorium on the production of such materials until we achieve that goal.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is also vital. We urge all annex 2 States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty. Meanwhile, we stress that the current moratorium should remain in place.

Spain expresses its grave concern at the proliferation crises that are yet to be resolved. Our decisive support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action continues to be one of my delegation's priorities. In that context, we highly value the work done by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and we urge Iran to comply with its commitments and to work cooperatively with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Moreover, it is imperative that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea comply with all Security Council resolutions. It must halt once and for all its nuclear-weapon and missile tests and move towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

Spain firmly supports any and all measures that contribute to nuclear non-proliferation. We therefore welcome the steps taken towards the creation of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We also support the central role played by the IAEA to ensure non-proliferation through its safeguards system. In that context, Spain advocates the universalization of safeguards agreements together with the additional protocol as international standards for verification and transparency.

Spain also appeals to States with fledgling civilian nuclear programmes to rescind without delay their small quantities protocols and to adopt the additional protocol. The role of the IAEA is also vital to extending the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology to all countries that wish to enjoy them. The contribution of those technologies to the achievement of the SDGs is key, and the IAEA, with the technical and financial support of its member States, can facilitate their safe and safeguarded use.

I cannot conclude without underscoring the importance of compliance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Spain will continue to actively champion the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Proliferation Security Initiative. It will also continue to strengthen export-control regimes, so crucial to preventing proliferation.

Mr. Walsh (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.11) and makes the following remarks in a national capacity.

The First Committee meets at a time of unprecedented challenge. We have seen repeated nuclear threats by

the Russian Federation in the context of the war in Ukraine. Ireland condemns Russia's nuclear threats and all nuclear threats, whether explicit or implicit, regardless of the circumstances. The reckless actions of the Russian military forces in Ukraine are cause for concern. Ireland recalls that the seven indispensable pillars of nuclear safety and security must be respected, including in armed conflict. Russia must immediately withdraw from and cease all actions against the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Ireland reiterates its full support for the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to address those nuclear safety and security risks.

The tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to agree on an outcome solely due to Russia's decision to block consensus. That was deeply regrettable and a missed opportunity to collectively respond to the growing challenges that we are facing. There is no question that all obligations and commitments under the NPT remain valid and must be honoured. Ireland is already preparing for the next review cycle, where we will continue to prioritize progress on disarmament, accountability, humanitarian consequences and gender perspectives.

Ireland warmly welcomes the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the adoption of the comprehensive Vienna Declaration and a robust Action Plan for the full implementation of the Treaty's provisions. The TPNW is fully compatible with and complementary to the NPT and is an effective legal measure contributing to the implementation of article VI.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is also an integral part of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We reiterate our call individually on each of the eight remaining annex 2 States to join the CTBT without delay or condition. We call on all States, until its entry into force, to uphold the global norm established against nuclear testing and to abide by all testing moratoriums.

Ireland reiterates the vital importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones to international regional peace and security. Ireland continues to support the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, an integral part of the 1995 package for the indefinite extension of the NPT. We were encouraged by the outcomes of both United

Nations-mandated conferences, which expressed the intent to pursue the establishment of such a zone on the basis of consensus agreement by all States of the region.

Ireland commends the unique and indispensable role of the IAEA. Ireland considers that the comprehensive safeguards agreements and the additional protocol constitute the current verification standards under the NPT. In that regard, Ireland calls on States developing their civilian nuclear programmes to amend or rescind their small quantities protocol and sign and ratify an additional protocol as a matter of priority.

Ireland also recognizes the contribution of export-control regimes to non-proliferation, as they play an important role in maintaining a safer and more secure world.

Like our European Union partners, Ireland strongly supports the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The full implementation of that agreement by all is critical to ensuring non-proliferation and promoting peace and stability in the region. The full implementation by Iran of the JCPOA, including full cooperation with the IAEA on monitoring and verification, together with resolving outstanding safeguards issues, is the only way for the international community to have confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

Ireland considers the indications of ongoing and intensifying nuclear and missile activities by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a matter of utmost concern. It is long past time for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete steps towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and to end its other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile programmes.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must return to compliance with the NPT and its IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements and bring into force the additional protocol as well as signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Ireland will continue to promote efforts to strengthen the application of gender perspectives in multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation and arms-control forums, including across all three pillars of the NPT. Ireland will likewise continue to highlight the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and girls.

In conclusion, the scale of the global challenges that we currently face must be met with a steadfast commitment to work in unity to address them. The world faces a heightened risk of nuclear catastrophe. It is imperative that we recognize that nuclear weapons afford us neither security nor safety. The wealth of scientific and medical evidence shows us that we are completely ill equipped to deal with the consequences of a nuclear-weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design. The only guarantee of safety from nuclear weapons is their complete elimination, and Ireland is committed to achieving that goal.

Mr. Štěpánek (Czechia): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, as well as other members of the Bureau on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session. The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.11). We once again condemn in the strongest possible terms the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which represents an unjustifiable breach of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as the political commitments that we have been jointly building over many decades to make the world a safer place. The Russian nuclear rhetoric used since February is irresponsible and deplorable. It only adds to the grave international tensions caused by Russia.

Despite the grave circumstances, the Czech Republic firmly believes in the power of multilateralism and international cooperation. We stress the importance of returning to full respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, strengthening the rules-based international order and seeking multilateral solutions that will enable us to restore peace, resume effective dialogue and promote transparency and confidence-building at the international and regional levels for the sake of the survival of humankind.

The Czech Republic vigorously supports a balanced approach to all three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Over more than 50 years, the NPT has proved its irreplaceable role in the international nuclear non-proliferation architecture, in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and in the development of peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Most of the States parties to the NPT that took part in its postponed 2020 Review Conference in August showed their willingness to arrive at a consensus outcome. Regrettably, only one country, the Russian Federation, opted out. Undoubtedly its main

motive was to ensure that there was no reference in the final document to the situation around the Ukrainian Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Now we know why: just watch an online chronicle depicting how one of the biggest nuclear power plants in the world is being stolen.

In that context, let me stress that the Czech Republic fully supports the independence, unity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, as well as its full sovereignty over all its nuclear facilities.

Those developments substantiate the importance of the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system, which should be further strengthened. We therefore call on all remaining NPT States parties that have not yet done so to ratify and bring into force their comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols without any further delay.

We observe with deep concern the lack of substantive cooperation from Iran in terms of supporting IAEA efforts over the past two years to clarify the outstanding issues related to the correctness and completeness of Iran's safeguards declarations. Further, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the NPT and to put all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

We also encourage those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so, thus complementing the international security architecture in accordance with the NPT. We deem it regrettable that the commencement of negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty is long overdue, and we encourage those concerned to respect the moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

The accelerated progress in the development of dual-capable missiles by several countries is highly alarming. That relates first and foremost, yet not exclusively, to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Both quantitative missile capabilities and their qualitative improvements require intensive efforts on the part of proliferators to procure high-end materials and technologies and the knowledge necessary for domestic research, development and production capacities. We must therefore identify and close all loopholes enabling such proliferation, which not only runs counter to the interests of non-proliferation but primarily falls under the Security Council sanctions regimes.

In that respect, the Czech Republic values highly the role of export-control regimes and the Nuclear Security Summit and its follow-up, as well as other relevant international security initiatives. We reiterate that there is no evidence that the existing counter-proliferation measures would limit access to peaceful uses.

With regard to the challenges facing the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, we are convinced that last year's extension of the New START Treaty can put us back on the right track. At the same time, we have to acknowledge the fundamentally altered strategic reality, which must be reflected in any future strategic arms-control agreements. We are closely following the interaction between the Russian Federation and the United States and tend to believe that the two countries are doing their utmost to reach an understanding that would allow an expansion of the scope of the Treaty to cover all nuclear warheads. It should also include those countries whose nuclear and missile arsenals have significantly expanded. China's role as a responsible stakeholder is crucial for the global system of strategic arms control to be effective.

Mr. Ray (India): India attaches high importance to the First Committee's work and looks forward to genuine dialogue that can achieve convergences and progress towards the aims set out by the first special session on disarmament.

India, as a responsible nuclear-weapon State, has a policy of maintaining a credible minimum deterrence with a no-first use posture and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

We remain firmly committed to a nuclear disarmament that is universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable. We are convinced that that goal can be achieved in a time-bound manner by a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory.

India's approach is outlined in our working papers submitted to the First Committee in 2006 and to the Conference on Disarmament in 2000. They remain relevant.

As the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has the mandate and membership to commence negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention. Without diminishing the priority that we

attach to disarmament, India supports the immediate commencement of negotiations in the CD on a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, which remains the most suitable basis for negotiations.

India's annual draft resolution on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/77/L.57), submitted since 1982 in the General Assembly, requests the CD to commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. It is our conviction that such a multilateral, universal and legally binding agreement would generate the necessary political will among States possessing nuclear weapons to engage in negotiations leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Our draft resolution on reducing nuclear danger (A/C.1/77/L.58), submitted since 1998, has drawn global attention to the hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons and calls for steps to reduce the risk of any unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through the de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons. India presents those two draft resolutions in this cluster and seeks the support and sponsorship of Member States for their adoption.

India would like to reiterate that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, negotiated outside the CD, does not create any obligations for India. India believes that that Treaty in no way constitutes or contributes to the development of any customary international law. However, India stands ready to work with all countries to achieve our shared goal of nuclear disarmament.

India strongly supports upholding and strengthening global non-proliferation objectives. It is important for the international community to prevent terrorists and non-State actors from gaining access to nuclear weapons, materials and technologies. The international community must also come together to isolate States that harbour and provide support to terrorists based on their soil.

India stands ready to work with fellow Member States towards the shared objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Chair: We have exhausted the list of speakers.

I shall now give the floor to those representatives wishing to make statements in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation rejects all that we have heard today, namely, the unfounded accusations against us. We wish to give some explanations in connection with some of the insinuations that we have heard from a number of delegations concerning the situation surrounding the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

Based on the referendum held in the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya provinces, those areas entered into the Russian Federation as new constituent entities. That was done on the basis of the expression of the will of the citizens of those areas and in full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates the right of peoples to self-determination. We spoke about that last week.

Russian jurisdiction now extends to the nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhya and an organization in charge of operating the station has been established. That new reality does not remove from the agenda the issue of the shelling by Ukrainian armed forces of the power plant. Since mid-July, they have carried out absolutely unacceptable attacks against the power plant. That poses a true threat to its security and the risk of an accident involving radioactive materials that could have the gravest of consequences. The reckless artillery shelling of the nuclear power plant — that is operating — by the Ukrainian armed forces would be impossible without the military and political support given to Ukraine by Western countries. That is what gives Kyiv a false sense of impunity and provokes it to engage in new and ever more dangerous undertakings.

The United States and leading European countries have made no efforts to put the Zelenskyy regime in its place, even though it is playing with the lives of not only its own citizens but also those of all Europeans. On 1 September, Russia did its utmost to ensure that the mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at the power plant could be carried out effectively and safely, despite the provocations by Kyiv.

Following the visit to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the Director General of the IAEA has proposed an initiative to create a zone of operational and physical nuclear security around it, which we

support in principle. However, there is a need to reach agreement on the parameters of such a zone. It is also important to ensure that so long as negotiations are ongoing and regardless of their outcome, attacks on the station need to be stopped completely. We reject completely the demilitarization of the nuclear power plant and the perimeter around it, which would decrease its safety, increase the likelihood of the commission of terrorist acts, as well as create conditions for the counter-offensive by the Ukrainian army. The site is of capital importance and cannot be left unguarded for even one minute. That is why the Russian national guard will continue to protect it.

On 11 October in Saint Petersburg, as members are all well aware, Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, met with the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Grossi. That meeting focused on the matter of cooperation between Russia and the Agency, including the situation relating to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We will continue to work with the IAEA on this matter.

Mr. Turner (United States of America): I regret taking the floor, but Russia's statement today requires a response to set the record straight.

The Russian Federation blames everyone but itself for the atrocities taking place every day in Ukraine. It was Russia that chose to further invade Ukraine on 24 February. It was Russia that has provoked the worst instability in Europe since the Second World War. It was Russia that created an economic and food crisis that ripples across the world.

Last week's vote in the General Assembly confirmed beyond a doubt that the international community will hold Russia accountable. The United States, for its part, will continue our steadfast support for the rules-based international order, and we will do what we can to assist Ukraine and all States suffering as a result of Russia's behaviour.

As the United States has made clear, the pursuit of New START follow-on measures with Russia requires a willing partner operating in good faith. Putin's brutal and unprovoked aggression in Ukraine severely tests that good faith. In the light of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we have suspended the strategic stability dialogue with Russia. The last dialogue took place on 10 January in Geneva. On that day in Geneva, Russian Senior Ministry of Defence officials and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials told our delegation

that Russia would not invade Ukraine. Those officials lied to us that day.

At this stage, it is therefore not possible to say when it will be appropriate to resume the dialogue. Russia earlier this year had a choice between war and diplomacy; it chose war.

I would also like to respond to South Africa's concerns about the lack of transparency and the need to increase reporting by nuclear-weapon States. The United States released details regarding our nuclear-warhead stockpile and held a side event during last year's session of the First Committee.

Finally, with regard to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to highlight that his country has made a mockery of the international rules-based order, with Russia and China preventing any effort to hold it accountable. We condemn the Democratic People's Republic's dangerous and reckless launch of a long-range ballistic missile that flew over Japan posing an unacceptable threat to the Japanese public. This action is a clear violation of multiple resolutions adopted unanimously by the Security Council. It again demonstrates the threat that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unlawful weapons-of-mass-destruction and ballistic-missile programmes poses to its neighbours and to the region. Together with the international community, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocations and engage in sustained and substantive dialogue. We are prepared to have a dialogue.

As has been previously stated in this session of the First Committee, naval nuclear propulsion is not prohibited under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and any cooperation envisioned under the enhanced trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States will be fully compliant with our respective obligations under the Treaty. We take our non-proliferation obligations seriously, we comply with them in full, and we reject any insinuation to the contrary.

Mr. Namekawa (Japan): I am obliged to exercise the right of reply in relation to the remarks made by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea concerning the discharge of the water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station treated through the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS). With regard to the handling of the ALPS-

treated water, Japan has been engaged in discussions based on scientific evidence in a transparent manner at such appropriate forums as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and has been taking measures to strictly abide by relevant international law and international practice, and we will continue to do so.

To be concrete, the Tokyo Electric Power Company conducted an assessment of the radiological impact on humans and the marine environment in accordance with internationally recognized scientific methods, which demonstrated that when discharging ALPS-treated water, the radiological impact will be very small, even compared to the natural radiation exposure in Japan.

In addition, the IAEA and international experts acting as third parties have been reviewing our efforts, and the review is ongoing. Japan will take appropriate measures before the discharge, taking into account their observations. Japan has been explaining this matter to the international community in a transparent manner based on scientific evidence and is prepared to continue to do so.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have to take the floor to exercise my delegation's right of reply and clarify our position with regard to the claims made on the so-called use of Iranian drones in Ukraine.

Since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken a clear, consistent and unwavering position, emphasizing that all States Members of the United Nations must fully respect the purposes and the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, as well as international law. The Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently supported peace and ending the conflict in Ukraine and has urged the parties to exercise restraint, avoid escalating tensions, engage in a meaningful process for addressing the root causes of the situation and settle their disputes through peaceful means. We have also urged the parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and conduct consultations to protect civilians and critical infrastructure from being military targets or subject to attacks.

The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to find a peaceful solution to this conflict. The United Nations should maintain objectivity and impartiality in order to play a responsible and constructive role in the political settlement of the Ukrainian conflict.

The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects and strongly condemns unfounded and unsubstantiated claims by such delegations as that of Germany about selling unmanned aerial vehicles for use in the Ukrainian conflict. These unfounded claims are nothing more than a propaganda apparatus launched by certain States to further their political agenda. In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready, in good faith and in accordance with its constructive approach toward the Ukraine crisis, to engage constructively in joint technical and expert cooperation to clarify the unfounded accusations levelled against Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue its constructive engagement to help achieve the peaceful resolution of this crisis.

Last but not least, Iran underlines that its missile programme is a home-grown and defensive capability that respects our international commitments. It should also be underlined that Iran continues to respect its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the comprehensive safeguard agreement. The additional protocol is a voluntary instrument.

Mr. Kim In Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is taking the floor to exercise its right of reply in response to the provocative statement made by the United States. My delegation categorically rejects that statement as the United States continues desperately to seek to distort the nature of the issue on the Korean peninsula. To be explicit, we have never recognized, and we will never accept, United Nations resolutions, as they are the fallout of the hostile United States policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which it seeks to disarm and whose dignified Republic it seeks to overthrow.

The United States is now desperate to spread disinformation in the international arena to order to demonize the Government of our Republic with an absurd sophistry that our self-defensive capability poses a serious threat to overall peace and security in the region. The ultimate goal of the United States is to one day overthrow our Government by pressing us to disarm, and furthermore, to give up our exercise of the right to self-defence.

The United States is now resorting to hostile acts and nuclear threats and blackmail against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which are unprecedented in scale, scope and method. We have already warned on a number of occasions that the joint

military drills of the United States and South Korea are a vivid expression of hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic and pose a grave threat to peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in the region.

The United States-South Korea joint military exercises have been staged without interruption in the past, even when the climate of improved relations and détente was manifest in the Korean peninsula. In his visit to South Korea in May this year, the United States Chief Executive discussed and agreed on offering enlarged nuclear-deterrence capacity to South Korea and scaling up the scope of the joint military exercises. This proves how ready the United States is to persist in continuing the joint military exercises against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

While making military threats against my country, the United States is still trumpeting the notion of dialogue and negotiations, but we have nothing to talk about, nor do we feel the need to do so. There will never be such a thing as our abandonment of nuclear weapons or first denuclearization, nor will there be any negotiations or bargaining chips in a process leading thereto. Our programme represents the exercise of the basic right to self-defence clearly stipulated in the United Nations Charter and international law pursuant to which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to arm itself with the self-defensive means to counter the heinous hostility of the United States, which has inflicted indescribable misfortunes and pain upon our people and persistently posed nuclear threats in an attempt to blackmail us. If the current United States Administration seeks to address the issue of the Korean peninsula by relying today on an anachronistic method of calculation, the result will be no different than that of the past.

Finally, Japan must heed the strong opposition from and protests of the international community, including neighbouring countries and the Pacific Island countries, and halt its decision to discharge nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean, which will have an immense and negative impact on the life, security and safety of the peoples of the region.

Mr. Kim (Republic of Korea): It is regrettable that my delegation has to exercise the right of reply in response to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. My delegation rejects the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's claims on the nuclear issues. As many

representatives repeatedly stressed, any attempt by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to justify its possession and potential use of nuclear weapons, including the adoption of the nuclear forces law, will not be recognized by the international community under any circumstances.

Allow me to give a brief history of the three-decades-long Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue, as there was a clear and deliberate attempt to distort cause and effect.

The nuclear issues surfaced in the early 1990s, right after the joint statement on the denuclearization on the Korean peninsula between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea avoided the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection and demanded a suspension of the joint military exercise for inspection, which we carried out. When called on to reveal the truth, it threatened to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1993. An agreement was reached in 1994, in which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea pledged not to develop nuclear weapons by reprocessing plutonium, in return for compensation and improved relations with the outside world, notably with the United States.

Unfortunately, the deal was broken as the country secretly carried out uranium enrichment activities, leading to the 2002 crisis. The Six-party Talks ensued. This time, a hard-won monumental agreement was reached in September 2005, with a huge compensatory package. The following year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted its first nuclear test, renegotiated again and reached an agreement in February 2007, followed by another nuclear test in 2009. Another interim agreement was reached in 2012, but a few days later, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched another ballistic missile, under the guise of a satellite launch. Nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches continued afterwards.

We did not give up on our efforts. We even stopped our joint military exercise for a few years, as the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea clearly stated in the general debate (see A/C.1/77/PV.7), but we now see only unprecedented missile launches.

Over the years, every time agreement was reached, numerous incentives, such as on food and heavy fuel oil, were provided. We even tried to build a light-water

reactor and clear messages of no hostile intent were repeatedly sent, but that went nowhere. That is how dialogues went on.

If a country that started a war and invaded us continuously cheats, breaks agreements and projects its hostile intentions, both in actions and words, then a defensive and measured response is inevitable in order to cope with such a threat, in accordance with our inherent rights to collective self-defence.

However, that is not the cause, but the effect. I will not elaborate on the long list of aggressive and hostile actions taken against us over the past years. If the Democratic People's Republic of Korea invokes the right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, we would like to invoke its Article 25, which emphasizes that all States Members of the United Nations accept and carry out the decisions of United Nations resolutions. That is the double standard.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes are not only unlawful, but also pose a serious threat to the peace and stability in the region and beyond. Alongside many other delegations, we strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop its provocations, return to the denuclearization talks and remain open to dialogue.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine would like to exercise the right of reply in response to the statement made by the delegation of the Russian Federation regarding the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

First of all, we completely reject all the allegations of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, including on the shelling of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. As we have been clear on many occasions, including at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the First Committee, there is only one country responsible for actions against the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and for creating unprecedented nuclear risks to Ukraine and beyond.

Russian forces have seized and occupied the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. They have also been shelling the plant regularly. The military forces of the Russian Federation are constantly present at the station. Most recently, on 6 October, Russia also undertook

another illegal attempt to place the nuclear power plant under its operational control.

We consider that decree of the Russian President null and void, and strongly condemn this crime, which further increases risks and threats in the sphere of nuclear safety and security caused by the Russian occupation of Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Russia must ensure the safety of the Ukrainian citizens who continue to perform critical functions at the nuclear power plant.

We also reiterate the urgent need to make all efforts to ensure the de-occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and its return to Ukrainian control. That is the only way to eliminate the current threats in the sphere of nuclear safety and security.

Ukraine maintains an active dialogue with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Recently, the President of Ukraine and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine met with IAEA Director General Grossi to discuss ways to ensure nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine.

Mr. Namekawa (Japan): I must exercise the right of reply once again in response to repeated allegations by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding the Advanced Liquid Processing System-treated water.

I will not repeat my words, however, since I already made our position clear in my previous intervention. I would like to highlight once again that Japan will continue to explain its efforts to the international community in a transparent manner and is willing to discuss the details based on scientific evidence at appropriate forums.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are compelled to invoke the right of reply a second time in order to categorically reject the accusations made against the Russian Federation by the representatives of the United States and Ukraine.

I will first turn to the insinuations from the American representative. We can merely briefly reiterate our approach to carrying out the special military operation in Ukraine. We laid that out in detail last week. I think that the representative from the United States can familiarize himself with it.

It boils down to the fact that Russia started the special military operation in order to protect the

residents of Donbas, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. That was done only after the Kyiv regime, with the approval of its Western sponsors, publicly buried the Minsk process. And after it became apparent that Ukraine's military action against the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics was unavoidable. It also became clear that the ensuing activities would imperil Russia's national security. That was the idea underpinning the special military operation. We also uncovered documents prepared by the Ukrainian General Staff.

As for the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the shelling supposedly undertaken by the Russian Federation, I think commenting on that would be strange, because it is fully at odds with common sense and general logic, especially now that the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has become the property of the Russian Federation and is in a region of the Russian Federation. Therefore, according to the Ukrainian delegation, the Russian Federation is shelling itself—in other words, it is shelling its own site.

I will turn now to the presence of weapons on the territory of the nuclear power plant. In that regard, one should look at the information provided by the observers of the International Atomic Energy Agency. They are constantly on the territory of the nuclear power plant, and they absolutely have not confirmed those alleged facts. The specialized entities of the Russian Federation have fully assisted them with the aim of ensuring that they can fully carry out their tasks. They have been given all the information they need about the nuclear power plant, and they have been given full access to all the rooms and areas of the nuclear power plant.

Mr. Kim In Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation totally rejects the absurd logic of South Korea and does not expect anything new from that country. Historically, the denuclearization process on the Korean peninsula has been totally destroyed owing to the hostile policy, nuclear threats and blackmail of the United States. The hostility of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has compelled us to make an inevitable choice. As long as that hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea persists, our rationale for strengthening our nuclear deterrent force will persist unchanged. However hard South Korea tries, it cannot conceal the aggressive nature of the joint military exercises. The current South Korean conservative Government, which took office this year, has resorted to

an extremely ferocious, confrontational policy towards their fellow countrymen and acts of flunkeyism. The new South Korean Government has designated our Government and army as its arch enemy and is resorting to all sorts of evil and inappropriate acts.

At this very moment, South Korea is growing more frantic in the development of weapons and the strengthening of its defence industry in a desperate effort to shore up its military inferiority to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We take clear note of the reckless remarks and offensive behaviour of South Korea and are closely watching all the transparent

military actions it conducts with the United States. If South Korea continues to take the actions it is taking today, such as taking issue with our exercise of the right to self-defence and aggravating military tensions while threatening our security, it will inevitably pay a high price for those actions.

The Chair: We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. The Committee will reconvene tomorrow morning in this Conference Room to continue the thematic discussions under the cluster "Nuclear weapons".

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.