



General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

First Committee

4th meeting

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New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Pieris(Sri Lanka)

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

Agenda items 90 to 108 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: Before I open the floor for statements, I would like to remind all delegations that the list of speakers for this phase of our work is closed, in accordance with our programme of work and timetable. I hope that all delegations intending to take the floor during the general debate were able to inscribe themselves on the list before the deadline. The list of speakers for the thematic discussion and for the plenary meeting on working methods of the Committee and programme planning is now open.

I would like to further remind delegations that I count on their cooperation in respecting the time limit for statements and speaking at a reasonable speed in order to allow for adequate interpretation. Longer statements can be posted on the eStatements portal.

Before I give the floor to the first speaker, I would also like to welcome Mr. Ioan Tudor, the Secretary-General of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I thank him for his presence.

Mrs. Hanlomyuang (Thailand): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election, and to assure you of Thailand's support for the work of the Bureau and the First Committee.

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

Attaining peace and stability and pursuing disarmament have never been more important, given the multiple challenges that the world is trying to deal with. Despite the urgency of those challenges facing the international community, it is unfortunate that the slow pace of disarmament and the decline in trust and confidence have exacerbated them. At the same time, rising military spending, the modernization and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, advances in the relevant technology and growing cybersecurity risks have increased the complexity of the global security environment and made their effects more unpredictable.

The United Nations is not short of ideas about how to promote disarmament, peace and security. We need look no further than the report of the Secretary-General on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), and particularly the ideas in the proposed New Agenda for Peace such as the calls for a time frame for the elimination of nuclear weapons and for banning cyberattacks on civilian infrastructure. Many of those ideas build on proposals that the Secretary-General made some years ago in his report on *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. Despite new developments, the underlying philosophy of disarmament as a way to save humankind and human lives remains valid today. Ultimately, what we need is the sustained collective

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political will to act together and to act now to pursue disarmament and arms-control policies and attain sustainable peace and security for all so that human security can flourish. That is why Thailand supports the efforts to develop a New Agenda for Peace based on the shared interests of States. We also hope that it will complement the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to promote human security, including in new dimensions.

The world can and indeed must do without nuclear weapons. The failure to adopt an outcome at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was a disappointment. We urge all the parties to reaffirm their commitments to implementing their obligations and undertakings under all three pillars of the NPT in a balanced manner. In the meantime, the recent positive developments under the framework of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) are encouraging. Its successful First Meeting of States Parties has laid a sound foundation that will complement and strengthen the NPT. My delegation also congratulates the four States that recently ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and joins others in calling on the remaining annex 2 States to ratify it without delay. We must consolidate our efforts under these frameworks towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In doing that, Thailand is willing to work with various partners and in multiple frameworks that can lead to the same goal, whether that means the TPNW, the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament or others.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's recent surge in conducting intercontinental ballistic-missile tests and launching ballistic missiles is a worrisome development that threatens peace and stability in the region. Thailand urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to halt its ballistic-missile tests, comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and refrain from actions that could create obstacles to dialogue. We also want to encourage all parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to remain engaged through diplomatic means and to do their utmost to revitalize it. Thailand reiterates its full support for the invaluable work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in verifying and monitoring nuclear activities and protecting nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

The promotion of trust and confidence, in tandem with the pursuit of disarmament, is important to the maintenance of peace and stability. At the regional level, Thailand will continue to promote confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy based on fundamental principles of international law, as reflected in the Charter of the United Nations, ASEAN's basic principles and shared values and norms. As the depositary State of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone or Bangkok Treaty, Thailand is fully committed to maintaining its region free of nuclear weapons. We support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions and call for further efforts to provide legally binding commitments on security assurances in the context of those zones. We also welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of its decision 73/546, on convening a conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction also requires our full attention. In South-East Asia, we are committed to maintaining our region free of weapons of mass destruction, as called for in the ASEAN Charter. The threats from chemical weapons remain high in many parts of the world. We therefore call on Member States to fully comply with their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, especially this year, the twenty-fifth anniversary of its entry into force. We also emphasize how urgent it is to build up the verification mechanism under the Biological Weapons Convention in order to address proliferation in that area.

Small arms and light weapons continue to cause vast numbers of casualties all over the world and are frequently associated with transnational crime, terrorism and human rights violations. Their illicit trade has become an obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Thailand therefore welcomed the adoption at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects of its outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2022/1), which also sets a robust agenda for the Programme of Action's fourth Review Conference. Thailand particularly welcomed the decision to establish a fellowship training programme to strengthen technical knowledge and build up capacity in related areas. Thailand also supported the establishment of the Open-

ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition and reaffirms its commitment to the principles and purposes of the Arms Trade Treaty, which we are working towards ratifying as soon as possible.

As a State party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Thailand has successfully returned more than 98 per cent of safe land back to its people. However, because of various challenges, including access to hard-to-reach areas, Thailand has submitted a request for an extension of the article 5 deadline. We will strengthen regional and international cooperation to make Thailand mine-free.

Outer space is a common heritage of humankind and its uses must be limited to peaceful ones. In that regard, we are supportive of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours in order to prevent outer space from becoming another arena for an arms race.

There is an urgent need to address the alarming rise of cyberthreats. Thailand welcomes the work on this matter of the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, and emphasizes that capacity-building programmes are essential to addressing our growing cyber challenges. Thailand also welcomes the adoption of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan on the Implementation of Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace.

In conclusion, we hope that the efforts of this Committee will create a positive impact and much-needed momentum for the work of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Thailand reaffirms its commitment to upholding its international obligations and working with all parties towards achieving a more secure and peaceful world.

Mr. Sánchez Kiesslich (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. You can count on Mexico's support for the success of our work. I also express my delegation's appreciation for the remarks of the President of the General Assembly (see A/C.1/77/PV.3) and of High Representative Nakamitsu (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

The current international security context is worrisome. As we continue to face the ravages of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the global economic

slowdown and the global food crisis, geopolitical tensions, military spending and arsenal modernization seem to be the norm. In addition, the threat of the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons is more present than ever. That is why the results that the First Committee can achieve are especially important and necessary. It is time to support multilateralism, to cooperate, to show solidarity in the face of those challenges and to fulfil the central mandate of this forum.

In my country's view, it is imperative to avoid the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from a nuclear detonation. Nuclear disarmament, 77 years after the founding of the United Nations, remains unfinished business. Far from seeing progress towards the goal of achieving and sustaining a world free of nuclear weapons, current trends show a clinging to the false logic of deterrence and all the risks that entails. Very simply, weapons of mass destruction do not guarantee international security — they endanger humankind. In that regard, we regret that no agreement on a final document was reached at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That was a great opportunity to endorse the unequivocal commitments of the States parties, create new measures for the non-proliferation and disarmament regime and effectively promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Notwithstanding the result, the NPT regime remains in force. My country will continue to promote it along with other legally binding instruments on nuclear disarmament, from the strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the preparations for the second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, over which Mexico will have the honour of presiding.

We also raise our voices in favour of the universality of other instruments on the matter, in the hope that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will enter into force as soon as possible, and that, meanwhile, the letter and spirit of the Treaty will be respected. My country also condemns the development or use of other weapons of mass destruction, and we urge the States parties to the multilateral frameworks that prohibit the use of chemical and biological weapons to comply with and respect their commitments, since the use of those weapons also represents a serious threat. Since Mexico's term as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution

1540 (2004), and taking into account the logic of synergies, we have advocated for the universality of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, as well as the effective control of nuclear, chemical and biological materials, since we recognize the impending interest of terrorist groups in acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction.

The impact of the wide availability of small arms and light weapons in our societies is unquestionable. Irresponsible flows, diversion and illicit trafficking underpin conflicts in all regions of the world. They fuel phenomena such as organized crime and exacerbate violence, as they claim more lives every day. Unfortunately, the greater the availability of weapons, the more attractive an alternative violence will be to peace. It is extremely important not to normalize those facts and to exercise a shared responsibility to strengthen the existing political and legal mechanisms. We note with satisfaction that various processes have achieved successful results. The recent 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 and the eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty show clearly that although it was not easy to include all the concerns and aspirations of States, the constructive spirit of the international community ultimately prevailed in favour of international security. We also recognize the work being done on ammunition and reiterate that it is an element that is inseparable from any discussion on small arms and light weapons. We call for the compatibility and complementarity of various processes in that regard to be strengthened.

Mexico notes the similarities throughout the international architecture, highlighting in particular Security Council resolution 2616 (2021), adopted last December, which contains a number of provisions on respect for United Nations arms embargoes. The resolution also promotes greater cooperation and exchange of information on traffickers and trafficking routes, illicit financial transactions and arms brokering or diversion activities.

There is mounting evidence that outer space and cyberspace are being used in a manner that is contrary to international peace and security. Despite the great similarities between the two areas in terms of the need to preserve their peaceful uses, they are once again being considered as viable and legitimate areas for

confrontation or deterrence, which is worrisome. Global development has never been more dependent on the use of cyberspace and outer space. It is essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of peaceful activities, tying them to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

I conclude with a reminder: disarmament is not an end in itself, it is a means to achieve a more secure and peaceful world. The disarmament machinery must prioritize dialogue, cooperation and negotiations in good faith. It is therefore in our interest to hold constructive deliberations that benefit us all and strengthen the security environment.

Ms. Schwalger (New Zealand): At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your appointment and to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

It seems that every year when we gather for the First Committee, our statements record our concern at the deteriorating global security environment, the violations of international humanitarian law and the failure of multilateral disarmament forums to respond in an appropriately robust or urgent way. Such statements seem nothing short of inadequate in 2022.

Our work takes place under the dark cloud of Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal invasion of Ukraine. Russia's so-called "referendums" in eastern and southern Ukraine constitute a new and additional act of aggression and a breach of the fundamental rules of international law. We strongly condemn Russia's actions, and we do not recognize Russia's illegal attempts to change Ukraine's borders or territorial sovereignty, including through annexation. Any steps by Russia that risk a further escalation of the war in Ukraine are reckless. As we have done from the start of Russia's invasion, we continue to call on President Putin to act in accordance with international obligations, cease Russia's invasion of Ukraine, withdraw troops and return to diplomatic negotiations as a pathway to the resolution of the conflict.

North Korea's continued ballistic missile and nuclear programmes, in contravention of Security Council resolutions, and its recent launch of a missile over Japan also demonstrate a reckless disregard for international rules. They undermine and pose a serious threat to our security. And reports that North Korea is preparing for a nuclear test are deeply troubling. The international community must stand together

to demonstrate that those actions are unacceptable. Russia's nuclear sabre-rattling and indeed the latest missile launch by North Korea have further underscored for New Zealand the importance of our struggle against nuclear weapons. That is a fight we have pursued across decades, in many different forums and in concert with a vast range of partners. It is a fight that has yet to deliver satisfactory results. But as our Prime Minister confirmed here at the United Nations (see A/77/PV.10) a few weeks ago, it is an effort we will continue.

To see the use of nuclear weapons being threatened again demonstrates the urgency of pursuing their total elimination. The only way to guarantee that people will be safe from the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons is for them not to exist. We are of course accustomed to being called naive for our relentless pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons and our belief that such a world can be achieved. But is it not the alternative that requires a suspension of reality? Will the continued existence of some 14,000 nuclear weapons — many on high alert — not tempt or risk use by someone, somewhere? Will threats to use nuclear weapons, made at times of extremely high tension and low trust, not risk miscalculation or overreaction leading to their detonation? And will persistent statements about the critical importance of nuclear deterrence for State security not eventually lead to the further proliferation of nuclear weapons? As our Prime Minister said, there is no question that nuclear disarmament is an enormous challenge. But if given the choice — and we are being given a choice — surely we would choose the challenge of disarmament rather than the consequence of a failed strategy of weapons-based deterrence.

Disarmament is the choice that Aotearoa New Zealand has made. It is why we urge all countries to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the clearest possible message a country can send of its opposition to those weapons and of its commitment to achieving a world without them. The successful first Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, together with the declaration and action plan adopted there, demonstrated the commitment and determination of TPNW supporters to moving forward on nuclear disarmament in an inclusive and transparent manner. We encourage all countries to join us in those efforts.

Our choice of disarmament over destruction is also why we continue to advocate for meaningful progress on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT). We remain deeply disappointed in Russia's decision to block the Review Conference outcome. But it will not weaken our commitment to pursuing full implementation of the Treaty and of its article VI in particular. The nuclear-weapon States must remedy the long-standing deficit in the fulfilment of their NPT disarmament obligations in order to restore confidence that they still intend to relinquish their nuclear arsenals — not when the time may be right for them but with the urgency demanded by an obligation that has been unsatisfied for 50 years.

Of course, nuclear disarmament is not the only challenge we face. Civilians continue to bear the brunt of all conflicts, including as a result of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. New Zealand is pleased to have been active in the negotiation of a political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas and looks forward to formally endorsing it next month in Ireland. At the same time, Aotearoa New Zealand continues to encourage the universalization and full implementation of conventional weapons treaties, including the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We condemn every use of such weapons and urge all parties to current conflicts to refrain from using them.

We are concerned at the lack of meaningful progress on autonomous weapons systems within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. That forum must meaningfully translate the development of substantive understandings over prohibitions, rules and limits into formal, agreed progress. We regret that some States are frustrating the efforts of a growing majority in that regard. We and the existing disarmament institutions must demonstrate that we are up to the task of addressing the newest challenges of the international disarmament agenda, even as we continue to grapple with the long-standing ones as well.

Finally, the challenges before us are immense, and the growing risk is seemingly overwhelming. But we are not defeatist and will not allow pessimism to discourage us from pursuing a safer and more secure world. We will continue to play our part.

Mr. Khalek (Egypt): First of all, I warmly congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairship of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. You, Sir, and the Secretariat may rest assured of the support of my delegation.

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), namely Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Egypt.

At the outset, Mr. Chair, the NAC congratulates you on your assumption of the chairship of the First Committee this year. We assure you of the full cooperation of the NAC.

As members are well aware, this year's session is being held amid profound global peace and security challenges. The world has changed dramatically since last year. The NAC is alarmed and dismayed by threats to use nuclear weapons and increasingly strident nuclear rhetoric. Recent international tensions, including the conflict in Ukraine, have taken on an increasing nuclear dimension. We strongly reiterate the fact that any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. We condemn unequivocally any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances.

Against that backdrop, the NAC deeply regrets the lack of any substantive outcome at the 2022 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — the second consecutive failure of the NPT Review Conference to agree on a final document. We are gravely concerned about the impact of that development on the credibility of the NPT and the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is important to highlight that the draft final document reaffirmed existing nuclear disarmament-related obligations and commitments — which remain valid until fully implemented — including their unequivocal undertaking. The NAC expects all NPT States parties to fully implement those obligations and commitments. In particular, with respect to the nuclear-weapon States, the lack of consensus at the Review Conference does not excuse them from fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities.

It is deeply concerning that the nuclear-weapon States and States under extended nuclear deterrence guarantees have increased the salience of nuclear weapons in their security and nuclear doctrines, policies and postures. In the view of the NAC, this trend runs counter to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The NAC urges all NPT States parties to bolster their efforts to fully implement their obligations under

article VI of the NPT and related commitments agreed at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

We also express our continued deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament is a legal obligation and remains an urgent — and as yet unfulfilled — moral and ethical imperative. Accordingly, the NAC will continue to advocate for the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures as part of the fulfilment of NPT obligations and commitments. In 1995 the NPT was extended indefinitely, with the mantra “permanence with accountability”. We were encouraged that modest proposals on improving transparency and accountability at the tenth NPT Review Conference were discussed. Despite the Review Conference's failure, we should collectively seek to build upon those proposals to strengthen the implementation of the NPT in the coming review cycle.

Meanwhile, we remain deeply concerned about policies and pronouncements that move further away from the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and detract from related global norms, including those against nuclear weapons use and testing. We see deeply concerning signs that nuclear weapons stockpiles are now increasing. The global security environment is not an excuse for inaction with regard to achieving nuclear disarmament. It reinforces its urgency. In a world beset by challenges, an enormous amount of resources are being dedicated to the maintenance, development and modernization of nuclear arsenals. Those resources could be better utilized in the pursuit of a better future, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is clear that the multilateral disarmament machinery is not delivering results. In addition to the failure of another NPT Review Conference, the continued stagnation of the Conference on Disarmament is not tenable. One positive development this year was the successful conclusion of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in Vienna. That meeting and the action plan for implementation it adopted reflect the commendable political will and true commitment of all States that participated in that process. As an effective measure on nuclear disarmament, the TPNW is fully consistent with and complements the NPT.

The NAC is fully committed to the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is fundamental to recall that the basis for the adoption of the NPT is the grand bargain, which was reconfirmed in the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. Any presumption of indefinite possession of nuclear weapons runs counter to the object and purpose of the NPT and threatens to erode its credibility and effectiveness.

The NAC affirms the significant contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to nuclear disarmament efforts and achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. We encourage nuclear-weapon States to take all measures necessary to bring into force the protocols to those treaties and to review, with the aim of withdrawing any reservations or interpretive declarations. The NAC emphasizes the importance of the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We acknowledge the successful organization in 2019 and 2021 by the Secretary-General of the first and second sessions of a conference to elaborate a treaty to establish the zone on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by all States of the region, and are encouraged by the outcomes. We should capitalize on the progress achieved so far.

Almost 25 years ago, the NAC Ministers for Foreign Affairs called on the Governments of each of the nuclear-weapon States and the three nuclear-weapons-capable States to commit themselves unequivocally to the elimination of their respective nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapons capability and to agree to start work immediately on the practical steps and negotiations required for its achievement. That call shall remain valid until its attainment.

As we approach the beginning of the next review cycle of the NPT in 2023, there is a plain and urgent need for all States parties to the NPT to confront the challenges facing the Treaty. We need clear, united resolve and a definite path forward towards the full implementation of the obligations under article VI of the NPT, most of all by the nuclear-weapon States. They need to show leadership in this regard to halt the erosion of the NPT and to achieve our shared goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Iraq would like to sincerely congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship

of the First Committee at its seventy-seventh session, as well as the other members of the Bureau. This session is taking place at a time when the international security situation is growing increasingly tense. We must combine our efforts and fully support you and your team in order to guarantee the success of our session this year. We also thank the Chair and the Bureau of the previous session of the First Committee.

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

Iraq is convinced that strengthening the universality of conventions and treaties on disarmament, including those concerning weapons of mass destruction, and nuclear weapons in particular, is the only guarantee of the non-use or threat of use of those weapons. That would avoid the catastrophic effects of the use of those lethal weapons owing to their destructive potential for humankind and the environment alike. Iraq stresses the need to retain the issue of nuclear disarmament at the top of the of the international community's agenda until we achieve the ultimate objective, which is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the prohibition of their use or threat of use under any circumstances or for any reason.

In that context, Iraq's delegation is disappointed at the failure of the 2015 and 2020 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We stress the need for political will and flexibility to overcome the obstacles faced in the past and to adopt measures and recommendations to fully eliminate those destructive weapons.

Once again, Iraq warns against procrastination in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which undermines the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes and negatively affects the credibility of the NPT and its achievement of universality. We stress that the international community in general, and the three sponsor States of that resolution in particular, need to assume their responsibilities to establish such a zone, which would contribute to the promotion of international peace and security.

In that context, Iraq calls for support for efforts to convene a conference to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Iraq urges all parties

concerned to maintain their support for the success of the third session, to be held in November. We stress our position that those efforts and outcomes must support international and United Nations efforts towards the creation of that zone, in accordance with the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference and with relevant successive resolutions. Iraq is of the view that it is impossible to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East without Israel joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State, eliminating its nuclear weapons and subjecting all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Everyone knows that mines and remnant explosive devices are dangerous to Member States, including my country, Iraq. They kill and maim thousands of people and have long-term economic, social and environmental effects. They also cause loss of agricultural land and reduce access to resources. In that context, Iraqi national institutions are pursuing their efforts to overcome challenges, establish contingency plans for liberated areas, undertake prioritized survey and demining work and register the names of the victims of those military devices. They are also promoting awareness among affected communities and displaced persons before they return safely to their homes. Iraq thanks all States and parties that have provided support in that field. We stress the dire need for the international community to continue supporting national institutions in order to eliminate those deadly weapons, which endanger people, the economy and the environment.

Iraq welcomes the first annual report (see A/77/275) of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, established pursuant to resolution 75/240 of 2020. We express our full support and are ready to make efforts for the success of the fourth and fifth sessions next year in the hope that recommendations will be adopted to support developing countries address the challenges and risks of using information and communications technologies, in addition to growing threats in that field.

Turning to conventional weapons, Iraq welcomes the adoption by consensus of the outcome document of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects. We look forward to implementing its recommendations, particularly those

regarding the United Nations Fellowship Programme on small arms and light weapons.

Once again, Iraq reiterates its commitment to the multilateral approach in many fields, including disarmament. We stress the importance of the role played by the Disarmament Conference as the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We stress the need for States members of the Conference to assume full responsibility and demonstrate the flexibility and political will for the Conference necessary to resume its negotiating role and end the stalemate it has been suffering for nearly two decades.

In conclusion, we reiterate our wishes for the success of the First Committee and for achieving the desired results while meeting the concerns of the Member States. For lack of time, the full text of my statement will be posted on the eStatements portal.

Mr. Muhith (Bangladesh): I warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I am confident that we will have a productive session under your able stewardship. We also welcome the members of the Bureau to the Committee.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). Allow me to share a few points in my national capacity.

Born out of the horrors of the Second World War, the United Nations envisioned a world free of nuclear weapons in its very first resolution (resolution 1(I)). Seventy-six years have since passed. Sadly, the promise of disarmament remains elusive. Our present and future generations will continue to live under the constant fear of nuclear catastrophe. The international community must be united against the perpetual holding of nuclear weapons by a handful of States, in total disregard for the safety and security of humankind.

Bangladesh's commitment to general and complete disarmament is total and unwavering. It is our constitutional obligation and remains a fundamental tenet of our peace-centric foreign policy objectives. Guided by that principle, Bangladesh continues to remain at the forefront in assuming higher obligations under all major multilateral disarmament treaties.

Bangladesh expresses its deep concern over the current difficult and complex situation in the field of disarmament and international security. We believe

that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security lies in the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It was in that conviction that we ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We welcome the coming into force of the Treaty on 22 January 2021 and the convening of its first Meeting of States Parties from 21 to 23 June, which adopted a political declaration and an action plan. We would like to see, as a matter of priority, its full implementation by all, including the nuclear-weapon-possessing States.

We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the fundamental foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. My delegation expresses deep disappointment over the consecutive failure of the ninth and tenth Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT to adopt a consensual outcome document. We call upon the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate their genuine political will to enable the eleventh NPT Review Conference to produce a meaningful, tangible and sustainable outcome to further strengthen the NPT regime.

We underline the importance and relevance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. We welcome the convening of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission in April and underscore our full support for its work, which must be intensified through reinvigorated political will to achieve meaningful outcomes to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation.

We reiterate our concerns over the protracted impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, due to the lack of consensus on a programme of work over the past two decades. This situation must be addressed carefully and urgently. Efforts must also be scaled up for the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Bangladesh recognizes the inalienable rights of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including in power generation, health care and agriculture, among other areas. We believe that such rights come with certain responsibilities and, on that premise, we are

constructing the first nuclear power plant in Bangladesh to support our development efforts. We are deeply conscious of our responsibilities and proceeding in line with the highest standards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We reiterate our support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and underscore that there can be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons. Bangladesh believes in the importance of upholding the credibility and integrity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We also reaffirm our full support for the Biological Weapons Convention and look forward to working together with the international community to strengthen the Convention to face future challenges.

Bangladesh fully shares the concerns of the international community that the illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons pose a serious threat to security and stability in the world. We have consistently supported the adoption 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 and called for its speedy and effective implementation. We welcome the successful convening of the eighth Biennial Meeting of the States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action and its outcome document. We also welcome its decision to establish a standing dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise in areas related to 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, particularly in developing countries. We also reaffirm our commitment to fulfilling our obligations under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols, to which we are party.

The disarmament discourse continues to be redefined by rapid technological advancements, including in artificial intelligence and biotechnology. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) have brought immense benefits to our peoples, yet our increasing dependence on digital technologies has created new vulnerabilities. Bangladesh strongly rejects the illegal or malicious use of ICTs, which are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international peace and security. We call for multilateral efforts to safeguard cyberspace from becoming an arena of conflict. In that regard, we reiterate our commitment to the success of

the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, established pursuant to resolution 75/240. We stress the importance of Member State capacity-building and confidence-building measures to enhance the stability and security of cyberspace.

Bangladesh emphasizes the inalienable right of all Member States to explore and use outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. In that conviction, we became a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space last year. We believe that States, regardless of their level of capacity in space science research and technology, ought to be able to bring their perspectives and concerns when defining the future rules for outer space. We reiterate our call for a legally binding international instrument for preventing the weaponization of outer space.

Achieving the United Nations disarmament agenda requires strong political will and genuine commitment. It is time to show that we genuinely mean business by breaking deadlocks, to start with, in our discourse. Only then can we make real progress in moving closer to the goal of a peaceful and more secure world. Bangladesh stands ready to work together with the international community towards that goal. I assure you, Mr. Chair, of my delegation's full support to you in all your efforts to make this a successful session.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I wish you and the other members of the Bureau every success. You have the complete support of my delegation during this session.

Argentina has built a two-pronged international security and non-proliferation policy. The first is related to the right to development and peaceful use of advanced technologies, while the second relates to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological, and their means of delivery and related technologies.

My country has a substantial and exclusively peaceful nuclear programme, as we are a producer and exporter of nuclear technology. In that respect, we strictly observe the norms enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, we regret that, despite

the efforts of the Chair of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, for the second consecutive time the Review Conference was unable to adopt a final outcome document or recommendations to advance the implementation of the Treaty. In that context, we urge those States that possess nuclear weapons to comply with their unambiguous obligations to completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, in accordance with article VI of the NPT and the commitments emanating from the NPT Review Conferences. We reaffirm that the NPT does not establish any right to the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by any State. The Treaty establishes a temporary status. We highlight the commitment of the parties to the NPT, with respect to the assessment of that instrument, to interaction, dialogue and negotiation on all aspects relating to the rights and obligations to which the Treaty refers. In that respect, we appreciate the support of the Chair throughout the Conference and its preparatory process.

We express our concern at the risks facing nuclear facilities containing nuclear and radioactive materials in Ukraine that could be affected by the conflict in that country, and we call on all parties involved to put an end to the hostilities. We express our support for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency, its independence and its reports on technological and physical security and safeguards, including the studies based on the seven indispensable pillars to ensure nuclear physical and technological security during an armed conflict.

In that regard, we express our deep concern at the threat to humankind posed by the existence, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons and the humanitarian impact, all of which are of special relevance due to our current international context. The use and threat of use of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. We also reiterate our call on the international community, as we did in our capacity as Chair of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States at the meeting commemorating the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, to initiate negotiations and the adoption of a universal legally binding instrument on negative security assurances as soon as possible. That is the legitimate right of all non-nuclear-weapon States.

Argentina recognizes the common interest of humankind and the sovereign right of all States to participate in the exploration and the use of outer space for purely peaceful purposes. My country is therefore convinced that an arms race in outer space and the placement or use of weapons there, besides being a severe threat to international peace and security, would affect the sustainable development of our countries. Argentina supports negotiations, in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, on a treaty prohibiting the placement of weapons in outer space. In the absence of such efforts, it is appropriate and necessary to strengthen confidence-building and transparency measures in outer space.

Argentina has actively worked for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), constantly seeking to update its regulatory framework, participating in the most important coordination mechanisms for non-proliferation and technological and physical security, and improving capacity for the effective implementation of its mandate. In that regard, we have been working in coordination with all competent national bodies to update our national implementation report, the most recent version of which was submitted in 2020. We also wish to express the importance we attach to the Biological Weapons Convention and reiterate our resolve to build consensus with a view to the success of the ninth Review Conference. We hope that the Review Conference will conclude with effective measures to strengthen the Convention, 50 years after its opening for signature.

We reaffirm our commitment to disarmament agenda and conventional weapons regulation agreements, including with respect to the emerging challenges posed by autonomous weapons technology. In that regard, we recall that Argentina, with other countries, has proposed a legally binding instrument in the form of an additional protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which we hope will contribute to addressing that issue.

Lastly, we stress our commitment to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. That will require renewed efforts at the global, regional, subregional and national levels. It is also necessary to ensure a controlled trade that takes into consideration the economic, health, gender and human rights dimensions of the matter, as well as through-life ammunition management.

Mr. Bobozoda (Tajikistan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I reiterate my delegation's full support for your chairmanship throughout the session.

Eliminating the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction remains one of the most important issues in the world. In that context, strengthening multilateral mechanisms of control over weapons, disarmament and non-proliferation is key to maintaining global security and stability. Tajikistan attaches great importance to the further strengthening of the disarmament, non-proliferation regimes and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The establishment of nuclear-free zones is an essential component of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the expansion of cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and the strengthening of regional and international peace and security. To that end, Tajikistan was among the five countries of Central Asia that created a zone free of nuclear weapons in Central Asia.

Our country shares the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and believes that no mechanism of nuclear disarmament can be effective without the accession of all concerned parties. In that regard, we call for the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the speedy enforcement of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Since joining the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in 1995, the Republic of Tajikistan has been fully committed to the implementation of its provisions. Tajikistan backs the idea that any use of chemical weapons under any circumstances, anywhere, at any time and by anyone should be considered a violation of international law. Much importance is attached to the efficient implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Tajikistan strives to see Central Asia free from landmines and calls upon international partners to contribute to achieving that noble goal.

Tajikistan supports the leading role of the United Nations in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and considers it crucial to the implementation 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, as a main multilateral mechanism to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We recognize the leading role of the United Nations in promoting dialogue among the Member States in information and communications technologies, which create huge opportunities for economic, political and social development, and in particular for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals worldwide.

Threats such as terrorism, extremism, drug and arms trafficking, cybercrime and other forms of cross-border organized crime have a tendency to increase exponentially. Therefore, the Government of Tajikistan, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and its partners will be holding the High-level International Conference on International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 18 and 19 October. We invite members to attend that important conference.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Tajikistan's commitment to cooperating closely with all United Nations Member States and international organizations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and to find solutions to our global challenges.

Mr. MOUNGARA MOUSSOTSI (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Like those who have spoken before me in this general debate, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I assure you of the full support of my delegation.

We endorse the statement delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). We thank them for their statements.

The adoption of the general and complete disarmament process raised hopes of one day seeing a world free of weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons. Several decades later, those hopes have been disappointed by the lack of significant progress and even troubling backsliding in the matter. Of course, there have been some achievements that we can attribute to our collective engagement in favour of disarmament. That is true of the adoption of bilateral and multilateral disarmament agreements, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, more recently, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons. There was a failure both in 2015 and this year to agree on a final document at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Moreover, repeated negative votes on resolutions calling for the substantial reduction in nuclear arsenals and disarmament reflect a clear lack of will to make progress in the implementation of the pillars of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Gabon is committed to vertical and horizontal disarmament. Prioritizing vertical disarmament does not do justice to those who want to see a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons. Excessive armament is based on a lack of trust among Powers and a lack of will to ensure coexistence grounded in respect for the universal values of peace and solidarity. Moreover, precious resources are being squandered and diverted to the detriment of the vital sectors of economy, education, agriculture and health care. We call for reduced military spending in order to increase the chances of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and improving health coverage, especially given that humankind is still facing the coronavirus disease pandemic and other major challenges that affect our security and collective well-being. To that end, it is crucial to both preserve and implement the NPT. Gabon remains strongly committed to the non-proliferation regime. The seismic observation facility maintained in the south-east of our country in the framework of the implementation of the Treaty testifies to my country's unwavering commitment in that regard.

Gabon condemns the use of chemical weapons due not only to their devastating effects but also to the untold human suffering that they inflict. Gabon is party to international instruments prohibiting the use of such weapons, including the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which entered into force in February 1928. It is the first major instrument prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons. We are also a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which opened for signature in Paris on 13 January 1993 and entered into force on 29 April 1997. We must also make progress in that regard.

Turning to conventional weapons, we welcome the tangible progress made with the adoption of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons; and,

above all, the April 2014 adoption of the legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). I welcome the accession of my country to the ATT, which strengthens our advocacy in the battle against the proliferation of weapons. Gabon calls for the lifting of the ongoing impediments to the full implementation of those instruments, notably as concerns the identification and marking, as well as the preservation and sharing of information.

Since the opening days of our debate, the President of the General Assembly has been inviting us to play our part in the vanguard of disarmament efforts for humankind. We must meet those immense challenges. That can happen only if the Member States gathered here make a sincere commit to do just that.

Mr. Ogasawara (Japan): At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Ambassador Mohan Pieris, on your assumption of the chairpersonship of the First Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. The full text of my speech will be uploaded to the *The Journal of the United Nations*.

Seventy-seven years have passed since the atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ever since that moment, Japan has assigned to itself this mission of taking the lead in international efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. The tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never be repeated. It is regrettable that the final document of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was not adopted due to the objection of only one country. However, that bitter outcome should not hinder by any means our joint courses of action towards a world without nuclear weapons. To that end, Japan will again this year submit to the First Committee a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament. We hope that the draft resolution will garner the widest possible support as a vehicle for our genuine aspiration for our shared goal.

On the very first day of the NPT Review Conference, Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio announced the Hiroshima Action Plan, which is rooted in the following five actions: sharing the recognition of the importance of continuing the record of non-use of nuclear weapons; enhancing transparency, including the disclosure of information on the status of the production of fissile materials; maintaining the decreasing trend of the global nuclear stockpile; securing nuclear non-proliferation and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and promoting an accurate understanding of the realities of

nuclear weapons use, especially through encouraging visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki by international leaders and others.

Since the height of the Cold War, there has been a consistent decrease in the global nuclear stockpile. That downward trend must be maintained and shall not be reversed. The early commencement and conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty is crucial to preventing an increase in the number of nuclear weapons. Japan calls on the nuclear-weapon States to declare or maintain moratoriums on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Last month, a high-level meeting of the Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was convened, with the participation of many Heads of State and Government and ministers. During the meeting, Prime Minister Kishida reiterated the importance of the early entry into force of the CTBT and emphasized that all existing moratoriums on nuclear weapon test explosions should be maintained. Japan urges all States to make every effort to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again and to refrain from any inflammatory rhetoric concerning the use of nuclear weapons. In that regard, President Putin's speech on Russian nuclear force, in the context of the aggression against Ukraine, squarely contradicts the joint leaders statement made by five nuclear-weapon States in January, affirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Japan urges the nuclear-weapon States, in particular the Russian Federation, to honour — not by words, but by actions — the crucial commitment made in their statement. Japan condemns the words and actions implying nuclear threats by the Russian Federation in the course of its aggression against Ukraine.

Concrete actions should be taken to reduce the risk of unintended nuclear weapon use. Efforts to increase transparency and accountability through reporting will contribute to increasing trust and confidence among all Member States. Japan also encourages China to continue its efforts to fulfil its responsibility as a nuclear-weapon State within the NPT and as an important player in the international community and to engage in bilateral dialogues with the United States under the NPT.

Japan is deeply concerned about North Korea's continued development of nuclear and missile capabilities and condemns a series of recent launches,

including that on 4 October, which flew over Japanese territory for the first time in five years, and a further missile launch the following day. Japan calls on all Member States to reaffirm their strong commitment to the goal of achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all of North Korea's nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, as well as ballistic missiles of all ranges in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. We also call on all Member States to fully implement those resolutions.

Japan underlines the vital importance of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention. We support the activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and extend our full support to the success of the ninth Review Conference of the BWC this year.

Japan underlines the urgency of the universalization and implementation of conventional arms control and disarmament frameworks. It is because of this sense of urgency that Japan, as the Chair of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, promotes international cooperation for mine action.

Once again this year, Japan, alongside Colombia and South Africa, will submit to the First Committee a draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Japan hopes that a consensus adoption of this draft resolution will demonstrate our united determination to tackle this problem.

Japan welcomes the ongoing discussions on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems in the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, in particular, those of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. Japan supports the Open-ended Working Group to foster common understanding on responsible behaviour in outer space. Japan has decided to commit to not conduct destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing.

Finally, Japan welcomes the adoption of the annual progress report of the Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025. Japan will continue to actively contribute to the promotion of a free, fair and secure cyberspace.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on assuming the leadership of the First Committee and to assure you of Armenia's full support for your efforts in guiding the work of the Committee, while also bearing in mind the challenging security environment in our region.

Armenia reaffirms its strong commitment to the full and universal implementation of the legally binding international obligations in the areas of non-proliferation, disarmament, conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. The full, complete and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and their technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving general and complete disarmament.

Throughout the years, Armenia has been committed to the implementation of the legally binding Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. Regrettably, the integrity of the conventional arms control regime has been seriously undermined due to systematic, intentional and massive violations of its core provisions by some parties. Policies of use of force to settle disputes, warmongering, State-led radicalization and identity-building on the basis of the dehumanization of entire nations and ethnic groups have been rising as dangerous tendencies detrimental to global and regional peace and security. The United Nations must stand united in resolutely rejecting the use or threat of force in violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in all instances.

Uncontrolled and unabated military build-up and military posturing represent warning signs of the threat of escalation and therefore should be closely monitored and assessed by the international organizations, including by missions on the ground. Strengthening of the monitoring, fact-finding and reporting capacities of the United Nations is crucial to the timely identification of the risks of dangerous escalation and the prevention of atrocities.

The aggressive actions of Azerbaijan against Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity represent an imminent threat to peace and security in

the South Caucasus region and beyond. The military offensive unleashed by Azerbaijan recently, on 13 September, targeted the eastern and south-eastern regions of Armenia, causing more than 200 deaths, including among the civilian population. Around 8,000 people, mostly women, children and the elderly, were temporarily displaced. Densely populated cities deep in the territory of Armenia came under targeted fire, in gross violation of the Geneva Conventions. Those attacks were preceded by previous acts of aggression in May, July and November 2021.

In flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, Azerbaijan captured, tortured and killed a number of Armenian service personnel, among them several women, who were exposed to the most despicable barbarities, including sexual and gender-based violence, violent murders and mutilations. The shocking videos of barbaric extrajudicial executions of Armenian prisoners of war are extensively celebrated over social networks in Azerbaijan. The well-documented evidence pointing to the criminal conduct of Azerbaijan's military is undeniable. It is ever-more imperative that all acts of atrocities be fully investigated and that perpetrators, including the leadership of the Azerbaijani armed forces, be brought to justice.

Last week, on 28 September, the invading Azeri forces resorted to yet another military provocation with the use of mortars and large-calibre weapons, which resulted in the killing of three servicemen. The Azerbaijani forces continue their concentration and reinforcement of positions along the borders and in the occupied parts of Armenia, posing a risk of further escalation. The well-established records of the non-compliance of that neighbouring country with treaties and regimes in the area of conventional arms control, unnotified large-scale military exercises, uncontrolled military build-up and consistent refusal to implement confidence- and security-building measures in the framework of regional arrangements throughout the years have demonstrated a clear intent to instigate further military aggression in our region. Regrettably, the lack of adequate reaction from the relevant international and regional structures and action in response to the clear incompliance of Azerbaijan with its legally binding obligations allowed the latter to further pursue its aggressive policies.

Armenia has brought the issue of the recent attacks and invasion by Azerbaijan to the attention of the Security Council and will continue to raise the matter

with the United Nations and its respective bodies so that they will stand up to their responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and resolutely condemn the criminal attacks against the territorial integrity of Armenia, and to call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the troops from our territory. We are convinced that the international structures should be resolute in the face of systemic and flagrant violations of legally binding international obligations. The criminal practice of using force to capture territories or to resolve international disputes must be unequivocally condemned and the violators be sanctioned accordingly.

Mr. Kvalheim (Norway): Norway has actively promoted nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for decades and remains committed to working towards a world without nuclear weapons.

Current challenges to nuclear disarmament are numerous. Over the past few months, global security has rapidly deteriorated. Russia's unprovoked and ruthless military attack on Ukraine and continued reckless rhetoric on nuclear weapons is a direct threat to international security. It is worth recalling that just a few weeks before the invasion, Russia signed a joint statement of the five permanent members of the Security Council, affirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

Proliferation challenges are on the rise and causing great concern. The continuous development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its nuclear weapons programme and its recently announced policy for use are destabilizing and deeply disturbing. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to re-commit to meaningful negotiations towards that end. Furthermore, Norway is deeply concerned for the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We urge Iran to return to compliance with its nuclear-related commitments.

Any use of nuclear weapons would have global ramifications. The humanitarian and environmental consequences would be catastrophic. Yes, it is in the interest of the very survival of humankind that nuclear weapons never be used again. A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Thus, we cannot allow the threshold for nuclear use to be lowered. We must persist in our efforts to reduce the risks and to pave the way for future disarmament and arms control agreements.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the foundation for our efforts in nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses. We regret that Russia blocked consensus at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. We should nevertheless be encouraged that State parties managed to find common ground on divisive issues and showed a strong commitment to the Treaty. The overarching goal of the NPT is to reduce and ultimately eliminate nuclear arsenals. Nuclear disarmament must be mutual, balanced, irreversible and verifiable. Norway continues its leadership on disarmament verification, including through the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, and welcomes the progress made in that field.

Norway continues to advocate for the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and calls upon the remaining eight annex 2 countries to ratify the CTBT without delay. The comprehensive safeguards agreement and the Additional Protocol constitute the global verification standard. We should also take necessary steps to regulate the development of autonomous weapons systems.

An open, free and secure cyberspace is essential to maintaining international peace and security. The affirmation of the applicability of international law to cyberspace is the cornerstone of the consensus reports of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security and the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. That achievement can be realized only through the implementation and compliance of all States.

Norway remains committed to preventing an arms race in space and to maintaining it as a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable environment, accessible to all. We welcome the comprehensive approach of the ongoing Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats.

The global conventions to prohibit chemical and biological weapons are foundational pillars of our non-proliferation architecture. Disturbingly enough, we have witnessed the recurring use of chemical weapons. Lately, the Russian Federation has tried to establish a false narrative of biological weapons

production in Ukraine. Such unfounded allegations undermine multilateral cooperation. We cannot allow those pillars to be eroded by blatant violations or allow the conventions to become arenas for false accusations. We must therefore make sure that the upcoming review conferences are used to strengthen those conventions and recommit to their ultimate intentions — to ensure that chemical and biological weapons cannot and must not, under any circumstance, be used. There must be no impunity for those who develop and use chemical and biological weapons. Norway reaffirms its support to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Technical Secretariat and the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

We strongly support the universalization of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, which contributes to transparency and confidence-building on ballistic technology development. The Arms Trade Treaty establishes a universal norm for responsibility in international arms trade. We continue to promote the code and to support efforts towards ensuring an effective implementation of the Treaty by all signatories. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions have been hugely successful, yet we are seeing an alarming increase in the use of those weapons, including improvised ones. We must double down on the implementation and universalization of those life-saving conventions.

Norway will continue its efforts to promote gender equality and diverse participation in disarmament processes, and support initiatives to involve the younger generation in that work.

Ms. Phat (Cambodia): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation throughout your mandate.

Cambodia would like to align itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Thailand, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

While the world is entering a period of great uncertainty and fragility due to super-Power geopolitical

rivalry, international cooperation and mutual trust must be strengthened. As we all are responsible for preserving international peace and security under any circumstances, Cambodia urges all sides to conflict anywhere in the world to exercise the utmost restraint, use diplomatic means and return to negotiations to absolutely avoid the use of all types of weapons of mass destruction.

In the efforts of nuclear disarmament, the failure to adopt a final outcome document during the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) demonstrates that greater efforts should be made. That failure should not be an impediment to reaching our common objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. In addition to the NPT, Cambodia welcomes the successful conclusion of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in June and its consensual adoption of the declaration and plan of action, which will accelerate global achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is important that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enter into force as it would help to reduce the nuclear arms race and mitigate the risk of nuclear war. It is therefore imperative that the 44 countries listed in annex 2 of the Treaty sign and ratify it.

At the regional level, Cambodia joins fellow ASEAN member States in the implementation of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and its extended Plan of Action 2023–2027 to ensure that our region and peoples are safe and live without fear of all other weapons of mass destruction. My delegation encourages the nuclear-weapons States to support our efforts by signing the Protocol to the Treaty. On weapons of mass destruction, Cambodia fully supports the Secretary-General's call for the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction and a new agenda for peace. At the national level, Cambodia has demonstrated its strong commitment, through article 54 of the Constitution, by enacting a series of laws prohibiting activities related to weapons of mass destruction and strengthening national institutions to ensure effective implementation of relevant laws, policies and measures.

Close cooperation between countries is necessary to combat the smuggling of small arms and light weapons, since it seriously threatens internal peace, security, stability and socioeconomic development. In this regard, Cambodia welcomes the success of

the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation 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 and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which adopted its outcome by consensus.

Cambodia continues to place a high value on the Ottawa Convention. As millions of anti-personnel mines, cluster bombs and explosive remnants of war have been destroyed, Cambodia would like to thank the international community for its contribution and continued support. In that field, we are pleased to inform the Committee that the Samdech Techo Project for Mine Action was established on 3 July. The project is aimed at accelerating mine-clearance efforts to reach Cambodia's goal of becoming a mine-free nation by 2025.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate that peace, security and sustainable development are essentially important for all. Therefore, Cambodia calls on States to demonstrate political will and commit to disarming weapons of mass destruction so that our future generation can live in a peaceful, safe and prosperous world.

Mr. Ben Zitun (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to manage the work of the First Committee. I wish you every success. I would also like to thank your predecessor for managing the previous session of the Committee. I reiterate the readiness of my country's delegation to cooperate with you and the other delegations to achieve the desired objectives.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of the Republic of Iraq, on behalf of the Group of Arab States; the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; and the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

As we start the work of the First Committee for this session, we bear a major historical responsibility to our peoples and nations, which believe in and are committed to the Charter of the United Nations for providing humankind with security, stability, development and prosperity on our small planet. It is our responsibility to act diligently and honestly, to adopt measures and

to intensify our efforts to reach the noble objective of eliminating all weapons that threaten peoples' security, safety and future. We also must end the political disputes that prevent us from reaching consensus on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. In that context, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has proven its resilience and effectiveness in containing the proliferation of those weapons. Nevertheless, the failure to fully implement its provisions transparently continues to be a source of deep concern, as do certain disputes over its main objectives and purposes. That was made clear by the failure to adopt an outcome document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, which was held in New York in August.

The nuclear-weapon States have not yet complied with the nuclear agreement and continue to implement their weapons development programmes. That will lead the world into a new arms race and raise tensions in international relations, negatively impacting and directly threatening international peace and security and obviating all the efforts of the United Nations, alongside other international and regional organizations, in the fields of disarmament, arms control and the production of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. That could lead to uncontrollable risks and has indeed led many countries, including my own, and a number of relevant non-governmental organizations to negotiate an international instrument to ban nuclear weapons, leading to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the first such legally binding multilateral instrument. In that regard, we reiterate our call on the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate their good faith and solidarity with all efforts to rid the world of those lethal weapons and to accede to the TPNW without delay in order to achieve its universality and to make a historic contribution to the achievement of collective security.

Libya reaffirms that non-proliferation is the responsibility of all States parties to the Treaty, whether nuclear or non-nuclear. That is an essential factor in reaching the ultimate objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The elimination of all nuclear weapons is the only guarantee of their non-use or threat of use. Pending that day, Libya reaffirms the importance of recognizing the initiative involving the voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons and their programmes. In that regard, we recall that Libya

renounced its nuclear-weapons programme in 2003 and hope that other countries will follow suit.

Our world continues to witness many armed conflicts that have caused huge humanitarian and material losses, the displacement of millions of people, instability, flagrant human rights violations and unprecedented poverty as an indirect result of negative foreign interference in some cases. Those acts of interference are undertaken on the basis of narrow self-interest and hidden agendas, to the detriment of the security, stability and prosperity of peoples. Such irresponsible acts of interference have prolonged certain crises and impeded efforts to find peaceful solutions for them.

Today my country, Libya, suffers from such interference, which has complicated our situation, in flagrant violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Such continuous violations have impeded peaceful solutions in my country. It is clear that the States responsible are pursuing their violations due to a lack of deterrent sanctions from the international Organization and the international community.

My country stresses the prominent role of conventions establishing zones free of nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction in achieving international peace and security. They represent a step in the right direction and have proven to be effective in regions around the world. In that regard, my country welcomes the regional effort to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. We welcome once again the holding of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which the United Nations convened under the chairmanship of the sisterly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in November 2019, in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546. We also welcome its success in adopting a number of important substantive and procedural resolutions, as reflected in a report of the Secretary-General in that regard (A/75/63). My country commends the second session, held in November 2021 under the chairmanship of the sisterly State of Kuwait. We call on all parties concerned to seize the opportunity to participate in the third session of the Conference, to be held in November and chaired by the sisterly Lebanese Republic. We hope that the Conference will be successful in achieving positive results that will hasten the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East through negotiations and

direct dialogue among the parties concerned in order to reach a legally binding instrument that would lay solid foundations for the achievement and promotion of peace and security at the regional and international levels.

Libya, as a Mediterranean basin State, will continue to cooperate, coordinate and consult with the basin States in a manner that will strengthen the peace, security, socioeconomic development and prosperity of all the peoples of the region. We also call for a culture of peace,

In most current conflicts, fighting depends mainly on small arms. They are widely used in conflicts among States and are preferred for civil wars, acts of terrorism, organized crime and guerrilla wars. In that context, Libya reaffirms the utmost importance of the revitalization 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. It is also crucial to prevent the acquisition of such weapons by terrorists and armed groups.

We will upload the full text of this statement to the eStatements portal.

Ms. Norton (Canada): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support.

This session of the First Committee takes place while we are still feeling the effects of the pandemic and grappling with other critical challenges, like climate change and the continuing war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine. The pandemic has shown us how complex, interconnected and vulnerable our world is. The pandemic has also shown us that international cooperation can address global challenges, as evidenced by the acceleration of vaccine development and global manufacturing capacity to respond to the coronavirus disease. We can all leverage those lessons to foster a safer, more secure world.

It is deeply regrettable that consensus could not be reached on an outcome document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), largely due to Russian obstructionism. Russia continues to wage a war of aggression against Ukraine, violating the Charter of the United Nations and disrespecting the security assurances it gave to Ukraine in the Budapest Memorandum. Russia, a member of the Security

Council and a nuclear-weapon State, has recklessly threatened nuclear weapons use and forcefully seized peaceful nuclear facilities in a non-nuclear-weapon State. Russia's behaviour poses a serious threat to the NPT and to an international order governed by the rule of law, not by the rule of force. Despite a disappointing outcome, the large majority of States parties reaffirmed the validity and integrity of the NPT as the foundation for the global pursuit of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Canada remains steadfast in its commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons through the Treaty's full implementation.

Canada calls on Russia and the United States to develop a follow-up to the New START Treaty. We urge the adoption of further risk reduction measures, as well as advancements in nuclear disarmament verification. We continue to advocate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the long-overdue launch of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. All States possessing nuclear weapons must take decisive actions to accelerate disarmament. In that context, we are particularly concerned by China's non-transparent and rapidly expanding nuclear arsenal.

Canada condemns North Korea's ongoing nuclear and missile programmes. The 4 October launch of an intermediate-range ballistic missile over the territory of Japan was a dangerous provocation that endangered Japanese civilians, needlessly raised tensions in the region and violated multiple Security Council resolutions.

Canada supports multilateral efforts to encourage Iran to restore its nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and to respect its obligations under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. The international community needs to be vigilant in upholding international standards that promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, recognize the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, together with an Additional Protocol, as the safeguards verification standard, and continue to advance nuclear safety and security.

Canada is committed to upholding the global norm against the possession and use of biological and chemical weapons. We stand firmly against the Russian Federation's disinformation campaigns targeting the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Russia's claims of such weapons provocation by Ukraine, as well as allegations of the

unprofessionalism and bias of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with respect to Syrian chemical weapons use, have no basis in fact. It was Russia, not Ukraine, that used a Novichok-type weapon in Salisbury in 2018 and again in the assassination attempt against Alexei Navalny.

Turning to outer space, Canada promotes the peaceful, sustainable use of outer space for all States. But space infrastructure is vulnerable to threats both in space and from Earth. We were the first country to join the United States commitment not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests. That is an emerging norm of responsible behaviour in space, and we welcome the growing number of States that have made similar commitments. We hope that, in the future, such agreement can be codified into a legally binding instrument. Canada is actively engaged in the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours. That is a pragmatic way to reduce misunderstanding, misinterpretations or miscalculations between States.

(spoke in French)

As a State party, Canada encourages all States to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty. The diversion of conventional weapons has devastating consequences for international security and human rights. We call for the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary this year. Those explosive weapons kill and injure civilians in an indiscriminate and disproportionate manner. Member States must ensure that all weapons comply with international humanitarian law.

Canada strongly supports the framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, which includes the 11 agreed voluntary standards, the applicability of international law and cyber confidence-building measures. We will continue to actively engage in the Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 to further develop the framework. We welcome the Group's adoption of a consensual annual activity report in July, and we hope that the Group will continue to offer concrete guidance. We strongly believe that close consultation with stakeholders underpins the work of the Open-Ended Working Group.

Canada also supports the draft resolution on the United Nations programme of action to advance responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies in the context of international security. We look forward to working with all States in the development of this new mechanism, which should focus on the practical and action-oriented implementation of the framework and create a permanent space for building trust among States. We believe that the programme of action can be developed in parallel with the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security in a coordinated and non-overlapping manner.

Canada tirelessly champions the equal, effective and meaningful participation of women and other underrepresented voices, such as youth and indigenous peoples, at all stages of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation processes, whether it be in developing policies, negotiating resolutions, writing treaties, implementing commitments and obligations on the ground, or reporting on progress. Greater diversity of thought and representation leads to better outcomes and ultimately to a safer and more secure world.

As we begin our work, Canada highlights the public commitment made to gender equality by our permanent mission in New York. We emphasize our continued commitment to ensuring that our work is carried out in an inclusive and respectful manner in formal and informal meetings, and we know that we can count on the Committee's support.

Finally, Canada is committed to continuing its engagement with civil society, which has an important perspective on these issues. Many civil society organizations here in New York have been searching for years, if not decades, for progress, solutions and answers in disarmament, peace and security. We acknowledge and thank civil society for its invaluable contributions and look forward to continuing to work therewith.

Ms. Eneström (Sweden): Sweden associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union (EU) and by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). The following remarks are made in our national capacity.

I extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, upon your election. You have my delegation's full support.

On 24 February, the international security environment deteriorated dramatically. Sweden reiterates in the strongest terms its condemnation of the Russian Federation's illegal aggression against Ukraine. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's threats to use nuclear weapons are completely unacceptable and flagrant violations of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. Russia — and no one else — brandishes the threat of using nuclear weapons and lowers the nuclear threshold. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the sham referendums in regions of Ukraine currently and partially occupied by Russia. Sweden will never recognize their falsified outcome. The sham referendums have no legal validity or effect, nor will we recognize the illegal Russian annexations of Ukrainian territory. Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya are, like Crimea, parts of the sovereign State of Ukraine within the country's internationally recognized borders. It is the legal responsibility of all States to not recognize those illegal annexations.

Sweden deeply regrets that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was not able to adopt an outcome document due to Russia's blocking of consensus. While the draft document was by no means perfect, it would have given important impetus to progress and follow-up. Sweden welcomes the strong support of States parties for the proposals of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament. Despite the unsatisfactory outcome of the Conference, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament, and non-proliferation architecture and obligations and commitments, including those from past Review Conferences, remain valid.

International peace and security are the responsibility of all States. Yet, the lack of transparency on the part of some States and the continued erosion of trust have made it increasingly difficult to achieve much-needed progress on disarmament and non-proliferation. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a fissile material cut-off treaty are both crucial building blocks. Sweden urges all States to ensure the entry into force of the CTBT and calls for immediate negotiations and the establishment of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

Another important building block is nuclear disarmament verification. Sweden is actively

engaged in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and strongly encourages more States to take part in the work.

Sweden is deeply concerned about the nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its international commitments and undertake complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, and to recommit to meaningful negotiations. Sweden remains committed to our engagement for a peaceful solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula and we will continue our efforts to further a dialogue.

The situation in Iran has developed into a serious challenge to the safeguards system and the global non-proliferation regime. We call on Iran to accept the EU's latest package proposal so that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action can finally be restored.

Sweden underlines the indispensable role of the International Atomic Energy Agency and highlights the importance of its safeguards system. The comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with protocols in accordance with the 1997 Model Additional Protocol, constitute the current safeguards verification standard and should be universally applied.

The international norm against chemical and biological weapons is indispensable to our collective security. Any use of chemical or biological weapons is a violation of international law, and perpetrators must be held accountable. Sweden condemns the 2020 assassination attempt against Alexei Navalny and reiterates its call on the Russian authorities to fully cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to ensure an impartial international investigation and to bring those responsible to justice.

The ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention starts next month. This is a critical opportunity to ensure that the Convention can uphold its central role in preventing the misuse of biology for hostile purposes. We strongly reject the groundless accusations of Russia, according to which Ukraine possesses a biological weapons programme. Those allegations undermine both the Convention and legitimate international cooperation to combat infectious disease.

A holistic approach to arms control and disarmament is essential. Now more than ever, we must preserve and strengthen key conventional arms control instruments. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary since the signing of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and we urge all States not yet party to join that landmark treaty.

The illicit flows, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of arms and ammunition, in particular small arms and light weapons, deserve our continued attention. The implementation of key instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, and support to programmes addressing physical security threats and socioeconomic and gender dimensions of armed violence remain crucial.

Outer space is a global common, to be used for the benefit of all. We underline the applicability of international law, including the United Nations Charter, to activities in outer space. Sweden is strongly committed to preventing an arms race in outer space, which is essential to safeguarding the long-term use of the space environment for peaceful purposes. We support the ongoing work in the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours. Agreeing on voluntary norms constitutes a way forward, without excluding the possibility of future legally binding measures.

The challenges before the international community are many and complex. Sweden is convinced that multilateralism is the best way to address them, while protecting and strengthening the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your election. We extend our full support and cooperation.

Egypt associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

The rising tensions in the international arena nowadays re-emphasize the urgent need for the total, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. It is more important than ever for the nuclear-weapon States to implement article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Moreover, the failure of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT for the second time puts

more pressure on the ability of the Treaty to handle the challenges it faces in terms of the implementation of article VI and its universalization, taking into consideration the increasing role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines and the growing trend towards developing them.

Egypt has repeatedly expressed its grave concern regarding the implications of such international tensions on the return of an arms race not only in the field of weapons of mass destruction, but also in the fields of outer space, information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other emerging technologies. The lack of political will on the part of some States continues to block any substantial progress in realizing agreed goals and fulfilling shared commitments. The continued reliance of nuclear-weapon States on nuclear deterrence or the continued resistance to launching negotiations on legally binding instruments to regulate a number of strategic and emerging technologies and to minimize their threats to international peace and security can no longer be a morally or politically acceptable norm.

Addressing the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East continue to be the most pressing priorities. In that regard, the First Committee has before it the annual draft resolution submitted by Egypt on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East and the draft resolution tabled by the Arab Group on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. Once again, we maintain the text of those two important draft resolutions without any substantive amendments. We count on the continued support of all Member States for those two draft resolutions, and we remain hopeful that consensus on the draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East will be restored. That objective is a shared global imperative, and a unified voice on the matter sends a strong signal that it continues to be of critical importance to all of us.

In this context, Egypt strongly welcomes the successful convening of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction under the chairmanship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which adopted a political declaration, and the convening of the second session under the chairmanship of the State of Kuwait,

which adopted the rules of procedure and an outcome report and established an informal working committee for intersessional consultations.

Regarding the prevention of an arms race in outer space, Egypt and Sri Lanka have submitted their annual draft resolution, which stresses the need for practical measures, dialogue and negotiations on that increasingly important subject, while underscoring and reiterating the necessity to observe all previously agreed commitments in that strategic domain.

With regard to cybersecurity and the international security aspects of ICTs, we welcome the successful conclusion of the first annual cycle of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, established pursuant to resolution 75/240, and the adoption of its first annual report (A/77/275). Furthermore, we welcome the adoption of the outcome document 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, including the establishment of a United Nations fellowship programme on small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, we hope that the Committee will exhibit the needed solidarity to address effectively the important issues on its agenda and achieve shared aspirations for peace, security and sustainable development at a time of increased tensions in the international arena.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): Please allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and to assure you of the full cooperation of the Latvian delegation.

Latvia fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, in his capacity as observer (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), and I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

We join the international community in condemning Russia's unjustified and brutal war of aggression against the sovereign State of Ukraine. That crime of aggression is a blatant violation of international law and severely undermines global security and stability. Russia has chosen a path of violence and complete disrespect for its international obligations and has demonstrated outright contempt towards the General Assembly resolutions on

its aggression against Ukraine. Recently, Russia has shown its intention to escalate further. Latvia deplores Russia's announcement of its illegitimate annexation of the occupied territories of Ukraine. That is a gross violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final act, the Paris Charter and the guarantees agreed to in the Budapest Memorandum. We also condemn Belarus for its continued support to the Russian invasion. Latvia reiterates its full support to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Latvia is convinced that effective rules and norms are based on verifiable arms control and disarmament, which are central prerequisites for ensuring global security. Existing obligations and instruments cannot be blamed for creating the deadlock in global security. Instead, obstruction displayed by certain actors is the main reason.

Russia has failed in its obligations as a permanent member of the Security Council and as a nuclear Power. We condemn Russia's irresponsible behaviour in threatening nuclear safety and security in Ukraine, in particular through the ongoing occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Furthermore, we express our concerns regarding Russia's intention to transfer nuclear-capable ballistic missile systems to Belarus and to make Belarus' fighter planes capable of carrying nuclear weapons. The ultimate objective to ensure that future generations can prosper in a world without nuclear weapons has been seriously challenged by dangerous and worrisome rhetoric. We call on Russia to withdraw from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and to support the establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone at the facility.

It is important to acknowledge that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. We regret that the compromise reached on the final outcome document of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT was broken by Russia, the only State to object to consensus. Targeted disinformation spread by Russia, falsely accusing Ukraine of using and preparing to use chemical or biological substances in Ukraine, must be rejected by the international community and dispelled accordingly. We expect a strong recommitment to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention at the upcoming review conferences.

The global community must continue its efforts to prevent several ongoing proliferation challenges from transforming into nuclear crises. Latvia emphasizes the essential and independent role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in verifying Iran's compliance with its safeguards obligations. The Agency has to be allowed to conduct monitoring without restriction. We urge Iran to come to an agreement and to return to the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the additional protocol of the comprehensive safeguards agreement.

The nuclear weapons programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as its missile capabilities, pose an unacceptable violation of international law. We strongly condemn the launch of a ballistic missile by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over Japan on 4 October. The irresponsible behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea threatens peace and security both on the Korean peninsula and in the wider region. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea needs to immediately engage in complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

In addition, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty are two long-standing necessities. The entry into force of the CTBT is an essential tool for advancing nuclear disarmament. Thus, we urge remaining States to join the overwhelming consensus against nuclear testing.

Latvia underlines the importance of an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace where fundamental freedoms and international law are fully respected and upheld. The increase of malicious cyberactivities is worrying and requires additional action. We express our support to the forthcoming draft resolution to establish a programme of action to advance responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in complementarity with the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025.

Latvia supports efforts to tackle security challenges emerging from new technologies, including those related to lethal autonomous weapons systems, within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Equally, Latvia will continue advocating for the promotion of responsible behaviour in space. Latvia stresses the importance of supporting

and strengthening conventional arms control instruments, as well as the multilateral export control regimes. We continue to actively engage within the Arms Trade Treaty, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Wassenaar Agreement. In order to facilitate focused exchange of views on challenges and opportunities in the field of export control during the recent NPT Review Conference, Latvia organized a thematic side event on export control in Africa in the context of commitments under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Latvia also advocates for the full implementation 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. Latvia undertook the role as vice-president of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which took place from 27 June to 1 July, contributing to successful outcome of the meeting.

Last but not least, our support for the women and peace and security agenda remains steadfast, in particular in the context of preventing and eradicating gender-based violence, as well as strengthening women's resilience in conflict areas. Strengthening societal resilience is also among Latvia's priorities in the Peacebuilding Commission. We firmly believe in the close link between global security and the equal participation of women.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you of the constructive participation of Côte d'Ivoire at this session's deliberations. I would also like to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, for his exemplary leadership of the Committee at its seventy-sixth session, despite the difficulties engendered by restrictions related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). I wish to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Once again, our work this year begins under exceptional circumstances, marked by a rise in international tensions, the emergence of new conflicts and the increased threat of use of nuclear weapons. The task of this Committee is therefore arduous and its responsibility greater, especially in the light of the

failure of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. It is therefore incumbent on us to contribute more than ever to calming the current tensions and removing the spectre of a nuclear confrontation.

In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire, whose unreserved commitment to the principle of a world free of nuclear weapons is embodied in its adherence to all the international instruments that contribute thereto, calls for their full implementation. In particular, we urge nuclear-weapon States to meet their obligations under the NPT. We also invite them and all those who have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to implement the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

Likewise, is it imperative to speed up the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty through its ratification by the eight annex 2 States, and to promote more ardently the nuclear-weapon-free zones, which contribute to the building of a world free of nuclear weapons.

One of the main lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is the need for heightened awareness about the serious threat to humankind posed by the deliberate or accidental use of biological and chemical weapons and the need to work to prevent their spread. For my country, the principle of complete elimination is also applicable to those two categories of weapons of mass destruction. It is therefore important to put an end to their use, to prevent and control their reappearance by improving the implementation of legally binding instruments that prohibit the production and possession of those weapons. Further steps must be taken to increase the effectiveness of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and the 1992 Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is aimed at preventing the possession of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors.

Conventional weapons and ammunition continue to pose an immediate and daily threat to many populations around the world. They fuel conflicts, terrorism, transnational crime and urban armed violence in several regions of the globe. In Africa, the human cost of their use and the suffering they inflict are immeasurable. They also represent the main challenge to the stability and development of the African continent. The

international community is required to regulate and limit their use. In that regard, my country welcomes the courageous actions undertaken in recent years and calls for their strengthening to ensure greater efficiency. Such actions include, at the African level, the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative, which is aimed at ending conflicts and creating conditions favourable to the growth, development and integration of the continent. As part of that initiative, Côte d'Ivoire participated in 2020 and 2022 in the Africa Amnesty Month project, seeking to reduce the possession and trafficking of small arms and light weapons. We welcome the continuation of that project in other African countries.

I should also mention the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the successful organization of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States. The effective implementation of the conclusions of that meeting must be made a priority, in particular the operationalization of the specialized training fellowship programme on small arms and light weapons, which is intended to strengthen the technical capacities of developing countries. Likewise, the creation of the Open-Ended Working Group to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management is to be welcomed. The universalization and concrete application of the Arms Trade Treaty must also be encouraged in order to better control transfers of conventional arms and to ensure regional and international security.

The security challenges related to digital technologies are another source of concern for Côte d'Ivoire, which is carrying out numerous actions to guarantee the security and reliability of its national cyberspace. The adoption, on 22 January 2021, of the National Cybersecurity Strategy 2021–2025, with the ambition of positioning the country as one of the African leaders in digital security, is part of this framework. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire is firmly committed at the regional and international levels to collective efforts for a secure, stable and peaceful global cyberspace. This is evidenced by our participation in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and our determination to promote and implement standards of responsible behaviours relating to ICTs. That is also the reason behind my country's support, as

a co-sponsor, of the draft resolution on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security.

One reason for satisfaction this year in terms of disarmament is undoubtedly the holding of the annual session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, putting an end to a three-year pause caused by the deep disagreements among certain members. We welcome the important conclusions of the deliberations of that session on the issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Now we must implement them. My delegation also hopes that the same dynamic will prevail at the Conference on Disarmament, promoting the continuation of substantive negotiations on issues of priority for global stability.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its deep attachment to a peaceful world, free of all threats to regional and international stability. Our Committee must make a decisive contribution to the building of such a world in the course of this year's work.

The Chair: I will now give the floor to those delegations wishing to exercise the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to five minutes for the first intervention and to three minutes for the second intervention.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my delegation's right of reply in response to the unacceptable statements made by the observer of the European Union (EU) (see A/C.1/77/PV.2) and the representative of France (see A/C.1/77/PV.3), as well as some others, concerning the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and Iran's peaceful nuclear programme.

Those delegations must be reminded that it was the United States, not Iran, that unilaterally and illegally withdrew from the JCPOA, reimposed sanctions and launched a maximal pressure campaign against Iran. Furthermore, it was the EU, not Iran, that abandoned its obligations under the JCPOA and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). Indeed, Iran was fully implementing its obligations, as confirmed by 15 consecutive reports of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Furthermore, it was only after more than one year of strategic patience in continuing the full implementation

of its commitments that Iran started to gradually resort to its only available remedy, namely, withholding the performance of the reciprocal commitments as a general rule of law and as enshrined explicitly in paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA.

The recent JCPOA talks in Vienna provided a unique opportunity for JCPOA participants, and the United States in particular, to indicate their candid intention to return to the full implementation of their commitments through the lifting of all sanctions in an effective and verifiable manner. It is yet to be observed whether the current United States Administration is ready to abandon the maximum pressure policy and its use of unilateral coercive measures and respect international law, implement its sanctions-lifting commitments in a full, effective and verifiable manner, while also taking all necessary decisions. The United States needs to address the concerns arising from its previous malpractice, the least of which is whether the future performance of its commitments can be relied on. Iran, for its part, has engaged seriously in negotiations with JCPOA participants to address the issues resulting from the withdrawal of the United States. We observed that the said delegations failed to acknowledge the responsibility of the United States in that regard.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a responsible State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, is committed to implementing its obligations under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. In view of this, Iran has spared no effort to enable the Agency to carry out its verification activities based on the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement in the country. Iran's full cooperation with the IAEA has enabled the Agency to continue to maintain its knowledge through a robust verification system that is unique in the Agency's verification system.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the claim by the delegation of Ukraine concerning the delivery of drones to Russia for use in the Ukraine war as baseless and does not confirm it.

On another note, I should emphasize that France itself has played an unjustifiable role in the Middle East proliferation crisis by assisting, since 1957, the Israeli regime in acquiring nuclear weapons.

We have also heard in this Committee certain unfounded and unwarranted accusations about Iran's position in the region. I should emphasize that our

steadfast approach is not to take the precious time of this body and dignify these lies with an answer.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply to reject all anti-Russian statements and accusations that have been voiced against us. These are unfounded and have no connection with reality.

We wish to offer an explanation to those delegations that have talked about the events that took place from 23 to 27 September in the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and in Kherson and Zaporizhzhya provinces, namely, the referendums on those regions joining the Russian Federation. Despite the provocations of the Kyiv regime, which issued criminal orders to inflict massive artillery strikes on crowded places and civilian objects, people were not afraid to come to the polls and express their will. The results of the plebiscite speak for themselves. The residents of the Donbas, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya exercised their legitimate right to self-determination and made a conscious choice in favour of Russia. They had the opportunity to independently and freely express their opinion, as has been confirmed by numerous monitors, including international observers. Such a step is fully consistent with the principles of equality and self-determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in the 1970 Declaration on Principles of Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and in many other documents. The aforementioned Declaration, unanimously adopted by the General Assembly, states:

“Every State has the duty to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peoples [...] of their right to self-determination and freedom and independence”. (*resolution 2625 (XXV), annex, para.1*)

In accordance with the Declaration, the aforementioned peoples are endowed with the right to also take action against violent acts and to receive support in so doing from the international community. The principle of the territorial integrity of States enshrined in the United Nations Charter does not have absolute priority over the right to self-determination. The 1970 Declaration sets forth an obligation to respect the territorial integrity of States,

“in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples [...] and thus

possessed of a Government representing the whole people belonging to the territory” (*ibid.*).

Therefore, the observance of one principle is tied to the observance of the other.

There is no need to prove that the Kyiv regime has in no way met the outlined criteria. It has grossly and massively violated the aforementioned United Nations requirements for many years. It has long proved itself foreign and hostile to those residents of Ukraine who cannot imagine their life without belonging to Russian civilization. Those are the same residents that President Zelenskyy demanded a year ago to get out and go to Russia. It is very clear that this regime did not represent the millions of citizens against whom a war was unleashed and who were repelled from Ukraine.

Russia was compelled to come to the assistance of the long-suffering population of the Donbas and to stand up to defend the residents of Zaporizhzhya and Kherson provinces. International observers, including from Italy, Germany, Venezuela, Latvia and other countries and totalling more than 130 people, followed the progress of the referendums and recognized their results as legitimate.

We call on United Nations Member States to accept the new, inevitable reality, which is dictated by life itself and based on the free expression of the will of the people. The truth will find its way out, regardless of whether the West wants it to or not. All attempts to deny the new reality will be consigned to oblivion, but the will of the people will remain.

Mr. Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to exercise its right of reply in response to the comments made by the representatives of some Western countries and Japan against my country.

My delegation resolutely rejects those provocative statements as outrageous infringements upon the legitimate right to self-defence of a sovereign State and intolerable interference in its internal affairs. As stated clearly, our measures for bolstering our self-defensive military capability are a reasonable and legitimate exercise of the right to self-defence and to safeguard our rights and interests in the face of growing military threats and nuclear blackmail from the United States. Accordingly, no one has the right to dispute it.

This year alone, the United States has recklessly deployed numerous strategic assets and cutting-edge

military hardware, such as B-52H, B2A and F35A aircraft, in and around the Korean peninsula. Last August, it conducted the largest-scale Ulchi Freedom Shield joint military exercises with South Korea by mobilizing tens of thousands of United States troops and the South Korean army for the first time since 2017. Worse still, in late September it also staged a war game around the Korean peninsula for the first time in five years, including with the involvement of the strike force of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan* and nuclear submarines.

It does not make sense to sit idly by in the face of the extreme hostility of the United States. As the hostile policy and nuclear blackmail of the United States step up, our strength is bound to grow proportionately. We are watching the developments, in which the United States poses a serious threat to stability on the Korean peninsula and its vicinity by again dispatching the aircraft carrier taskforce to the waters of the Korean peninsula.

Against that background, it is ridiculous of New Zealand to turn a blind eye to the United States, United Kingdom and Australia partnership known as AUKUS, which is happening before its very eyes and undermining the global non-proliferation regime. Western countries are well advised to invest time and energy in dismantling nuclear sharing and the NATO joint nuclear mission in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner instead of pointing an accusing finger at others. The Cold War mentality and double standards will only trigger confrontation and tensions.

Japan's hackneyed allegation against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is aimed at justifying its attempt to become a military Power by amplifying so-called external threats and preventing us from enhancing our self-defence capability. In recent days, Japan has been sounding the alarm bell more loudly, unwittingly showing how nakedly desperate it is to rationalize the necessity, urgency and legitimacy of its moves, including increased defence expenditures, the acquisition of counter-attack capabilities and others, in order to realize its wild invasion ambition.

Japan's moves to revise the peace Constitution and to possess pre-emptive strike capabilities are the main factor and a grave threat undermining regional peace and stability and aggravating the situation. Japan has no justification or qualification to find fault with our self-defensive measures in view of its history. It occupied

Korea by force and ran amok to obliterate the Korean nation in the past. Multilateral military drills involving Japan off the Korean peninsula remain on our watch list. While clamouring for a nuclear-free world, Japan still opposes the abandonment of the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons, sticking to the nuclear umbrella of the United States, and seeks to damage the ecosystem of the ocean by discharging nuclear-contaminated water. We expect no better from such a country. However belatedly, Japan must reflect squarely on offering a sincere apology for its past, in which it inflicted immeasurable suffering on the peoples of Korea and the rest of the Asian region.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): Our delegation would like to exercise its right of reply to the statement made by the Russian delegation.

I would like to remind the international community that, from 23 to 27 September, the Russian Federation organized a propaganda show it called "referendums" in the temporarily occupied territories of the Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Ukraine. Forcing people in those territories to fill out papers at gunpoint constitutes yet another crime by Russia in the course of its aggression against Ukraine. Such actions severely violate the legislation of Ukraine, as well as the norms of international law and Russia's international obligations. That performance has nothing to do with the expression of will and has no implications for Ukraine's administrative territorial system or internationally recognized borders.

The Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions, like 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. Ukraine will never agree to any Russian ultimatums. Moscow's attempts to create new separation lines and weaken international support for Ukraine are doomed to fail. By organizing sham referendums in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, Russia wilfully demonstrates that all signals of its alleged readiness for negotiations are intended only to provide a cover-up for its armed aggression and hapless attempts to hold onto the temporarily occupied territories.

Russia speaks of international law. Let me be clear — by launching its aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and by invading Ukraine in February 2022, Russia

has violated the norms and principles of practically all fundamental international documents, including bilateral and multilateral agreements, the Helsinki Final Act and, first and foremost, the Charter of the United Nations. Let me refer to resolution ES-11/1, adopted at its eleventh emergency special session on 2 March by an overwhelming majority of 141 Member States, in which the Assembly deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter.

International law protects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and explicitly confirms our inherent right to self-defence, enshrined in particular in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The most important pillar of international peace and security is the territorial integrity of States. No country is allowed to change internationally recognized borders by force. Russia has severely damaged that principle and prospects for restoring international peace and security, and therefore urgent and decisive actions are needed. Ukraine will fight against the occupiers until all Russian soldiers who have entered Ukraine to kill its people are defeated. The only thing that Russia can do to save the lives of its soldiers is to order their immediate withdrawal. The liberation of the Ukrainian territories, which is now well under way in the Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk and Kherson regions, serves as the best proof of the effectiveness of our efforts.

As we speak, Ukraine's cities continue to be targeted by Russian missile strikes. Earlier today, the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhya was hit by at least seven missiles. By killing Ukrainian people, including women and children, Russia is committing war crimes. Russia has also spoken of Nazification and Nazis, so the killing of Ukraine's innocent children is probably what the Russian murderers would call "de-Nazification".

Mr. Ogasawara (Japan): I would like to exercise my delegation's right of reply with regard to the remarks pronounced by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Nuclear and missile development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a clear violation of a series of Security Council resolutions that urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes. It is our greatest hope that diplomatic efforts will lead to the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles

of all ranges by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — a common goal that we all share — in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

He also mentioned the Japanese defence policy. Under its Constitution, Japan has adhered to the basic precept of maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy by not becoming a military Power that poses any threat to other countries and observing the three non-nuclear principles. Under those precepts, Japan will never change the course it has taken as a peace-loving nation. Our defence capabilities will be exclusively for Japan's defence. We will also continue to ensure the transparency of our defence-related expenditures and adhere to strict civil control of the military.

As for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's remarks about Japan's past behaviour, we would like to stress that Japan regards the facts of history in a spirit of humility and has consistently respected democracy and human rights while contributing to peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the international community as a whole over the 70 years since the end of the Second World War.

The issue of water treated by the advanced liquid processing system (ALPS) was also mentioned. ALPS-treated water will be discharged into the sea only when the Tokyo Electric Power Company, the operator, complies with the regulatory standards based on recommendations by the International Commission on Radiological Protection. ALPS-treated water would also be discharged in line with international practice.

Mr. Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I will be brief for the sake of the time.

Obsessed with an inveterate habit of forsaking its own interests by picking on others, Japan has trumpeted self-initiated threats with the sole purpose of realizing its ambition for overseas reinvasion. Let me make some clarifications with regard to the comment made by the representative of Japan on the nature of its defence posture.

For instance, in 2015 Japan revised the guiding principles of Japan-United States defence cooperation so as to provide a legal framework for extending its aggressive tentacles to the Korean peninsula. Besides that, it has overtly clamoured for the automatic intervention of self-defensive forces in case of emergency. It is scheming to revise its defence strategy

and to institutionalize its pre-emptive strike capability as a national policy.

To that end, there has been a sharp increase in its defence expenditure and development of offensive military equipment. Worse still, it is devising spurious motives to justify its preparations for reinvasion by inciting hostile feelings against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and an insecure consciousness in the minds of its own people. We will continue to keep a close eye on Japan's moves to become a military Power, the dire consequences of which Japan must seriously reflect on.

Mr. Ogasawara (Japan): I am compelled to exercise our right of reply in response to the remarks made by the previous speaker.

First of all, Japan is very proud of the degree of transparency it provides as far as its national policy and national budget are concerned. We have clearly declared that our defence policy is exclusively for defence purposes and that the posture of our defence policy, as well as our defence structure, are clearly geared towards such purposes only. Moreover, we have never flown a missile over another country's territory.

I would also like to state the importance of compliance with international law, as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions. We would hope to see those problems resolved through diplomatic efforts.

Mr. Bencini (Italy): I heard the representative of the Russian Federation mention that there were Italian observers present at the so-called referendums in the regions of Ukraine occupied by the Russian armed forces. I would like to recall that there are procedures for establishing recognized legitimate observer missions, and that is certainly not the case here. Therefore, we consider those referendums illegitimate and give no credence to the reference to the presence of any Italian individual in that context.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are compelled to take the floor to exercise our second right of reply in connection with the accusations that we have heard addressed against us by the delegation of Ukraine. They are off the scale in terms of hypocrisy and lack of foundation. We will also respond to the statements by the representative of Italian delegation.

I would like to provide absolute clarity with regard to the referendums that were held in full compliance

with all international standards. They took place under strict international observation by citizens of other States, in particular, as I have already said, Italy, Germany, Venezuela, Latvia and a number of other countries, amounting to more than 130 observers who recorded how the populations of four regions voiced their will. Now, such statements by several delegations, made in the General Assembly Hall, are denying the people in those regions the opportunity to exercise their sovereign will and to enjoy their right to self-determination. Those rights are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

That is regrettable. However, such is reality. As I have already said, the States that choose to ignore the will of those citizens, to hinder the course of history and to hamper the pursuit of those people to voice their will will not succeed. There are four regions that have become part of the Russian Federation. That is an undeniable fact that will be recorded in history as such.

Mr. Gobel (Germany): I would like to exercise my delegation's right of reply to the intervention by the representative of the Russian Federation.

As has been said already by my Italian colleague, I want just to underline that there was no officially recognized observer of the so-called referendums in Ukraine. I also want to reiterate that Germany, together with its partners, condemns not only the brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, but also the so-called referendums. Let me repeat that international law is clear that the so-called referendums are null and void. As Secretary-General Guterres said on 29 September,

"The Russian Federation, as one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, shares a particular responsibility to respect the Charter. Any decision to proceed with the annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions of Ukraine would have no legal value and deserves to be condemned. It cannot be reconciled with the international legal framework."

Therefore, the breach of the Charter of the United Nations by a permanent member of the Security Council sets a dangerous precedent. No United Nations Member State can feel safe within its borders, if we do not speak out loud and clear now.

Mr. Filipsons (Latvia): I would like to exercise the right of reply to join my Italian and German colleagues in refuting the statements made by the representative of Russia. He mentioned my country as well. I would like to take this opportunity to once again reaffirm that we deplore Russia's announcement of its illegitimate annexation of the occupied territories of Ukraine. We

maintain our position that that is a gross violation of international law, as has been also noted by the Secretary-General. We would just like to make our position clear once again that the sham referendums held under the barrel of a gun are null and void.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.