



General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

First Committee

3rd meeting

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New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Pieris(Sri Lanka)

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

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

The Chair: I would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, President of the General Assembly, who is here today to share his vision for the current session of the Assembly. We are very pleased to have him in our midst.

I now invite the President of the General Assembly to address the Committee.

Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary), President of the General Assembly: I am very honoured to address the First Committee at this pivotal moment for international disarmament and security.

Our times are far from ordinary. The significance of the Committee's joint work is extraordinary. We are confronted with unprecedented, interlinked crises, the ramifications of which profoundly affect all aspects of our lives. As those impacts keep testing the crisis-management capabilities of our societies, we feel that a business-as-usual approach and postponing responses to strengthen international security is becoming extremely dangerous. There are some 30 armed conflicts going on in the world, and none of them shows signs of improvement. The most consequential among them is the war in Ukraine. Its impact has reached nearly every country in the world.

The world out there is expecting improvements in the general atmosphere — assurances that the worst-case scenarios would be excluded. Let us not forget about that. Is the accelerating arms race improving

security and well-being? It is a simple question and I think the answer should also be simple.

In spite of the many other challenges they are facing, our Governments continue to increase military spending while people struggle to buy food, educate their children or heat their homes. I know that many States would tell us that they are compelled to invest in defence now because war and annexing the land of one's neighbour have apparently returned to the toolbox for settling disputes. I hear and I understand such arguments to a certain extent. In the long run, arming ourselves with new, even more devastating and even more expensive weapons is a path, quite frankly, to self-destruction.

The answer to this dilemma has been provided by the developments of the past six months. We are witnessing the meltdown of key components of the arms control system built over decades, resulting in the decline of international stability and security. That is a trend that must be reversed.

Is it within this First Committee's power to significantly contribute to flipping the paradigm? In a year increasingly marked by deadlock, the world is looking to us to make breakthroughs and to find solutions. We need a United Nations that is better prepared for transformation and crisis management, and more effective in those fields than it used to be. So if not us, who? Who if not the representatives in this room and their Governments? When if not now? Let us please make extra effort to focus on the most burning issues.

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I am aware that the Committee has much on its plate, from the immediate threats of nuclear disaster to surmounting the dysfunction that is plaguing the disarmament machinery. Representatives are tasked with safeguarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force and addressing both cybercrime and the arms race in outer space. At this session, they will also address landmark legal frameworks, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

I acknowledge that the list is long and that focus can be easily lost. When if not now, when progress is vital? Progress through action is possible and now is the time to achieve it. On nuclear threats, we simply must not allow international tensions to escalate to the point of no return. We cannot afford to undermine the credibility of the NPT and the nuclear disarmament architecture. I also encourage members to do the hard work of finding a path to dialogue. Too many lives are at stake.

(spoke in French)

After decades of efforts to promote disarmament, it is unimaginable that weapons of mass destruction remain an impending threat.

(spoke in Russian)

I call on members now to ensure that those deadliest creations of humankind are never used or produced again, and that they never fall into the hands of rogue users or terrorists.

(spoke in Arabic)

Small arms and light weapons cause nearly half of the world's violent deaths each year.

(spoke in English)

We understand how quickly a local threat can turn global. True security will never be attained or preserved without adequate transparency and oversight over small arms and light weapons. The world is expecting us to act and find tangible solutions in that field.

Peace can be built only on the basis of full respect for human rights. It is time for male-dominated global discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. Women's voices must be heard so that we can

return to a path of conciliation and dialogue, fulfil our disarmament commitments and tailor targeted solutions for those in need. At this critical moment, I am asking the First Committee to lead the way in solving the most pressing problems of our world, to break any deadlock and to move forward together. I pledge to work with all representatives as they get this work, crucial to our survival, under way today.

The Chair: I thank the President of the General Assembly for his statement and once again for his presence today among us. He has left us with a lot of food for thought this morning. We look forward to a great collaboration at the current session.

Agenda items 90 to 108 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: I would remind representatives that I count on their cooperation to limit statements to 8 minutes when speaking in their national capacity and to 12 minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations.

Representatives with longer statements can deliver a summarized version while providing their full statement to be posted on the e-statement web portal. I would also strongly encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed to allow adequate interpretation.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Costa Rica congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee.

Over the past year, Costa Rica has worked tirelessly to address the gender blindness inherent within the international instruments dealing with peace and security. Applying a gender perspective means understanding the different ways that men, women, boys, girls and people of other genders engage in, are affected by and respond to armed violence. We have done so because it is key to developing effective solutions to prevent armed violence and break the link between violence and masculinity.

In March, in the Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025, Costa Rica called for further research that promotes a better understanding of the linkages between gender and cybersecurity, addressing issues such as access to technology, data literacy and online harassment.

Improving data collection processes and making women more visible in open, gender-disaggregated datasets are all steps in the right direction.

However, women account for only 2 out of 10 cybersecurity professionals, despite representing almost half of the global workforce, and the lexicon in that field is charged with hyper-masculinity. It is essential that we all work together to provide gender-sensitive capacity-building, overcome the gender digital divide, establish links with the women and peace and security agenda, and develop together a gender and cybersecurity toolkit for all interested parties in that regard. We must also pay attention to the gender norms that can be implicitly and explicitly encoded in machine learning processes and assess the potential consequences for military applications of artificial intelligence. Costa Rica thanks the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for its work in that regard.

In May, in the Open-Ended Working Group on conventional ammunition, Costa Rica recognized that gender-sensitive ammunition management policies and practices will be a turning point, as people do not die from gun wounds — they die from bullet wounds. Those policies and practices will increase the effectiveness of efforts to prevent and reduce the impacts of ammunition diversion and unplanned explosions. They will also strengthen the international agreements and normative declarations to which all States are a party. We are hopeful that the global framework on conventional ammunition, which should be adopted next year, will include an entire section on gender from the outset. That is progress.

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, held in June, Costa Rica worked decisively to both ensure the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, and to incorporate a gender perspective throughout the process. We are reassured that the outcome document did not lose sight of the bigger picture and contextualized the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument within the wider framework of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the women and peace and security agenda.

In August, at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we recognized the focus on gender and the role of women in the NPT context in the past several years. However, greater awareness must be translated into effective and thoughtful inclusion that drives action. That must go beyond simply increasing the numbers of women in nuclear disarmament spaces; it must include marginalized groups and engaging in gendered analysis.

Whether it is having more women in the room and driving the initiative, taking stock of the disproportionate effects of nuclear weaponry on women and girls, or elevating women's experiences and gendered perspectives that challenge masculinized narratives of power, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the final report of the first Meeting of States Parties, including the Declaration and Action Plan, are documents that place gender-sensitive considerations firmly in spaces that historically did not allow that. Since its inception, the TPNW process has been markedly more inclusive than most other international peace and security processes, both with respect to gender inclusion and the inclusion of civil society. Those documents and processes can and should serve as useful models for other undertakings.

In 2021, global military spending surpassed \$2 trillion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. This is the seventh consecutive year that military spending has increased globally. That is due to a patriarchal mindset that is frequently expressed in a need for dominance. To make meaningful change and fully commit to our common goals of peace, security, environmental sustainability and the recognition of universal human rights, we must embrace a feminist perspective on the consequences of ever-increasing military spending. In that regard, Costa Rica calls on the Security Council once and for all to fulfil the mandate contained in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. A gradual and sustained reduction in military spending will be crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals over the next eight years.

In conclusion, violence is a gendered phenomenon. It is not inevitable; rather, it is a product of gendered social norms that can be triggered by weapons. Violence can be prevented through good policies, robust implementation and appropriate funding. We must overcome the destructive biases or prepare ourselves

for failure if we do not use the power of gender inclusivity to foster international peace and security. In that regard, Costa Rica is enthusiastic about working this year on the draft resolution led by Trinidad and Tobago on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now read out the statement of the head of the Russian delegation, the Director of the Department for Non-proliferation and Arms Control of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Yermakov.

“The current session of the First Committee is taking place in the emergency circumstances of the gravest crisis of international security. Those circumstances have been created by a group of self-proclaimed exceptional countries that, having failed to cope with the phantom pains of their colonial past, continue to aggressively press for their selfish goals, in defiance of the principle of indivisible security and fundamental interests of other States and peoples. That destructive course exacerbated the risks in the area of strategic stability and caused crises to erupt in many areas, with dire consequences for the entire international community, first and foremost the developing countries.

“The recklessness of the destructive course taken by NATO States, led by the United States, aimed at open confrontation with Russia in Ukraine and their brinkmanship on the verge of direct armed conflict are obvious, threatening further escalation to the point of a military clash among nuclear Powers, with the gravest of possible consequences. Such a scenario must be prevented. It is therefore imperative in that context for all five nuclear countries to remain committed to the postulate that any war between nuclear-weapon States is unacceptable, as reflected in the January joint statement of the leaders of the nuclear Powers. Russia is fully committed to that as well.

“The United States activities related to the development and deployment of the assets of a global missile defence system in various regions of the world, together with the build-up of high-precision non-nuclear weapons that can achieve strategic outcomes, remain a negative factor involving significant risks for strategic stability. In violation of its NPT obligations, NATO is

maintaining its so-called nuclear sharing missions with the participation of non-nuclear European countries on whose territory United States nuclear bombs are deployed. Those weapons and their means of delivery are undergoing destabilizing modernization. We have repeatedly stressed the need to return United States nuclear weapons to their national territory, eliminate the infrastructure for their deployment in Europe and stop nuclear sharing.

“The demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty due to the United States withdrawal set the world back more than 30 years back as regards the international agreements in the area of nuclear-missile disarmament. We call on Washington and its allies to take responsibility and assume, on a reciprocal basis, obligations similar to those undertaken by Russia, namely, not to be the first to deploy systems that were prohibited under the INF Treaty.

“The world is changing rapidly. In the absence of a constructive dialogue, accumulating disagreements will continue to escalate, leading to total chaos in strategic affairs and the worst-case scenario. To avoid that, respectful and motivated dialog is required on the mutually acceptable rules of conflict-free coexistence to reduce tensions, prevent dangerous escalations and arms races, including through arms control. Such a discussion should be consensus-based and take the legitimate interests of all parties involved into account. The need to shape a more viable international security architecture based on genuine multilateralism and the principle of undivided security is particularly evident in the current situation.

“It is regrettable that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to agree a consensus final document. The participants were unable to overcome the disagreements on acute issues affecting all three NPT baskets. As a result, the chances to adopt a final document were reduced to zero. However, we are firmly convinced that its absence does not at all imply the failure of the Conference. The very fact that the States parties to the Treaty were able to exchange views is in itself of great value in the current difficult geopolitical conditions.

“The situation at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is totally unacceptable. That once very authoritative and purely technical international entity has, through the efforts of the Western countries, become a tool for pursuing their geopolitical interests in the Middle East and beyond.

“The absence of comprehensive explanations following the Consultative Meeting of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) initiated by Russia in connection with the United States and Ukrainian military and biological activities on Ukrainian territory, focused on the specific claims presented in detail by Russia regarding the compliance of those countries with the Convention, only reinforced the need to strengthen the BWC. We are referring primarily to resuming work on a legally binding protocol to the BWC with an effective verification mechanism. The relevant Russian initiatives are aimed at strengthening the institutional framework of the BWC. We suggest taking relevant decisions at the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the BWC.

“There is a need to strengthen the Secretary-General’s Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, including by considering the possibility of updating the principles and procedures, which have not been updated since their adoption in 1990. We are submitting the relevant draft resolution to that end. We look forward to broad support and co-sponsorship.

“For decades, the Russian Federation has advocated the development of legally binding norms aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, with guarantees against the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against or by space objects. We are submitting to the First Committee draft resolutions on non-first placement in outer space, on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, and on further practical measures in the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We count on maximum support and co-sponsorship for them.

“We welcome the adoption of the first annual report of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025.

Russia joined the consensus on the document, with reservations. It is important that those provisions and this year’s consensus be reflected in the relevant General Assembly resolution.

“We note the growing politicization of discussions within the General Assembly, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. We are seeing the abandonment of substantive dialogue and persistent attempts by the Western countries to turn those bodies into instruments of pressure on those that fall out of line, to erode their mandates and to revise the rules of procedure and the fundamental principles of their functioning.

“For our part, we have consistently promoted a unifying agenda. We will present a draft resolution entitled ‘Strengthening and developing the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements’. We look forward to its adoption by consensus and its positive effect on constructive cooperation on the whole range of issues of international peace and security.”

Mr. Al-Dobhany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country’s delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. We are certain that your skill and wisdom will ensure the success of the Committee’s work, and we affirm our full support for and cooperation with you for the success of this session, which is taking place under complex international geopolitical conditions.

My delegation also associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Iraq, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

The Republic of Yemen reaffirms its commitment to the principles and objectives of disarmament, international security and nuclear non-proliferation, because the possession and development of nuclear weapons pose a threat to regional and international peace and security. From that standpoint, my country supports all initiatives aimed at limiting the spread of nuclear weapons and establishing zones free of weapons of mass destruction, especially in the Middle East region, which continues to suffer from instability

and insecurity due to the imbalance of power among its parties and the existence of nuclear activities that are not subject to the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

While all Arab countries have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and confirmed their ongoing readiness to take measures aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region, Israel still refuses to join the NPT and to subject all of its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It also rejects all international initiatives aimed at achieving the universality of the NPT and nuclear disarmament in the Middle East, all of which perpetuates the state of instability and an arms race in the region.

In that context, my country welcomes the success of the first session of the United Nations Conference to Establish a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, which was held in November 2019 under the chairmanship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and of the second session, which was held in November 2021, headed by the State of Kuwait, and the decisions issued by it, in particular the adoption of rules of procedure and the establishment of an informal working committee pursuant to decision 73/546. My country looks forward to the active participation of all concerned countries in the third session of the Conference, which is scheduled to be held in November under the chairmanship of the Lebanese Republic, with the aim of reaching a binding treaty that promotes stability, security and peace in the region and the world.

This session is taking place more than 50 years after the NPT entered into force and 27 years after its indefinite extension, which underscores the importance of ensuring the continuity of the Treaty and of moving forward in implementing its obligations. In that regard, my country deeply regrets the failure of the tenth Review Conference of States Parties to the NPT to reach a final document, for the second time in a row, following the failure of the 2015 conference. We call on States to set aside their differences and strengthen the spirit of multilateralism in order to preserve a world free of nuclear weapons and save future generations. We therefore hope to see everyone working for the success of the eleventh Review Conference through the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced final document that includes clear measures to enhance the effectiveness and universality of the Treaty through

the implementation of the agreed commitments, especially with regard to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

This session is being held at a time when my country has been suffering from armed conflict for more than seven years as a result of the coup against constitutional legitimacy by the terrorist Houthi militias, which receive all forms of military and logistical support from Iran, including ballistic missiles, drones and land and sea mines that kill Yemenis, threaten neighbouring countries and undermine security and stability in the region and the world.

Yemen eliminated its stockpile of mines after it signed the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty in 1997. However, the Houthi militias returned to manufacturing and planting millions of mines and explosive devices in many regions of Yemen, including sea mines in the sea lanes, which has continued to kill and injure thousands of victims, especially children and women, and threatened international navigation in the Bab el-Mandab Strait and the Red Sea. Despite the strenuous efforts made to clear those mines by the National Army and the Saudi MASAM Project for mine clearance, the density and randomness of the planted mines and the lack of maps continue to pose a major challenge to those efforts. We call on the international community to put real pressure, first, on those militias to immediately stop planting mines and using weapons against Yemenis and, secondly, on the Iranian regime, which supplies them with those weapons and missiles, to abide by international law and resolutions, stop exporting weapons of death and destruction to those militias and cease interfering in the internal affairs of my country. We also call on the international community and specialized organizations to support the Yemeni Government's efforts to get eliminate the mines, rehabilitate and raise awareness of their dangers and methods of dealing with them.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, my country welcomes the results 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. My country reaffirms the need to implement the Programme of Action, especially in the light of the expanding provision of those arms and weapons to armed militias and terrorist groups, which

prolongs the war, adds fuel to the fire and reduces the prospects of peace, security and stability in Yemen and the region.

In conclusion, we look forward to the success of the work of the current session and affirm our ongoing cooperation in order to achieve our common goals and objectives in a world where security and peace prevail.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): Allow me to take this opportunity, Sir, to congratulate you heartily on your appointment as First Committee Chair for the seventy-seventh session. I assure you and your Bureau of our full support and cooperation. My delegation wishes to extend our appreciation to the Under-Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Her Excellency Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, and her team for their work in carrying out their mandate at the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

Following two years of severe constraints and restrictions that limited our ability to convene in the manner we are accustomed to, this year we were presented with several opportunities to bring into focus the disarmament agenda through statutory meetings. This year alone, we have seen the reconvening of the Conference on Disarmament, the first Meeting of States Parties on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), 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, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Namibia remains firm in its resolve to play its part in advancing the principles of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as we consider those to be central tenets to our collective ambition of promoting international peace and security. That is advanced in the conviction that inclusive multilateral cooperation and negotiations among States are the only avenue through which we can make headway on the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and mitigate their humanitarian consequences.

Military spending continues to increase at a time when the world is in need of a reallocation of resources to fund development, especially in the global South. The stark geopolitical tensions that characterize the current world order place immense pressure on us to navigate complex global security challenges. Thus, we have a collective responsibility to build bridges of peace that can bring us closer together, despite our differences.

Namibia continues to call for the swift entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, we encourage the annex 2 States to ratify the Convention in view of its entry into force.

Namibia remains disappointed that the recently ended tenth Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference failed to deliver a conclusive outcome that supports clear commitments to a world in which nuclear weapons are not a threat to humankind. For us, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

We are however encouraged by the entry into force of the TPNW and the progress in its implementation through the hosting of the first Meeting of States Parties in Vienna in June. Namibia considers the TPNW and NPT to be complementary instruments, and we continue to encourage States that have not done so to accede to and ratify both instruments. As we endeavour to meet our disarmament obligations, we remain acutely aware of the need to work closely with nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. We are concerned that, to this day, no nuclear-weapon State has joined the TPNW. The TPNW remains a major step towards a world free of nuclear weapons, and if we are genuine in our pursuit of disarmament, we have a collective responsibility to ensure its universalization.

My delegation continues to place great importance on nuclear-weapon-free zones and the value they add to global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. As a committed State party to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone — the Pelindaba Treaty — which provides a shield for Africa by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices and prohibiting the testing of those destructive weapons on the continent, Namibia supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions of the world. We believe that this constitutes a confidence-building measure and an important step in achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. For that reason, Namibia calls for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons

and all other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East without further delay, as recommended by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

At the seventy-seventh session, Namibia is particularly encouraged by efforts to advance the full and equal participation of women in the disarmament agenda. Equally, by mainstreaming youth into the disarmament agenda, we ensure that our approach is holistic and in line with the ambitions of the global agenda, which strives to leave no one behind.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that nuclear war is an unnecessary evil that we have the power to rid the world of in our lifetime. It is in that conviction that my delegation will engage in the discussions of the First Committee during the seventy-seventh session. Our positions will be expounded on in detail during the thematic discussions. We once again reiterate our full cooperation to you, Mr. Chair, and will support you and your Bureau in the hope that this session will yield a positive outcome.

Mr. Espinosa Cañizares (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I congratulate you, Sir, and all the members of the Bureau on your election. We know that the management of this First Committee is in good hands.

The delegation of Ecuador aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

Frustration has increased among Member States due to the current situation, which is raising growing concern around the world. Ecuador champions an international system based on norms, as established in the Charter of the United Nations, under the sovereign equality of States and the prohibition of the use of force in any way that is incompatible with the purposes of the Charter.

We are witnessing a context in which the planet is experiencing the threat of the use of nuclear weapons as never before. That challenge has a global dimension and calls on us in the United Nations to redouble our efforts to advance in the search for international peace and security, especially a world free of any weapon of mass destruction. No nuclear weapon is good, given its catastrophic humanitarian impact. Its existence alone

challenges the survival of humankind. The world must continue to search for an order of peace and prosperity without weapons of mass destruction. Enormous budgets are allocated every year for the updating and development of nuclear weapons, while other common challenges continue to affect humankind, such as climate change, poverty and hunger, among others.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must proceed in a simultaneous, interrelated and confluent manner. All States must comply with non-proliferation obligations. In that regard, it is time to pursue concrete actions with the commitment of the entire international community. We therefore highlight the convening of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which ended with the adoption of a declaration that strengthens the commitment of the States parties, together with the Vienna Action Plan, which seeks to facilitate in a practical way the effective and timely implementation of the Treaty.

Ecuador reaffirms the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and reiterates the need for its prompt entry into force. We therefore call on those countries that have not yet done so, particularly those in annex 2, to do so as soon as possible.

In addition to the almost 30-year paralysis in which the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to fulfil its mandate to negotiate international instruments, we are facing challenges derived from the current situation that threaten the disarmament and non-proliferation processes. We regret that the principle of consensus in the Conference on Disarmament, which should be a negotiating instrument, has become a form of veto. This would therefore be the right time to launch a reflection process to consider possible elements of reform that would give the Conference has true relevance as a multilateral forum and fulfil its objective. This year, Ecuador, in its capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, will submit draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament for adoption by the Committee.

Ecuador shares and strongly supports the objectives of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. In that regard, we highlight the result of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action in fulfilling its objectives.

We welcome the consensus adoption of the first annual progress report at the third substantive meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025, concluded on 29 July. We are sure that concrete results will continue to be obtained at the fourth and fifth substantive meetings of this working group.

With respect to cybersecurity, Ecuador underscores the need for the future development of a solid and binding framework. Until that happens, we must continue working on the implementation of existing regulations to promote the use of information and communication technologies for peaceful and security purposes, as well as on building capacities, concerning which we support the development of a permanent action-oriented platform.

In the light of the high priority that Ecuador grants to its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, allow me to present a case that confirms that where there is a will, the processes of disarmament, international peace and security are possible.

On humanitarian demining, Ecuador and Peru maintain a binational coordination and cooperation mechanism that, without a doubt, has become a model for the international community and an example of peace and brotherhood, since it took two armies that had faced off against each other in the past and brought them together in a work unit, with a common doctrine, that focuses its actions on humanitarian objectives.

Finally, during its term on the Security Council in 2023 and 2024, Ecuador will seek to support efforts to strengthen synergies among the organs of the United Nations system, both in non-proliferation and in the fight against illicit arms trafficking or their diversion to third parties. We will always be firmly convinced that every effort is valuable, in the context of multilateralism, in continuing to forge a path of peace and security for all the countries of the world, framed in international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Petit (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee.

France associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2) and would like to make the following additional remarks in its national capacity.

First, in the context of our work, we begin this session of the First Committee in an unprecedented environment. Russia's blatant violation of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law has dealt a blow to the architecture of peace and security built up over more than 70 years. By breaking the commitments made under its international obligations, including the Budapest Memorandum, it has directly undermined the security of the European continent and, more broadly, global stability. We strongly condemn those violations, including the recent illegal referendums, and support collective action to restore lasting conditions of peace and security in Ukraine.

Secondly, France reiterates its commitments and, in particular, its attachment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of our non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We deplore the blocking by Russia of the final document at the Review Conference of States Parties to the NPT in August, when we had an ambitious document on the table that all the other parties — that is, 190 States — were ready to support. We are determined to pursue those efforts at the next review cycle.

France also remains fully mobilized to find a diplomatic solution to the proliferation crises, be it concerning Iran, which we call on to return to its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and to cooperate fully, without delay and in good faith with the International Atomic Energy Agency, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which must proceed with the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of all its proliferating programs.

Those efforts are all the more necessary in that the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains acute.

We are concerned by the observed erosion of the norm prohibiting chemical weapons, as seen in their use in Syria, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and Russia. We denounce unfounded statements by Russian officials regarding allegations of chemical provocations in Ukraine. The instrumentalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is unacceptable. We will continue to advocate for them ahead of the fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the CWC in 2023 and to support existing investigative mechanisms.

We also remain fully mobilized in the fight against impunity, particularly within the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, which we chair.

Furthermore, we remain committed to export control regimes for sensitive technologies that help prevent their diversion for illicit purposes and thereby strengthen international peace and security. Those regimes help strengthen mutual trust and facilitate international cooperation in that area, in full compliance with non-proliferation commitments.

In the field of conventional weapons, France remains committed to strengthening efforts to implement international humanitarian law. We hope that work on lethal autonomous weapon systems can progress within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We will continue our efforts to prevent, eliminate and combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which, I recall, still claim by far the most victims in the world. We will also continue to be involved in work on ammunition, which is of particular importance to security, the fight against trafficking and the safety of populations.

My third point concerns the prospects for our work. In this tense context, the coming months will be decisive in preserving and consolidating the achievements made in recent decades in terms of non-proliferation and disarmament.

The ninth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention will take place as Russia continues to use its provisions to disseminate unfounded allegations against Ukraine and the United States, as we heard recently. In defence of the Convention, France has proposals to increase transparency on national implementation, strengthen assistance among the parties in the event of allegations, and facilitate international cooperation in biosafety and biosecurity. We look forward to the support of all States parties for concrete results in December and reiterate our best wishes to Italy in its presidency. We will also continue to support the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, which remains the only existing independent international mechanism to investigate allegations of the use of biological weapons.

In 2023, we will start a new NPT review cycle. We are determined to use the significant achievements of the negotiations of the previous review round to make

progress on the three pillars of the Treaty, the only instrument capable of effectively safeguarding the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

France will also hold one of the presidencies of the Conference on Disarmament for the coming year. We are determined to advance the work of the Conference, in coordination with the five other countries that will hold the presidency, three of which are also part of the European Union.

France will actively contribute to the work of the First Committee. As President of the latest Review Conference of the Conference on Certain Conventional Weapons, we will submit the annual draft resolution on the Convention, which will be aimed in particular at reflecting the outcome of that meeting. We will also work to establish a future cyber programme of action to support the efforts of Member States in implementing standards of responsible behaviour in cyberspace and strengthening their capacities. We attach particular importance to the progressiveness of that work and to the full complementarity of the future programme of action with the current Open-ended Working Group. We will also submit, as we did two years ago alongside Germany, a draft resolution on the prevention of the acquisition of radioactive sources by terrorists. Finally, we will champion the resolution on the fight against the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, which each year cause more casualties and civilian injuries than any other weapon after firearms.

The seventy-seventh session of the First Committee has begun in a difficult and particularly degraded context. We will nevertheless continue to defend effective multilateralism based on an open but demanding dialogue with all of our interlocutors to prevent this forum from being politicized or instrumentalized. It is in our common interest to enable concrete progress in terms of disarmament and international security.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): It is a pleasure to see you. Ambassador Mohan Pieris, preside over this important Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Pakistan aligns its position with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

Our world today is adrift — geopolitically, economically and ecologically. The risks are multiplying. Developing countries face a triple food,

fuel and finance crisis. Climate change is wreaking havoc, as evidenced by the massive floods in Pakistan. Failure to uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations has perpetuated old conflicts and triggered new ones. Threats to peace and security have proliferated across Europe, the Asia-Pacific and elsewhere. A renewed and expanded global arms race is under way. Military expenditures have surpassed those of the Cold War era. Outer space cybertechnologies, artificial intelligence and new delivery systems are being weaponized. Aggressive war-fighting doctrines, now including those for the use of nuclear weapons, are openly advocated. Key arms control agreements have been discarded. Nuclear disarmament obligations remain unfulfilled. The international consensus on nuclear non-proliferation has broken down. The Secretary-General has warned that the prospects of a nuclear war are back within the realm of possibility.

Rebuilding a durable and more equitable international security architecture is an urgent imperative. We need to follow fundamental principles. Those include, first, full and consistent respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, especially non-use of force; secondly, implementation of the assurance in the first special session on disarmament that “every State has an equal right to security”; and thirdly, the full utilization of the United Nations potential to promote peace. It offers the most inclusive vehicle to build a durable structure of peace based on the United Nations Charter. War is never inevitable, and war cannot bring durable peace or security. Peace is always the product of compromise and negotiations are the only pathway to peace.

Peace and security in South Asia are threatened by the ultranationalist and hegemonic policies of one State, turbocharged by the extremist ideology of Hindutva. Today that Government seeks to establish an exclusively Hindu State in India, marginalizing and oppressing its 200 million Muslims and other minorities; to crush the legitimate Kashmiri quest for self-determination with 900,000 troops; and to threaten and intimidate Pakistan with the deployment of the vast majority of its land, sea and air forces and the adoption of doctrines that envisage fighting “a limited war under the nuclear overhang”. It seeks to build up its conventional and nuclear weapons capabilities with \$73 billion in acquisitions last year to threaten neighbours, impose its regional hegemony and promote its great power aspirations.

The proclaimed desire of the Hindutva leaders to occupy Azad Kashmir and even to create Akhand Bharat — a concept that envisages Hindu rule over all of South Asia and beyond — are indications of its aggressive and expansionist nature. A lack of global accountability and a generous supply of advanced weapons and technologies from multiple sources have emboldened that regime to follow this aggressive course.

One recent indicator of India’s reckless behaviour was the launch of a supersonic nuclear-capable missile into Pakistan’s territory on 9 March. That could have escalated into a wider conflict but for Pakistan’s self-restraint. That incident cannot be dismissed as an accident. The joint inquiry called for by Pakistan is essential to answering questions on the integrity of India’s command-and-control system, its safety and security protocols and the reason for India’s delayed admission of the missile launch.

Pakistan desires and is determined to pursue peace, development and strategic stability in South Asia, based on sovereign equality and mutual respect. Such a peace can be built, first, through the resumption of negotiations to resolve the outstanding disputes between Pakistan and India, especially the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people; and secondly, by the maintenance of a balance of conventional and strategic military capabilities and deployments, including reciprocal measures for nuclear, missile and military restraints between the two countries. Pakistan’s proposal for a strategic restraint regime in South Asia remains on the table. We hope that India will help to create conditions conducive to such a deal. That could lead to trade and investment cooperation, including connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia, West Asia, China and beyond.

Pakistan remains firmly committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We reiterate our call for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention. Proposals for negative security assurances and the Outer Space Treaty have been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament for the longest duration and are most ripe for negotiation. Pakistan has called for a fissile material treaty that reduces existing stocks. The so-called fissile material cut-off treaty would freeze existing unequal and large nuclear arsenals and fissile materials. We have opposed such a discriminatory treaty and will continue to oppose it.

Pakistan will once again submit its four draft resolutions to address regional and conventional arms control and disarmament, and to build negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Ambassador Mohan Pieris, on assuming the Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. On behalf of the Republic of Korea's delegation, I assure you and the new members of the Bureau of our full support.

My delegation strongly believes in the value of the rules-based international order. We, as a State member of this body, share the responsibility of upholding universal values, restoring global order and proving the role of the United Nations in addressing the global challenges we face that cannot be solved by a single nation.

Today's global security environment is more precarious and complex than it has ever been since the end of the Cold War. We are living in an era of uncertainty and upheaval. The solidarity of the international community and the core values of the Charter of the United Nations are being tested on a daily basis. Pressures and threats come from both the conventional and unconventional security dimensions. For example, the integrity of the rules-based order and national sovereignty is seriously impaired by the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustifiable attack on Ukraine.

Against this troubling backdrop, it is truly regrettable that we failed to reach a consensus at the tenth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in August. However, the Non-Proliferation Treaty must stand strong as the fundamental cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. My delegation aligns itself with other countries in reiterating that the failure to reach consensus does not mean failure of the Treaty itself. Throughout the Conference, Member States constructively engaged in productive negotiations and even managed to agree on many areas of utmost importance, including the text regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It is unbearably frustrating that the threat and possibility of use of nuclear weapons are looming larger than ever. A country with the largest nuclear arsenal, the Russian Federation, is threatening to use

nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear weapon State. We join the urgent call on Russia to assume its due responsibilities as a nuclear-weapon State and translate this year's joint statement by the five permanent members of the Security Council into action. We also urge Russia to immediately cease all military actions, withdraw all its forces from Ukrainian territory and comply with its obligations under international law.

Another country, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which has developed its nuclear and missile capabilities in defiance of numerous Security Council resolutions, recently passed a new law that sets the threshold for using nuclear weapons far lower than any other country in the world. That policy even allows pre-emptive strikes or the use of nuclear weapons on a dangerously arbitrary basis. In addition, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fired yet another intermediate-range ballistic missile just yesterday, amounting to a record total of 39 ballistic missiles this year alone. The Republic of Korea condemns in the strongest terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued nuclear and missile activities, in flagrant violation of the Security Council's resolutions. We are deeply concerned about the unprecedented level of paranoid aggressiveness in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's recent pattern of behaviour.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea now seems all but ready to conduct its seventh nuclear test, which will critically undermine the fundamental credibility of the international non-proliferation regime. Moreover, how we address the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issue in the Security Council will not only serve as a message to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but will be a litmus test on the viability and relevance of the Security Council. As such, we urge all Member States, and the members of the Security Council in particular, to join us in sending an unequivocally stern message to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to choose different path. We also call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately return to dialogue and respond positively to our audacious initiative, which proposes corresponding economic, political and military measures once the Democratic People's Republic of Korea embarks on a genuine and substantive process of denuclearization.

We are gathered here today in the First Committee, the pre-eminent platform to develop norms and build consensus in the pursuit of collective security and

peace. This year, the Committee must strive to fulfil its mandate with an overwhelming sense of responsibility. The Republic of Korea will undertake every effort to constructively contribute to the critical work of the First Committee and its clusters.

As a country with an unwavering commitment to achieving the shared vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, my delegation would like to highlight the long-lingering issues of the commencement of negotiations of a fissile material cut-off treaty and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We call upon all Member States to revitalize relevant efforts and take a concrete and step-by-step approach towards nuclear disarmament. In that respect, we note the significant role of the Stockholm Initiative and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament. We also reaffirm our full support for the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative, as one of the co-Chairs.

As witnessed in the war in Ukraine, the threats posed by conventional weapons and other weapons of mass destruction should not be underestimated. Accordingly, the Republic of Korea remains committed to the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). With respect to the ATT, the Republic of Korea recently assumed the presidency of its ninth Conference of States Parties.

We also reiterate our support for the norms against using biological and chemical weapons. With that in mind, we believe that the upcoming Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention in Geneva in November and the Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention next year will provide added momentum for the State Parties to reaffirm their commitment to the Treaties and their implementation. The Republic of Korea will work with others to achieve tangible outcomes from the Review Conferences.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to ensuring a safe, secure and sustainable space environment for all. In that vein, we welcome the ongoing Open-ended Working Group process as an important opportunity to find common ground on identifying responsible behaviours to reduce space threats. We are of the view that the deliberate destruction of space objects, which creates long-lived space debris, thus hampering the peaceful use of space, is one of the most pressing threats. Today the Republic

of Korea commits not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing following the United States announcement in April. We call on other States to join the relay of that commitment.

As one of the most digitally wired nations, as well as one under persistent threat from malicious cyberactivities, we firmly believe in the importance of an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace. My delegation acknowledges the critical role of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies and the Group of Governmental Experts in developing responsible State behaviours in the use of information and communications technology, including the applicability of international law in cyberspace.

Although this year's session of the First Committee is taking place in a particularly challenging security environment, we must not let history slide backward by idly watching our universal values break apart. We hope that we in the First Committee can lead the way to embrace multilateralism and the rules-based order to achieve collective security and peace. The Republic of Korea is ready to engage constructively throughout the process.

Mr. Vidal (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this Committee and to wish you every success in your work this year. We also extend our greetings to the other members of the Bureau, together with our firm commitment to contributing actively and positively to the results of our deliberations.

Chile endorses the statement delivered yesterday by the Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

Once again, we wish to point out that maintaining international peace and security without resorting to nuclear deterrence is, in addition to an ethical imperative, an achievable goal and in line with the international system for the protection of human rights. Concerns regarding the potentially catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of just one nuclear weapon are growing, not to mention what a global nuclear war would entail.

The current situation forces us to be more vocal in reiterating that coexistence in a world without nuclear weapons is possible and that threats to use weapons of mass destruction are an open violation of the Charter of

the United Nations and international law. In that regard, Chile recognizes that the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) supports the system and the multilateral order in the fight against the possession of that type of weapon. We therefore support the Treaty and invite the other States Members of the Organization that are not part of the TPNW to sign and ratify it.

The results of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty, held in June in Vienna, have already been announced in other forums.

Chile also attaches the greatest importance to the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a fundamental instrument of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Chile therefore reiterates its call to redouble diplomatic efforts for its prompt ratification, especially by the annex 2 countries.

We recall that Latin America and the Caribbean was the first densely populated region in the world that, through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, established, on 14 February 1967, a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Chile is convinced that it is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and stresses the importance of achieving its universalization and the balanced implementation of the three pillars that give it its fundamental structure, namely, disarmament, non-proliferation and the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. That is why we find it disturbing and worrisome that we did not reach consensus on a final document or an action plan at the delayed tenth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We call for the pursuit of all multilateral efforts in favour of disarmament, non-proliferation and the prohibition of the use and possession of all weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, we condemn the military use of biological and chemical weapons in all circumstances. Chile promotes universal adherence to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction.

We wish to emphasize that it was possible to adopt on 1 July, by consensus, the resolution corresponding to 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. It provides a regulatory framework and operational guidance for different United Nations entities. We recognize the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition as a scourge whose destructive effects are immeasurable, going beyond the sphere of international security and impacting developing countries in particular.

In view of the fact that cyberspace entails important responsibilities with respect to its risks, particularly considering its global and cross-border nature, Chile welcomes the fact that, on 29 July, the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025 concluded its third substantive session, and that the first annual progress report of the Working Group will be adopted by consensus.

To conclude, I reiterate our commitment to contributing positively to the work of the First Committee.

Mr. Bencini (Italy): I congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment as Chair of the First Committee. You have my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

International peace and security depend on respect for international law on the part of all United Nations Member States and the international community as a whole. Effective multilateralism and a rules-based international system are the only path to success. For that reason, Italy reiterates its support for the United Nations disarmament machinery and its three mutually reinforcing forums.

Against our best efforts to enhance global security, in February the Russian Federation, a major nuclear Power and permanent member of the Security Council, attacked a neighbouring country, violating the values and rules on which international security and civil coexistence among countries have been based for decades. We had been convinced that we would no longer have to witness wars of aggression in Europe. Instead, the aggression waged against Ukraine by Russia and the resulting crises — food, energy and economic — put our collective ideals at risk, as has rarely happened since the end of the Cold

War. While the responsibilities for the conflict are clear — and borne by only one side — it is our collective responsibility to find answers to those problems with a sense of urgency, determination and effectiveness. We reiterate our condemnation of Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric. It will not distract or dissuade us from supporting Ukraine for as long as is necessary.

For us, it is not possible to ignore the consequences of the current international scenario on our debate today and on the work we do every day here in New York, in Geneva and in Vienna. Working on disarmament and international security, we bear a special responsibility.

Italy fully shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons — a goal that can be attained only through a progressive approach. Our efforts are underpinned by our utmost concern for the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons use. In that regard, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with its three mutually reinforcing pillars, remains the cornerstone of the international regime. It is the only realistic legal framework to pursue a world free of nuclear weapons in a way that promotes international stability and undiminished security for all.

We deeply regret that at the recent Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT, it was not possible to adopt a final outcome, due to Russia blocking consensus. Although a compromise text, it would have represented an important milestone, in particular in the current strategic context. Nevertheless, we reaffirm the importance of the legal obligations enshrined in the NPT and we call upon States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty without delay and without conditions.

Nuclear-weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities, and we encourage them to seek further reductions. An important step in that direction should be the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As a staunch supporter of the Treaty and in line with its current role as article XIV co-Coordinator, Italy urges all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it without further delay. In the meantime, we call upon all States to respect the moratorium on nuclear tests.

We also continue to support the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Pending its conclusion, all relevant States should abide by a moratorium.

We remain deeply concerned by the severe difficulties that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear programme is still experiencing. We urge Iran to return to implementing its obligations under the JCPOA without delay and to comply fully with its safeguards obligations.

Likewise, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocations, including the increasing number of ballistic missile launches and the recent approval of a domestic law codifying the right to launch pre-emptive nuclear strikes. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete steps towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and to return to full compliance with the NPT.

Italy remains strongly committed to supporting the Chemical Weapons Convention and the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances. It is imperative to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of chemical attacks.

Italy is extremely concerned by the indiscriminate humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war, as well as improvised explosive devices. Italy believes that international cooperation and victim assistance are key components of our commitment to a world free of mines, and we believe that a comprehensive approach is needed.

We welcome the completion earlier this year of the negotiations on the text of a political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas. Furthermore, we believe in the importance of countering illicit arm transfers, and we call for the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty and the full implementation of all its provisions.

Italy strongly and actively supports the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its annexed protocols. We welcome the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems. Bearing in mind the importance of applying international humanitarian law to all weapons systems, we believe that it is crucial to reach consensus on the possible elements of a normative and operational framework.

Technology development and science progress are critical to the well-being of humankind. We are firmly committed to the long-term sustainability, safety and security of outer space and to the prevention of an arms race in that domain. We encourage further international cooperation to elaborate agreed principles of responsible behaviour.

Along the same line, we support all efforts towards a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace. In that vein, Italy supports the proposal to establish a programme of action on advancing responsible behaviour in cyberspace as a necessary complementary initiative for an action-oriented agenda with a specific focus on capacity building.

In conclusion, I am particularly honoured that the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) have agreed to designate me to preside the upcoming ninth Review Conference. The pandemic has shown how important is to improve biosecurity and biosafety. Italy attaches the greatest importance to the BWC as a fundamental component of the disarmament architecture. In a context of fast-paced scientific and technological developments, we should use the upcoming Review Conference to strengthen the Convention and endow it with appropriate mechanisms to assess the potential impact of such developments. In the year when we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention, every possible effort should be made to and ensure its universality, together with its full and effective implementation.

Italy promotes policies and approaches that enable the full empowerment of women and take into due regard the gendered impacts of armed violence and the importance of including women in disarmament negotiations and peacebuilding programmes.

We all are required to make special efforts to respond to threats to international peace and security, and it is important that we look together at our common interests to address global challenges. We must not enter the path of a new arms race. Instead, we need a collective, renewed commitment to preserving international institutions and instruments and guaranteeing their proper functioning.

A longer version of this statement will be published online.

Mr. Aidid (Malaysia): My delegation joins others in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you of Malaysia's full support in the work of the First Committee.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of Thailand, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

Against a backdrop of shifting global politics, various challenges persist in the domain of disarmament and international security, while new threats continue to emerge with alarming frequency. It is therefore imperative that we navigate the prevailing complexities through sustained multilateralism, in the interest of common security, peace and sustainable development for all humankind.

Although the coronavirus disease has exacerbated adversities across the political, social and economic fields without regard to national borders, it is deeply regrettable that a handful of States still demand and decree the investment of substantial resources in the modernization of their nuclear arsenals. Malaysia expresses deep concern at the qualitative improvement of and quantitative increase in nuclear weapons, and the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons, as well as the lack of progress in diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies. Malaysia also condemns unequivocally any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances.

Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Regrettably, Despite exhaustive deliberations by NPT States parties, the Review Conference was unable to adopt a final document. The consecutive failure of the ninth and tenth NPT Review Conferences to achieve a substantive outcome does not augur well for the Treaty and is without precedent since the NPT's indefinite extension in 1995. The continued effectiveness of the NPT must not be taken for granted and may well be called into question unless States parties redouble their efforts to strengthen the integrity and credibility of the Treaty. The full implementation of all obligations and

commitments undertaken by States parties is essential to ensuring the attainment of the Treaty's objective and purpose across its three pillars.

Increasingly sophisticated concepts, doctrines and policies cannot mask the abhorrent nature of nuclear weapons as instruments of war and destruction or the dire humanitarian consequences and suffering that would inevitably result from any use thereof. Indeed, the only and absolute guarantee against the existential threat to humankind posed by nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

It is for this reason that Malaysia views the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as a landmark instrument in our common advance towards a world free of nuclear weapons. We welcome the entry into force of the Treaty in January 2021 and the successful convening of its First Meeting of States Parties in Vienna in June 2022. Malaysia is proud to serve, together with South Africa, as co-Chair of the informal working group on the universalization of the TPNW, established at the Meeting.

Building on previous initiatives of the TPNW core group, Malaysia and South Africa facilitated the convening of the TPNW high-level signing and ratification ceremony as part of the treaty event held by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs in New York on 22 September. The event witnessed the deposit of instruments of ratification for the TPNW by two Member States, namely, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Dominican Republic, as well as the signature of the TPNW by five Member States, namely, Barbados, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti and Sierra Leone. Malaysia commends those States for having taken an important step towards consolidating the Treaty, which will undoubtedly continue to grow in strength.

As has been repeatedly emphasized by its States parties and signatories, the TPNW is fully compatible with and complementary to the NPT, as well as the various treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. With regard to the latter, Malaysia reaffirms the central role of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty and its Protocol in safeguarding our region against the scourge of nuclear weapons.

In times of heightened geopolitical tension and in view of increasingly strident nuclear rhetoric, Malaysia remains concerned over the absence of legally binding negative security assurances by the nuclear-weapon

States to countries in our region. The conspicuous lack of signature of the SEANWFZ Protocol by any of the nuclear-weapon States, which is the status quo, cannot continue indefinitely. In that connection, Malaysia underscores the urgent need to resolve outstanding matters pertaining to the signing and ratification of the SEANWFZ Protocol at the earliest possible date, in line with the vision espoused by the ASEAN leaders through the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025.

Furthermore, Malaysia joins others in urging the annex 2 States that have yet to do so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, so as to allow for the Treaty's entry into force as soon as possible.

As in previous years, at this session Malaysia will submit its traditional draft resolution, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons". Malaysia recalls the International Court of Justice's finding that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control. That assertion remains as relevant today as it was when the Court rendered its seminal opinion more than 25 years ago.

Malaysia continues to follow closely regional developments that impact international peace and security. We are gravely concerned over ongoing developments in the Korean peninsula, which increase tension and instability and impede efforts towards the peaceful resolution of the long-standing conflict in the peninsula. We condemn the spike in the number of ballistic missile tests undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this year, including those of intercontinental ballistic missiles, as well as the most recent escalation through the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of a ballistic missile over Japan. Malaysia reiterates the importance of self-restraint on the part of all concerned parties and the need for a resumption of dialogue towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

We also reaffirm our support for the restoration and continued implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Malaysia calls on all concerned parties to move forward on the basis of strong political will and diplomacy.

Furthermore, Malaysia remains fully committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, both of which are integral elements of the global community's efforts to save present and succeeding generations from the unspeakable horrors of weapons of mass destruction.

In the cyberdomain, Malaysia welcomes the progress made in the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025, and looks forward to further work by that body in the spirit of consensus.

In 1978, the General Assembly, in the final document of its first special session devoted to disarmament, succinctly described the prevailing international situation in the following words:

“Mankind today is confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of the most destructive weapons ever produced.”
(*resolution S-10/2, para. 11*)

Sadly, despite the passage of more than four decades, that observation appears equally well-suited to the contemporary state of affairs in our world.

The full realization of the global disarmament agenda across various substantive areas requires its deliberative and implementing machinery to be functional, resilient and agile. In that spirit, Malaysia commends the successful convening of the substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in April after the hiatus of the past few years. It is our fervent hope that, together, we will be able to strengthen and revitalize other key bodies, such as the Conference on Disarmament and, of course, the First Committee, including through the present session under your able leadership, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Wróblewski (Poland): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee for the seventy-seventh session. You can be assured of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Poland.

Poland fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). Let me highlight several issues in my national capacity.

The number one issue is obvious and the most fundamental. Due to the Russian aggression against

Ukraine, the world dramatically changed on 24 February. The entire global security architecture has been challenged. Pillars of the international system built since the Second World War have been undermined. That has also broad and long-lasting implications for efforts related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. It deeply affects the work of this Committee and its deliberations. Here are the reasons why.

Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear-weapon State, is conducting a bloody and full-fledged war — a totally unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. Russia has blatantly violated the Budapest Memorandum. Russia is continuing its threats of using nuclear weapons, alongside military escalation and the mobilization of its armed forces. “This is not a bluff”, stated President Putin, announcing the forcible illegal annexation of other parts of Ukraine last week. Russia's strategic forces have been put on high alert. Russia is illegally occupying and conducting military activities against nuclear power plants and installations in Ukraine, in particular the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Ukrainian nuclear safety and security are being questioned. Russia is violating existing conventional confidence-building measures and arms control commitments.

Let me be absolutely clear — this aggression is the culmination of years of violations and undermining of the international order by Russia. Let us not forget Russia's proven record of violations of and non-compliance with the arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements and commitments, such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, to name but one. Belarus's recent renunciation of its nuclear-free status, following amendments to its Constitution and other signals and declarations regarding the possibility of hosting Russian nuclear weapons on Belarussian territory, add complexity to that gloomy picture. Those developments leave no illusions — Russia is currently destroying the rules-based international order, with multilateralism as its core, posing a direct threat to international peace and security.

In that context, the message from this Committee should be loud and clear. We must condemn the Russian aggression in the strongest possible terms. It must stop now. Russian forces have to withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine, and we need to figure out what to do in order to uphold the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture in the months to come.

In these demanding circumstances we cannot lose sight of security threats and challenges evolving in other regions of the world. Here, let me move on to my second point.

The complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains an absolute imperative and priority. We are concerned about the continuation of its nuclear programme, as demonstrated, *inter alia*, by the reopening of its nuclear test site, alongside the unprecedented number of unlawful missile launches this year, including one very recently, and a new law authorizing pre-emptive nuclear strikes. We remain convinced that a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula can be achieved only through peaceful means.

Furthermore, we take note with concern of steps taken by Iran in violation of its obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as highlighted in the reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) over recent months. Poland, like the European Union, continues to support the JCPOA as an important agreement in the sphere of curbing the nuclear proliferation. Our perception remains unchanged; it would be of the utmost importance if parties were able to reach consensus on JCPOA reactivation.

Thirdly, we need to do our utmost to uphold and strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of effective, verifiable and irreversible disarmament, in accordance with its article VI. That was a driving force behind our engagement in the NPT review process as Chair of Main Committee II, our activities within the IAEA Board of Governors and our recent chairmanship of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. The lack of a consensual outcome of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT, despite enormous efforts and due to the veto of only one country — Russia — does not change that approach. We have to be ambitious but realistic in the current strategic context.

Fourthly, we need to address the future of the global arms control system. Its current state has been a source of concern for some time. The New START Treaty is the only non-conventional arms control mechanism in place. It should contribute to maintaining overall strategic stability, but primarily it should lead

to a broader follow-on treaty that covers all nuclear weapons, including non-strategic ones in Europe, and their new types. China should constructively engage in those efforts. Realistically again, any dialogue depends clearly on rebuilding mutual trust and confidence based on respect for international law.

Fifthly, despite undeniable successes in curbing the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, we cannot neglect the threats and challenges related to their use. The Russian aggression against Ukraine and Moscow's disinformation narratives provide a clear reminder in that regard. Taking that into account, we are actively engaged in the run-up to the Review Conferences of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We definitely need to focus on strengthening those regimes to the greatest possible extent. For that very reason, Poland, as in previous years, will introduce to the General Assembly the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The General Assembly has to send a strong and unambiguous signal of support from the whole international community for the CWC's integrity and the leading role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which is particularly important in the run up to the Review Conference of the States Parties to the CWC next year.

Last but not least, Poland attaches great importance to the work conducted within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). We believe that the CCW remains the most relevant international forum, combining diplomatic, legal and military expertise and involving industry and civil society to examine new developments in weapons technologies. Unfortunately, the significance of the CCW and its framework are, as we speak, being challenged by the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The massive and indiscriminate use of inhumane weapons against innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure is particularly deplorable and absolutely goes against the goals of the Convention. The Russian forces' shelling and air bombardments of densely populated areas are unequivocal violations of international humanitarian law, which the CCW is meant to uphold and protect.

Poland will be chairing the upcoming Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW, at which upholding international humanitarian law and preserving the integrity of the Convention will

be high on our agenda. We will support the continuity of the disarmament discussions, including by taking a constructive decision on the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in 2023. Let us not forget, that the political impact of the CCW relies on financial stability. Without it, the Convention would not be able to pursue its goals. Poland appeals to all States parties to pay their mandatory contributions on time and in full.

In this difficult situation, we should do our utmost to respond to today's and future challenges, while being realistic and aware of limitations. The Committee also has a role to play when it comes to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In this and other forums, Poland will therefore actively pursue its endeavours related to peace and security.

Mr. Rai (Nepal): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to chair this important Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support in the deliberations of the Committee.

I align myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

This year, the First Committee is meeting at a challenging time. Amidst geopolitical tensions and conflicts, there is growing strategic contestation, polarization and disruption in the world order. Norms and the institutional framework built under United Nations auspices have fallen short in delivering disarmament, peace and security when we need it now.

The arms race is on a surge as if there were no tomorrow. The annual global military expenditure has surpassed \$2 trillion. The modernization and upgrading of nuclear arsenals have accelerated in the name of nuclear deterrence in security doctrines. We should be mindful that modernized nuclear arms and weaponized outer space and cyberspace could promise only destruction, but no peace.

No country is immune from the threat of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons, whether detonated by accident or by design. Therefore, the elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee of the non-use of those weapons in the future. Until such elimination, the nuclear-weapon States and the international community should provide legally binding assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Nepal believes that the use or threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction is against the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian, human rights and environmental laws.

Being a party to Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Nepal strongly supports the general and complete disarmament of nuclear weapons in a time-bound manner. The NPT is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. Regrettably, the recent tenth Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT failed to reach a consensus on a substantive outcome. The nuclear-weapon States should abide fully by their legal obligations towards the total elimination of their nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible, and verifiable manner.

Nepal believes that the TPNW complements and strengthens the objective of general and complete disarmament. We welcome its entry into force and the outcome of the first Meeting of States Parties. Nepal is committed to ratifying the TPNW at the earliest possible date. Similarly, we count on the early conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

We fully support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are building blocks of disarmament and a world free from nuclear weapons.

Nepal strongly supports the inalienable rights of States to acquire and use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under article IV of the NPT.

Nepal expresses its satisfaction over the effective operation and verification mechanism of the Chemical Weapons Convention to ensure a credible regime to verify the destruction of chemical weapons, provide protection and assistance against chemical weapons, and facilitate the peaceful uses of chemistry. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is also an important international legal architecture governing weapons of mass destruction. We must strengthen the treaty to prevent the weaponization of biology. There is an urgent need for a universal, non-discriminatory and legally binding mechanism to tackle the issue of biological threats.

The illicit trade in small arms poses a persistent threat to global peace and security. Nepal welcomes the outcome of the eighth Biennial Meeting of the 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. As identified by the outcome, we must promote cross-border cooperation and support to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Outer space is a global common heritage of humankind. We firmly stand for the prevention of an arms race in and the weaponization of outer space. Outer space should be used only for peaceful purposes. Transparency and confidence-building measures should be promoted in matters related to outer space. Outer space and cyberspace are under the threat of being arenas of conflicts. Nepal stresses the importance of a global regulatory framework for open, secure, accessible information and communications technology and cyberspace. Developing countries should be assisted in increasing their capacity for cybersecurity.

The disarmament machinery, such as the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, should function effectively to take us forward on non-proliferation and disarmament.

We support the inclusion of gender perspectives in disarmament frameworks. Women, youth and civil society actors are change agents in disarmament architecture.

We believe that regional disarmament institutions and regimes complement global disarmament architecture through the promotion of dialogue and confidence-building measures in the region. We need to enhance the role of United Nations regional centres for regional disarmament. As in past years, Nepal will table a draft resolution entitled “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific” in its capacity as host State of the Regional Centre. My delegation looks forward to receiving the continued sponsorship and support of all Member States for the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, as in previous years.

Mutually assured peace was the primary thrust when the United Nations was founded. Dialogue, transparency and trust are fundamentals for disarmament and durable peace. The future we want depends on the solidarity we forge today. Let our solidarity supersede suspicions for the sake sustained peace and security for all.

Mr. Yoseph (Ethiopia): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, and other members of the Bureau on your election to preside over the work of

the Committee. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

My delegation also associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

We live in a world that is currently facing enormous and complex challenges. Increasing conflicts are threatening regional and global peace and security. The proliferation of nuclear weapons, coupled with geopolitical tension, has exacerbated the situation to an unprecedented level in which the likelihood of nuclear catastrophes cannot be ruled out. It is deeply worrisome that, after the end of the Cold War, we are hearing, as the Secretary-General has said, “the rattling of nuclear sabres”. We also share the warning of the Secretary-General that “any use of nuclear weapons would incite a humanitarian Armageddon”.

At this critical time, my delegation underscores the primacy of diplomacy to ease global tensions and eliminate the threat of nuclear war. In that regard, the work of this Committee remains more important than ever to continue to contribute to the efforts of disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security. While emphasizing that the nuclear States should take meaningful actions to de-escalate global tensions, we all need to come together and restore confidence to achieve a nuclear-free world. Ethiopia firmly believes that this is possible with strong political commitment and shared vision.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It is regrettable, however, that the tenth Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT, which was held in August, ended without consensus. Ethiopia, as a State party to the Treaty, reaffirms its commitment to its implementation and calls on all to forge a new consensus to collectively address nuclear threats.

We in Africa have adopted the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Pelindaba Treaty, to ensure that nuclear weapons are not developed, produced, stockpiled, tested, acquired

or stationed in Africa. We are confident that through that and similar commitments in other regions, we can advance the cause of global peace and security.

We would also like to seize this opportunity to underline the importance of the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and call on the International Atomic Energy Agency to continue its technical support.

Ethiopia underlines the vital role of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in negotiating multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agreements. In fact, it is our firm position that the CD is and should be the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We therefore call for greater flexibility to allow the Conference on Disarmament to commence its substantive work without further delay.

In the same vein, the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons have become a great concern, particularly in Africa, where they are fuelling conflicts and terrorism. It is essential that we strengthen our collective efforts to effectively implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects to address that pressing challenge. It is also crucial to scale up support for subregional and regional efforts to eliminate that profound threat to peace and security.

Ethiopia welcomes the progress made with regards to the Open-ended Working-Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, which we believe will immensely contribute to global efforts to safeguard cyberspace.

We also underline the critical importance of preventing an arms race in outer space through a legally binding instrument. Furthermore, it is vital that the necessary support be provided to developing countries so that they can use outer space for peaceful purposes in their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Let me conclude by reaffirming the commitment of my Government to discharging its Treaty obligations, and we look forward to the productive deliberations of the Committee.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Let me begin by congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your election, Mr. Chair. We look forward to working under your leadership to achieve progress and

invigorate the multilateral disarmament architecture. In the current circumstances, that is no easy task, but you can count Austria's full support.

Of course, Austria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

Since our last session, war has returned to Europe. A nuclear-armed State is conducting an unprovoked aggression against its sovereign neighbour and trying to justify its ambitions of territorial expansion through illegal referendums. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been accompanied by nuclear threats and the occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant — the largest in Europe — by Russian armed forces. Those actions are irresponsible. They knowingly if not deliberately risk catastrophic consequences for all of us around the world — consequences that cannot be confined by borders and that could well mean the end of the world as we know it.

Those developments have shaken our public and our politicians, as well as us diplomats. They also affect the whole range of topics that the First Committee is set to discuss. Let us look at what we have witnessed — the indiscriminate bombing and shelling of urban areas that have turned cities into rubble, in gross violation of international humanitarian law; illegal cyberattacks affecting individuals far beyond their intended targets; multilateral negotiations hijacked by conspiracy theories about alleged biological weapons. But nowhere are the stakes higher than in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Nuclear risks have not been this high for decades, and the remaining mechanisms meant to de-escalate simply do not work.

While the crisis has exposed the fractures, the cracks were long known. This year's Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed not just because Russia blocked consensus on the final document. As in the Conference of 2015, geopolitical tensions dominated the negotiation process, reflecting serious trust deficits and fundamental divisions within the NPT membership. Most of all, they revealed the determined unwillingness of nuclear-weapon States to move forward on real nuclear disarmament and to a move away from the mistaken belief in nuclear deterrence.

Nuclear deterrence is based on the willingness to inflict mass destruction and human death and suffering beyond our imagination. It is not a friendly doctrine; it

is a theory to justify the possession of weapons of mass destruction. If the theory is correct and it does make the world safe, logic would dictate that everyone should have nuclear weapons and contribute to that positive effect. But that would be lunacy. Nobody wants it. If the theory is incorrect, then nobody is safer, nobody has an advantage, and the only result is that everyone is less secure. Nuclear deterrence is a theory based on erroneous assumptions and fraught with uncertainties. Only one thing is certain — if it fails, it can have catastrophic consequences.

We have to draw the right lessons from the current crisis. We cannot accept the nuclear status quo, which in fact is a reversal into a nuclear arms race with new or improved weapons, increased arsenals and reduced transparency. Under the broad umbrella of the NPT, we need a total paradigm shift.

A clear majority of States is pursuing just that through the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). In view of the current crisis, it is a relief that the first Meeting of States Parties in Vienna not only demonstrated the strong belief in disarmament shared by so many States; it also delivered concrete results — a strong political declaration condemning all nuclear threats, irrespective of the circumstances, and an ambitious Vienna Action Plan to implement the Treaty. That strong message and unequivocal declaration of support for international law, multilateralism and a world without nuclear weapons are of utmost importance in the current circumstances.

We look forward to continuing our work, drawing on scientific expertise, civil society and affected communities as we prepare for the second Meeting of States Parties here in New York next year. Not surprisingly, we call on all States to join the TPNW. Now is the time to step up and support an unequivocal stance against nuclear weapons. For those that are not yet ready to do so, we encourage them to join the other observers at the second Meeting of States Parties and engage in the intersessional work of the Treaty.

The common thread running through all our disarmament efforts is putting people at the centre of our work, including the TPNW. Another example is the long-standing work on explosive weapons in populated areas, which has culminated in a collective commitment to better protecting civilians from explosive weapons and to strengthen compliance with and improve implementation of international humanitarian law.

Statistics show that when explosive weapons are used in populated areas, over 90 per cent of the victims are civilians. Together with a coalition of like-minded States and a group of civil society colleagues, Austria launched the process leading to the political declaration. I am grateful to our Irish colleagues, who took over the torch after the Vienna Conference and brought the negotiations to a successful close. We call on all States to join us in November at Dublin Castle and sign the political declaration.

Autonomous weapons systems raise serious concerns from a humanitarian, legal, security, technological and above all ethical perspective. Clearly, the current legal framework needs to be strengthened to ensure human responsibility and accountability when force is used. We need to address those issues with urgency as the research, development and deployment of new weapons technologies progress at a rapid pace.

We will address other issues, from the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to the Hague Code of Conduct and disarmament education, in our cluster statements. But I just want to say a brief word about our unwavering support for the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the essential work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The use of biological and chemical weapons by any actor, at any time and under any circumstances is unacceptable and reprehensible. Anyone violating those essential norms must be held accountable. That is why Austria is a member of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. In those, as in other forums, Austria remains convinced that multilateralism is essential to defusing crises and to building momentum towards more sustainable security. That holds true especially in the disarmament, which repeatedly has been stalled by abuse of the consensus principle.

Security cannot be built by a paradigm that preferences the security of some over others. Undiminished and increased security can be achieved only through concrete disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Lagdameo (Philippines): The Philippines congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and assures you and the Bureau of our support.

We support the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Thailand, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

Even as we struggle to recover from a global pandemic, widening geopolitical polarities and intensifying strategic competitions pose profound challenges to our collective security. We remain beset by dangerous nuclear rhetoric and postures and the continued modernization and expansion of nuclear arsenals. Those set us back in our shared aspiration for a world rid of nuclear weapons. As Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said in his statement at the general debate,

“we must reject the notion of deterrence and remain committed to decreasing the global stockpile of [nuclear] weapons” (A/77/PV.5, p. 5).

No aspiration or ambition can justify the use of weapons that destroy indiscriminately and completely. Those weapons of death put us all at mortal risk, especially if they fall into the hands of terrorists. Only their complete elimination will protect us from the catastrophic impact of their use.

We take pride in being the fifty-third Member State to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which outlaws nuclear weapons on the basis of irrefutable humanitarian principles, establishes environmental remediation as a global norm and represents an advancement of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is fundamental to a rules-based international order that safeguards the security of nations and the conditions for our peoples to thrive in peace. We regret that we concluded the tenth Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT last month without a consensus outcome.

We call upon the eight remaining annex 2 States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without further delay and to usher in its entry into force.

We remain committed to the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We continue to support the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and we look forward

to engaging actively to help bring about a successful outcome of the ninth Review Conference of the BWC.

The Philippines supports the implementation of comprehensive norms and regulations covering conventional weapons. We are proud to have ratified the Arms Trade Treaty and Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons this year, which makes us one of the few countries that are States parties to all humanitarian disarmament conventions.

As Chair 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, the Philippines' leadership was characterized as inclusive and transparent. Those attributes were pivotal and contributory to the progress and success in achieving consensus on the outcome of the Meeting. We welcome the decision to establish the small arms and light weapons (SALW) fellowship programme in the next budget cycle; the consideration to establish an open-ended technical expert group prior to the fourth Review Conference; the responsible disposal, preferably through destruction, of SALW surplus; and the preservation of the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the eighth Biennial Meeting outcome document.

The Philippines strongly supports the work in Geneva to operationalize the aims of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Our engagement is guided by our twin advocacies of victim centrality and enhanced independent national capacities of affected countries. We also continue to call for collaborative action to counter the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, particularly by armed non-State actors.

We must work to render our global governance regime future-proof amidst rapid advances in technologies. At the start of the seventy-seventh session, our President called for legal rules to prevent the weaponization of artificial intelligence. To that end, the Philippines, together with a group of like-minded States, has submitted a draft sixth protocol of the CCW to prohibit and regulate autonomous weapon systems.

We reaffirm our aspiration to a legally binding instrument that would prevent an arms race in outer space. We support all efforts to enhance outer space

security. As President Marcos said, it is important for the international community to clarify the norms of responsible behaviour in outer space. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, pursuant to resolution 76/231. We see that process as an important step towards building robust structures to support and promote outer space security. We believe that the principle of due regard is a foundational standard by which to measure responsible behaviour.

The multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regime is an important component of the rules-based international order that has underpinned global peace, security and stability since the founding of the United Nations. Its integrity and credibility rest on structures developed over time through expert-driven processes. As a country that implements a strategic trade management framework, we are of the view that export control regimes do not place undue restrictions on international cooperation on peaceful uses, and instead concretely uphold our non-proliferation obligations.

Technology pervades almost every facet of our human lives, and there are emerging and evolving non-traditional security threats powered by technology. Thus, it is timely and relevant that we discuss the rules, norms and responsible behaviour of States in the security of and in the use of information and communications technologies. We recognize the strides achieved by the Open-ended Working Group created pursuant to resolution 75/240 and the Group's consensually agreed annual progress report.

The substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) over the past three years has been unduly subjected to organizational, procedural and political issues. We appreciate the fact that, despite the difficult geopolitical environment, the UNDC successfully resumed its work as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly this year. We look forward to the final year of the work cycle of the UNDC in 2023.

In closing, we view recent developments in the Asia-Pacific within the context of the primacy of commitments under the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty and the NPT. We welcome the reaffirmation of ASEAN member States to continuously engage nuclear-weapon States

and intensify the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty and the nuclear-weapon States' statements of their readiness to engage for that purpose.

Finally, we reaffirm the wisdom of the founders of our United Nations. That means transcending our differences and committing to ending war, upholding justice, respecting human rights and maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and other members of the Bureau on your election.

Today is the 223rd day of the unprovoked and unjustified aggression unleashed by a nuclear-weapon State signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) against a non-nuclear NPT State.

Most recently, Russia announced a mobilization. Some newly conscripted troops are already deployed on the battlefield. Russia has held so-called referendums on the occupied territory of Ukraine and attempted to annex parts of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions. Such actions severely violate the Constitution and laws of Ukraine, as well as the norms of international law and Russia's international obligations. They will not have any implications for Ukraine's administrative territorial system and internationally recognized borders. This performance has nothing to do with the expression of the people's will and does not have any implications for Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. The Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions, like the Ukrainian Crimea, remain the sovereign territories of Ukraine. Ukraine has every right to restore its territorial integrity by military and diplomatic means, and will continue to liberate the temporarily occupied territories.

For many years, Ukraine has been consistent in its call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons as the final goal of nuclear disarmament and strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime as a tool to achieve that goal. For its part, my country made an unprecedented contribution in the field of nuclear disarmament by abandoning the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal.

Ukraine continues to consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, the NPT's efficiency and integrity were undermined when Russia occupied Crimea and launched its aggression in the east of Ukraine, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a number of international treaties and agreements, including the Budapest Memorandum.

Despite the constructive negotiations at the tenth Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT in August, Russia — a nuclear-weapon State — blocked consensus on the final document. In so doing, the Russian Federation not only showed its disregard for its obligations and commitments under the Treaty, but also tried to avoid its full responsibility for its actions against nuclear facilities of Ukraine. What is especially alarming is that the risk of nuclear war is now higher than it has ever been since the Cold War. Today the Russian Federation openly threatens to use nuclear weapons. The international community cannot simply turn a blind eye to that reckless rhetoric.

From the first days of their aggression against Ukraine, the Russian forces indiscriminately attacked Ukraine's peaceful cities and villages with missiles, aviation, tanks and artillery. Russia's army also actively uses explosive weapons, including cluster munitions, thermobaric and incendiary weapons, which cause civilian injuries and severe damage to civilian infrastructure, including residential buildings, schools, hospitals, maternity hospitals and kindergartens.

We are especially concerned over the use of Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles against Ukraine's people and civilian infrastructure. For the first time in history, civil nuclear facilities, including the operating Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the largest in Europe, have been turned into military targets and springboards for the Russian army, in breach of international law and the NPT. In addition to the illegal presence of Russia's military forces at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, as well as the personnel of Rosatom, Russia is regularly shelling the power plant and the satellite city of Energodar with heavy weapons, as well as terrorizing and torturing employees at Zaporizhzhya.

Due to the actions of the Russian Federation, the whole world is today on the brink of a nuclear catastrophe, the consequences of which could be global.

This is a clear example of nuclear terrorism sponsored by a nuclear-weapon State. Ukraine appreciates the bravery and professionalism of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) mission experts. The visit was only a first step. Since the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant remains under occupation, the risks remain. However, the only way to ensure that there are no nuclear threats is for Russia to demilitarize the power plant, withdraw its troops and hand over full control of the station to Ukraine.

Along with numerous violations related to nuclear safety and security, Russia is manipulating the biological and chemical issues. Since the full-scale war began, Russia has targeted chemical enterprises on the territory of Ukraine, made a large number of completely false allegations of chemical weapons use by Ukraine and used the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as a platform for its provocations. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention has been used by Russia as a tool for its propaganda against Ukraine. Russia's accusations against Ukraine and the United States are aimed above all at creating artificial grounds to justify its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, diverting the attention of the international community from atrocities committed by the Russian armed forces in Ukraine.

The increased number of launches of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea throughout the year undermines international peace and security. In that regard, Ukraine strongly condemns the ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in blatant violation of relevant Security Council resolutions. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully implement and respect all Security Council resolutions related to its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programmes by abandoning all nuclear and any other existing WMD and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Ukraine supports efforts to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We urge Iran to return to full compliance with the JCPOA and its IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement without delay.

Ukraine shares the view that the establishment of new WMD-free zones will strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. We strongly support the universalization and entry into force of

the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, we call upon all States that have not yet done so, in particular the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty to ensure a legally binding moratorium on nuclear testing.

Another long overdue task is the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which is essential both to constrain nuclear proliferation and to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament.

Ukraine continues to strongly adhere to the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, the Security Council's resolutions on arms embargo and other important instruments in the field of non-proliferation and arms control.

In conclusion, given the mandate vested in the First Committee, this subsidiary body of the General Assembly plays a crucial role within the disarmament machinery aimed at seeking solutions to threats that undermine peace and security worldwide. Therefore, we hope that the First Committee will be able to properly address the most serious challenges to international security since the end of the Second World War.

The Chair: I shall now call on delegations that have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to five minutes for the first intervention and to three minutes for the second intervention.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The aggressive anti-Russian policy of the United States and its allies in the post-Soviet space, as well as their stubborn support of the neo-Nazi regime in Kyiv — which continues, with active outside assistance, to exterminate the population of Donbas for the ninth year — have forced us to take the most decisive measures. We long did our best to resolve the conflict through diplomacy at the negotiating table, hoping that the West would come to its senses. However, the Western States sought only to exacerbate our differences to provoke a full-scale military conflict against the backdrop of the de facto refusal of the Kyiv authorities to implement the Minsk agreements.

It was the politicians of the Western countries who forbade Kyiv to continue peace talks and inspired the idea of a swift victory. The United States and its allies must bear the burden of their responsibility for fomenting the bloody massacre by the Kyiv regime of its own citizens. The United States has ramped up its efforts to pump Ukraine full of weapons, providing its military with intelligence information and ensuring the direct participation of its militants and advisers in the conflict, which not only prolongs the hostilities and leads to new casualties, but also brings the situation closer to the danger of a direct military clash between Russia and NATO.

Washington allocates vast sums to Kyiv for its military needs alone. The United States and its NATO allies encourage in every possible way the militaristic aspirations and revanchist desire of the Kyiv regime, which no longer hides its plans to recapture the territories lost as a result of its own destructive policy and to use the long-range missiles it has requested from United States to strike sites deep into Russia. At the suggestion of Washington, the military-political leadership of Ukraine has begun to talk not only about the need to defeat our country on the battlefield, but also to achieve, with the assistance of the West, its subsequent dismemberment and destruction.

Western countries support the terrorist methods of fighting used by the Ukrainian neo-Nazis, who resort to the tactics of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and set up firing positions and ammunition depots in schools, hospitals, residential buildings and hazardous chemical facilities, strike at nuclear power plants and places of detention of prisoners of war, use civilians as human shields and execute refugees.

Since the end of July, the centre of Donetsk and its suburbs have been remotely planted with “petal” anti-personnel mines, which are prohibited under the Ottawa Convention. In his statement, the representative of Ukraine talked of the need to abide by the Ottawa Convention — that was pure hypocrisy.

In August, information also emerged concerning the use of chemical poisonous substances against Russian military personnel near Zaporizhzhya. Kyiv did not even spare the prisoners from the Azov Regiment, bombing a pretrial detention centre in Yelenovka, where they were being held, all to prevent the fighters from testifying against their handlers in Kyiv and in the West. We hope that the experts of the

International Committee of the Red Cross will respond to the invitation of the Russian Ministry of Defence and visit that pretrial detention centre to see for themselves what inhumane provocations Kyiv is capable of.

All of this is well known in America and Europe, but they turn a blind eye to the uncomfortable truth. Indeed, they have already become accomplices in the war crimes of the Kyiv regime and made themselves parties to the conflict in Ukraine.

In the current conditions, it was impossible to ignore the will of the inhabitants of the Donbas and the liberated territories of Ukraine, who would face reprisal if the Kyiv militants returned. The President of Russia made the only possible decision — to support the desire of the inhabitants of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and the liberated territories of Ukraine to free themselves of the yoke of the neo-Nazi Government in Kyiv. The plebiscites were held from 23 to 27 September, and on 30 September agreements were signed on the entry — the return home — of the Republics into Russia.

Russia therefore rejects any accusations made by delegations against us unfounded and totally divorced from reality.

Ms. Narayan (India): India congratulates you, Sir, on assuming the chair of the Committee during these troubled times and assures you of its fullest cooperation.

India wishes to express its sympathies to the people and the Government of Pakistan due to the devastation and suffering caused by the floods in Pakistan.

The Permanent Representative of Pakistan has misused this forum to make untrue accusations against India. It is well known that the Pakistani State hosts, aids and actively supports terrorists. Its most prominent export is violence and an ethos that suppresses minorities, suppresses women and promotes sectarian strife, including amongst Muslims. India, on the other hand, exported vaccines and health-care supplies and capacities during the darkest days of the pandemic. It lived its civilizational heritage of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, an ancient Sanskrit saying that stresses the unity of all humankind and the indivisibility of its welfare.

It is not surprising that Pakistan uses the First Committee, which deals with vital matters of international peace and security, to disguise the predatory nature of the Pakistani State and

its single-minded and very-short sighted focus on promoting terrorism, violence and instability. India is a secular democracy and an open country that hides nothing. Pakistan's allegations against India, including in relation to the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and to conditions within India, do not have a basis in fact. They do not merit a response, as they pertain to matters internal to India, save to advise the delegation of Pakistan to concern itself with the disturbing conditions of minorities and women in its own country.

In respect of the missile issue, let me reiterate what we have said previously. The Government of India has expressed regret. India has taken a serious view of the matter, conducted a high-level court of inquiry and taken appropriate action. India strictly abides by its obligations under international treaties and needs no advice from a country that has a proven track record of illicit export of nuclear material and technology.

India's security concerns are not confined to a region and therefore India has always approached such issues in a global context. The First Committee is not the forum to address bilateral or regional issues. Regional security issues have no place in its deliberations.

One country has held up progress in the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament for the past two decades, and that country is Pakistan.

I would like to thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for raising the subject of economics and connectivity. The figures speak for themselves. India is one of the fastest-growing major economies and has bounced back from the stresses of the pandemic. India has laid the foundations for transformed connectivity through land, sea and air in its neighbourhood, in spite of the best efforts of Pakistan to prevent regional and subregional economic cooperation. We will devote more resources and capacities to expanding connectivity and economic growth.

The First Committee has a vast agenda that deals with global issues relating to disarmament and international security. Our collective time and effort have assumed even greater significance in the current circumstances. Going by its past practice and its obsession with India, Pakistan may exercise its right of reply and continue its litany of untrue statements and accusations. India will refrain from further exercising its right of reply out of respect for the work of the First Committee and your leadership, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Kim In Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to exercise its right of reply in response to the statements made by the representatives of some European countries and South Korea.

We totally reject the statements made by those countries. It is deeply alarming that European countries are still dancing to the tune of the United States in pursuit of a vicious, hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is the legitimate right of our sovereign State to steadily build up our military capabilities to cope with the political and military landscape created on the Korean peninsula by the United States, which is running amok to stifle our country. To this day, the United States has been staging joint military drills targeting our country one after another and testing all kinds of strategic weapons.

On top of that, the United States is seriously threatening the security of our State by deploying ultra-modern military offensive means and dispatching strategic assets in rapid succession to the Korean peninsula and the rest of the region. It is none other than the United States and its vassal States that are posing a grave danger to the global non-proliferation regime through the foundation of the Australia, United Kingdom and United States (AUKUS) partnership. They are also perpetrating acts that undermine peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region by dispatching nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and various warships to the region.

Thus far, the stability on the Korean peninsula and in the region is entirely attributable to the fact that we have a built powerful war deterrence to cope with the persistent military threats of the hostile forces. The more the United States clings to its anti-Democratic People's Republic of Korea pressure campaign by rallying its vassal States, the more we will accelerate our self-defensive measures.

In order to properly address an issue, it is integral to identify its root cause before coming up with a prescription for it. If European countries are really interested in ensuring international and regional peace and security, why do they keep silent on the nefarious hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea? Why do they intentionally ignore the AUKUS partnership, which undermines the international non-proliferation regime? The European countries would be well advised

to listen to and heed the growing voices of a majority of the Member States calling for the dismantlement of nuclear sharing and NATO joint missions in Europe in a complete and irreversible manner. If the European countries stick to the Cold War mentality and double standards, that will lead to the aggravation of tensions and conflict in the region.

The conservative South Korean Administration that took office this year is resorting to an extremely ferocious, confrontational policy towards its fellow countrymen and acts of flunkeyism. Its policies and acts surpass those of any of the previous conservative Governments, thus driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to the brink of war. The new South Korean Government has designated our Government and army as the arch-enemy and are resorting to all sorts of evil and inappropriate acts on the absurd grounds of ensuring preparedness against their fellow countrymen. They are playing the bluff by overtly advocating peace through strength and security based on strength, and even claiming that they would not hesitate to launch a pre-emptive strike to neutralize the war deterrent force of our State. At this very moment, South Korea is growing more frantic in its development of weapons and the strengthening of its defence industry in a desperate effort to shore up its military inferiority. Worse still, it is planning to bring in nuclear assets of the United States on a larger scale and is scaling up its military drills on various pretexts.

Though belatedly, the conservative Government of South Korea must admit that it has overstepped the limit from the very beginning. We vividly remember the reckless remarks and offensive behaviours of South Korea and are closely watching all the military actions it conducts with the United States. If South Korea continues to commit acts such as taking issue with our exercise of our right to self-defence and aggravating military tensions while threatening our security, it shall inevitably pay a high price. South Korea is strongly urged to refrain from finding fault with us now and then, and more importantly, not to deal with us once and for all.

Mr. Wróblewski (Poland): I take the floor to address the Russian representative's statement in my capacity as the representative of a country that is a neighbour of Ukraine and also affected by the Russian aggression.

Several million Ukrainians have crossed the Polish border. Many of them remain, mostly women and children, in my country. Therefore, calling the brutal aggression a “denazification operation” is an insult not only to those refugees who lived in peace in a democratic country, but also to the collective memory of the horrific Nazi occupation that took place in Europe, Poland and the whole region, including Ukraine, Belarus and part of Russia, as well as to Holocaust survivors and their descendants.

Let us not be fooled by the Russian narrative. Russia is waging a brutal, aggressive war that is very familiar to Russian and Soviet neighbours. The Soviet Union collapsed, but the Soviet methods of lies, murders, intimidation and deportation to Siberia are still being applied by the Russian Federation.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

Russia’s aggression started in 2014, when Russia occupied Crimea and launched its aggression against Ukraine in the Donbas region. From the very beginning of its aggression, Russia has committed crimes against the population of Ukraine. The numerous violations and abuses of human rights in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, especially against the Crimean Tatar population, are especially egregious. Such crimes have been condemned in the resolutions of the General Assembly and other important international bodies. As we are all aware, Russia’s membership in the Human Rights Council has been suspended. Russia is also no longer a part of the Council of Europe.

In 2022, Russia launched its full-scale aggression against Ukraine. Russia has attacked Ukraine’s population and civilian infrastructure from the first days of its aggression. As a result, an investigation is now being conducted in Ukraine into more than 30,000 war crimes and crimes of aggression committed since 24 February. Among them are cases involving the killing of around 7,000 civilians, including women and children. Those figures are growing daily due to unceasing, heavy shelling and air strikes on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure. A thousand Ukrainian educational and medical institutions have been damaged or destroyed. The aggressor State has reduced many flourishing Ukrainian cities to ruins

and ashes, including Mariupol, Bucha, Borodyanka, Irpin, Melitopol, Severodonetsk and many others, where hundreds of decomposing corpses of Ukrainian civilians — cynically slaughtered by Russian invaders, bullets, artillery and missile attacks — have remained unburied since the spring. The Russian invaders have also destroyed water and electricity supply systems in occupied Ukraine cities and towns. There is a complete absence of epidemiological control in the areas temporarily controlled by the Russian occupiers. Russia is also using different conventional weapons, including those prohibited under international law.

All military support provided to Ukraine is aimed at repelling that brutal aggression. The pressure on Russia must continue, including the imposition of new, tough sanctions and an increase of military aid to Ukraine, in order to repel the aggression .

Mr. Sarwani (Pakistan): My delegation is exercising its right of reply in response to the comments made by the representative of India.

Deflection and disinformation define India’s diplomacy today. The biggest falsehood that we have just heard is that Jammu and Kashmir is part of India. That is a legal fiction. In all its resolutions on the subject, the Security Council has decided that the final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined by its people through a United Nations-supervised plebiscite. India has accepted that decision and is bound to comply with it, in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The maps of the United Nations also show Kashmir as disputed territory. In Kashmir, the oldest United Nations peacekeeping force is deployed at present along the Line of Control. Above all, the report that is under consideration by the Security Council itself considers Kashmir to be disputed territory. If India has any respect for international law and moral courage, it will end its reign of terror, withdraw its troops and let the Kashmiris freely decide their future, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In order to divert attention from the ever-increasing international condemnation of India’s widespread and escalating human right abuses in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, India continues to level baseless allegations against us. History bears testimony to the undeniable reality that aggressors, colonizers and occupiers often attempt to justify the suppression of

legitimate struggle for self-determination and freedom by portraying them as terrorism. India is the very epitome of that approach.

Moreover, the Indian delegation's statement did not address the facts presented by my delegation regarding a destabilizing arms build-up and aggressive military policies. Rather, it made a self-serving assertion that this is not the right forum to raise those issues. Let me re-emphasize that the issues my delegation raised are completely relevant to the Committee's work, as they carry grave implications for regional and international peace and security. International bodies mandated to deliberate or negotiate security and disarmament issues do not do so in vacuum. The perceptions, doctrines and negotiating postures of States are not predicated solely on global developments, either.

Obviously, what the Indian delegation would not want this body to scrutinize is the overwhelming deployment of India's conventional and non-conventional capabilities against Pakistan. Pakistan has been and will continue to highlight those issues and Indian State terrorism against the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

As for comments regarding minorities, the Indian delegation would do well to reflect on the deeply troubling trajectory its State is embarked upon, rather than indulging in a patent falsehood about Pakistan. Today India is being guided by the Hindutva ideology, which has mainstreamed Islamophobia and bigotry against minorities, particularly Muslims, in its political discourse. In today's incredibly intolerant India, the 200-million strong Muslim minority faces frequent lynching by vigilantes and pogroms by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh thugs, with official complicity, discriminatory citizenship laws to disenfranchise Muslims, and a concerted campaign to destroy mosques and the rich Muslim heritage of India.

Regarding the reckless behaviour of launching a supersonic, nuclear-capable missile into Pakistan territories, as my delegation has already said, it is insufficient for India to dismiss that incident as an accident. The joint inquiry called for by Pakistan to answer questions relating to safety and security protocols and the reason for India's delayed admission of the missile launch is essential.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to take the floor to exercise the right of reply

to respond to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

My delegation would like to reiterate that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has launched as many as 39 ballistic missiles this year alone, including yesterday's launch of an intermediate-range ballistic missile, each of which is a gross violation of Security Council resolutions, which, in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations, we have all agreed to implement.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is also now all but ready to conduct a seventh nuclear test and has openly pursued its dangerous nuclear ambitions. That has significantly lowered the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons, while threatening the possibility of a pre-emptive nuclear attack. In that context, the Republic of Korea and the United States combined defence and deterrence posture, including joint exercises, is in response to such military threats from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Those defensive measures are, at the very least, the duty of a responsible Government.

Any attempt by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to justify its position and potential use of nuclear weapons, including the adoption of a new nuclear forces law on 8 September, will not be recognized by the international community under any circumstances. We take this opportunity to strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop all kinds of provocations and return to the denuclearization talks.

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

Ms. Homolkova (European Union): I take the floor to exercise the right of reply on behalf of the European Union and its member States in response to and in addressing the statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

The European Union categorically denounces the horrible and unfounded accusations that Russian officials continue to spread in an attempt to legitimize the Russian Federation's illegal war against Ukraine. The European Union also categorically rejects any questioning of the very existence of Ukraine as an independent and sovereign State. We urge the Russian Federation to stop its disinformation campaign and propaganda, as well as cyberattacks against Ukraine and other States.

We resolutely support Ukraine's inherent right of self-defence and the Ukrainian armed forces' efforts to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity and population, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. We demand that Russia immediately cease its military actions, withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders. The use of military force or coercion to change borders has no place in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Turner (United States of America): I have hesitated to reply to the Russian comments of the last couple of days, so full are they of outright lies, counterfactual statements and increasingly delusional threats. As for the charges against my country, the United States will maintain its unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will stand by Ukraine as it defends its sovereign, internationally recognized territory. Neither Ukraine nor the United States nor NATO is to blame for Russia's destruction of Ukraine and its destabilization of world security and the international rules-based order. The blame lies with Russia alone.

I would note, referring simply to yesterday as well, the irony that the same Russia that asserted its own sovereignty yesterday in this room under the banner of multipolarity (see A/C.1/77/PV.2) has shown no qualms about violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a neighbouring country or annexing parts of that

country it now claims it is prepared to defend by any means, including the potential use of nuclear weapons. That is simply unacceptable.

Mr. Kim In Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to take the floor to exercise its right of reply a second time in response to the provocative statement made by the representative of South Korea.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that we will never acknowledge the United Nations resolutions because they encroach upon the sovereignty and the right to development and existence of our country.

However hard South Korea tries, it cannot conceal the aggressive nature of its joint military exercises with the United States, which are clearly aimed at toppling our Government by use of force, as revealed by a close look at the operational plans conducted under the joint military exercises. We vividly remember the reckless remarks and offensive behaviour of South Korea and are closely watching all provocative military actions that South Korea conducts with the United States.

South Korea would be well advised to ponder the serious consequences its reckless remarks and behaviours would entail in the future. I would also like to strongly urge South Korea not forget our advice, even a single for a moment, that it would be preferable for South Korea not to deal with us any longer.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.