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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Pieris(Sri Lanka)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 90 to 108 (continued)

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

The Chair: First of all, allow me to convey the warmest Diwali greetings on this festive day of lights. May that light guide our work today and the rest of the session. Diwali, as we know, symbolizes the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. That spirit makes us lucky to be working on a day like today. Let us structure all our discussions on the basis of that ethos so that we can unite together and work for peace, which is the most important task ahead of us. Successfully expanding the middle ground between what we discuss will require the same ambition and idealism that drove the conclusions that we have come to in the past few days. It will therefore require innovation and perseverance in order to identify and promote mechanisms that can reduce the risks that we are talking about. It will also require building trust in the belief that States and civil-society actors on both sides of the debate share the objective of mutual security. It is in that spirit, the spirit of Diwali today, that we will launch ourselves into this discourse, which I hope will be fruitful. The degree to which it can be fruitful is entirely in our hands. So let us give it our best shot. I wish everyone a very happy Diwali.

The Committee will continue its thematic discussion under the cluster “Conventional weapons”.

Delegations wishing to exercise their right of reply will be able to do so once the Committee exhausts the list of speakers for the cluster. Immediately after that, we will begin our thematic discussion under the cluster “Other disarmament measures and international security”. 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 a national capacity.

Mr. Coulibaly (Mali) (spoke in French): First of all, Mr. Chair, I am pleased to see your country, Sri Lanka, a friend of Mali, steering the work of the First Committee at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. I would also like to assure you of the full support of the delegation of Mali in the conduct of the Committee’s work. I will now make some remarks in my national capacity.

Despite the initiatives that the international community has taken in recent years to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects, that problem unfortunately continues to encourage conflict, exacerbate violence and fuel terrorism and organized crime in many countries, including Mali. As far as my country is concerned, we know that the illicit spread of small arms of all kinds to terrorist groups and non-State entities is at the root of the security crisis in the central and northern regions of Mali. The situation remains a major obstacle to our development goals, particularly the fight against poverty, access to health and education, gender awareness and the fight against disease, among others. In addition, security constraints deeply affect

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the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

My delegation welcomes the fact that in the context of the settlement of the Malian crisis, the Security Council, through various resolutions on the situation in our country, is asking the international community to help Mali tackle the problem of the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. In that respect, I would like to invite the international community, in its capacity as guarantor of the implementation of the peace agreement, to play its full role in order to expedite the cantonment of armed groups and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, all of which will contribute to reducing the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons in my country.

The fight against the illicit trade and circulation of small arms and light weapons can be effective only if it is in synergy within a framework of consultation and cooperation with the countries hardest hit. It was in that context that the Malian authorities, concerned about preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Mali and its populations, first deployed commendable efforts in building the capacities of its Defence and Security Forces in the fight against violent extremism. At the multilateral level, they have also called on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to cooperate fully and completely with the Malian Defence and Security Forces in order to enable it to better carry out its mandate.

On the legal front, Mali has ratified or acceded to almost all the international and regional conventions and agreements on the control of conventional arms, including the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, the Arms Trade Treaty, and the Firearms Protocol. In accordance with its commitments, the Government of Mali, through its permanent secretariat for the fight against the proliferation of light weapons, has taken robust action to combat the scourge of small arms and light weapons, including through awareness-raising and the recovery of weapons illegally held by civilian populations throughout its national territory. With the support of its partners, the Government is continuing those actions, which come directly under the framework of the ongoing peace consolidation process in Mali and its improved protection of its populations.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Mali to continue and intensify its efforts in combating the proliferation of small arms.

Mr. Mbingo (Eswatini): The Kingdom of Eswatini associates itself with the statements made 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.16).

Eswatini remains deeply concerned about the continued illicit trade, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, including their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many parts of the world, an issue that is of serious concern not only to Eswatini or the African region but globally. Eswatini attaches great importance to the central role of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), as crucial multilateral instruments that are dedicated to fighting the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and tackling their multifaceted effects, which pose a threat to international peace and security.

Eswatini acknowledges the extensive work done to address the illicit trade in small arms, including the 2000 Bamako Declaration, the African Union (AU) Constitutive Act, the 2002 Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU, the Southern African Development Community Protocol of 2004, the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative and many other subregional initiatives.

Eswatini remains steadfast in its resolve, together with the African region and the full support of the international community, in making concrete progress on the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by Year 2020, within the context of the AU's Agenda 2063. Eswatini urges Member States from developed economies to render more technical and financial assistance to developing countries like Eswatini in realizing the overall objectives of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, with a view to eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as Eswatini believes that such efforts will not only promote national and regional initiatives but will also be of assistance at the global level.

The Kingdom of Eswatini further appreciates the efforts made by States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since its entry into force, as well as the work of the eighth Conference of States Parties held in Geneva, from 22–26 August. Eswatini further encourages States parties to the Treaty to implement it in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States, not just the major international producers and exporters. We further advocate for the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms, their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Lastly, Eswatini is pleased that the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action was able to agree on establishing a standing dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons with a view to strengthening technical knowledge and expertise in areas related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, particularly in developing countries such as Eswatini.

Mr. Eustathiou de los Santos (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, since this is my first time speaking in the First Committee, I would like to salute you, Mr. Chair, and to reiterate my delegation's support for the successful completion of the Committee's work.

Uruguay reiterates its commitment to the fight against the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their destabilizing accumulation and improper use. In combating that scourge, we believe it is essential to strengthen coordination and cooperation at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels. Uruguay believes that multilateralism is our greatest ally in achieving that goal, in particular as embodied in the United Nations.

The Arms Trade Treaty is a major step towards more responsible international regulation and international trade in conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons and their parts, components and ammunition. My delegation welcomed the holding of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. While little has changed since the meeting, we applaud the progress made in the areas of cooperation, the fellowship programme and gender.

As we expressed recently in the general debate, we value the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition and its framework document (see A/C.1/77/PV.5). We hope that eventually the Open-ended Working Group will take into account the points made by various countries in my region, bearing in mind that the existing global and regional frameworks are insufficient to address the management of the lifespan of munitions and that there is no universally accepted regulatory framework. We should address the security aspects of ammunition management throughout its lifespan from its point of production to its disposal or use, by identifying and promoting activities designed to monitor and improve the effectiveness of security measures at all stages of ammunition life-cycle management. In that way we can help to avoid nuclear, humanitarian and climatic catastrophes, among other things. For that reason, my country also supports a comprehensive approach that includes the life-cycle management of conventional ammunition. The proper regulation of ammunition for small arms and light weapons is essential. We have contributed language in that regard, together with various delegations in the region. We have pointed out that while ammunition for small arms and light weapons poses a minimal risk of explosion, it has enormous potential for diversion, given its poor traceability. Making progress with respect to defining and categorizing ammunition would be timely, since it would clarify the work of the Open-ended Working Group at the same time.

We emphasize the importance of providing assistance and cooperation for countries that request it, with a view to reducing technological gaps in security for stockpiles, preventing their diversion and guaranteeing their sustainability. Strengthening national capacities in that area will improve the protection and security of all. We therefore reiterate our support for delegations that are working on draft resolutions in the area and urge the membership to support them as well. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Nohra Quintero Correa of Colombia for her efforts to that end. For all of those reasons, we also consider the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument to be vitally important instruments and international benchmarks in the fight against illicit trafficking of these weapons. We firmly believe in making use of the synergies between the Programme of Action and the other instruments I have referred to.

Considering that the trafficking of small arms and light weapons has decisive implications for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals—in particular Goal 16, which recognizes the need for just, peaceful and inclusive societies, and Goal 5, on gender equality—Uruguay recognizes that women play a fundamental role in disarmament, arms control and security. We therefore support including a gender perspective on the issue of conventional weapons and its mainstreaming in the First Committee. Likewise, we recognize the participation of civil society, which we thank for its support in combating this scourge.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore and reiterate that in order for developing countries to succeed in this fight, it is vital that they receive technical and financial assistance, which is so essential to achieving concrete progress.

Mr. Sharoni (Israel): Conventional weapons continue to claim the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent victims around the world every year. These weapons, especially missiles, rockets, small arms and light weapons and related technologies, have proliferated all over the world. Unfortunately, conventional weapons have been acquired and spread throughout the Middle East in unprecedented quantity and quality. They find their way into the hands of oppressive regimes, terrorist organizations and terror-sponsoring States. It is clear that States need to fulfil their international obligations not only to avoid spreading conventional weapons but to fight proliferation generally and prove effective in the management of their stockpiles.

The compliance with and implementation of relevant instruments, such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, as well as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), are important to our collective efforts to achieve a safer world. In that regard, Israel has delivered its annual report to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, as well as its annual report on military expenditure and its biannual report to the Programme of Action. Israel joined the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention as an observer and extended its moratorium on all exports, sales or other transfers of all anti-personnel landmines for an additional period of three years, until July 2023. As a High Contracting Party to the CCW, Israel has also delivered its national report of compliance and report to the Amended Protocol II.

Israel welcomes the extensive work and achievements that have been made so far, including the successful conclusion of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as the consensus adoption of its outcome document. In addition, Israel is participating in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition regarding the elaboration of a new global framework that will address the existing gaps in through-life ammunition management. It will be important to ensure that future political commitments reflect respect for existing national legal systems if they are to be effective and sustainable. Ammunition management should be based on national norms. Moreover, in Israel's view, that framework should be voluntary and not legally binding.

Israel acknowledges the significance of the Arms Trade Treaty as a milestone in the international community's pledge to enhance efforts to curb the illicit transfers of arms. As a signatory State, Israel supports the goals and purposes of the Treaty, and many of its principles and standards are already embodied in our robust export-control mechanisms. In some parts of the Middle East, arms are deliberately transferred to non-State actors and terror-sponsoring States. Among the numerous consequences of such illicit arms trafficking are the intentional storage of arms in urban areas, non-State actors' abuse of civilians as human shields and indiscriminate terror attacks on civilian populations. We believe that preventing the diversion and proliferation of arms to unauthorized recipients, especially terrorists, is of paramount importance.

Israel values the CCW and recognizes its uniqueness as a main forum for the inclusion of all of the most relevant actors, which means that its achievements have the greatest practical effect on the ground. Its strength lies in its commitment and ability to strike an appropriate balance between military and humanitarian considerations, and it should maintain that strength in all future efforts. Israel will continue to play an active and constructive role in any future discussion of lethal autonomous weapon systems. The meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems held so far have helped promote a greater understanding of the various aspects of the issue and enabled us to agree on the 11 guiding principles in 2019. We consider that a noteworthy achievement and a strong foundation for our future work. However, we note that there are still many issues that require further

clarification and deliberation and that there is therefore a need to continue with an incremental and informed process that will deepen our collective understanding. We look forward to further discussions on the issue within the framework of the CCW.

Ms. Moran (Ireland): Ireland aligns its statement with that made last week on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.16), and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Ireland will devote its statement today to the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas, and we will upload a full version of our statement covering conventional weapons generally.

Ireland has a strong humanitarian disarmament tradition that is a core part of our national identity and a signature Irish foreign policy. The devastating humanitarian and development consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas cannot be overstated, endangering civilian lives and in the longer term imperilling their futures through displacement and acute damage to essential services and infrastructure. The Secretary-General has consistently appealed for a political declaration to address the problem. We are proud that the international community now has the opportunity to respond to that appeal at the Dublin Conference next month by endorsing the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. Ireland concluded the consultations on the text on 17 June, following nearly three years of consultations involving Member States, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society. It is a milestone. But Ireland's process has not operated in a vacuum. It is built on the work of others over many years, including the series of talks on explosive weapons in populated areas led by Germany, successive joint statements in the First Committee, regional conferences in Maputo and Santiago, the Vienna International Conference and the debate on the protection of civilians in urban warfare in the Security Council in January (see S/PV.8953).

The underlying purpose of the declaration is to reduce the harm caused to civilians from explosive weapons in populated areas. It does not establish a prohibition on the use of any specific weapon or create any new legal obligations. Indeed, the text is explicit in stating that existing international humanitarian law

provides a framework for regulating conduct in armed conflicts, including the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. What the text does do is recognize the significant humanitarian issues associated with explosive weapons in populated areas, acknowledge the need to address that and outline a framework for the realization of those commitments in practice, by ensuring that militaries explicitly consider the effects of their actions on civilians and civilian objects and restrict or refrain from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas accordingly, by strengthening international cooperation on how to implement those commitments practically and by facilitating humanitarian access, support for victims and the improved collection of data. Put simply, those actions will help prevent and reduce civilian suffering.

We are grateful to the international community and civil society for their input and engagement in developing the Declaration. The finalization of this text is a momentous occasion and Ireland now has the pleasure of welcoming Foreign Ministers and other senior representatives of States, international organizations and civil society to Dublin on 18 November, when our Minister for Foreign Affairs will host a high-level international conference at which delegates will formally adopt the Declaration. We also strongly encourage all delegations to attend the civil-society forum in Dublin on 17 November.

The Political Declaration is an achievement of global importance and a product of extensive interregional collaboration, developed in full respect for the principles of multilingualism and multilateralism. In that spirit, Ireland recognizes the importance of ensuring regionally diverse attendance. We are therefore pleased to announce that we are funding a sponsorship programme administered by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to facilitate ministerial and high-level attendance from less developed countries and small island developing States. More details on the sponsorship programme will be issued shortly. Other States' contributions to it are also encouraged. We would like to take this opportunity to remind delegates to submit notes verbales by 3 November.

In conclusion, it is inspiring that amid the most difficult international security environment that we have witnessed since the end of the Cold War, States, international organizations and civil society have come together to reach agreement on the Political Declaration. All too often we are confronted with

scenes of humanitarian suffering following the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas. They are a stark and urgent reminder of our collective responsibility to reinforce global norms and address the root causes of this suffering. We hope that the Political Declaration marks a step forward for the international community in furthering that ambition by sending an unambiguous message on the fundamental importance of the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): Allow me to wish a happy Diwali to you, Mr. Chair, and to all who are celebrating that auspicious festival of lights today.

Slovenia also aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of by the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.16), and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

We live in a dangerous world, a world of violence, a world of complex and interdependent sources of instability — organized violence and crime, coups d'état and wars. In such a setting, it is increasingly essential that all States respect and fully comply with international humanitarian law. The Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, together with all of its Protocols, is an essential part of international humanitarian law. We encourage all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it.

Slovenia would like to express its deep concern about the use of cluster munitions on civilian populations in Syria, Yemen, Libya and Ukraine, among others. We call on all to refrain from such actions and to respect and implement the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We also call on all States to refrain from any arms transfers to States that violate that Convention, including the Russian Federation. We strongly condemn Russia's use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions against civilians in Ukraine, as well as its use of other explosive weapons such as rockets, artillery shells and improvised explosive devices.

The illicit proliferation and unauthorized use of small arms and light weapons pose a serious danger to international security and stability. They threaten the lives of millions all over the world every day and create a constant obstacle to economic development. Slovenia is committed to promoting the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in

All Its Aspects. We also emphasize the importance of a gender-sensitive approach, as well as of discouraging the recruitment of child soldiers, in policies controlling the demand for and transfer of small arms and light weapons, policies that should be executed in coordination with policies on the effective management of conventional ammunition.

Slovenia welcomes the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems. Its work is making a positive contribution to our common understanding of this complex matter. Slovenia believes that the Group's outcomes should also take into account related ethical considerations arising from decisions taken by human beings.

Slovenia is fully committed to the Ottawa Convention as well as to the Oslo Action Plan and its implementation in all areas. We devote a great deal of attention to the field of mine action. In 1998, the Slovenian Government established ITF Enhancing Human Security, an organization designed to help eliminate the scourge of anti-personnel mines in mine-affected regions across the globe. Over the course of more than 20 years, with the support of donors, ITF has responded to the needs of children and adults affected by conflicts in various areas around the world. A number of projects, in addition to de-mining, have been implemented with a focus on capacity-building and providing medical and psychosocial rehabilitation to victims, especially children, from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Gaza Strip, Ukraine, Lebanon and other places. Recently, with a donation from the Republic of Korea, ITF started mine-victim assistance projects in Lebanon to address the most crucial and life-saving health-care and income-generation needs of mine victims and their family members. The project will bring together mine victims and their families to participate in beekeeping and honey-production training workshops.

In conclusion, Slovenia continues to draw inspiration from the life of bees. They work as one, together and united for a common goal. We, the States Members of the United Nations, should unite in strengthening the arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture in full respect for the Charter of the United Nations.

The Chair: I can only agree with the representative of Slovenia's sentiment. We should all work in one

group like bees, and bees do work very efficiently. That is exactly what we should be doing.

Mrs. Ferreira (Angola): Angola aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.16).

The Republic of Angola signed the Ottawa Convention in 1997 and ratified it in 2002. It entered into force in Angola's legal system in 2003 and since then we have been committed to ensuring the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in our jurisdiction by 2025. As a State party to that international instrument, we are committed to creating conditions and legal mechanisms to achieve the objective advocated by the founding States of the Convention — the banning of mines, which represent an obstacle to the social and economic development of post-conflict countries and two thirds of which are located third-world countries. In that regard, our national mine-action agency, which we created to respond to our commitments assumed under international instruments and to implement national obligations, has been working based on our national strategy for mine action, and has contributed to further strengthening our commitments under the Convention, providing better guidance and direction for activity in that sector in our country.

Through that agency our Government has remained committed to monitoring and ensuring the implementation of our demining strategy, in cooperation with other national and international partners in the mine-action sector, as well as to mobilizing resources through various national and international authorities at a time when research carried out in previously inaccessible areas has confirmed that five of our country's 19 provinces still require attention to their high level of contamination.

Angola's situation is still in need of special attention. We have 1,092 minefields in an area of 73,714,652 square feet and require \$285,515,434 for demining and removal operations throughout the country. The activities of our national demining operators continue to be financed by the Government of Angola through annual budgetary allocations. Considering the shortfall I just referred to, there is therefore a need for more funding for demining, as well as technical assistance in order to ensure the full implementation of our land-liberation efforts. In that regard, we express our support for draft

resolution A/C.1/77/L.40, on the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Mr. Souliyong (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation aligns itself with statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.16), and Cambodia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/77/PV.15).

While conventional weapons do not have the same level of destructive impact as weapons of mass destruction, their extensive use can also have harmful humanitarian effects with long-term consequences. Explosive remnants of war are a good example in that regard, since their consequences persist long after a conflict has ended.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has gone through the traumatic experience of the humanitarian and development harm done by conventional weapons. We therefore strongly support and actively participate in the work of the international community on control and disarmament in the area of conventional weapons. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a party to major international instruments in that area, including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and four of its Protocols. We attach particular importance to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). As the second signatory to the CCM, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been a proactive member of the Convention and hosted its first Meeting of State Parties in 2010, when the State parties adopted the Vientiane Declaration and Vientiane Action Plan 2011–2015. Those two important documents have charted a road map for States parties to further implement the Convention. Likewise, the Lausanne Action Plan, adopted at the second Review Conference of the CCM in September 2021, will guide States parties in making tangible and long-term progress towards the universalization and implementation of the Convention for the period from 2021 to 2026.

The war in Indochina left behind numerous challenges that still persist today. More than 270 million cluster submunitions were dropped on Lao soil, and as many as 30 per cent of them failed to detonate on impact. To this day, we continue to encounter negative consequences from the unexploded ordnance scattered across our country, which has continued to kill and maim innocent people, particularly children, and to hamper our socioeconomic development and poverty

eradication efforts. To overcome those challenges, the Lao Government adopted our national Sustainable Development Goal 18, entitled “Lives safe from unexploded ordnance”, with the aim of removing the obstacles that unexploded ordnance poses to our national development. To that end, our obligations under the CCM have been integrated into our 2021–2030 national strategy for unexploded ordnance, entitled “Safe Path Forward III”, in order to ensure that we continue to address the problems caused by unexploded ordnance. In that regard, we are counting on the continued support and cooperation of the international community to help the Lao People’s Democratic Republic implement that national goal, along with the other Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic remains committed to continuing to work closely with all countries and development partners in order to enhance international cooperation and assistance to countries affected by unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war, with a view to ensuring that all lives are safe and that people can enjoy their right to development.

Mrs. Cedano (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.16), and Austria, on behalf of a group of States, on lethal autonomous weapons (see A/C.1/77/PV.17). I will now make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Controlling small arms and light weapons and preventing and combating illicit trafficking in such weapons are high on the Dominican Republic’s national agenda. Our country has been severely affected by criminal acts related to those weapons, harming our security at the national level. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, together with their wide availability, excessive accumulation and misuse, constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security, encourages armed violence and undermines respect for human rights. In addition, it contributes to transnational organized crime and terrorism and is an obstacle to the achievement of sustainable development. For that reason, we are committed to combating this scourge by ramping up measures to control the acquisition of such weapons, strengthening institutions, building capacity, and fully complying with domestic and international legal

commitments, including the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Our authorities are working to implement public policies for reducing criminal activity and violence and have therefore launched a comprehensive national strategy for citizen security known as My Safe Country. It encompasses a disarmament plan for peace, planned in several phases, including stiffening the requirements for carrying and possessing weapons, conducting processes that encourage the civilian population to voluntarily surrender firearms and locating and seizing all unregistered weapons and those without valid licences. In this regard, we wish to both highlight and express our appreciation for the technical assistance provided by the Department of Public Security of the Organization of American States and the Programme for the Control of Arms and Ammunition, which, in conjunction with our Ministry of the Interior and Police, carried out the first public hearing on weapons of mass destruction on 20 August 2021.

Ammunition is essential to small arms and light weapons. We believe that establishing effective ammunition-control mechanisms can complement efforts to combat illicit trafficking and armed violence. We appreciate the work that the Open-ended Group on Conventional Ammunition has been doing, as well as the contributions by Member States. However, despite that progress, States continue to face difficulties in achieving effective arms control, which is why we must increase cooperation and international and regional assistance in the areas of financing, capacity development, technology and equipment transfer and the exchange of experiences and good practices, taking into account the needs of the receiving State.

The wide availability of weapons also has a direct effect on the forms and intensity of gender-based violence, including sexual violence both within and without conflict situations, and it puts women and girls at greater risk of violence and insecurity. It will therefore be crucial to increase efforts to incorporate a gender perspective into international arms-control frameworks. We must continue to promote gender equality and women’s participation in decision-making and planning activities to combat illicit arms trafficking. In that context, we welcome this year’s work within the framework of the ATT, and we support the progress

made on gender and gender violence. We commend the progress reflected in the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and welcomed its final document.

Finally, considering the new manufacturing methods, design and technologies that have been emerging for conventional weapons, such as modular and polymer weapons and 3D printing, we are in favour of discussions in that regard. The challenges posed by those innovations must be addressed, including by instituting standards for their marking and tracing, and we must tackle the issues of transfers via the dark Internet and the conversion and reactivation of weapons. We need a comprehensive approach that analyses the impact of those technological advances in the fight against illicit trafficking.

Mr. Pereira Sosa (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, as well as their ammunition, continue to be the weapons most used by transnational organized crime, as a result of their illicit trafficking and diversion to non-State actors or unauthorized users. They threaten national and international peace and security, destabilize entire regions and affect the foundations of our institutions and our societies. In that context, the fight against organized crime is a priority area for the Government of Paraguay, and the effective control of weapons is an essential pillar in efforts to weaken the operational capacity of criminal organizations.

Paraguay's commitment to the international community regarding conventional weapons is reflected in the fact that we are party to most of the international and regional instruments that regulate the matter, and have adopted regional mechanisms within the Southern Common Market. International and regional cooperation are crucial to maintaining the efficiency and effectiveness of arms control, not just in order to strengthen our capacities and the transfer of good practices and technologies, but also for the implementation of common policies, strategies and programmes. In that regard, and bearing in mind its significance as a permanent space for dialogue and work to improve our collective efforts, we highlight the work done to adopt a final consensus document at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

While there is still serious work to be done under the Programme of Action, especially on incorporating our region's legitimate concerns about the issue of conventional ammunition, we commend its approach to the various effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on women, girls and boys, as well as the recognition of the problems created by recent developments, including capacity-building to address advances in technology and design. We highlight the fellowship programme, particularly for developing countries, among the other agreements reached, and we consider the document adopted to be a good basis for the next review conference. In the same vein, we should not fail to point to the importance of the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition, an area where a comprehensive approach to the issue is also essential, specifically to ensure the explicit incorporation of the matter of ammunition for small arms and light weapons. Besides that, the connection with the Programme of Action should be promoted in view of its evident complementarity, the needs and situation of each country and region should be addressed and clear commitments for international cooperation and assistance ensured in order to achieve a framework of clear, efficient and effective political commitments.

In addition, it should be noted that Paraguay will continue its tradition of sponsoring and supporting the important draft resolution submitted by Colombia, Japan and South Africa on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (A/C.1/77/L.50), as well as the initiative on the Arms Trade Treaty (A/C.1/77/L.39), submitted by South Korea. We urge delegations to support both draft resolutions.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the valuable cooperation of the Global Arms Programme and to highlight the central work they carry out in terms of cooperation and technical assistance, which strengthens our capacity-building, together with other entities such as the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

Finally, I would be remiss to conclude without highlighting the important work carried out by our colleague from Colombia, Ms. Nohra Quintero Correa, to facilitate draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.50 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, as well as the great work carried out by Ms. María del Rosario Estrada Girón of Guatemala and by Ms. Julia

Rodríguez Acosta of El Salvador at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States. I also wish to recognize the tireless efforts of Ambassador Maritza Chan Valverde of Costa Rica and of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Uruguay, Mrs. Gabriela González, for her efforts to coordinate our work meetings. I further wish to highlight the important and critical intervention of our colleague from Peru, Ms. Sara Alvarado, last Friday in this very room (see A/C.1/77/PV.17). They all confirm the importance that our region attributes to the issue that I referred to earlier, as well as the importance and necessity of guaranteeing the full, equitable, significant and effective participation of women in organizations in spheres of disarmament at the local, national, subregional, regional and global levels.

Mr. Carlos (Mozambique): The delegation of Mozambique aligns itself with the statement 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.16).

Mozambique attaches great importance to the control of conventional weapons as a fundamental pillar in the framework of the realization of the disarmament agenda with a view to creating an environment of sustainable international peace and security. That principle is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique. As part of its commitment to general and universal disarmament, Mozambique has implemented the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects since 2001. As such, the Government has adopted several legal instruments and law enforcement measures to better address the challenges arising from the proliferation of firearms. It has also improved the management of their use and possession by civilians, as well as of the record-keeping, marking, tracing, import, export and transit and trade embargoes of arms and related penalties. The Government of Mozambique regularly conducts in that regard public awareness campaigns, seminars and workshops in order to share and socialize the measures and strategies on that matter.

Mozambique also aligns itself with multilateral efforts and integrated actions against transnational organized crime, while strengthening regional cooperation and exchange of information in order to improve prevention and combat trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We have strengthened

national efforts to curb illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Mozambique is a member of the Southern African Police Chiefs Regional Cooperation Organization, which coordinates all actions related to the prevention and combat of trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the subregion of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The Republic of Mozambique is a party to the Arms Trade Treaty, following its ratification in 2018, and the Treaty has been integrated into the Mozambican legal framework, strengthening the national arms trade control mechanism. In August 2021, the Government of Mozambique began implementing the agreement amending the SADC protocol on the control of firearms, ammunition and other related material. The amendment to the SADC protocol extends its scope to include conventional weapons, harmonizes with international conventions and other legal instruments dealing with firearms, ammunition and other related materials, and incorporates contemporary and emerging threats of proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

As a result of the lengthy demining programme process, Mozambique has obtained significant results. The country was formally declared free of anti-personnel mines in 2015, following the removal and destruction of an estimated 10,000 land mines and their remnants. Following the success of the demining process, the Government is directing its responsibility towards assisting mine survivors through action plans that are regularly approved to guide social assistance, medical care, education and professional training, psychological assistance, social and economic inclusion, as well as improving the living conditions of mine survivors and persons with disabilities so that none of them are left behind.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates Mozambique's full commitment to continuing to implement all international measures aimed at reinforcing the global arms control frameworks, in particular the Arms Trade Treaty, and to the advancement of the disarmament agenda.

Mr. Vidal (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we thank you, Mr. Chair, for sharing the meaning and spirit of Diwali and wish the best to all colleagues and their peoples who celebrate that day.

Chile aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.16) and

by the representative of Austria on lethal autonomous weapons systems (see A/C.1/77/PV.17).

As we noted in the general debate (see A/C.1/77/PV.3), my country attaches great importance to the role that the States Members of the United Nations play in curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, eliminating the threat of improvised explosive devices and promoting transparency measures in the area of weapons. We support continued multilateral efforts on the various protocols, laws and conventions in force that seek to eradicate the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of arms and ammunition. Therefore, we should continue to encourage progress in concrete results with respect to the Arms Trade Treaty and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Precisely because of the recognized risks of conventional weapons, States must act quickly and cooperate with one another to face the challenges in that area, among them rapid technological advances. That is why the Congress of my country approved a law at the beginning of this year to create a strategic trade commission that will regulate the export of dual-use and defence material. The norms of that law are mandatory under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regulating the technologies designed for use in legitimate civil activities, both productive and scientific. However, such technologies can also be used by oppressive or extremist regimes to produce conventional weapons or weapons of mass destruction.

There is no doubt that the illicit trafficking of firearms constitutes a threat to peace and security at the national, regional and international levels. That is why we must combat criminal networks. From a regional security perspective, the growing illicit flow of weapons and of their parts, components and ammunition has fuelled the strength of transnational crime organizations and enabled them to infiltrate the social fabric, often usurping the functions of the State. Changing that reality will require coordinated work among the countries of the region. However, even more important is joint work at the national level among all the public institutions tasked with enforcing the law, with clear guidelines and a common conceptual basis that clarify the what, how and why of combating arms and ammunition trafficking.

We call for improved cooperation, communication and interaction between the agencies that deal with arms control at the national and regional levels, in accordance with international instruments or the control and cooperation mechanisms derived from the Arms Trade Treaty. In order to achieve peace, we must cut the flow of arms to criminal networks and reduce the volume of arms in the legal market, thereby transforming private demand and limiting diversion and illicit trafficking. The continuous flow of illegal weapons to countries in conflict continues to fuel armed violence and perpetuates the violation of civilian rights, with especially harmful effects on minors and women.

To conclude my statement, my delegation joins Paraguay in commending the women of the Latin American region who have played notable roles in the First Committee.

Mr. Makarevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The problems arising from the accumulation of surplus conventional ammunition stockpiles continue to raise serious concerns among the members of the international community. The diversion of ammunition could lead to armed conflicts and continued violence and conflict throughout the world. The poor management of stockpiles can lead to accidental explosions, which can have catastrophic consequences, resulting in loss of lives and damage to critical infrastructure. We believe it is essential to concentrate our efforts on further practical measures to deal with the safety and security challenges at individual stages of munitions stockpile management throughout its life cycle, taking into account the views of all States. A logical conclusion to the work in that area would be the development of a comprehensive set of obligations ensuring the safe, secure and sustainable munitions stockpile management for conventional weapons. Under the current conditions, this session is important, and we are convinced that constructive steps forward are only possible if we take decisions by consensus.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the full readiness of the Republic of Belarus to cooperate in a constructive manner.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish a happy Diwali to you, Mr. Chair, and other colleagues who are celebrating this important day.

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.16).

The Charter of the United Nations in general and its article 51 in particular have enshrined the sovereign and inherent rights of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms for their self-defence and security needs. Any arrangement for the regulation of conventional armaments should conform to the purposes and principles of the Charter. We have noted the existing relevant global processes, such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), and that the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action adopted its outcome document by consensus. That is a remarkable achievement in the disarmament forums, which are characterized by divergent views and observations and even some reservations. In the spirit of preserving consensus, it is important to take into account and accommodate all those views. We emphasize the importance of the full, effective and indiscriminate implementation of the commitments emanating from the Programme of Action and the ITI. In that context, fostering international cooperation through capacity-building and technical assistance, financial support and technology transfer are of essential importance to realize the goals of those instruments. We welcome the establishment of a standing fellowship programme for developing countries and hope that, in addition to what is required of the developed countries in terms of international cooperation, that will contribute to better implementation of those documents.

We have witnessed the ongoing deliberations of another initiative, namely the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition. The Group has started its work, which is aimed at developing a cooperative framework for the through-life management of ammunition. We hope that process will elaborate a consensus-based outcome accommodating the concerns of the entire membership. I would like to emphasize that most of our observations on small arms and light weapons, including the voluntary and non-binding nature of the recommendations respecting the sovereign prerogative of Member States to decide, oversee and manage their safety and security, transparent, inclusive and consensus-based decision-making and avoidance of controversial issues, also apply to that new process.

In practical terms, the overproduction, massive transfer and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons in certain regions have caused actual concerns in terms of regional and international security.

In 2021, the world's military expenditure surpassed previous records by reaching for the first time an amount of \$2,113 billion. Global spending in 2021 was 0.7 per cent higher than in 2020 and 12 per cent higher than in 2012. The United States of America accounted for 38 per cent of world military spending in 2021, remaining by far the first and largest spender. United States military spending totalled \$801 billion in 2021. Bearing those facts in mind, it is imperative to reduce global military expenditure and observe responsible production, as well as the transfer of conventional weapons.

The Middle East region is a worsening example of the problem. Last year, Israel spent 5.2 per cent of its gross domestic product, or \$24.3 billion, and is among the top five military spenders in the Middle East. The United States is still the biggest arms seller in the region. In addition to its weapons of mass destruction, the large arsenal of sophisticated offensive conventional weapons of the Israeli regime continues to threaten the peace and security of the region and beyond. That regime is the largest cumulative recipient of United States foreign assistance since the Second World War.

In conclusion, Iran reiterates its readiness to play the utmost possible constructive role in strengthening international peace and security.

Mr. Moussots (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The untold suffering caused by the use of conventional weapons has unfortunately become commonplace. Those weapons, which are actually weapons of mass destruction, are in circulation across the globe. Their use, whether in conflict situations or not, is widespread in the regions and subregions of America, Africa and Europe. In Africa, conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, are mainly used in mass killings, in times of conflict and even in times of peace. Estimated at 1 billion or more, they kill indiscriminately, their purpose being to ensure the supremacy of armed groups, economic predation and even extortion or the destabilization of institutions.

The destabilizing flows of conventional weapons are fuelled by chronic instability in certain parts of the world, by the mismanagement of legal weapon stocks, or even by poorly managed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. The trade in those

weapons by criminal organizations is often intended for use by child soldiers and is associated with the drug trade and the sexual exploitation of young girls. Their size and weight, as well as border porosity, make their control difficult, thereby undermining the commendable efforts of Member States, the United Nations and several non-governmental organizations. Given the scale of the phenomenon, stricter implementation of the measures already adopted, including the relevant Security Council resolutions, seems necessary to us. It is also a question of strengthening cooperation and the exchange of information and experiences for better implementation of the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty adopted in April 2013, to which my country recently acceded, as well as the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

At the level of Central Africa, our leaders adopted the so-called Kinshasa Convention for the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and all the parts and components that can be used for their manufacture, repair and assembly. The sessions of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa dedicate special meetings to the implementation by Member States of the measures enacted by that Convention, which is an integral part of the subregional strategy against terrorism and illicit flows of small arms and light weapons. During its third term on the Security Council, Gabon organized a public forum on the troubling question of small arms and light weapons. The possible solutions contained in the presidential declaration adopted at the end of that debate deserve to be implemented. In our view, because the phenomenon of destabilizing conventional weapons flows and its ravages are global in nature, the only alternative is cooperation and strengthened concerted actions.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Kasabri (Palestine): The State of Palestine aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) and by the representative of Iraq on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The State of Palestine always emphasizes the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, but one must not forget that it is conventional weapons that continue to

kill most civilians around the world. Some of those weapons are by essence indiscriminate and therefore are themselves illegal. The use of other weapons in an indiscriminate or disproportionate manner must also be deemed unlawful. The State of Palestine stresses once again that its overall approach to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is guided by the need to uphold international law, notably international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to ensure in particular the protection of civilians in all circumstances. It has therefore spared no effort to be an active and constructive actor internationally in order to advance those goals, including by being a strong advocate for the prohibition and elimination of certain weapons and the regulated use of others. As such, the State of Palestine has acceded to all relevant instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction and banning or regulating relevant conventional weapons. The State of Palestine has joined the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, as well as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and relevant protocols, informed by the suffering of our own people from those weapons.

The State of Palestine is also a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty and reminds all States parties to the Treaty of their obligation under articles 6 and 7, respectively, not to authorize any transfer of conventional arms if they could be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Neither should States parties authorize exports of those weapons if they would undermine peace and security or could be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law or of international human rights law. The State of Palestine has undertaken those steps, motivated both by its commitment to international law and by its wish to end the suffering endured by the Palestinian people as a result of the use of illegal weapons and the unlawful use of conventional weapons by Israel, the occupying Power, and its armed settlers.

The rapid development of autonomous weapons systems poses ethical, legal, humanitarian and moral challenges, as well as challenges related to international peace and security, which require the urgent development of a legally binding instrument. The joint statement on lethal autonomous weapons systems delivered by Austria on behalf of 70 States (see A/C.1/77/PV.17), including the State of Palestine, recognizes those challenges and the need to maintain

human responsibility and accountability and to establish internationally agreed rules and limits, including prohibitions and regulations.

The State of Palestine welcomes the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, and commends Ireland for its exceptional leadership in that regard. The State of Palestine is proud to have participated in the elaboration of the Declaration and has the honour to confirm it will be joining it in November. Our people, especially in the Gaza Strip, understand better than anyone the need for such a Declaration and, more importantly, the need for its implementation.

In conclusion, the State of Palestine stresses once again the need for a more holistic approach to security that can be best served not by an arms race but by ensuring human security. In that regard, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control enhance security. They also make it possible to devote those resources to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. When we speak of the international law-based order, we cannot but place disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control at its heart. And if we want to advance and preserve that order, much more needs to be done in that regard. The State of Palestine stands ready to do its share and to work with all delegations to advance that aim.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Caccia (Holy See): The Holy See would like to reiterate its support for multilateral efforts to strengthen and fully implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), which are important means for seriously impeding the nefarious effects of the uncontrolled spread of illegal arms. Small arms and light weapons may be the so-called weapons of limited destruction. However, they claim hundreds of thousands of lives around the globe every year, and their horrendous impact is widespread and devastating for humankind.

There is a deep connection between the illicit traffic in weapons and violence. In the hands of terrorists, organized crime, gangs and groups that traffic in human beings, narcotics and protected wildlife, the illegal weapons trade undergirds and

in many cases enables malicious actions to take root potentially everywhere. There is also a deep connection between the eradication of that appalling spread and integral human development and peace. Already in 1967, Pope Paul VI declared that development is the new name for peace. We cannot help but note that the words of Pope Paul VI are somehow echoed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: “There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development” (see resolution 70/1). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) rightly recognize that, with target 16.4 aiming to significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows by 2030. In that regard, the Holy See is confident that the Programme of Action truly can enhance the respect for life and the dignity of the human person through the promotion of a culture of peace.

Conscious that greater international cooperation is required today, the Holy See welcomes the adoption in New York last summer, at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, of a consensus-based outcome document, in particular its references to strengthening cooperation and coordination at the subregional, regional and cross-regional levels, the promotion of information-sharing and the reinforcement of national control mechanisms, and it looks forward to the Programme of Action and ITI Review Conference to be held in 2024.

Regrettably, as the Secretary-General has noted, the efforts of the United Nations to address the problems posed by illicit small arms have been fragmented and limited. More needs to be done. Shamefully, there are those who accumulate great wealth through trafficking in the instruments of death. On the other hand, each country has to face the challenge of the demand side of the equation. In those perspectives, the duty to confront the problem of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons should be a concern for the entire international community. For that reason, as Pope Francis repeatedly affirmed, it is important to eliminate violence at its root and promote a culture of peace that protects the most precious gift of all: human life. Allow me to conclude by reiterating the words of Pope Francis: why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on individuals and society? Sadly, the answer, as we all know, is simply for money — money that is drenched in blood, often innocent blood. Let us

together, as the international community, overcome economic and political interests and establish human life as an overarching priority.

The Chair: The Committee has heard the last speaker on the cluster “Conventional weapons”. I shall now call on those who have requested the exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation yet again categorically rejects the absolutely unfounded insinuations by Western countries regarding the alleged transfer to Russia of Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles in violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The reasoning behind such aggressive propaganda is very clear to us. Washington, which flagrantly violated that resolution through its unilateral withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2018, has simply created its most recent convenient justification for definitively dismantling that agreement. The result of such irresponsible actions will be an increase in tensions in the Persian Gulf region. No good will come from such near-sighted activities. As the saying goes, they who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind.

Western countries, having already identified the alleged perpetrators and implemented unilateral sanctions against them, are now actively lobbying the United Nations Secretariat, in violation of Article 100 of the Charter of the United Nations and its mandate to carry out a so-called impartial investigation. We know quite well the price of such an investigation. We have seen an example in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), when, contrary to their fundamental international legal obligations, including under the United Nations Charter, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and France committed an act of aggression against Syria and then actively pressured the OPCW Technical Secretariat to retroactively concoct justifications for their illegal acts. As a result, the authority of the OPCW was undermined. The Technical Secretariat refused to give any explanations with regard to the disclosed cases of pressure applied to the staff of the inspection group that carried out the investigation, while the OPCW Director-General, Mr. Fernando Arias, has ignored four invitations from the Security Council presidency over the past two years asking him to participate in a Council meeting. He has used all possible gimmicks to

avoid taking responsibility for his actions in order to please Washington, Paris and London.

In that context, the Russian Federation expects the United Nations Secretariat to provide unequivocal confirmation of the fact that it does not intend to violate the United Nations Charter. If not, we will draw the appropriate conclusions vis-à-vis its impartiality and may reconsider all our relevant relations with it.

Mr. Bourgel (Israel): I am compelled to take the floor following the references to my country made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Palestinian Authority, which Israel clearly rejects. Iran, in an attempt to gain regional dominance and spread its extremist ideology, is the biggest proliferator of conventional arms in the region and beyond, using proxy organizations to spread terror and engage in hostilities. Just a few examples are the hubs that Iran is creating with missile capabilities in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Iran is clearly working against the international community to bring about the collapse of the arms control forums.

Israel rejects the fraudulent allegations made by the representative of the Palestinian Authority. Many in this room referred during the debate under this cluster to the diversion of arms to terrorist groups. Since its independence, Israel has been threatened on a daily basis by terrorist organizations that seek its destruction. Perhaps the representative of the Palestinian Authority could have referred to the ways in which the Palestinian Authority can play a role in preventing arms from reaching the hands of terrorists that aim to kill innocent Israelis.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am compelled to take the floor to reject the allegations made by the Israeli representative against my country. I do not want to take the time of the Committee and dignify his remarks with an answer. Our position is the same. Israel is a violator of all international regulations with regard to human rights, disarmament and arms control. It is also the number one violator of the international regime banning weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the main source of regional threat and insecurity.

The Chair: We will now take up the cluster “Other disarmament measures and international security”, for which we have a long list of speakers. I therefore appeal for the full cooperation of all delegations and request that they respect the time limit.

Ms. Werdanintyas (Indonesia): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

NAM notes the positive benefits of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their contribution to development, and encourages States to implement the norms, rules and principles for the responsible behaviour of States, as that will contribute to increasing stability and security in cyberspace. On the other hand, NAM strongly rejects the cases of malicious use of new information and communications technologies, including the Internet, social networks and social media, and other uses not in accordance with international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, and that may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure of States to the detriment of their security. NAM calls for the intensification of efforts to safeguard cyberspace from becoming an arena of conflict, and instead to ensure exclusive peaceful uses, which would enable the full realization of the potential of ICTs for contributing to social and economic development.

NAM takes note of the conclusions of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (GGE), in its 2013, 2015 and 2021 reports (see A/68/98, A/70/174 and A/75/816), that international law, in particular the United Nations Charter, is applicable and essential for maintaining peace and stability and promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment.

NAM recalls the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established by resolution 73/27, which was the first inclusive mechanism established within the United Nations with the participation of all Member States, acting on the basis of consensus. NAM reiterates its determination for the success of the OEWG on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies established by resolution 75/240, which is currently the only inclusive mechanism that takes into account the concerns and interests of all States, is based on consensus and proceeds within the United Nations with the active and equal participation of all States. NAM further notes the process of adoption of the OEWG's first annual progress report by consensus

(see A/77/275) and strongly encourages reaching consensus through a negotiation process that considers, in accordance with the relevant recommendation of that report, the remaining outstanding issues, including those contained in the Chair's Summary in the final substantive report of the 2019–2021 OEWG (see A/75/816).

NAM stresses that the development of any international legal framework to address issues related to the use of ICTs with implications for international peace and security should take into account the concerns and interests of all States and be based on consensus and pursued within the United Nations with the active and equal participation of all States. At the same time, as a principled position, NAM stresses that nothing in that legal framework shall affect the inalienable rights of States to the development and use of ICTs for peaceful purposes, or shall restrict or deny, in any manner whatsoever, developing countries' use of ICT-related science, know-how, technology and services in all their aspects for peaceful purposes.

NAM condemns the misuse of information and communication technologies, including the Internet and social media, to incite and commit acts of terrorism. NAM underscores the importance of capacity-building for Member States and confidence-building measures aimed at enhancing the stability and security of cyberspace. NAM also emphasizes the importance of the observance of environmental norms in the preparation and implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements. Furthermore, NAM reaffirms that international disarmament forums should take fully into account the relevant environmental norms in negotiating treaties and agreements on disarmament and arms limitation, and that all States, through their actions, should contribute fully to ensuring compliance with those norms in the implementation of treaties and conventions to which they are party.

NAM welcomes the adoption without a vote of resolution 75/43 on the relationship between disarmament and development. NAM expresses concern at the increasing global military expenditure, which could otherwise be spent on development needs. NAM firmly supports the unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures aimed at reducing military expenditures, thereby contributing to strengthening regional and international peace and security, and recognizes that confidence-building measures assisted in that regard.

Under this cluster, NAM has submitted four draft resolutions, for which it welcomes the support of all Member States, entitled “Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control” (A/C.1/77/L.4), “Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation” (A/C.1/77/L.8), “Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium” (A/C.1/77/L.10) and “Relationship between disarmament and development” (A/C.1/77/L.5).

Mr. Fuller (Belize): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

We align our statement with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

CARICOM remains committed to contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security by implementing our international obligations. We are also committed to taking the necessary action at the national and regional levels. With security as the fourth pillar of our regional integration process, CARICOM seeks to implement practical and innovative approaches and to collaborate with other Member States and institutions to combat our region’s multidimensional security threats.

The global community faces a complex set of crises, which has heightened the awareness of the absolute need for more collaborative partnerships. There is not a single Member State that is capable of managing peace and security independently. Therefore, international partnerships are an essential means of developing capacity and strengthening frameworks to confront that scourge. We reiterate the need for continued partnerships with Member States, the United Nations system, United Nations agencies and other relevant stakeholders.

We affirm that disarmament is fundamentally about ensuring that we live in a safe and secure world. In that context, CARICOM believes that the continued consideration of gender perspectives will only advance the achievement of disarmament goals. We seek to pivot from the traditional perspective to one that embraces a multidimensional and humanitarian approach, aimed at leaving behind no woman, man, boy or girl. Resolution 65/69, entitled “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”, which was the first

resolution on that subject and was adopted in 2010, aims to urge Member States to promote equal opportunities for women in disarmament and decision-making processes and to support and strengthen the effective participation of women in the field of disarmament. A draft resolution on that subject is submitted biennially to the First Committee by CARICOM Member State Trinidad and Tobago. It retains considerable support among the Member States, as we seek to position gender and disarmament as a core and cross-cutting item on the agenda of the United Nations. We encourage all Member States to continue to support the future iterations of that important resolution.

Terrorism undermines the fundamental values and principles of CARICOM. It is one of the most severe attacks on democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance. Like others, we share the view that terrorism poses a serious threat to peace, security and stability and endangers the economic development of our societies. As a result, the CARICOM Counter-Terrorism Strategy operationalizes the subregion’s commitment to the global fight against terrorism. It seeks to promote greater regional and international harmonization of approaches and build networks between relevant agencies in order to address the conditions that lead to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism. We continue to highlight the significant role played by the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security in ensuring continuity and effectiveness in the region’s action and response to challenges posed to security in the region, as well as the implementation of the region’s Management Framework for Crime and Security.

With regard to information communications technology, the threats to peace and international security in cyberspace cannot be diminished. None of us are immune to those cyberthreats. We therefore require collaboration across borders if there is to be peace and security in cyberspace. Within that context, in the Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community, cybercrime is highlighted as an obstacle and a threat to the region’s sustained economic development. CARICOM is cognizant that, as developments in science and technology continue to transform our daily interactions, we must remain vigilant in understanding new and emerging weapon technologies. We also encourage Member States to implement the norms, rules and principles for responsible behaviour, contributing to increased stability and security in cyberspace. In that

regard, CARICOM will continue its active engagement in the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for the period 2021 to 2025. We welcome the interim progress report (see A/77/275) as the road map for our work in that process and look forward to solid recommendations and tangible outcomes, particularly regarding capacity-building.

To effectively contribute to the process, the digital gap that exists must be addressed. For CARICOM, like many other developing States, the ability and capability to respond to malicious acts and the protection of our critical infrastructure are issues that we grapple with. We are thankful for the support with confidence-building measures that development partners have provided to build capacity. The Women in Cybersecurity Fellowship, sponsored by Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the United States of America, has allowed women from the CARICOM Member States to attend and participate in the open-ended working group.

While the CARICOM region is not affected by armed conflict, we face tremendous challenges related to armed violence in our countries. As a result, significant resources are diverted from development and, by extension, from social and development goals. Security costs can cause a delay in social, education and infrastructure programmes and create an untenable burden for countries that are already heavily indebted and vulnerable to natural disasters. Developing nations are often more negatively affected by the use and trade of weapons, while no CARICOM Member State is an arms producer. A diverse range of perspectives must be present at the international disarmament forums in order to ensure that decisions made are reflective of worldwide concerns. The underrepresentation of small island developing States at international disarmament forums must be addressed in a holistic manner. In that vein, CARICOM welcomes draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.5, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", which was submitted by Indonesia on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement. To reduce the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries, the Non-Aligned Movement annually urges the international community to devote the resources made available by implementing disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development. We encourage all

Member States to continue to support draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.5.

In conclusion, CARICOM also would like to reiterate the impact that armed violence has had on the development and quality of life in our communities. We will continue working with Member States to ensure a broader framing of disarmament and weapons issues to address humanitarian and development agendas.

Mr. Peñaranda (Philippines): The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) also aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

ASEAN emphasizes the central role of the United Nations in discussions on cybersecurity. It reaffirms the need to enhance cooperation to build an open, safe, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable, peaceful and resilient cyberspace, and to minimize the risk of misperception and miscalculation by developing trust and confidence. We appeal to Member States to recognize the importance of preserving and maintaining consensus on the important matter of cybersecurity. We were able to achieve a consensus resolution on that very important matter last year at the First Committee (resolution 76/19). ASEAN had hoped that the positive practice of adopting a single consensus resolution would continue this year, and we are disappointed that is not the case. It is crucial that Member States continue to work together to safeguard efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Committee. We should also avoid having parallel mechanisms on the same matters and straining the finite resources of the United Nations and its Member States, and should also refrain from organizing overlapping meetings to avoid overstressing delegations, particularly small delegations and those from developing countries.

ASEAN would also like to reaffirm its support for the work of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for the period 2021 to 2025 as a confidence-building measure and a forum for building and rebuilding consensus on that important issue. ASEAN therefore welcomes the consensus adoption of the first annual progress report of the OEWG at its third substantive session held in July (see A/77/275). ASEAN looks forward to continued progress in discussions at the OEWG by building on the agreements reached in the progress report, as

well as on previous successful outcomes, including the final reports of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security for the period 2019 to 2021, and the sixth iteration of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security.

The pervasive and constantly evolving nature of cyberthreats requires the coordinated expertise of multiple stakeholders across different domains and across borders. In ASEAN, cooperation on cybersecurity cuts across pillars and sectors, guided by the ASEAN Digital Master Plan 2025 and the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2021–2025, which was adopted by the ASEAN Digital Ministers in January. The ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2021–2025 was developed in response to newer cyberdevelopments since 2017, and seeks to reinforce ASEAN's collective efforts to provide a secure cyberspace environment in which the region's digital economy and community to grow.

ASEAN reinforces cybersecurity cooperation and capacity-building under the coordination of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee, and advances the continued development of a secure, resilient, interoperable and rules-based cyberspace, by encouraging policy coherence across sectors and ASEAN Member States, strengthening ASEAN centrality in the region's cybersecurity architecture, and enhancing the alignment of regional cybersecurity policy.

ASEAN emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and capacity-building in the field of information and communications technology (ICT) security, which will allow States, especially developing countries, to effectively implement the 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs. In doing so, at the second meeting of its Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee, held in November 2021, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN regional action plan on the implementation of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts' norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. The regional action plan will help ASEAN Member States identify areas that need further support in implementation of the norms, including capacity-building and international cooperation.

ASEAN also works with international partners to enhance international cooperation in the field of ICT security, through platforms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum intersessional meeting on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus Experts' Working Group on Cybersecurity. In recent years, the latter has accomplished four important initiatives. There is much potential to build on and expand those initiatives in order to contribute to cybersecurity at the global level. We look forward to sharing our experiences and lessons learned, where relevant, to further develop those initiatives.

In conclusion, ASEAN reaffirms its commitment to be future-ready for any security challenges and to enhance our cooperation with the international community in advancing our shared goals of having a peaceful, secure and resilient cyberspace. We look forward to contributing constructively, alongside the rest of the international community, to building a cyberspace environment that will contribute to the overall maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Al-Taie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the Group of Arab States associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Concerning other disarmament measures, the Arab Group stresses that the solutions agreed upon in the multilateral framework and pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations provide the only sustainable way to address issues of disarmament and international security. The Arab Group calls on all Member States to reiterate and implement their individual and collective commitments made in the multilateral international framework. The Group emphasizes its belief in the pivotal role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Arab Group would like to express its concern at the increase in world tensions and military expenditures, a large part of which could be spent to promote sustainable development and the eradication of world poverty, in particular in developing countries, including Arab States. The Group once again underscores the importance of following up the implementation of the programme of work adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, as well as of considering the impact of increased military expenditures on the implementation

of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The continued acquisition and modernization of nuclear arsenals constitute the gravest threats to international peace and security and sustainable development. Therefore, the Arab Group stresses the importance for international disarmament forums to take into account the relevant environmental criteria, while negotiating disarmament and arms control treaties and conventions. The Group stresses also the need for all States to ensure compliance with those environmental criteria in their implementation of treaties and conventions.

With regard to cybersecurity, the Arab Group expresses its concern at the increased use of information and communications technology (ICT) in destructive activities that threaten international peace and security, including the activities carried out by terrorist and criminal organizations. The Arab Group underscores the need for continued work by the United Nations to develop binding rules that will govern the responsible behaviour of States in that vital field, as well as for the continued development of regulations in that field in a manner that keeps pace with its speedy developments. There is also a need to continue international cooperation and to maintain the central role of the United Nations in those efforts. The Group stresses the importance of supporting international cooperation to strengthen ICT security that would increase the ability of States to deal with any sabotage attacks, which was confirmed by many reports of the Group of Governmental Experts and the former Open-ended Working Group.

The Arab Group is keen to sustain the continued central role of the United Nations in the development of the system of international criteria for ICT security and the continued cooperation within the United Nations in that field, which now affects all the vital facilities of various States. However, its increased misuse threatens international security.

In conclusion, the Arab Group reaffirms its continued interest in effectively participating in the work of the Open-ended Working Group established under resolution 75/240 and welcomes the adoption by consensus of its first annual report (see A/77/275). We look forward to holding intensive consultations on the relevant various proposals that will support developing countries to face the challenges resulting from the use of ICT, in addition to the growing threats in that field.

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

Ms. Korff (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its States members. The candidate countries Montenegro, Albania and the Republic of Moldova, as well as Georgia, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its States members strongly promote a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace, in which international law, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, fully apply, supporting social, political and economic development. We recall the important work of the international community to advance international security and stability in cyberspace and to address cyberthreats. The cyberthreat landscape continues to evolve, and cyberspace is increasingly being misused to conduct malicious cyberactivities, including cyberattacks, as a means of hybrid warfare, which the EU strongly condemns.

Let me recall the risks that Russia's aggression in Ukraine brings to our broader security and stability, and underline that the EU and its States members attributed the malicious cyberactivity targeting the satellite KA-SAT network to the Russian Federation. That cyberattack occurred one hour before Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, facilitating the military aggression. It had a significant impact, causing indiscriminate communication outages and disruptions across several public authorities, businesses and users in Ukraine, and affected several EU States members. The attack that began on 24 February 2022 was not an isolated event. Russia's aggression in Ukraine has been accompanied by a significant increase in malicious cyberactivities, including a striking and concerning number of hackers and hacker groups indiscriminately targeting essential entities globally. We continue to stress that cyberattacks targeting one State could spill over into other countries and cause systemic effects, putting the security of other States at risk. The EU condemns such activities in the strongest possible terms.

Taking into consideration the new strategic environment that cyberspace has created — which cyberactors can use to increase their power, degrade the power of others and gain strategic advantages — the EU recognizes the role of the United Nations in further

advancing norms for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. The Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Security of and in the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for the period 2021 to 2025, building on the previous OEWG and Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and by reflecting the discussions held among all States Members of the United Nations, confirmed that the United Nations is well placed to lead the way and promote dialogue on the use of ICTs by States in the context of international peace and security. We welcome the consensus reached this year on the annual progress report of the OEWG (see A/77/275), which recognizes the increasing urgency of the discussions and offers broad support to the consensus framework for responsible State behaviour, including the application of international law and international humanitarian law, as well as norms developed previously by the United Nations GGE. Together with agreed confidence- and capacity-building measures, those elements consolidate a cumulative and evolving framework for responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs, providing a foundation upon which the current OEWG builds.

We acknowledge and welcome the broad desire for universal participation, including multi-stakeholder participation, in the current OEWG. However, we regret that many non-governmental organizations were denied access. We hope we will be able to ensure inclusiveness in future OEWG sessions. The EU remains ready to engage with stakeholders, including regional and subregional organizations, in a systematic, sustained and substantive manner during the next formal sessions, as set out in the road map contained in the draft annual progress report and at the intersessional sessions proposed by the Chair. Considering the context, the ability to agree on a consensus report sends an important signal from the international community that, on issues of international peace and security in cyberspace, there is a desire for continued regular dialogue on the development and implementation of the framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace that is endorsed by all United Nations Member States. Much more remains to be achieved, notably with regard to support for the practical implementation of the outcomes of those discussions. We look forward to continuing to work with States and other stakeholders to take those efforts forward, in particular through the elaboration of a programme of action.

Taking all those factors into consideration, the EU and its member States strongly support the proposal to establish a programme of action to advance responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. We fully support the corresponding draft resolution (A/C.1/77/L.73). Following four inclusive and transparent rounds of informal consultations, which were held in both Geneva and New York, the draft resolution was discussed openly and consequently also adapted to include the broadest possible constructive viewpoints, and is currently co-sponsored by a transregional group of 54 States. The draft resolution welcomes the proposal to establish a United Nations programme of action as a permanent, inclusive and action-oriented mechanism in the future. Let me reiterate that the draft resolution seeks to design the programme of action in complementarity with the ongoing work of the OEWG and does not seek to establish the programme of action as a parallel process. Under the proposed programme of work, it would not take up its work until 2025, at the end of the mandate of the OEWG, and would build upon the outcomes of the OEWG achieved by 2025.

Draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.73 is therefore aimed at fostering inclusive discussions on a programme of action and the possible way forward for its future establishment after the completion of the OEWG mandate. Highlighting that the programme of action has a strong focus on the implementation of the previously established normative framework on responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, as well as capacity-building, we are convinced that the programme of action is the right forum in which to continue our discussions on responsible State behaviour in cyberspace and, most importantly, that it will serve the interests and needs of the entire United Nations membership.

Ms. Kristanti (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statement we delivered earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the statement delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The increasing number of malicious activities in the information and communications technology (ICT) environment jeopardizes international peace and security and compromises people's livelihoods. While ever-increasing connectivity also exposes critical infrastructure to various threats and vulnerabilities, Indonesia remains committed to promoting a peaceful, safe and secure ICT environment. Against that backdrop, allow me to raise two pertinent points.

First, existing multilateral frameworks and norms on the use of ICT should be strengthened. The Charter of the United Nations and international law provide a fundamental and essential framework for guiding States in their use of ICT. The role of existing cybernorms is also essential for guiding States' behaviour and strengthening trust and predictability. The United Nations plays a central role in addressing challenges to and gaps in the implementation of international laws and norms. In that regard, Indonesia welcomes the ongoing work and the recent consensus adoption of the annual progress report of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for the period 2021 to 2025 (see A/77/275). That consensus adoption is a testament to the strong commitment to continue achieving progress in spite of the current geopolitical situation. Indonesia also wishes to recognize the efforts of the current OEWG to follow up the recommendations of the previous GGE and OEWG reports, including the initial steps taken to implement a global point of contact under the auspices of the OEWG. We hope that the platform will facilitate cooperation and transparency and strengthen the global emergency response to threats in the ICT environment.

Secondly, there is a need to ensure synergy between global efforts in strengthening the ICT environment. Steps taken at the bilateral, regional and global levels should mutually reinforce efforts to strengthen the security of the ICT environment and facilitate confidence- and capacity-building measures. We recognize the efforts of, and initiatives presented by, States related to the issue of ICT security. However, Indonesia reiterates the importance of maintaining a single, inclusive and consensus-based process on the issue of ICT security under the auspices of the United Nations. We should avoid parallel processes that might overlap and duplicate the mandates of existing mechanisms. We also call on all countries to continue utilizing the OEWG platform for future regular institutional dialogue.

To conclude, Indonesia wishes to recognize the contributions made by stakeholders' expertise in supporting Member States' efforts to maintain peace and stability in the ICT environment. Given the unique attributes of the ICT environment, it is essential that Governments engage with stakeholders. Many elements of critical infrastructure are owned and administered by the private sector. Therefore, we

believe that stakeholder engagement is one area in which capacity-building could be further explored. Such engagement would provide avenues to strengthen trust and collaboration, which are crucial in the field of ICT. Rest assured that Indonesia stands ready to engage constructively in that regard.

Mr. Turner (United States of America): United Nations Member States have worked for more than 20 years on conflict prevention in cyberspace. In the past decade, we have developed and affirmed a comprehensive framework to guide States in their cyberbehaviour, which has been lauded by the international community. The United States has engaged in good faith throughout the process to bolster our shared multilateral rules-based order so that this important emerging technology contributes responsibly to peace and international security.

However, one country, the Russian Federation, has challenged our good work this year. Judging by its unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine, its flagrant violations of international law and its repeated use of cyberattacks, we can only conclude that Russia believes it is somehow exempted from the rules-based order, but we will not let Russia's obstructionism hinder our work on cyberissues. Our efforts belong to every Member State that seeks to preserve stability in cyberspace and benefits from an open, interoperable, secure and reliable Internet. It also belongs to every one of us that is engaged in good faith and contributed ideas to the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, the Group of Governmental Experts and the First Committee itself.

The work we have accomplished over the past two decades has tangible value for responsible State actors and their citizens. All States who seek improved international cyberstability can find valuable guidance in the framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. That framework also better enables us to hold irresponsible States accountable for their cyberbehaviour. We must persevere, despite the disruptive actions of malign actors. Thanks to the heroic efforts of Ambassador Burhan Gafoor, Chair of the OEWG, we reached consensus this July on a modest progress report (see A/77/275) to guide further work using the framework as its foundation. We support the

Chair's draft decision A/C.1/77/L.54, on welcoming that report, and we would welcome its universal acceptance by the General Assembly.

It is in that light that we must consider the intention behind Russia's draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.23/Rev.1, through which Russia would seek to take advantage of Member State support for the OEWG progress report in order to push its own agenda and assert ownership over the process. The draft resolution relies on controversial, non-consensus text to address issues well-covered in consensus documents, which undermines both our consensus-driven work in the OEWG and the work of the OEWG Chair. From the perspective of the United States, the draft resolution serves no purpose except to reinterpret the OEWG's work and duplicate the OEWG Chair's draft decision welcoming the OEWG's report. We cannot support that text. By contrast, we commend the inclusive and constructive approach France has taken in its draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.73 on a cyber programme of action. The United Nations has repeatedly called for a more permanent United Nations mechanism on cyberissues in the context of international security. That issue deserves the priority attention of Member States, including in the context of the OEWG process.

France's draft resolution introduces Member States to the programme of action and its purpose, which is to assist States in adhering to General Assembly-wide commitments to the framework of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, while remaining flexible enough to address future threats. Draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.73 also calls for a new report of the Secretary-General on States' views on how to create a new programme of action. We believe the resulting report will be a valuable contribution to the OEWG's work and the General Assembly's overall consideration of the matter. Over the past two decades, our Committee's objectives on this issue have remained the same: to prevent conflict arising from States' use of information and communication technologies and to minimize civilian suffering stemming from the use of cyberattacks in the conduct of armed conflict when it does occur. We hope that our Committee's work on cybersecurity can continue to guide responsible States and their actions in cyberspace and, when necessary, help those States hold irresponsible States accountable when they undermine international cybersecurity and stability.

Mr. Hegazy (Egypt): Egypt aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on

behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Iraq on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Egypt reiterates that non-discriminatory, multilateral, legally binding instruments are the most effective measures for achieving sustainable progress in the area of disarmament and international security. The continued commitment of all States to previously agreed undertakings and international law is a necessary condition for maintaining international peace and security and avoiding chaos. Taking into consideration the rapid scientific and technological developments in several strategic fields, there are several domains that have a direct impact on international security that have been left without any internationally agreed rules to prevent them from turning into arms races and armed conflicts. Cyberspace, outer space and the weaponization applications of artificial intelligence, including the area of lethal autonomous weapons, are prominent examples. The lack of progress in addressing the severe security threats that arise in such domains is clearly not due to the lack of technical expertise on the part of the international community but rather to the continued misguided belief by some States that absolute dominance in such domains can be maintained — hence their resistance to any efforts to develop equitable rules-based international regimes that prohibit the malicious uses and weaponization of such technologies, which will lead to an arms race that no one can win.

Egypt expresses its full support to the ongoing open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, which was established pursuant to resolution 75/240, and welcomes the successful conclusion of the first annual cycle of the OEWG and the consensus-based adoption of its first annual progress report (see A/77/275), which reflects concrete proposals, including confidence-building measures. The report will also pave the way for a focused discussion on other outstanding proposals with a view to their further elaboration. In that vein, we look forward to holding a session or sessions dedicated to capacity-building within the OEWG in order to support developing countries' capabilities and address the digital gap among Member States and the increasing threats.

The OEWG witnessed many creative ideas and constructive proposals, including on the future of regular institutional dialogue under the auspices of the

United Nations, such as through a possible programme of action on cyber-related matters, to complement the work of the OEWG, which has been reflected in the consensus-based outcome reports of both the 2021 cyber OEWG and the Group of Governmental Experts. In that vein, Egypt shares the view that the programme of action should be established through an inclusive and unifying cyber process that avoids any duplications with other relevant processes and proceeds on the basis of the views and proposals of all Member States, which will be thoroughly discussed within the OEWG, in line with the positive references to that proposal in the first annual progress report. That would make it possible to focus the discussions in 2023 on the programme of action, in addition to draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.73 on the cyber programme of action, which requests the Secretary-General to submit a report reflecting States' views on the programme of action's scope, rules of procedure and the process of its establishment, which will all be discussed at the OEWG.

Ms. Petit (France) (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement by the observer of the European Union. We make the following additional remarks in our national capacity.

Cybersecurity has become a major issue in a context in which malicious activities carried out by State and non-State actors are increasingly intense. That issue is all the more crucial for our collective security, since there are major disparities in the capacity of States to deal with such malicious activities. To address those challenges, France reiterates its commitment to the normative framework for responsible State conduct, which was consolidated by the Group of Governmental Experts and the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. France renews its full and total commitment to the work of the current OEWG for 2021 to 2025 and welcomes its annual report adopted last July (see A/77/275). This report provides a substantial roadmap for the work of the upcoming sessions. France intends to actively contribute to this process and hopes that the work on confidence-building measures, international law, norms, capacity building and regular institutional dialogue can lead to concrete results.

Member States have repeatedly stressed the usefulness of working towards the establishment of a permanent mechanism on cyber issues. This topic deserves priority and specific attention, which is

why France, together with a transregional group of States and the European Union, has, since 2020, been promoting a proposal for a United Nations Programme of Action for Cybersecurity, which would aim to establish a permanent, inclusive and action-oriented mechanism at the United Nations following the OEWG 2021–2025, which would build the capacities of States requesting it and fight against the digital divide. This proposal was noted in the consensus reports of the last GGE and the 2019–2021 OEWG, which called for its further development.

To stimulate these discussions in the context of the OEWG 2021–2025 and because we need to prepare for United Nations practices starting now, France will present a draft resolution this year entitled “Programme of action to advance responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies in the context of international security” (A/C.1/77/L.73), which complements the draft decision sponsored by the Chair of the OEWG, which we support. Our draft resolution is currently co-sponsored by 54 States from various regional groups. This draft welcomes the programme of action proposal and outlines the general objectives but leaves full flexibility for the definition of content. It takes a step-by-step approach. It does not seek to establish the programme of action immediately so as not to interfere with the work of the OEWG.

Draft resolution L.73 requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report for the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly on the basis of contributions from States, the content and structure of the programme of action and the possible modalities for its establishment. That report will serve as a basis for further discussions among States at the OEWG so that no parallel process or additional workload is created for States.

The programme of action proposal is essentially based on agreed and consensual language from the annual reports and consensus resolutions on the cyber mechanisms, so it does not create any new concepts. Similarly, to improve our collective response to security challenges in cyberspace, the programme of action proposal aims to institute, over time, increased cooperation with relevant stakeholders from the private sector, academia and civil society.

France's action is based on transparency, cooperation and the fight against their misappropriation or malicious use, in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by the development of new technologies.

We will spare no effort to ensure compliance with the relevant standards and arrangements.

Ms. McIntyre (Australia): We all benefit from an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace. However, never before has cyberspace been more contested. Nor has the framework for responsible State behaviour, endorsed by all 193 States Members of the United Nations, been more flagrantly contravened. This year has borne witness to unacceptable instances of malicious cyberactivity, including against the International Committee of the Red Cross and by Russia targeting Ukraine's banking sector. We all bear a responsibility to work together to manage the complex international security challenges in cyberspace and focus our efforts on promoting peace and avoiding conflict.

Australia remains firmly committed to meeting these challenges. We reaffirm our commitment to acting in accordance with the cumulative and evolving framework established through the consensus reports of prior Groups of Governmental Experts and the inaugural Open-Ended Working Group on Information and Communications Technologies. We call on all States to meaningfully implement and faithfully observe their commitments under the framework, and we express our thanks and support to Ambassador Gafoor, Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), for his ongoing leadership of that process.

Australia will continue to publicly share how it implements, interprets and observes the framework. Transparency breeds accountability, predictability and stability, and we therefore encourage all States to do the same.

Australia welcomes the annual progress report of the second OEWG and its unequivocal reaffirmation of the framework, with its four key elements: international law, norms, confidence-building measures and capacity-building. We were particularly pleased that the report notes that international humanitarian law applies in cyberspace in situations of armed conflict, recalling that the principles of international humanitarian law by no means legitimize or encourage conflict. We encourage all States to meaningfully engage with the next steps recommended by the report.

Australia places great importance on moving back towards consensus on cyber issues at the United Nations. The progress Member States have made to date shows we can work together successfully. Australia

encourages all States to continue to work constructively and find balance.

Australia has long been an advocate for the establishment of an institutionalized United Nations mechanism to consider and address responsible State behaviour in cyberspace — a mechanism that is inclusive, transparent, democratic and consensus-based. Whatever the mechanism or architecture that we, as Member States, settle upon, it must be firmly anchored in the agreed framework and position us to meaningfully address emerging threats to international security.

We must strive for a forum where all States Members of the United Nations can meaningfully and regularly engage with stakeholders — and one that can grow, pivot and develop into the future. We must strive for a forum that brings us back to consensus and a single-track process, as these issues are simply too important to be split across multiple fronts.

Australia stresses that any new permanent mechanism would not compete with what has come before it, but rather represent the next evolution in United Nations cyber discussions, building on prior discussions and agreements. Australia will continue to work diligently with all Member States to find a path to consensus on cyber issues under the First Committee.

Mr. In den Bosch (Netherlands): In addition to the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union in its capacity as observer, the Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

In the light of the rapid developments in the technological field, the Netherlands would like to emphasize the importance of the responsible use of new technologies and, in particular, of artificial intelligence. Rapid advances of this technology will have far-reaching geopolitical consequences, and it represents the next frontier in arms control. As an international community, we need to strengthen international governance around the development, deployment and use of artificial intelligence in the military domain.

For this reason, the Netherlands will host the REAIM 2023 summit, the high-level meeting on responsible artificial intelligence in the military domain, on 15 and 16 February 2023 in the Hague. The purpose of the meeting is to agree on a common international agenda that will ensure the responsible development,

deployment and use of artificial intelligence in the military domain within the parameters of existing international humanitarian law. We intend to invite Ministers and other stakeholders from all over the world to engage with us and address this rapidly increasing challenge for international peace and security. In addition, the Netherlands underlines the importance of the existing security frameworks for technology transfers for peaceful uses.

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are a tremendous driver of sustainable development worldwide, but as our reliance on these technologies grows, so does the threat of disruptive, coercive and destabilizing cyberactivities by State and non-State actors. The Netherlands continues to be deeply concerned by the ever-growing risk to international peace and security posed by the malicious use of ICTs. At the United Nations we have a shared responsibility to promote an open, free, secure, stable, accessible and interoperable ICT environment. The Netherlands therefore reaffirms its commitment to the consensus outcomes of the intergovernmental processes under United Nations auspices endorsed by all Member States. In particular, we underline that international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law, is applicable to cyberspace.

The Netherlands welcomed the adoption by consensus of the 2022 annual progress report of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for the period 2021 to 2025 (see A/77/275). The report reaffirms the cumulative and evolving framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace and provides several concrete recommendations for future work, including in the area of confidence-building measures. We strongly support draft decision A/C.1/77/L.54, submitted by Singapore, which endorses the report. It cements the important consensus achieved, and its adoption without a vote would strengthen the positive momentum going forward. The Netherlands remains committed to the work of the current Open-ended Working Group. We will continue our active and constructive engagement in the process with the aim of reaching further common understandings and building trust and confidence among all States. In particular, we are strongly encouraged by the increasing number of women representing their countries in the Open-ended Working Group, and we support a further promotion of gender perspectives in its work.

The current geopolitical environment further underlines the urgency of putting our consensus agreements into practice and increasing our cyber resilience. All States agreed to be guided by the consensus reports in their use of ICTs. Doing so requires international cooperation, the sharing of best practices and improving our capacities. To that end, the Netherlands is a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.73, submitted by France, on the programme of action to advance responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs in the context of international security. In our view, the programme of action, which will be established after the completion of the current session of the Open-ended Working Group, will serve as an inclusive action-oriented mechanism in support of States' capacities and efforts to implement their commitments in that area. We appreciate the broad and open consultations so far and believe that the proposed prudent and incremental approach will lay out an inclusive and transparent path towards the establishment of the programme of action.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): The military application of new and emerging technologies continues to outpace the application of existing principles and norms of international law. Efforts to develop commensurate norms, laws and rules to regulate those technologies remain largely stalled. There are increasing dangers arising from the development and use of weapon systems based on those technologies, as they reduce or eliminate risks of human casualties for the user States. The possession of those systems therefore increases the likelihood that they will be used and the potential likelihood of symmetric and asymmetric responses, thereby lowering the threshold for armed conflict. As a result, risks and threats to peace, security and stability at the global and regional levels are growing. Those risks are particularly worrisome given the currently growing geopolitical tensions. It is in that context that my delegation would like to draw attention to two particular issues, which are lethal autonomous weapon systems and cyberweapons.

Along with weapons of mass destruction, the development of lethal autonomous weapon systems has emerged as perhaps the defining concern for the international arms-control agenda. Those weapons do not exist in isolation or in a vacuum, and they are not science fiction. Such systems consist not of one or two types of weapons but are a capability category, with layers of unpredictability and cascading, destabilizing

effects on regional and international security. They also amplify aspects of force multiplication and asymmetry. Their growing sophistication and integration with missiles, nuclear weapon systems, outer space and cyberweapons carry huge human costs and destabilizing effects. Their growing autonomy, based on machine-learning algorithms and increased speed of action during operations, will further reduce the predictability of their behaviour.

On top of lowering the threshold for war, such weapons could also have additional consequences, such as anonymous and clandestine operations, including targeted killings on the territory of other States. Not only would the dangers of one-sided killing deny combatants in targeted States the protection offered by the international law governing armed conflict, the use of such weapons could also put the lives of civilians and non-combatants at risk on both sides, since if legitimate human targets on the ground in user States were not available, the result could be reprisals on their civilians instead. In a nutshell, States would be tempted to diminish the military advantage of adversaries through asymmetrical means.

The Committee's deliberations continue to highlight the fact that those weapon systems are already being factored into many States' strategic and security doctrines. It is obvious that such developments do not augur well for the already crisis-ridden international arms-control agenda. Without meaningful restraints, those developments will only trigger costly arms races involving these weapons. That scenario could also result in enabling non-State actors to access, possess, produce and use such weapons, with unimaginable consequences. Cumulatively, those developments could make unintended or uncontrolled levels of escalation possible. The spiral of reprisals perpetuating or expanding conflicts, particularly in crisis situations, is a foregone conclusion. Yet rather than addressing those fundamental concerns, a handful of States continue to stall meaningful progress on the normative track and overtly oppose the development of internationally agreed legal norms, rules and regulations governing the design, development and use of such weapon systems. We reiterate our call to those States to end their opposition to an urgent start to negotiations on a legally binding instrument stipulating appropriate prohibitions and restrictions on lethal autonomous weapons.

The weaponization of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and cyberspace

poses serious risks to peace, security and stability both at the international and the regional level. The ability to act anonymously without traditional geographic limitations, coupled with the ability to mass-produce cyberweapons cheaply, makes them extremely attractive and dangerous. Several States are developing ICTs as instruments of warfare to achieve political objectives. The continued absence of a shared understanding of what constitutes acceptable State behaviour in the use of cyberspace is heightening the risks, thereby elevating the destructive potential of cyberweapons to a level on a par with that of weapons of mass destruction. The unique differences between the physical and cyber arenas, and the extent and scope of the applicability of existing international law and its interpretation, demand that we expedite our consideration, elaboration and development of commensurate norms and rules governing the use of cyberspace. The ongoing deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for the period 2021 to 2025 have the potential to develop common understandings that can form a basis for further normative efforts to prevent cyberspace from becoming another domain of conflict.

Finally, given the increasing salience of laws and cyberspace in questions of international and regional peace, security and stability, the Conference on Disarmament represents an enduring platform to elaborate and codify the normative work through the relevant international conventions.

Ms. Ringor (Philippines): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and my own country, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The Philippines reaffirms that the multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control regime is an important component of the open, inclusive and rules-based international order that has underpinned global peace, security and stability since the founding of the United Nations. As President Marcos of the Philippines stated in his address to the General Assembly last month (see A/77/PV.5), that rules-based order is the ballast that stabilizes our common vessel amid challenging global tides. We must reject any attempt to deny or redefine our common understanding of the principles that underpin that world order, particularly international law and the

principles of equity and justice. In order to maintain the integrity of that regime, it is important that technical processes remain expert-driven and beyond the reach of politicization. At the same time, we must ensure that technical processes are inclusive. We therefore welcome the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for the period 2021 to 2025 and the consensus adoption of the Group's first annual progress report (see A/77/275).

We have consistently raised our concern with regard to the submission of competing draft resolutions on the same subject matter, leading to fragmentation in the First Committee's work. Rather than choosing which draft resolution to support, Member States often decide to support both draft resolutions. This frequently results in duplicative and competing mechanisms and processes that strain the Organization's finite resources. We therefore urge sponsors of such draft resolutions to exert every effort to arrive at an agreement with sponsors of other draft resolutions to come up with unified draft resolutions. Such harmonization ensures the efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the First Committee, leading to credible and collective action that addresses outstanding issues on disarmament, peace and security in a timely manner.

Ms. Angekrdechok (Thailand): Thailand associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and the Philippines on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), respectively.

In today's interconnected and interoperable world, the erosion of trust and an atmosphere of tensions have increasingly propagated cyberthreats and malicious cyberactivities, which have security ramifications, socioeconomic impacts and humanitarian consequences. In my national capacity, I would like to highlight a few points that are essential for stability and predictability in cyberspace.

First, a rules-based cyberspace is an important enabler for peace and security as well as economic progress and the betterment of living standards. Thailand sees benefit in creating a universally accepted common understanding of international law applicable to cyberspace and in the implementation of the norms, rules, and principles for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. As reflected in the Secretary-General's *Our*

Common Agenda (A/75/982), and supported by many, we must do more to foster a culture of accountability in cyberspace.

Thailand welcomes the adoption by consensus of the annual progress report of the Open-ended working group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (OEWG) for the period 2021 to 2025 in July (see A/77/275), which reflects our common aspirations to consolidate efforts and reaffirms the central role of the United Nations-based multilateral system in this critical domain. We wish to take this opportunity to commend Singapore's role as the Chair of the OEWG and reiterate the great importance we attach to the work of this working group.

Looking ahead, a regular institutional dialogue is important for the continuity of our discussions. Such a mechanism needs to be open, inclusive and action-oriented, building upon the work of the previous OEWG and Groups of Government Experts. It must not duplicate existing efforts, taking into consideration the limited resources of States, particularly of developing countries, to ensure no one is left behind.

Secondly, capacity-building is necessary to enable Member States with different levels of capacity to comply with international law and adhere to the norms of responsible State behaviour. Capacity-building can also help to strengthen our cyber resilience and protect our critical infrastructures and critical information infrastructures. In this regard, Thailand fully supports capacity-building programmes under bilateral, regional and global frameworks. We wish to highlight the work of the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre, in Bangkok. Through information-sharing, best practices and mutual assistance, the Centre has contributed to the strengthening of the region's cyber resilience as well as incident response and preparedness, complementing the existing ASEAN efforts aimed at building a regional cybersecurity posture.

Thirdly, confidence-building measures (CBMs) are important to ensure peace and stability in cyberspace. Thailand supports the significant role of regional bodies in developing and adapting confidence-building measures and hopes to see regular cross-regional information exchange and good practices. In this regard, we see merits in the establishment of a global registry of national points of contact to help ensure developing countries' accessibility.

At the regional level, ASEAN has also taken concrete and practical steps towards this end. Thailand welcomes the adoption of the ASEAN regional action plan on the implementation of norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace and the updated ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2021–2025, which seeks to promote CBMs through various mechanisms, including the ASEAN Regional Forum Intersessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies.

In closing, allow me to reiterate that we must not allow the potential harms of the digital domain to

overshadow its benefits. Thailand stands ready to work with all parties towards achieving a secure, trusted, open, and interoperable cyberspace, which would be a firm basis for peace and security and for a flourishing economy and prosperity for all.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker for today's meeting. The next meeting will be held this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this conference room to continue our discussion under the cluster "Other disarmament measures and international security".

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.