



# General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

## First Committee

6th meeting

Monday, 10 October 2022, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

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

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

### 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, delegations are reminded that the list of speakers on our thematic discussion segment will close tomorrow, Tuesday, 11 October at 6 p.m.

I urge all delegations taking the floor to kindly keep in mind the suggested time limits for their statements.

**Mr. Ray (India):** India congratulates Ambassador Pieris on his assumption of the Chair of the First Committee. My delegation assures him of our full support and cooperation.

The First Committee, which is a part of the disarmament triad, along with the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, meets this year under challenging geopolitical circumstances, and following the pandemic. The Minister for External Affairs of India, Mr. Jaishankar, in his recent address at the general debate of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly stated that,

“India is on the side of peace and will remain firmly there. We are on the side that respects the United Nations Charter and its founding principles. We are on the side that calls for dialogue and diplomacy as the only way out of conflict. We are

on the side of those struggling to make ends meet, even as they stare at escalating costs of food, fuel and fertilizers” (A/77/PV.12, p. 52).

India will be completing its tenure as a member of the Security Council this year. During our tenure, we have also focused on such critical areas as maritime security, counter-terrorism and peacekeeping.

India remains firmly committed to the goal of universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. India has called for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons through a step-by-step process, as outlined in our working paper on nuclear disarmament, submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 (CD/1816). India reiterates its call to undertake the steps outlined in the working paper, including the negotiation in the CD of a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention.

India attaches high importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the world's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, as mandated by the Final Document of first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) and reaffirmed most recently in resolution 76/62. India has participated constructively in the work of the CD's subsidiary bodies.

We are pleased that the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the main deliberative body within the United Nations on disarmament issues, was able to commence substantive proceedings after a gap of almost three years.

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In the current session of the First Committee, India will submit four draft resolutions: “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons”, “Reducing nuclear danger”, “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction” and “Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament”, which have consistently highlighted crucial and pertinent issues in disarmament and international security and enjoyed wide support of the membership.

As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, India is committed, pursuant to its nuclear doctrine, to maintaining a credible minimum deterrence with the posture of no first use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States. Without lowering the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, India supports the immediate commencement of negotiations in the CD of a fissile material cut-off treaty on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We share the widely felt disappointment that these negotiations remain blocked. India continues to actively participate in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is an important priority area for India. As a major spacefaring nation, India has vital development and security interests in space. We believe that outer space should be an arena for cooperation, not conflict. Even as we participate constructively in the open-ended working group on reducing space threats, India supports the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament to address the global concerns related to space security.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are worthy examples of global non-discriminatory treaties for the complete elimination of the respective categories of weapons of mass destruction. India will contribute substantively and concretely to the upcoming ninth Review Conference of the BWC. India and France have jointly proposed the establishment of a database for assistance within the framework of article VII of the Convention and hope that the proposal will receive the support of all Member States towards a decision at the Review Conference. We also look forward to contributing constructively to the success of the fifth Review Conference of the CWC scheduled to take place next year.

India has and will continue to actively participate in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems. India believes that those deliberations are most appropriately continued within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Illicit transfers of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, and in particular to terrorists and non-State actors, is a grave area of concern for us. India welcomes the consensus 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 earlier this year, which recognized the adverse effects of illicit arms trade in exacerbating terrorism and emphasized the role of United Nations instruments in addressing the threat posed by terrorism.

We are pleased that the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, chaired by India, adopted a consensus report. We invite all States Members of the United Nations to participate in that valuable voluntary transparency and confidence-building mechanism, which allows countries to report on their transfers of conventional arms.

India continues to actively participate in the ongoing discussions of the open-ended working group on conventional ammunition. We underscore the need to address the diversion of ammunition to non-State actors and extend our support to strengthening the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines guidance in that area.

India is committed to promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful environment with regard to information and communications technologies. Cyberspace is facing an increasing number of challenges in the form of threats and in its misuse for criminal and terrorist purposes. Recognizing the disparity in cyberpreparedness among Member States to tackle various cyberthreats and need to enhance their capabilities, India has proposed the development of a global cybersecurity cooperation portal, anchored at the United Nations, as a global platform for international cooperation and coordination among Member States on cyberinfrastructure security and improving cybercapabilities. We look forward to productive discussions and a decision in that regard.

in the coming year at the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies.

To conclude, in line with the emphasis placed by the General Assembly's first special session devoted to disarmament on promoting expertise in disarmament and in empowering younger generations, India hosts a fully funded annual disarmament and international security fellowship programme to advance disarmament education.

**Mr. Vaaras** (Finland): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of my delegation's full support.

In addition to all the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and of the Nordic countries, allow me to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Finland condemns the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified attack against Ukraine. The Russian invasion of a sovereign country is a violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. We furthermore reiterate our condemnation of the sham referendums organized by the Russian Federation and the subsequent illegal annexation of some eastern regions of Ukraine. Those are blatant violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and the Charter of the United Nations. Let me emphasize that Finland supports Ukraine in its right to self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. The Russian Federation must immediately cease its military actions, withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be a central element of the rules-based multilateral system. Finland is disappointed that it was not possible to agree on an outcome document at the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in August owing to opposition by the Russian Federation. That failure is a reflection of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, not a failure of the NPT itself.

Regrettably, no progress has been made on nuclear disarmament during recent years. We recognize that there is some truth in saying that the current international environment is not conducive to nuclear disarmament. At the same time, it is advisable to recall Dag Hammarskjöld's words from 1955: "Disarmament is never the result only of the political situation; it is also

instrumental in creating the political situation." We need to continue to work on disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy to make the next review cycle a success.

This year marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Despite tangible progress in the implementation of the Convention, the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons remains a threat to international peace and security. We condemn the use of chemical weapons in all circumstances by anyone, anywhere and at any time. The use of chemical weapons constitutes a violation of international law and, in certain circumstances, amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Our most urgent priority is to uphold the norm against the use of chemical weapons and to ensure that the perpetrators of chemical attacks are held to account. In that context, we consider it of utmost importance to maintain the integrity and independence of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

On biological weapons, the coronavirus disease pandemic showed us the devastating impacts of the spread of dangerous pathogens, whether accidental or natural. We need to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. It is important to improve the implementation of the confidence-building mechanisms already in place under the Convention. We should also consider developing enhanced transparency measures in order to increase trust and reduce the risk of dangerous misperceptions. We look forward to working with all States parties in a constructive and collaborative manner at the upcoming ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. We need to adopt forward-looking decisions and recommendations that provide a clear road map for the next review cycle.

We reiterate our continued support to the Secretary-General's *Agenda for Disarmament*. We need to be relentless in our work ensuring the effective implementation of the commitments made under the various disarmament and arms control instruments.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the need to strengthen the rules-based international system. That would enhance our efforts to advance disarmament and non-proliferation. The world needs this, and we need to deliver on this necessity.

We look forward to working with you, Mr. Chair, and all delegations to make this First Committee session a success.

**Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria):** Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee. You, Sir, can count on Bulgaria's full support in your efforts to steer us to a successful outcome.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.6). I would like to make a few points in my national capacity.

We are meeting in an extremely challenging security environment. The illegal, unjustified and unprovoked aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has severe repercussions for Europe and the world as a whole. The actions of the Russian Federation are not only in complete violation of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations, but also shake the very foundations of the global arms control and non-proliferation architecture. The Russian Federation, a nuclear-weapon State, has violated the security guarantees provided to Ukraine in the 1994 Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, undermines the safety and security of the nuclear power plants on Ukraine's territory and now threatens the world with the use of nuclear weapons. We decisively condemn that dangerous and irresponsible escalation of the conflict.

We also categorically reject the illegal annexation by the Russian Federation of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions as a blatant violation of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. That annexation follows sham referendums that were neither free nor fair, and we will never recognize it.

We once again call on the Russian Federation to stop this illegal war, to abide by its international commitments and to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

It is deplorable that, after four weeks of extensive negotiations among the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the adoption of the draft outcome document of the tenth NPT Review Conference was not possible owing to

the Russian Federation blocking consensus. The draft outcome document itself was not perfect, but it represented the best effort of the parties to the NPT to bridge their differences and to reiterate their commitments to the full and effective implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty in a highly volatile global security environment.

In preparing for the next NPT review cycle, we must continue to explore ways to reaffirm and strengthen the Treaty as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and a framework for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. As a newly elected member to the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Bulgaria will spare no efforts to counter the global non-proliferation challenges and the threats to nuclear security and safety, and also to promote the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. While we remain fully committed to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, we believe that is unattainable without the NPT framework, namely, its article VI, and through a progressive and comprehensive approach based on mutual trust.

The entry into force and the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT) remain a political imperative and a practical step towards nuclear disarmament. Bulgaria, as an annex 2 State that has signed and ratified the Treaty, calls upon all States, particularly the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay.

The current proliferation challenges need to be urgently addressed. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes continue to pose a threat to regional and global peace and security. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return to compliance with the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and within the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement.

Bulgaria continues to firmly support all diplomatic efforts to preserve and restore the full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as an important component of the global non-proliferation architecture that helps reduce regional and global security risks.

This April we marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Bulgaria remains committed to the



full and effective implementation of the CWC and all decisions taken by its States parties. We consider the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances completely unacceptable and constituting a clear violation of the CWC and international law. We stand ready to continue to support the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons aimed at ensuring that all perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or persons otherwise involved in the use of chemical weapons are identified and held accountable.

While the world continues to recover from the coronavirus disease pandemic, we must remain vigilant about the potential risk that any future pandemics may be caused by engineered diseases. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has a key role in international efforts to prohibit and prevent the use of biological and toxin weapons. However, the Convention continues to face challenges that require institutional strengthening. The upcoming ninth Review Conference of the BWC provides a valuable opportunity for the States parties to achieve concrete and meaningful outcomes in order to resolve those challenges.

We welcome the results achieved by 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, which was held in June this year. We also strongly support the universalization and the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and believe that the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the Arms Trade Treaty can benefit from synergies with other regional and international instruments that share common objectives, such as the Firearms Protocol; the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials; and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, to name a few.

Bulgaria believes that ensuring a global, accessible, free, open and secure cyberspace can be achieved through responsible State behaviour, confidence-building measures and transparency, within the existing international legal framework. We continue to contribute to the work of the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 and support

the establishment of a United Nations programme of action on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace.

Lastly, we are encouraged by the fact that, after three years of stalemate, the Disarmament Commission managed to resume its work in April. We will continue to work on improving and modernizing the disarmament machinery and to seek common ground among the members of the Conference on Disarmament in order to make it deliver again, according to its mandate.

**Mr. Liddle** (United Kingdom): The maintenance of international peace and security, including through the suppression of acts of aggression, is one of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations and at the core of the First Committee's mandate. Article II of the Charter of the United Nations prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. On 24 February, the Russian Federation trampled over those fundamental principles by launching an unprovoked and barbaric invasion of its neighbour, Ukraine.

Over seven months into this war, its disastrous impact — on Ukraine, on Russia and on the world — is clear. And now, President Putin's efforts to incorporate Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson into the territory of the Russian Federation constitute a new low point in Russia's blatant flouting of international law and a further violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The United Kingdom is proud to stand in solidarity with the Government and people of Ukraine, as they fight for their freedom and independence.

Russia's aggression has also cast a long shadow over international disarmament negotiations.

Unable to acknowledge the consequences of its war for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — including by issuing grossly irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, undermining security assurances by flouting the Budapest Memorandum and recklessly endangering the safety of Europe's largest nuclear power plant — Russia alone blocked the adoption by consensus of a final document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in August.

Russia also tried and failed to airbrush from the record the criticisms it faced at the Conference on Disarmament.

Russia has attempted to exploit the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention by deliberately misrepresenting peaceful public health cooperation between the United States and Ukraine as a biological weapons programme. The formal consultative meeting convened under article V last month demonstrated that there is no merit in Russia's allegations. Such disinformation risks undermining scientific and technical cooperation between States for peaceful purposes under article X.

Russia has also made baseless allegations about Ukraine in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Russia and its ally, the Al-Assad regime in Syria, continue to impugn the expert, impartial and evidence-based work of the Technical Secretariat. Consistent reports of Russia's use of anti-personnel mines and victim-activated booby traps call into question its compliance with its obligations under Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The United Kingdom, as President of the tenth Meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, expressed its grave concern about Russia's repeated use of those heinous weapons. Moreover, Russia has resorted to desperate procedural manoeuvres to curtail any discussion of its war or the means and methods by which it is pursuing it. Russia repeatedly attempts to rewrite history to justify the unjustifiable. It portrays itself as the victim, when it is the aggressor. It blames everyone but itself for the consequences of its own choices. Try as it might, though, Russia cannot hide from the revulsion the world feels at its actions.

But we cannot let Russia's aggression monopolize our attention. The world faces many other challenges. The United Kingdom reiterates that Iran must never develop a nuclear weapon. We regret that Iran has chosen not to seize the opportunity to restore the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and instead continues to escalate its nuclear programme. We urge Iran to return to the full implementation of the JCPOA and to urgently provide credible answers to the International Atomic Energy Agency's separate investigations to fulfil Iran's legally binding safeguards obligations.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched an unprecedented number of ballistic missiles in 2022. It also restored its nuclear test site. Any nuclear test must merit a swift and robust response from the international community. Those programmes continue

to threaten international peace and the stability of the Korean peninsula and the integrity of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in addition to violating unanimously adopted Security Council resolutions. We call on all Member States to condemn those provocations and urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete steps towards denuclearization in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Syria's non-compliance with its chemical weapons obligations must be resolved in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

More generally, the illicit and uncontrolled proliferation of conventional arms contributes to instability, terrorism and organized crime and causes untold death and devastation around the world. We are concerned about the continuing efforts by some States to undermine and discredit multilateral arms-control regimes, which are a critical part of the non-proliferation system and facilitate exports and technology transfer around the world.

And States' consistent concern that information and communication technologies can be used for purposes that are inconsistent with international peace and security is now a reality. The world must stand together to promote the application and observance of international humanitarian law, both in the physical and virtual worlds and in outer space.

Notwithstanding those dark clouds, there are some rays of light. The fact that every country but one was prepared to join the consensus on the draft final document at the NPT Review Conference was an expression of their determination to uphold the centrality of the NPT. We welcome the decision to establish a working group on strengthening the review process. We warmly congratulate President Gustavo Zlauvinen and the whole Bureau for their superb efforts. We will continue to work in that constructive spirit in the new review cycle.

The ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, to be held at the end of November, is a vital opportunity to strengthen that important regime, including through proposals for a science and technology review process, as well as by operationalizing article VII of the Convention and engaging in more agile decision-making. To keep the Convention fit for future challenges, we also support

the proposal for an expert working group to study the key issues and identify steps to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in all its aspects.

We also welcome the progress made by the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours, thereby preventing an arms race in outer space and maintaining the use of space for peaceful purposes, a task that is increasingly urgent. Space systems underpin life in the twenty-first century and are vital for the functioning of the global economy and the mitigation of the climate and humanitarian crises we face, as well as for ensuring defence and security. Disruption or damage to those systems could have far-reaching consequences, including conflict. One of our key concerns is the destructive testing of direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles. Such tests generate significant debris and put the continued use of space at risk, in addition to being potentially destabilizing. I am therefore pleased to announce that the United Kingdom has joined others in committing not to carry out destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests. We encourage others to do the same, especially those countries with such capabilities.

We must seize on those opportunities. In the face of growing global instability, the international security, non-proliferation and disarmament system has never been so important. Now is the time for Member States to work together to protect and strengthen it. It is in all our interests to do so.

**Ms. Estrada Girón** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and to assure you of our full confidence in your leadership. We also extend our greetings to the other members of the Bureau. They can count on my delegation's full cooperation in ensuring the smooth conduct of the Committee's work.

My delegation supports and aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the member countries of the Central American Integration System (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

During the year 2020, the States Members of our Organization were affected by the outbreak of the coronavirus disease pandemic, demonstrating that weapons, including nuclear weapons, do not guarantee security and do not protect countries from the effects of the pandemic. According to publicly available figures, about \$73 billion has been spent on nuclear weapons

worldwide in recent years; clearly, a small fraction of that expenditure in the health sector would have made our societies better prepared for and more resilient to respond to a pandemic such as the coronavirus. In addition, the Russian Federation's illegal, unwarranted and unprovoked invasion of sovereign Ukrainian territory has had major security implications for the international community. It is of the utmost concern that a nuclear Power is threatening a country, a region and the entire world with the possible use of such weapons.

A nuclear disaster would be tragic for humankind and all living beings that coexist on the planet, which is why Guatemala will condemn any actions that increase tensions and hinder multilateral efforts to promote dialogue, trust and cooperation for peace and denuclearization. Nuclear-weapon States are qualitatively modernizing their weapons, and it worries us to see that some of them have withdrawn from international arms control treaties. Those actions undermine the efforts achieved by multilateralism. Guatemala urges that the Committee, in the course of its work, to recommit itself to the principles for which it was established and to make progress in making effective and action-oriented decisions that demonstrate the will of the international community by drawing on the validity of multilateralism as the only way to achieve peaceful and sustainable societies.

My country is firmly committed to the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and is a firm promoter of general and complete disarmament. Guatemala is therefore proud to be a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, an international benchmark that underpins efforts to maintain peace and security through its establishment of the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone. My delegation reiterates its deep concern about the threat to humankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons, as well as their use or threat of use and the humanitarian and environmental impact they represent — they would be fatal for humankind. The only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their prohibition and total elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner within a clearly defined time frame.

In keeping with those principles, we welcome the convening of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which constitutes a milestone and a firm step towards nuclear disarmament. Guatemala ratified that instrument in

June, making the Central American subregion the first in the world to accede to such an instrument. My country reiterates its position that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons complements the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We regret and note with concern that, despite the valuable participation of most States parties and the efforts of the presidency, the tenth NPT Review Conference concluded without reaching the consensus necessary to adopt an outcome document that would have enabled progress in the implementation of the Treaty.

We urge the nuclear-weapon States to comply with their unequivocal obligations to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with article VI of the NPT and the commitments arising 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, as the Treaty provides for a transitional status.

We strongly reaffirm our condemnation of the launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of two ballistic missiles on 28 September and the launch of a ballistic missile on 4 October this year, as well as all related actions. At the same time, we call on the eight annex 2 States to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to accede to this instrument so that it can enter into force as soon as possible.

We also call for the advancement of a fissile material cut-off treaty to prohibit the production and ensure the elimination of stockpiled material, thereby eliminating the necessary element for the production of nuclear weapons.

My delegation expresses its concern about a possible arms race in outer space, given that outer space could become a theatre of military confrontation. Such actions would be contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as an immeasurable tragedy for human life.

On chemical and biological weapons, my delegation strongly condemns the use of such weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. There is no justification whatsoever for their use, and their use cannot go unpunished. It is in the hands of the international community to bring to justice those who resort to such weapons, through the mechanisms that the international community itself has legitimately and legally created for that purpose.

Armed violence is a scourge strengthened by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, threatening the protection of people and the physical and moral integrity of inhabitants and certainly hindering the creation of an environment with adequate conditions to promote integral and sustainable human development. We believe that the Arms Trade Treaty is an effective instrument for guiding States in the effective regulation of the international arms trade by providing clear guidelines to prevent the diversion of arms.

In addition, Guatemala expresses its satisfaction with the final 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. It was an honour for my country to have co-chaired that meeting, together with the Hungarian delegation, in the absence of the Ambassador of the Philippines. We are grateful for the support provided by the Vice-Chairs of the Conference in reaching a consensus document. Although there is still work to be done on the issues of ammunition, the women and peace and security agenda and others, we consider the adopted final document a good step forward for the consideration of States at the next Review Conference.

In conclusion, Guatemala appeals to United Nations Member States, reminding them that the opportunity we have to live together peacefully on this planet depends on our actions and political goodwill. Seventy-seven years after the founding of the Organization, we must direct our work towards a more sustainable world, while protecting the human species from unnecessary suffering and securing the future of generations to come.

**Mr. Yousfi** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Let me begin by sincerely congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election to chair the First Committee of the General Assembly. I pledge the full support and the unwavering commitment of my delegation to ensure the success of the work of our Committee. I also wish to express to Ambassador Magzhan Ilyassov, who competently directed many of the preparations of our Committee, with the support of the members of the Bureau. I also thank all of the delegations for their kind words towards His Excellency Ambassador Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations, following my country's chairmanship of the First Committee during the preceding session.



My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as those delivered on behalf of the Group of African States and of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). We would now like to offer some remarks in our national capacity.

The world is at a crossroads. The international community must choose between coexistence marked by confrontation and division or multilateralism, underpinned by peace, development and common security. Humankind continues to confront several multidimensional challenges, such as a nuclear disaster, climate change and pandemics. How the international community confronts those challenges will determine our future. The nuclear threats signal the fragility of the concept of nuclear deterrence and its fundamental pillars. Humankind will not survive a nuclear war. We therefore need to put in place a common, positive, inclusive and multidimensional security framework so that all States may feel secure and at peace. This approach is a serious, credible and realistic alternative to nuclear competition and the threat of mass destruction.

In that regard, the Kingdom of Morocco remains firmly convinced that nuclear weapons are not a guarantee of security and do not guarantee stability regionally or internationally. We have therefore strategically chosen instead to commit to disarmament and non-proliferation. That shows our firm commitment to international peace and security, as well as our commitment to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes

Despite the weeks of unfruitful negotiations and the backtracking with regard to commitments under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) confirms the relevance of the Treaty in the framework of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

In that regard, Morocco calls upon all States who hope to make tangible progress towards implementing Article VI of the NPT to accede to the Treaty, which represents a glimmer of hope amid the challenges faced by the international community. The balance among the three pillars of the NPT must be addressed through the equitable and universal implementation of all of its provisions as a key instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. Morocco reiterates its full commitment to the inalienable rights of the

States parties to the NPT to engage in the peaceful use of nuclear energy in order to engage in development, through the cooperation of the international community and under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

As a party to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, Morocco will make every effort to uphold Africa's status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. That Treaty, which constitutes a shield for Africa, also prohibits the placement of nuclear explosive devices or the testing of such weapons on our continent. Our country also undertakes to make its experience and expertise in the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy available to friendly, brotherly countries that so desire in order to bolster their capacities as a vehicle for socioeconomic development on the African continent. Moreover, the fundamental role of zones free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in ensuring international peace and security has never diminished. That is particularly true in the Middle East.

My delegation wishes to highlight that the universalization of the NPT is closely tied to the commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons in the Middle East through the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, the Kingdom of Morocco is pleased to see the holding of the first conference on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, under the competent chairmanship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the holding of the second such conference, under the chairmanship of Kuwait, during which the rules of procedure for the conference were adopted and an informal working group was put in place and tasked with follow-up consultations between the sessions of the conference and the adoption of a final report. Morocco also wishes every success to the Republic of Lebanon for its upcoming chairmanship of the third session of that conference in November.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the importance of which is confirmed even in the preamble to the NPT, has not yet entered into force, even though 26 years have elapsed since its adoption. As a State firmly committed to regional and international peace, Morocco will continue to deploy efforts to ensure the expeditious entry into force and universalization of the CTBT in order to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, Morocco attaches great importance to the eradication of those weapons of mass destruction and condemns any use of such weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. The States Parties to the CWC are called on to resolutely work together to further strengthen the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in achieving a world free of chemical weapons. Morocco also remains deeply concerned about the threat posed by the acquisition and potential use of such weapons by non-State actors and terrorist groups, particularly in the current international context. The existence and illicit circulation of destructive weapons is a wrong that fuels and perpetuates conflicts, terrorism, including nuclear terrorism, and trafficking of all kinds and deeply affects the sovereignty of States and the most vulnerable sectors of society.

The current challenges make it essential that we work to achieve the goals of international peace and security. A spirit of renewed commitment must guide the actions of the international community, particularly with regard to outer space and cyberspace, so as to allow it to continue to take full advantage of those common spaces and make them catalysts for sustainable development. As far as outer space is concerned, Morocco has ratified the five treaties in that area. Morocco joined the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 1961. We remain convinced that space is a common heritage that should be protected against any potential threat.

Morocco adheres to all international instruments on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and reiterates its strong commitment to complete and irreversible general disarmament. We can only hope that the work of our Committee will be crowned with success and provide new impetus for our long journey towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction. My country remains convinced that strengthening multilateralism and international cooperation remain fundamental elements in providing comprehensive and effective responses to global threats related to proliferation. The threat of war and its consequences have not diminished over the years. That said, political

will and a collective approach can lead to change. There is still time to be innovative and ambitious in reframing security and reshaping our world.

**The Chair:** I would be grateful to the representative of Morocco for conveying our deep appreciation to Ambassador Hilale for his contribution to the First Committee.

**Ms. Hannust** (Estonia): I assure you, Mr. Chair, of my delegation's full support and cooperation. Estonia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). Allow me to also highlight some issues in our national capacity.

This session of the First Committee takes place in unprecedented circumstances. Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, continues its war of aggression against Ukraine despite the overwhelming condemnation of Russia's actions by the General Assembly.

Russia's plans to annex four Ukrainian regions after the so-called referendums have no legitimacy and are yet another blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Russia's military mobilization, as well as its irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, is escalating the situation. This morning, Russia launched massive missile attacks on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, and on Zaporizhzhya, Dnipro, Lviv and other regions. Such deliberate targeting of innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure is considered a war crime under international humanitarian law. Those actions by the aggressor are reckless and desperate and severely undermine global security and stability.

We urge Russia to immediately withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We condemn the involvement of Belarus in the ongoing aggression against Ukraine.

Estonia is extremely concerned about the threats to nuclear safety, security and safeguards that the Russian military invasion poses. Nuclear facilities in Ukraine remain at the highest risk. We welcome the call by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency for the establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We call on Russia to immediately withdraw its military and other personnel from the

plant so that the Ukrainian authorities can resume their sovereign responsibilities without outside pressure and interference.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global regime for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Estonia deeply regrets that, owing to Russia's opposition, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT could not achieve a consensus on an outcome document. We also condemn the violation of the security assurances that Russia provided to Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 in connection with Ukraine's accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. That violation seriously undermines the global non-proliferation order. Estonia shares the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons and continues to advocate for a progressive approach, pursued in a realistic and responsible way.

Estonia supports all international efforts towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We urge all States, particularly the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. We also support starting negotiations on the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and we call on the nuclear-weapon States to declare, or maintain, moratoriums on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Estonia fully supports the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We are increasingly concerned over Iran's continued actions that are inconsistent with the JCPOA. Estonia strongly urges Iran to stop all actions inconsistent with the JCPOA and return to collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency to resolve all pending safeguards issues, in accordance with its legally binding obligations under its NPT Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. We call on Iran to seize the diplomatic opportunity and accept the proposal on the table so that the Vienna negotiations can conclude successfully.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programme continues to threaten international and regional peace and security and is a matter of grave concern. Estonia strongly condemns the illegal launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of an intermediate-range ballistic missile on 4 October 2022, which flew over the territory of Japan, amid multiple ballistic-missile launches over the past

week. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with Security Council resolutions and abandon all its nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Estonia is firmly committed to contributing to the successful outcomes of the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and the fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The Conferences serve to uphold the comprehensive legal prohibitions of such categories of weapons of mass destruction and to ensure that there can be no impunity for those who use them. As part of its aggression against Ukraine, Russia has engaged in a campaign of disinformation and State-controlled propaganda in spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations against Ukraine and the United States regarding biological and chemical weapons. That is unacceptable.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria, as well as in the United Kingdom and Russia, are flagrant violations of international law. Estonia commends the leadership of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in investigating/ the use of chemical weapons and reiterates its full confidence in the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its professionalism, impartiality and independence. We call on Syria to fully comply with its obligations under the CWC and Security Council resolutions. We call on Russia to come clear on the cases of the Skripals and Mr. Navalny.

The growing frequency of sophisticated malicious cyberincidents demonstrates how cyberspace is increasingly being used to challenge our security. We saw how Russia uses cybertools to advance its military aggression against Ukraine. Just recently, large-scale cyberattacks also targeted the Western Balkan countries, and Costa Rica was hit critically by ransomware attacks. In that context, promoting an open, free and secure cyberspace, in which international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law, fully applies, remains our priority. Our focus should now turn more strongly to the practical implementation of the agreed framework for responsible State behaviour. That is why Estonia supports the establishment of a permanent, inclusive and action-oriented programme of action and the corresponding draft resolution (A/C.1/77/L.73), presented to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.

In conclusion, Estonia is determined to contribute to the global efforts to strengthen the international rules-based order with the United Nations at its core. We remain fully committed to the implementation of the existing disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments.

**Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I wish you every success. I also express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Morocco, Mr. Omar Hilale, for his commendable efforts in facilitating the work of the First Committee at the previous session.

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

Jordan reiterates its deep concern about the continued failure to achieve tangible progress in the areas of nuclear disarmament, the implementation of agreed obligations and the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). My delegation also deplores the fact that the parties to the Treaty have failed for the second consecutive session to agree on an outcome document. The stalemate of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime at the international level impedes efforts to establish international peace and security, rid humankind of weapons of mass destruction, and divert human and financial resources from armaments to development.

We support the call for a comprehensive and balanced dialogue to ensure the success of the eleventh NPT Review Conference, to be held in 2026, with the aim of adopting an inclusive final document that once again reflects the commitment of all States to the NPT. That includes the implementation of obligations made at previous Review Conferences, in particular with regard to nuclear non-proliferation, the universalization of the Treaty and the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Jordan calls on all States Members of the United Nations to embrace the outcomes of the first and second sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other

Weapons of Mass Destruction, which were presided over by Jordan and the sisterly State of Kuwait, respectively. We call on States to support the efforts of the countries of the region to reach a legally binding instrument to eliminate the risk of non-conventional weapons in the region and promote international and regional peace and security. We wish the sisterly Lebanese Republic every success in presiding over the third session of the Conference, and we call for States to participate effectively in the Conference in order to ensure its success. We stress the need for greater efforts to promote the achievements made and reaffirm the call on Israel to join the Conference without any preconditions. It is imperative that Israel accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities and activities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system.

Concerning the peaceful uses of atomic energy, Jordan reaffirms that article IV of the NPT recognizes the right of States to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy, as well as the rights of non-nuclear States, while observing the highest internationally recognized standards of safety and security and the need for such peaceful uses and programmes to be under the supervision of the IAEA and its safeguards regime. Jordan calls for strengthening the measures that ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy and for promoting cooperation and assistance in that area, especially to benefit developing countries in a manner that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

Jordan reaffirms the need to preserve outer space from arms race and disputes. International efforts must focus on using outer space for peaceful purposes. The relevant international conventions have enhanced the peaceful use of outer space and regulated the activities undertaken in it. However, there is an urgent need to adopt a new legally binding instrument that prohibits all non-peaceful uses of outer space. Collective efforts must build on the results achieved by the Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which was established pursuant to resolution 72/250. Jordan welcomes the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour and hopes that it will successfully conclude its work. We also support efforts aimed at finding solutions to the question of space debris through effective international cooperation.



Concerning cybersecurity, Jordan supports international efforts aimed at promoting the security of information and communications technology (ICT) in a manner that protects States from any attacks that would affect their interests. We also reaffirm the need to build capacity in developing countries in order to ensure the security and use of ICT by exchanging expertise, establishing a United Nations mechanism for the sharing of information on the capacity-building of States and encouraging them to express their needs in the field of cybersecurity and finance programmes for building capacities. Jordan welcomes the results of the third session of the Open-ended Working Group on security and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2015, which was established pursuant to resolution 75/240, in particular the adoption of its first annual report (A/77/275, annex), which comprehensively reflects the deliberations of States at its first two sessions, as well as a road map for the Group's work in the future. In that context, Jordan commends the Permanent Representative of Singapore for chairing the Group and for his efforts leading to the adoption of the report. My country's delegation will support the draft decision of the First Committee on that report to be submitted by Singapore.

Concerning conventional weapons, Jordan reaffirms the importance of reactivating the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in particular of preventing terrorist groups from obtaining access to such weapons. We welcome the consensus-based adoption of the final document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2022/1, annex) of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of Programme of Action and look forward to building on the recommendations contained in the final document, in preparation for the holding of the fourth Review Conference in 2024. Jordan also stresses the need to assist developing countries in securing their borders in a manner that would prevent the smuggling of small arms and light weapons, in particular in conflict zones, and calls for promoting transparency among States to ensure that weapons do not reach terrorist groups illicitly.

In conclusion, we would like to express our full support for the work of the First Committee and our close cooperation with all Member States.

**Ms. Quintero Correa** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the Bureau on your election and assure you of my delegation's support.

We thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu for her valuable introductory comments, and we welcome those made by the President of the General Assembly.

In addition to the unprecedented global challenges in the areas of weapons control, disarmament and non-proliferation, cybersecurity, the environment and sustainable development, we now face the consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic. We are at a watershed moment. However, considerable resources continue to be earmarked for military spending, which, in 2021, exceeded \$2 trillion. That is contrary to the efforts and investments needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and targets to address climate change. The proliferation and illicit trafficking of weapons fuel conflict and wars and increase the suffering and scars they cause. They heighten discord, distrust and tensions. They distort our view of others, divide us and drive us apart. We are the civilization that has achieved the highest level ever recorded of technological and scientific development, which enables us to enjoy the greatest level of well-being in history and allows all human beings to have access to it. However, we face an abyss. The horrors of war are intensifying and the spectre of the nuclear threat looms over us.

We continue to be drawn into games of power and war, which have taken our reason hostage. Short-sighted in the face of the challenges that demand greatness from us, we have entrenched ourselves behind the machines of war — the instruments of death — which we are developing at the same pace as other technological progress. What will we choose to continue to prioritize: power, profit or life? It is our collective, ethical and existential responsibility to avoid war and the suffering and tragedy of those subjected to it, as well as, inevitably, those who wage it, and to prevent the unspeakable suffering that would be wrought by the global devastating power of nuclear weapons. In his speech at the general debate a few weeks ago, President Gustavo Petro Urrego of Colombia said,

“What is the point of war when what we need to do is save the human species? [...] Only in peace can we save lives on this Earth of ours”. (A/77/PV.4, pp.20 and 21)

It is time to change course; it is time for peace. The demonstrations that we have seen over the past few years throughout the world are the voices of the people asking their leaders for meaningful change to

build a more equitable, peaceful and environmentally sustainable world; a world in which people live without fear of the other; a world based on international law, respect for human rights and dignity, cooperation, dialogue and brotherhood — the world foreseen by its peoples in the founding Charter of the United Nations. Let us listen to those voices. We call for dialogue to end war everywhere in the world and achieve global peace.

One month ago, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons concluded, regrettably without reaching a positive outcome despite the fact that we face the greatest level of nuclear threat since the Cold War. We reiterate that the contention that nuclear weapons provide security is a fallacy, as it is undermined by the humanitarian impact of their use. That situation is unacceptable and confirms for us the urgent need to move forward with global and total disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition continues to be one of the most consequential collective threats, owing to its humanitarian and socioeconomic ramifications and its links to violence, organized crime, terrorism and other crimes. No country is immune to that phenomenon, which has an impact on the lives, welfare and dignity of individuals, families, communities and entire nations — hence the importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which has contributed to addressing the phenomenon.

We welcomed the success 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 and the adoption by consensus of its final document. This year Colombia, together with Japan and South Africa, will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.50 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, which seeks to maintain dialogue and cooperation in order to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. We call on all States to continue their support for the annual draft resolution and maintain their broad sponsorship.

Colombia has reiterated that ammunition is inextricably tied to small arms and light weapons and constitutes one of their fundamental aspects and, as

such, a key part of the problem posed by their illicit trade and diversion. We have therefore called for the implementation of the provisions of the instruments concerning ammunition and for stepping up dialogue among States in that regard. We will continue to do so in all relevant forums. In the framework of the open-ended working group on conventional ammunition, we have pointed out that the new global framework must be comprehensive, fill existing gaps and explicitly and clearly include small arms and light weapons ammunition.

Colombia is firmly committed to the full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. This year, as President of its twentieth Meeting of States Parties, we have worked on, inter alia, strengthening cooperation and constructive dialogue with the States concerned, promoting risk education and fostering the full, equal, effective and non-discriminatory participation of victims in society. Similarly, this year together with Germany and the Netherlands, we sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.40 on the implementation of the Convention, which seeks to continue promoting its effective implementation and universalization. We call on all States to continue their support for the annual draft resolution and to participate in the twentieth Meeting of States Parties, to be held in Geneva from 21 to 25 November.

Lastly, we would like to highlight the need to include a gender perspective in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation policies and programmes. The participation of women in the development and implementation of policies is important, given their critical role in building peace and security.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other Bureau members on your and their election. My delegation associates 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).

It is clearly and more than ever apparent that the international community must address both traditional and non-traditional security concerns in the light of the most recent array of security threats. The world faces multiple and interlinked challenges and new emerging threats in the areas of cyberspace, artificial intelligence, the dark web, outer space and so on. Furthermore, the chronic threat of weapons of mass destruction poses an

existential threat to humankind. Military expenditures have reached an all-time high of \$2.1 trillion, and the very high number of military transfers in 2021 broke all previous records, with the great Powers accounting for the bulk of both. The inevitable compounding of such expenditures could possibly trigger substantial tensions.

Nuclear war is becoming exponentially more likely, not only because of the means of modernization, as well as the renewed and enlarged nuclear arms race, but also because of other factors. Nuclear arsenals are being replaced and upgraded. For instance, the United States has retained or even increased its budget for every nuclear-weapon programme. The United Kingdom's nuclear-weapon policy includes increasing its stockpile ceiling of nuclear weapons by up to 44 per cent and, along with a number of other nuclear-weapon States, lowering the threshold for the possible use of such weapons and reducing transparency about its nuclear weapons.

In addition to the demise of key nuclear arms control agreements and the erosion of the international arms control architecture, there is non-compliance with the legally binding obligation by the nuclear-weapon States on nuclear disarmament based on article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Unfortunately, there is also no prospect of any improvement in the future. The international community expects to hold the nuclear-weapon States responsible and accountable by upholding their obligations following the failure of the two consecutive Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in 2015 and 2022. Moreover, the New START Treaty has yet to be implemented, rendering moot the possibility of negotiating a superseding agreement. Regrettably, at the regional level in the Middle East, the Israeli regime is equipped with all types of weapons of mass destruction, while acting within the parameters of its irresponsible policy, including the cyber and physical attacks carried out by the regime against safeguarded nuclear facilities, as well as the terrorist assassination of nuclear scientists. The regime must renounce the possession of nuclear weapons and abide with international calls to join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party, without any precondition or delay, and subject all its nuclear activities to the full scope of the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

We believe that nuclear weapons are not deterrents but are instead tools for mass murder. The idea that nuclear bombs bring stability to a world that spends

staggeringly more on weapons and war than on the social good is a clear indication of such an illogical principle. The simple solution is nuclear disarmament through the total elimination of all nuclear stockpiles. The action needed first and foremost in this regard is the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.

It is hard to deny the concrete threat that chemical and biological weapons pose to humankind. Any use or threat of use of these inhumane weapons should be unequivocally rejected and prevented. The most effective way to uphold the global prohibition on them is the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on Biological Weapons (BWC).

It is noteworthy that, in practice, these instruments face challenges at different levels. As the only existing major possessor of chemical weapons, the United States still has not concluded the destruction of its arsenal. It has also been the only party with reservations and therefore has blocked the strengthening of the BWC by rejecting the laying out of a verification-system protocol. In addition, the United States still has reservations about the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We urge the United States to play a responsible role by implementing its obligations and withdrawing the aforementioned reservations. Once more, the Israeli entity in the Middle East must join these conventions and fulfil the obligations set forth therein.

On another note, I would like to discuss the militarized and politicized approach taken by certain countries with regard to outer space and cyberspace. We are steadfast in our principled position that both domains should be utilized exclusively for peaceful purposes and that this can best be achieved by agreeing on legally binding instruments for both. We strongly recommend avoiding any reckless decision-making or activities designed to enforce any unilateral interpretation or impose unilateral coercive measures that hamper States' ability to enjoy their inalienable rights strive to make achievements for peaceful purposes in these two areas. Two regrettable examples of such irresponsible actors in these two fields are the United States and the Israeli regime.

In conclusion, I would like to draw the attention of the First Committee to the fact that the withdrawal in 2018 of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive

Plan of Action and the unwillingness of the current United States Administration to return to it have caused immense damage to international efforts on nuclear non-proliferation. However, Iran has consistently complied with its obligations under the comprehensive safeguards agreement and has been cooperating with the IAEA.

As the penholder, Iran will present a biennial draft decision on “Missiles”. We hope it will be adopted with resounding support from the entire membership.

**Mr. Li Song** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China congratulates Ambassador Pieris on his election to chair the First Committee and assures him and the other delegations of its full cooperation in striving to making this session a successful one.

Thirty years since the end of the cold war, the cold-war mentality remains the greatest threat to international peace and stability. Today global security, international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms face the greatest challenges they have faced since the cold war. A glacier is not formed over a single cold snap; acts of certain countries to raise the ante in major-country competition and confrontation, strengthen military alliances, provoke and aggravate disagreements have seriously undermined trust among major countries and global strategic stability. The prevalence of double standards has shaken the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, made hotspot issues more complex and intractable, and worsened the international security environment. Widespread practices of block politics and suppression of countries with different views have severely toxified multilateral cooperation with very negative impacts.

The profound changes in our world, our time and our history are unfolding in an unprecedented way. President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Security Initiative, which seeks to establish a balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture, thereby offering China’s wisdom and solution for eliminating the root causes of conflicts and achieving lasting stability and security in the world. In this context, I would like to share China’s positions and proposals as follows.

First, mutual trust and collaboration among major countries is the bedrock for international security and stability. Nuclear-weapon States must abandon strategic competition and block confrontation, renounce exclusive and absolute security, and refrain from putting one’s own security above that of others. Instead, they should commit to rebuilding strategic trust through dialogue

and cooperation. The joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States in January is of far-reaching significance to prevent a nuclear war and arms races. The permanent five should strengthen communication and collaboration and maintain strategic balance and stability.

It is our hope that all nuclear-weapon States heed the repeated calls of the Secretary-General Guterres and China to pursue the no-first-use policy. Nuclear disarmament should always be undertaken through a fair and reasonable process consisting of gradual and balanced reduction. The United States and Russia, which continue to bear special and primary responsibilities, should make further significant reductions in their nuclear arsenals to create conditions for multilateral nuclear disarmament. The United States should stop developing and deploying regional or global missile-defence systems, refrain from deploying land-based intermediary-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific and European regions and refrain from duplicating nuclear-sharing arrangements in the Asia-Pacific.

Secondly, we must abide by and strengthen international arms-control treaties and mechanisms. The diminishing trust and growing conflict and confrontations among countries stems not from the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter being obsolete, but rather from resentments triggered by the so-called rules-based international order. States Members of the United Nations should practice true multilateralism and uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order underpinned by international law.

China has launched its domestic procedure to ratify the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which demonstrates its determination to embrace multilateralism and build a community with a shared future for humankind.

The States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should renew their efforts to uphold the object and purpose of the Treaty. China will always faithfully fulfil all its obligations under the NPT, actively support international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and expand the NPT’s role for peace and development in a new era.



Thirdly, we must stay true to our original aspirations for non-proliferation and to the right path to that end and resolutely oppose proliferation disguised as non-proliferation. The nuclear-submarine cooperation of the enhanced trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States runs counter to the object and purpose of the NPT, represents an attack on International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, poses a severe proliferation risk and undermines regional peace and stability. We call upon the international community for closer attention, thorough discussion and prudent handling with regard to this issue, so as to preserve the integrity and effectiveness of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The Iranian nuclear issue is at a critical juncture. All parties should stick to dialogue and negotiation. The United States must make a political decision and positively respond to Iran's legitimate concerns with a view to reaching an agreement on restoring compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

As the situation on the Korean peninsula remains tense, all parties should focus on the bigger picture of peace and stability on the peninsula and avoid escalating tensions. The solution should be guided by indivisible security and geared towards the denuclearization of the peninsula, with the reasonable concerns of all sides addressed in a balanced manner, and fresh efforts made towards dialogue and negotiations.

Fourthly, it is imperative to improve security governance on new frontiers. It is our hope that the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention will promote the strengthening of the Convention's mechanism at the ninth Review Conference. One major spacefaring country, guided by a strategy aimed at space dominance, is directly fuelling space weaponization and an arms race in outer space. China calls for the prevention of such an approach and is ready to contribute to achieving greater security in outer space governance in a principled and constructive manner. Negotiating a legally binding arms control instrument is the key to ensuring security in outer space. China underscores the crucial role of the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies as the only United Nations process on information security and supports the leading role of the United Nations in strengthening global artificial intelligence governance. China advocates for establishing an open, inclusive

and just dialogue at the United Nations in order to continuously promote the peaceful uses of science and technology and relevant international cooperation, with the dividends shared among all.

China has long pursued an independent foreign policy of peace and a defence policy that is defensive in nature. It has played an active part in advancing the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes and refuses to engage in any arms race. China's defence forces serve to resolutely defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Its arms control policy is aimed at promoting a fair, just, reasonable and feasible multilateral arms control process in order to promote international peace, security and stability and safeguard China's legitimate security interests. No country is exempt from the multiple security challenges we face. The work of multilateral arms control and disarmament mechanisms is closely linked to the evolving international situation. To weather the current uncertainties, we must work relentlessly to improve the security environment and political climate by rising above a Cold War mentality. We must adopt a new vision of a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, respect and ensure the security of each country, and work together to build common security. China stands ready to make tireless efforts to that end.

**Mr. Makarevich** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Today we regret to note the unprecedented levels of tension and distrust that have triggered a new arms race and an increased risk of military confrontation against the backdrop of the ongoing collapse of international arms control and non-proliferation agreements, which are the fundamental tenets of international and European security. It is not difficult to cite examples, such as the decreased effectiveness of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019 and the failure of the Open Skies Treaty due to the withdrawal of two key parties. The arms control regime and confidence-building measures in Europe are in crisis. No progress has been made towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), while the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) faces many challenges.

There is no doubt that nuclear weapons and the threat of their use are a major cause for concern. Considering the lack of progress with regard to nuclear disarmament, the threat is just as acute as it was during the most active years of the Cold War. During the NPT

Review Conference held at Headquarters in August, the proceedings were held hostage to unprecedented differences and politicization of nuclear issues. Belarus, which voluntarily and unilaterally renounced its nuclear weapons more than 30 years ago, calls on all nuclear-weapon States to take decisive steps to comprehensively strengthen the global non-proliferation machinery and lay the groundwork for gradually moving towards a world free from nuclear weapons.

First and foremost, we see a need for taking concrete actions to reduce nuclear threats and ensure that the nuclear disarmament process is multilateral and irreversible in order to achieve the goals set forth in article VI of the NPT. Nuclear-weapon States should play a particular role and bear a particular responsibility in that regard. We trust that positive steps, such as the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and Russia, as well as the joint statement made in January by the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States on the prevention of a nuclear war and an arms race, will lay the groundwork for further systemic efforts on the non-nuclear track. We reiterate that there is a need to ensure the swift entry into force of the CTBT, which plays a critical role in nuclear disarmament. We call upon those States with the power to determine the fate of the CTBT to demonstrate political will and take the urgent steps required to ensure its entry into force. We attach particular importance to the provision of guarantees by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States on the non-use of nuclear weapons and the inadmissibility of the use of such weapons.

At the present juncture, we have all the required elements in place to launch a global, legally binding agreement that provides non-nuclear States with unambiguous, specific and unequivocal security guarantees. That fully aligns with the Belarusian Head of State's letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in May, in which he highlighted the need to lay out clear agreements on the rules of a new world order that provides security guarantees for all members of the international community. It is important to ensure unstinting compliance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We advocate the depoliticization of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We want to see its activities restored to operate within the framework of professionalism and mutually respectful dialogue, without any intervention on the work of the Security

Council. We deem it necessary to steer the OPCW back onto the consensus track. The coronavirus disease pandemic demonstrated the increasing importance of issues related to biological security and the need to shore up existing international legal mechanisms in that area, primarily the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We would like to secure the adoption of a legally binding protocol to the Convention that would verify adherence to its provisions.

We attach great importance to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is an important mechanism for preventing weapons of mass destruction and related materials from falling into the hands of non-State actors. In that context, we advocate the extension of the mandate of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), and we are committed to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as a unique forum. Restoring the full-fledged, non-politicized work of the CD could help to strengthen international security and slow down the arms race.

We also continue to support the draft treaty submitted by the Russian Federation and China on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force in outer space. We note the vital importance of the international initiative for a political commitment to refraining from any first placement of weapons in outer space, and we call on all countries to join it, as it could play a key role in consolidating our joint efforts to strengthen international information security. In that regard, we welcome and fully support the work of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, which should result in the adoption under the auspices of the United Nations of universal rules on the responsible behaviour of States in the information realm.

As has been said, multilateral disarmament forums continue to be held hostage to politicized approaches and disagreements. In the First Committee, fewer and fewer resolutions are adopted by consensus, while the numbers of resolutions that are voted on not only as a whole but paragraph by paragraph is increasing, which in turn emphasizes the depth of disagreement. We should work to interrupt that negative trend and return to a path of equitable and mutually respectful dialogue. Belarus believes firmly in that approach, which is affirmed in many of our initiatives, including on international security, disarmament and confidence-building, as

well as on launching a wide-ranging dialogue aimed at overcoming disagreements between States and re-establishing trust with a view to creating digital good-neighbourliness and on adopting a multilateral political declaration on the non-deployment of medium-range missiles in Europe. We are prepared to engage in open, inclusive cooperation with all States Members of the United Nations in order to strengthen international peace, security and stability.

**Mr. Bakradze** (Georgia): On behalf of the Georgian delegation, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and assure you of the full support of the Georgian delegation.

First, let me stress that Georgia stands in full solidarity with Ukraine and commends the people of Ukraine for their courage in defending their country against Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression, which Georgia condemns in the strongest possible terms. Georgia firmly condemns Russia's full-scale military invasion of a sovereign country, illegal sham referendums and annexation of Ukrainian territory, and considers them gross violations of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, that are severely undermining European and global security architecture. We are concerned about the recent escalation, including the deliberate targeting of civilians and damage to civilian infrastructure by the Russian Federation. It is very disturbing that Russia has lately been using dangerous nuclear rhetoric. It is also very worrying that Russia's actions pose a serious and direct threat to the safety and security of Ukrainian nuclear facilities.

We urge Russia to immediately cease its illegal war on Ukraine and withdraw its military and other personnel from the whole of the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine, including the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, so that the Ukrainian authorities can resume their sovereign responsibilities and the legitimate operating staff can carry out their duties without outside pressure or interference. We welcome the International Atomic Energy Agency Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya and commend the Director General and his team in accomplishing that important mission.

Georgia has always been a staunch supporter and adherent of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes — the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions. We also consider vitally important the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is a crucial component of the non-proliferation and disarmament system. Georgia supports the universal and effective implementation of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is disappointing that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was not able to reach consensus in August owing to Russia's rejection of a compromise document that would have enabled progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Georgia also fully adheres to the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which are key instruments in preserving international peace and security. I would like to highlight that Georgia has completed its work on harmonizing its national legislation with the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are fully committed to our international obligations under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, including the requirements and provisions of the Convention on the management of biological laboratories. Here I want to highlight that the Government of Georgia has established our National Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Council. With the active involvement of European Union (EU), the United States and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the Council developed and the Government adopted a National CBRN Threat Reduction Strategy and Action Plan for 2021–2030.

Addressing the problem of the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of conventional arms and ammunition is another priority for us. It will be vital to maintain an effective strategic trade control system that keeps pace with evolving proliferation threats and rapid technological and scientific developments. In that context, the Arms Trade Treaty is a unique instrument that should be strengthened. Georgia also supports the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on conventional ammunition, which started its work this year and is designed to elaborate a set of political commitments and address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management.

Today's global security architecture puts the fight against international terrorism at the forefront, and it is a priority for Georgia, too. We have been an active participant in global efforts and the various coalitions in the fight against terrorism. Through effective Government policies and coordination with partners, the Government of Georgia has prevented attempts by Da'esh and other actors to expand their network and influences in Georgia.

Preventing and responding to nuclear and radioactive threats are primary elements in States' maintenance of security. The two regions of Georgia that are illegally occupied by Russia remain a security challenge in many respects. In that context, we have documented attempts of smuggling nuclear and radioactive materials via Russian-occupied regions, and thanks to effective measures taken by Georgian law-enforcement agencies, those illegal activities have been duly prevented. However, in the absence of an international presence on Georgia's illegally occupied territories, it has become virtually impossible to conduct any verification activities on the ground. Furthermore, the continued occupation and excessive militarization of the illegally occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia violate fundamental norms of international law, the Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, as well as Russia's own obligations under the EU-mediated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008. Russia's actions are nothing but a continuing pattern of the creeping annexation of Georgia's territories.

Cyberspace has increasingly become one of the most critical aspects of the hybrid warfare domain. Given the globalized information environment and technological progress, weaponized information is an effective tool for advancing individual political agendas. Georgia has been subject to disinformation and cyberattacks from Russia. Despite the steps Georgia has taken to ensure responsible behaviour in cyberspace, attacks and malicious activities are being identified on a daily basis. Over the years we have witnessed aggressive, intensified attacks on both the Government of Georgia and our private sector. Meanwhile, we are sparing no effort to develop sufficient capabilities in the field of cybersecurity in order to handle any potential incidents. In 2021 the Government approved our national cybersecurity strategy for 2021–2024 and its action plan.

The international community should take coordinated and holistic measures to effectively address the multidimensional peace and security challenges that

the world is facing today. They are by no means limited to the boundaries of any given country or region and have wider implications for global security generally.

**Mr. Abushahab** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee for this session, and to wish you every success. We also want to express our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco for his successful leadership of the work of the Committee during the previous session.

The United Arab Emirates aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Iraq, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

The United Arab Emirates supports all international efforts aimed at achieving our common goal of establishing a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We stress that the most effective way to achieve further progress in addressing all the aspects of issues relating to disarmament and international security is by intensifying multilateral action, especially amid States' declining commitment to the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and our escalating global challenges, particularly existing conflicts and rising food and energy prices.

The United Arab Emirates emphasizes the importance of compliance with the international conventions and instruments on nuclear security and safety in order to promote international peace and security. In addition, States must take a transparent approach in using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with international treaties, particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which constitutes the main pillar of the nuclear disarmament regime. We also stress the importance of taking concrete steps to enhance the Treaty's universality. The United Arab Emirates regrets that it proved impossible to adopt an outcome document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and underscores the importance of implementing the outcomes of previous Review Conferences, especially the resolution on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the action plan agreed on in 2010.

In the context of maintaining momentum towards achieving peace and security in our region, we look forward to participating in the upcoming third session



of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November under the presidency of the Republic of Lebanon. We also thank the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Kuwait for their efforts during their presidencies of the previous sessions.

In the light of the growing threats posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and continuing efforts to acquire and develop them through nuclear programmes of a questionable nature, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has become more important than ever. In that regard, the annex 2 States have the responsibility to take urgent action to sign and ratify the CTBT so that it can enter into force.

The United Arab Emirates stresses the pivotal role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system, which provides a reliable mechanism for ensuring that nuclear materials and facilities are used for exclusively peaceful purposes. In line with its commitment to the non-proliferation regime, the United Arab Emirates concluded its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA and signed its Additional Protocol. In that regard, we reiterate our call to States whose nuclear activities are questionable to cooperate appropriately with the IAEA and respond constructively to its inquiries, while taking all the steps required to address international concerns about their nuclear activities in order to restore confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of their programmes.

In that context, my country is concerned about Iran's continued development of its nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes. We join many other countries in calling on Iran to address the concerns about its nuclear programme and build confidence by complying with the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements and the NPT, including by ceasing all activities that threaten the global non-proliferation regime. We also condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's repeated missile tests, which are flagrant violations of Security Council resolutions, and express our concern about its continued development of its nuclear and missile capabilities. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should respect its relevant international obligations to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

As malicious attacks targeting vital infrastructure continue to increase, the United Arab Emirates stresses the importance of strengthening international

cooperation on cybersecurity and supporting frameworks that regulate information and telecommunications security. We also call for intensifying efforts to protect countries and peoples from the misuse of cyberspace, which has become a threat to the whole world and particularly to developing countries struggling to keep up with today's advances.

In conclusion, we believe that it is essential to reach consensus if we are to make progress on outstanding issues related to disarmament and international security. We also emphasize the importance of an approach that enhances multilateral action under the auspices of the United Nations. We stress the need for ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation in disarmament and international security issues as well as the inclusion, empowerment and education of young men on those issues. Their participation can ensure that their perspective and needs are taken into consideration when relevant policies are adopted and implemented, which in turn would enhance the effectiveness of the arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

**Mr. Flores** (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Honduras congratulates you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Dominican Republic, on behalf of the Central American Integration System (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), and with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Honduras is committed to the provisions of Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, which explicitly states that we must maintain international peace and security. In that regard and on behalf of the country I represent, led by Her Excellency President Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, I reaffirm our commitment to the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to achieve general and complete disarmament, non-proliferation and the implementation of the international agreements on disarmament and arms control in order to maintain collective peace and security for the good of all humankind.

My delegation expresses its concern about the increase in global military spending and the imminent escalation of the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction. Undoubtedly, the risk posed by the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons undermines the purpose and work of this multilateral space. The only way to put an end to the risk posed by nuclear weapons is their total elimination. Honduras condemns nuclear-weapons tests and calls for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction through multilateral negotiation and under the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency, while affirming the importance of humanitarian considerations in the context of all nuclear weapons and disarmament deliberations.

No country is prepared to face a humanitarian catastrophe from the use of nuclear weapons, and we must bear in mind that as long as nuclear weapons exist, there is unquestionably a latent threat that they could be used again.

In the face of that threat, Honduras has convincingly shown the importance of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, their complete elimination and the total prohibition of nuclear testing. We signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 1967, and although 55 years have passed, the total elimination of the nuclear arsenal remains a pending issue. That is why Honduras remains firmly convinced that legally binding instruments establishing enforceable regulations and principles for States possessing nuclear weapons must be put into effect.

For Honduras, the nuclear issue is admissible only if it refers to the use of technologies for peaceful purposes, to build national capacities and to make progress in the application of nuclear technology under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. My country reiterates the call for all countries of the world to commit to the use of nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes or responsible scientific cooperation.

Honduras supports the use of outer space for peaceful purposes only and supports the strengthening of international norms applicable to States in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, promoting actions and strategies to strengthen cybersecurity and the use of a secure, stable, accessible and peaceful space, regulated by a universal legal instrument.

I wish to emphasize that, for Honduras, assistance and cooperation, the sharing of experiences, constant training and the participation of women in disarmament issues are fundamental.

My country is living a historic moment. Today we have the first democratically elected woman President since the coup d'état of 2009, which undermined the rule of law and had a significant impact on the country's legal institutions and social fabric. The country's vulnerable state provided fertile ground for the emergence and growth of corruption, organized crime and illicit arms trafficking. Hundreds of illicit weapons are still in circulation and play a central role in exacerbating and sustaining armed conflict, widespread violence, crime and migration.

Given this reality, effective small arms control remains as urgent as ever. Hondurans are victims of the illicit manufacture and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. That is intimately related to the challenges of sustainable development and gender equity and has different impacts on the lives of women, men, girls and boys. In my country, that situation is not abstract; it is real. Promoting an agenda to reduce the human suffering caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and enhancing respect for the life and dignity of the human person through the promotion of a culture of peace, with the support of the United Nations and within the broader framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the women and peace and security agenda, is of primary interest to our current Government, which is headed by a woman.

Finally, congruent with the challenges posed by the multiple global crises in which we live, and in line with our Government plan, Honduras is today dedicated to strengthening solidarity and peace among peoples and, as recently expressed by President Xiomara Castro Sarmiento at the United Nations, to building "a system with the promotion of humanism, solidarity, integration with our brother peoples, peace and respect for human rights at its core" (A/77/PV.5, p. 3) — one founded on a genuine, moral and transparent political will in support of a multilateralism that is capable of counteracting the crises that currently threaten the very future of humankind and the destiny of our planet.

**Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil):** Brazil aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau on your election to your post in order to discharge the critical task of guiding us through First Committee this year.

As we kick off this Committee's session, old and new conflicts generate and intensify severe humanitarian crises, with a notable impact on food security and the access to energy sources. Those crises feed a sinister vicious cycle of mistrust and conflict that leads to persistent instability.

In response, countries are increasing their military spending to unprecedented levels in a spiral that some have called the great global rearmament. In such a scenario, substantial financial means are earmarked for the expansion of conventional and strategic arsenals, while crucial resources are diverted from other key sectors of human life, such as education, health care and sustainable development. It is high time that we overcome the elusive narrative that more weapons, especially strategic weapons, make us safer. Security does not exist in a vacuum. The yearning of a few for a purported absolute security results only in diminished security for all.

Faced with expanding arsenals and intensifying nuclear rhetoric, we were unable to reach an outcome document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Despite the extremely polarized environment and thanks to the efforts of the Chair of the Conference, we had before us a text that, although far from ideal, was a possible and necessary compromise. It is therefore deeply regrettable that consensus on it was broken at the last minute.

Much has been said about a crisis in the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime after two consecutive failed Review Conferences. The regime is indeed in crisis, but not for the reasons mentioned. We must not mistake the symptom for the disease. It is no use trying to understand the crisis of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime through the exclusive lens of super-Power rivalry. In fact, the crisis is due to the abandonment by nuclear-weapon States of the grand bargain that made the adoption of the NPT possible — the undertaking by non-nuclear-weapon States not to pursue nuclear weapons, which is inextricably linked to the obligation of nuclear-weapon States to disarm. Over its five decades of existence, however, it seems that only the non-proliferation side of the bargain is being consistently met. Yet there are those that insist on furthering that already untenable imbalance. That state of affairs is simply unsustainable, and it may ultimately lead to the demise of the NPT regime.

In the opposite direction, last June, more than 80 States met in Vienna to reaffirm their unwavering commitment to the total, irreversible, verifiable and transparent elimination of nuclear weapons. In adopting the Vienna Declaration and Action Plan of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the States parties and observers to the TPNW reiterated the moral and ethical imperatives that led to the adoption of the Treaty and that should pave the way for our common objective of general and complete disarmament. The Vienna Declaration also includes an unequivocal condemnation of any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances. Brazil fully subscribes to that condemnation.

The first step on the tortuous road leading to nuclear disarmament is to achieve a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing — not a moratorium, but a legally binding prohibition. We celebrate the recent accessions to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we insist on the need for the annex 2 countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, thereby preventing its entry into force, to do so without delay.

In a recent trip to Brazil and neighbouring countries, the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization applauded our region for carrying the torch of leadership in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. In fact, the Treaty of Tlatelolco established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a permanently inhabited area of the world, paving the way for similar initiatives. We believe that the strengthening of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the creation of new zones, based on consensus among all States in the respective regions, will be a crucial step towards our common goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

We also take pride in having developed, with Argentina, an innovative and highly successful model for the implementation of nuclear safeguards through the establishment of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) — a landmark for the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The ABACC is an example to the world as an instrument for building trust and verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as recognized by General Assembly resolution 76/52, adopted by consensus.

As a developing country with considerable space capabilities and aspirations to become a full spacefaring nation, it is in Brazil's utmost interest that outer space remain peaceful, stable, safe and accessible to all. We look forward to the successful conclusion of the ongoing Open-ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours. Brazil hopes that that process will help us to reach a common understanding on what constitutes responsible behaviour in outer space and build much-needed mutual trust, thereby paving the way for a future binding instrument to supplement the existing legal framework.

Earlier this year, the Brazilian Special Representative to the Conference on Disarmament was appointed Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. Since then, many States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) have provided significant contributions, which enriched the current debate and indicated possible future options for the development of an international framework concerning lethal autonomous weapon systems. The Group held two formal sessions and three intersessional informal sessions and adopted a consensus report in July. Brazil appreciates the support received from the members of the Group, whose work touches upon a strategically important subject for all High Contracting Parties to the CCW and the international community as a whole.

Finally, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the topic of programme planning. General Assembly resolution 76/236 reiterated that, whenever the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) cannot provide conclusions and recommendations on a given subprogramme or programme of the proposed programme budget, the plenary or the relevant Main Committee will consider the said programme at the very start of its session in order to provide conclusions and recommendations to the Fifth Committee no later than four weeks after the start of the session.

This year, the CPC could not reach consensus on five programmes, including programme 3, "Disarmament", which will be considered by the First Committee on 13 October. We stress the sensitiveness of that issue, and we trust that the First Committee will be able to complete the review of that programme and send its conclusions and recommendations to the Fifth Committee in a timely manner.

**Mr. Vongnorkeo** (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I join other delegations in extending my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, and to the other members of the Bureau on your election to the First Committee. I assure you of our full support and cooperation.

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

The international community must continue to renew its commitment to maintaining global peace and security in order to create an environment conducive to sustainable development. It is of the utmost importance for us to strongly promote peaceful dialogue and negotiations by upholding multilateralism and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

To that end, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must remain at the core of all disarmament regimes, especially when global peace and security are at risk. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is of the view that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has remained the cornerstone of international efforts on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy since its entry into force more than five decades ago.

Despite the efforts made during the intensive negotiations during the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, we were unable to reach a consensus on an outcome document. In that regard, my delegation encourages all States parties to continue to engage in constructive and meaningful dialogue to reaffirm our collective efforts and commitment to the NPT.

In the same vein, my delegation welcomes the successful convening of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2022. We hope that the Treaty will contribute to the global objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its strong support for international efforts towards making our world free of nuclear weapons and other weapon of mass destruction. Against that backdrop, we emphasize the importance of the full and effective



implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and treaties related to the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction.

In addition, the Lao People's Democratic Republic supports the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also welcome the adoption of the final report of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms by consensus.

While recognizing the importance of technologies in contributing to social and economic advancement, it is of the utmost importance to ensure that all activities with regard to the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) be carried out in accordance with international law in order to prevent the existing and emerging threats in cyberspace. In that regard, we welcome the progress made in the work of the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of ICTs 2021–2025, and we reaffirm our readiness to join other Member States in continued deliberations on safeguarding cybersecurity.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is of the view that capacity-building is critical to ensuring a safe, secure and resilient cyberspace for all and to reducing disparity with regard to cyberspace. We take this opportunity to call for continued support from more advanced countries in helping to build the capacity of developing countries in order to achieve our common objective of maintaining a peaceful ICT environment.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its full support for the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament and international efforts in disarmament and international security, taking into account the specific needs to address the serious impact of conventional weapons and other explosive remnants of war, particularly since cluster munitions and unexploded ordnance, contaminated across our country, have continued to kill and maim innocent people, especially children, and have seriously hindered our national development efforts for more than four decades. To that end, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has adopted its own specific national sustainable development goal 18, entitled "Lives safe from unexploded ordnance", and recently adopted a new 10-year unexploded ordnance strategy plan, Safe Path Forward 3, for the period from 2021 to 2030. To continue addressing the

problems caused by unexploded ordnance, we count on the continued and enhanced support and cooperation of the international community.

In conclusion, the Lao People's Democratic Republic reaffirms its unwavering commitment to advancing disarmament and non-proliferation in order to create a more secure world with sustainable global peace and security.

**Mr. Masila (Kenya):** My delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your election and that of the members of the Bureau of the First Committee for this session.

Kenya aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

On 24 January 1946, the General Assembly adopted its very first resolution, resolution 1 (I), by consensus. Seven decades ago, that first resolution called for the elimination of national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. Regrettably, to date, the urgency of that call for disarmament remains unheeded. It has been 75 years since the first atomic bomb was detonated, but nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear conflict continue, and within a context of much more advanced nuclear technologies and delivery mechanisms and with many more players, State and potentially non-State actors. The threat of nuclear weapons or material falling into the hands of terrorists and criminal groups is real and immediate and requires greater vigilance and collective action. In that regard, and inasmuch as nuclear security assurances remain a useful tool of nuclear diplomacy, they can never be guarantees. The era of an open-ended nuclear deterrence posture is long past.

The reality of the devastating effects and catastrophic consequences of nuclear detonation should necessitate urgent constructive engagement, political will and the full implementation of the relevant multilateral legal obligations and commitments, until the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons is achieved. A renewed momentum among all nuclear-weapon States in implementing their disarmament commitments should no longer be optional or conditional. My delegation urges all nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-umbrella States to aim for new defence and security doctrines devoid of nuclear weapons.

Kenya reaffirms its long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons. We further affirm that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons. As a State party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we call on all the annex 2 States that have yet to ratify the Treaty to make the CTBT a reality by ensuring its entry into force. As a State party to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty, Kenya is fully cognizant of the role that nuclear-weapon-free zones play in disarmament. In that regard, we look forward to a successful third session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction under the presidency of Lebanon.

As a developing country, Kenya underscores article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and affirms the importance of continued respect for the inalienable right of all States to engage in researching and developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. My country has benefited immensely from technical cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other partners in maximizing our potential in the health, agriculture, water, industry and energy sectors and in the areas of climate adaptation and inclusive socioeconomic development, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Kenya remains unwavering in its commitment to the objectives of the NPT and in its call for a total ban on nuclear weapons. In that regard, my delegation joins other States parties in expressing its disappointment that once again the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT failed to produce a consensus document.

It is our hope that the First Committee will continue to safeguard consensus and action-oriented outcomes in all ongoing processes. The First Committee, through its outcomes and existing frameworks, has an important role and responsibility to ensure that among other things, the United Nations effectively supports countries in their quest to build the digital capacity they need, and for those countries to ensure they are equipped to balance digital innovation and address the malicious use of digital technologies by both State and non-State actors in matters related to international peace and security and threats to nationally identified critical

infrastructure. My delegation welcomes the progress made and the consensus adoption of the first annual progress report (A/77/275) of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, chaired by Singapore. We are confident that we will see continued tangible deliverables.

Regarding outer space, Kenya joins other delegations in expressing concern and stressing caution regarding the possibility of an arms race in outer space. We support the call for adopting a legal framework that complements the relevant international legal mechanisms and allows for balanced and equal opportunities for all nations to explore outer space in conformity with the principles of non-appropriation and the peaceful uses of outer space.

My delegation welcomes the enhanced partnership between the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the African Union (AU) in the AU flagship initiative on Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030. The illicit transfer and trade in small arms and light weapons constitutes a serious threat to regional and international peace and security. Kenya has taken significant measures to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, including by strengthening its national policy and legal frameworks. As the Chair, in 2021, of the seventh 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, Kenya remains committed to the Programme of Action's goals, and we welcomed the successful outcome of the eighth Biennial Meeting, held in New York in June and July under the leadership of the Philippines.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you, Mr. Chair, of Kenya's continued constructive engagement as part of our shared responsibility in matters pertaining to disarmament and international security.

**Ms. Moran** (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), and by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/77/PV.4). We will submit a longer version of this statement.

I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee, and to assure

you of Ireland's full support to you and your Bureau in terms of your work.

The only way to address global threats such as the modernization and expansion of nuclear arsenals, the proliferation of missile technology, malicious cyberactivity, tensions in outer space and challenges to international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians, is through collective action. The United Nations and multilateralism are central to that work.

We are convening in a time of crisis. Ireland strongly condemns Russia's threat of the use of nuclear weapons. Any use of nuclear weapons would have devastating humanitarian consequences. The heightened nuclear risks arising from Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the threats to nuclear safety and security resulting from military activity in and near civilian nuclear facilities in Ukraine are unprecedented. Ireland supports the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to assist Ukraine with nuclear safety and security at its facilities. The seven principles of nuclear safety and security set out by the IAEA Director General apply in all circumstances, including armed conflict. We support the efforts of the Director General aimed at establishing a nuclear safety and security zone around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is deeply troubling that one country alone, Russia, prevented agreement at the tenth NPT Review Conference in August. I stress the urgency of full implementation of the NPT, including accelerated progress on nuclear disarmament.

Ireland proudly participated in the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in June. The Vienna Declaration and Vienna Action Plan were critical milestones in allowing the Treaty to establish the necessary foundations for the implementation of its provisions.

Ireland stresses the importance of the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We call on each of the remaining Annex 2 States individually to sign and ratify the CTBT immediately.

In pursuit of non-proliferation, Ireland reaffirms the importance of universal adherence to IAEA safeguards and universalization of the additional protocol.

Ireland strongly supports the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We are concerned that full restoration of the JCPOA has not yet been possible. We hope that all sides will move quickly to agree on the deal and move forward with its implementation. We call on Iran to reverse all activity inconsistent with the JCPOA and to return to full cooperation with the IAEA on monitoring and verification. Iran must also move to satisfactorily clarify outstanding nuclear-safeguards issues with the IAEA.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ongoing nuclear rhetoric and nuclear- and missile-related activities constitute a serious threat. We call on the Democratic People's Republic to immediately end its destabilizing actions and undertake steps to abandon its missiles, weapons of mass destruction and nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

This year, we marked 25 years since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The re-emergence of chemical-weapons use, including in Syria, is one of the most urgent threats to international peace and security and must be dealt with firmly and collectively. We strongly support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, its professionalism, integrity and impartiality in carrying out its work.

Similarly, it remains critical that we support the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) as the legally binding global norm and cornerstone of international efforts against biological agents and toxins as instruments of war. Ireland looks forward to the upcoming BWC Review Conference, which will seek to strengthen the Convention and improve biosecurity.

Addressing the unacceptable levels of civilian harm arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) is a key priority for Ireland. We were proud to have led the consultation process to agree on a political declaration on EWIPA, which was concluded last June in Geneva after three years. This milestone declaration recognizes the devastating humanitarian consequences of EWIPA and the actions that can be taken to strengthen the protection of civilians. Its implementation will change how militaries operate in populated areas, including a commitment to restricting or refraining from the use of explosive weapons when their use may be expected to cause harm to civilians or civilian objects. Ireland will seek the adoption of the

political declaration with a high-level conference in Dublin on 18 November, and we encourage all States to join us and endorse the political declaration.

Ireland is unequivocal in its support for the comprehensive prohibitions against anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. Recent documented use of cluster munitions and anti-personnel landmines in armed conflicts, notably in Ukraine, has underscored the continuing threat that these weapons present to civilians. Since its adoption in Dublin in 2008, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) has established itself as a core part of the international disarmament framework. We are hopeful that the Lausanne Action Plan will advance universalization and effective implementation of the CCM. Similarly, the work to universalize the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention must continue.

With regard to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Ireland supports the universalization of the Convention and its protocols and works to ensure it remains responsive to emerging challenges. Ireland continues to be concerned at the humanitarian and developmental impact of mines other than anti-personnel mines and to believe that expert discussions on this issue would benefit all States. Similarly, despite the challenges faced in the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems, we believe that failure to make progress cannot continue indefinitely. We look forward to engaging with the topic once again at the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW in November.

Ireland welcomes the opportunity afforded by the open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours to intensify efforts to address challenges in outer space. Ireland reaffirms its support for voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

Gender equality and consideration of the gendered impacts of weapons are long-standing priorities for Ireland. We are proud to co-chair the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group and are encouraged by the increasing number of draft resolutions that include gender considerations. We must ensure that this work continues, that our Committee is truly representative and that it addresses its work in an inclusive and comprehensive manner.

At this time, our work in the First Committee is more important than ever. Ensuring multilateralism supports a peaceful and secure world. Mr. Chair, we look forward to engaging with all partners, including civil society, under your leadership to this end.

**Mr. Dang Hoang Giang (Viet Nam):** Mr. Chair, I warmly congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Thailand on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), respectively (see A/C.1/77/PV.2 and A/C.1/77/PV.4).

The work of the First Committee this year is taking place against the backdrop of the most complex international security environment in decades. Geopolitical rivalries have compounded long-standing conflicts. We are witnessing confrontations on a scale that most members of the younger generations have seen only in documentaries. Amid the continued rise in defence spending and despite the socioeconomic difficulties, what trigger the greatest concern are the alarming dangers of miscalculation. Regrettably, there are signs that these worrisome trends have had an impact on and will continue to affect the work of our Committee, one of the most important mechanisms on international disarmament and arms control.

In the light of such developments, it is important that we renew and strengthen our commitment to international disarmament efforts so as to preserve our hard-earned achievements and respond adequately to the emerging challenges. Such an approach must further the adherence to fundamental principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, including respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, the peaceful settlement of disputes and refusal to resort to the use or threat of use of force. Multilateralism should be nurtured and remain at the heart of our efforts.

In so doing so, priority should be given to our common goal of nuclear disarmament, leading to a world free of nuclear weapons. We reiterate the need to continue to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime. It is crucial to advance actions on all three pillars of the Treaty in a comprehensive and balanced manner, especially the disarmament aspect. In this regard, it is heartening to note the results at the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of



Nuclear Weapons. We believe that the adoption of a political declaration and practical action plan will set the course for the implementation of the Treaty and facilitate progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In so doing, multifaceted efforts should also be made on multiple fronts, from the promotion of nuclear-weapon-free zones to negative security assurances.

While striving for progress on disarmament and arms control in relation to weapons of mass destruction, it is crucial that we address the issues on conventional weapons with great care and balance. My delegation underscores the right of States to retain, possess and manufacture conventional weapons for legitimate self-defence. We support the continued 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 call for further international cooperation in that regard, including capacity-building support to developing countries. The effects of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other unexploded remnants of war should continue to be addressed, with support for the most contaminated areas.

Newly emerging technologies are bringing about new horizons, allowing better access to significant benefits related to outer space and digital technologies. At the same time, the associated risks in that environment and with those technologies have become more salient. The thin lines between borders, sovereignty and defence and economic activities have been blurred. It is therefore high time for the international community to make further efforts to establish frameworks on those matters in order to ensure that all cyberspace and outer space activities be carried out in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and that they benefit all. The right of every State and people to freely access such spaces must be guaranteed. The way towards the formulation of such frameworks, whether through a programme of action or a legally binding instrument, should be handled with care and avoid hasty or divisive courses of action, all while taking into account the views of all Member States and the corresponding complexity of these areas.

In order to ensure progress on such important areas, it is equally critical to strengthen the disarmament machinery and promote new initiatives and proposals, while taking into account the legitimate concerns of States. We honour multilaterally agreed principles, and

we support the work on important issues addressed by relevant working groups, including those on outer space and information and communication technologies. However, time is not on our side, and it is urgent that Member States soon arrive at mutually acceptable frameworks that regulate such emerging issues, for which international rules and norms are sorely needed. In that regard, regional groups like ASEAN play an important role, and further synergy between the international and regional levels on disarmament should be further explored.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Viet Nam's readiness to engage constructively in the work of the First Committee and to support its efforts in our common pursuit of a world of peace, stability and development.

**The Chair:** I shall now give the floor to those delegations wishing to exercise the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to five minutes for the first intervention and three minutes for the second intervention.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are compelled to take the floor in exercise of our right of reply in response to a number of anti-Russian statements made by various delegations and containing unfounded accusations.

In connection with the statement made by the representative of the Georgian delegation, we would like to say that South Ossetia and Abkhazia were recognized by Russia based on the free expression of will of the people of those areas, in accordance with the norms and principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

Regarding the presence of Russian military personnel in those sovereign republics, it is regulated by the appropriate bilateral agreements with those two independent States. Russia provides the republics with large-scale assistance in order to ensure their development as independent democratic institutions, to strengthen their international positions and to bolster their socioeconomic development.

As for the most recent anti-Russian attacks related to Ukraine, we would like to underscore again that, after an armed coup d'état in Ukraine, with the direct support of the Western countries, in 2014, nationalist radical forces with openly Russophobic views came to power.

As regards the attitude towards the Russian-speaking population of Donbas, the statements made by Ukrainian officials speak for themselves. Particularly telling is the statement made by Mr. Yatsenyuk, then Prime Minister of Ukraine, calling the inhabitants of Donbas “non-humans”. In a September 2021 interview, when asked what he thought about the people living in Donbas, President Zelenskyy said that there are people and there are “beings or creatures”. I think there is no need to comment on that. Similarly, in the spring, the mayor of the city of Dnipro, Mr. Filatov, said:

“Now we have the full moral right to calmly and with a clear mind to kill these non-humans around the world — as long as possible and as many as possible.”

Just recently, in September, the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, Mr. Danilov, said:

“In towns where the Ukrainian armed forces enter, residents will undergo Ukrainization, without consideration of their views. This will apply to representatives of other nationalities as well as Russian.”

The Ministry of Education of Ukraine has excluded the Russian language and Russian literature from school curricula. Just like in fascist Germany, books in Russian have been banned and destroyed. Monuments to Russian authors have been destroyed.

Hypocritically declaring adherence to the Minsk agreements, the Kyiv authorities have openly and with impunity sabotaged their implementation. A financial, transport and energy blockade of Donbas has been introduced, and the residents of the region have been cut off from social benefits, pensions, salaries, banking services, communications, education and health care. They are being deprived of their basic civil rights. At one point, Mr. Zelenskyy said that the Minsk package of measures was needed only in order to maintain the sanctions imposed against Russia.

The Kyiv regime owes its impunity to its Western backers. Instead of pressing the Kyiv leadership to implement the Minsk agreements, they cynically turned a blind eye to Kyiv’s open threats to solve the so-called Donbas problem by force. With State support, the ideology of national intolerance towards ethnic Russians is being imposed. Today the country’s officials are no longer ashamed of their Nazi essence, openly

and with impunity calling for the murder of Russian people. For example, the Ambassador of Ukraine to Kazakhstan, Mr. Vrublevsky, on 22 August stated in an interview: “We are trying to kill as many Russians as possible. The more we kill today, the fewer our children will need to kill. That is it.”

I also recall a 5 August 2021 interview with Mr. Zelenskyy, in which he advised everyone who feels Russian to leave and go to Russia for the benefit of their children and grandchildren. The Ukrainian President’s recent calls for Western countries to carry out preventive nuclear strikes against Russia are extremely irresponsible.

The facts I have cited once again confirm that Ukraine has finally turned into a radical nationalist State, with openly Russophobic views, and that the decision to conduct a special military operation was unavoidable.

**Mr. Kim Song** (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to exercise its right of reply in response to the misdirected allegations made by the representatives of the United Kingdom, Germany and other European countries. European countries are outrageously misusing this forum to spread disinformation and misinformation against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. My delegation is compelled to counter such disinformation.

As is widely known, the Korean peninsula remains technically in a state of war. Owing to the dangerously growing hostility and nuclear threat of the United States, tensions in the Korean peninsula are running higher than ever before. The United States is now desperate to spread disinformation in the international arena aimed at demonizing the Government of our Republic, with an absurd sophistry that our self-defence capability poses a threat to global peace and the security of the region, but the ultimate goal of the United States is to overthrow my Government some day by pressing us to disarm and, furthermore, to give up our right to exercise self-defence. The United States and its servile forces are ridiculously leaving no stone unturned in order to portray the massive joint military drills as defensive in nature.

Let me take this opportunity to briefly elaborate on the aggressive nature of the situation with some facts. During his visit to South Korea in May, the United States chief executive made a commitment to the delivery of extended deterrence, including nuclear

weapons, the expansion of joint military exercises in scale and scope and the deployment of United States nuclear assets to the Korean peninsula. For all intents and purposes, the underlying objective of the joint military drills is to become well-versed in the war plans for a surprise attack against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under the simulated conditions of a real war. For example, Operation Plan 5015, an integral part of the joint drills, contains a decapitation operation, a large-scale landing operation and the invasion of the capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by commando units. What is more, the United States deployed nuclear submarines, strategic bombers and even nuclear aircraft carriers in and off the Korean peninsula every time that it conducted joint military exercises. We can easily guess what roles those nuclear assets played.

Given the fact that the United States and its servile forces are running wild to replicate the NATO model in the Asia-Pacific region, the joint military exercises of the United States and its servile forces cannot be viewed as solely aimed at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. To our deep regret, very few countries know about that or, although they know it, they intentionally ignore it. The international community should look closely into the threatening nature of the joint military drills and deployment of nuclear assets and should resolutely counter them in order to ensure peace and security in the Korean peninsula and the rest of the region.

The main mission of our self-defence capability is to contain any possible outbreak of war by making the hostile forces give up their attempts at aggression and military attacks. Accordingly, it never poses a threat to the countries and peoples that are friendly towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Korean people suffered tremendously in the past war in the 1950s. As such, our aspirations for peace run high. We also vividly remember a number of historical tragedies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, brought about by wrong choices in the face of United States stereotyped preaching and sophistry, unilateral pressure and military threats. Our approach is clear-cut in response to the recklessly increasing hostility and nuclear blackmail of the United States and its followers.

The United Kingdom, which is pushing ahead with an Australia-United Kingdom-United States partnership, undermining the global non-proliferation

regime despite the outpouring of condemnation by the international community, has no right or qualification to dispute our self-defence capability. Western countries are well advised to abandon the habit of the Cold War era to blindly follow in the footsteps of the United States in its hostile policy and translate its much-touted independence in foreign policy into genuine action.

**Ms. Hill** (Australia): I take the floor on behalf of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS) to exercise a right of reply to assertions made in the general debate today regarding the AUKUS partnership. Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are undertaking trilateral cooperation within the AUKUS partnership in a manner that is fully consistent with our respective non-proliferation obligations and commitments, and which seeks to strengthen the integrity of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Naval nuclear propulsion is not prohibited under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Any cooperation envisaged under the AUKUS partnership will be fully compliant with our respective obligations under the Treaty. We welcomed the report of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the September meeting of the Board of Governors, which reaffirmed his satisfaction with the AUKUS partners' engagement with the IAEA to date and noted that Australia has consistently complied with its reporting obligations under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol. It is critical to the international non-proliferation regime that the IAEA continue to be allowed to fulfil its mandate to engage with Member States on safeguards issues with independence and without interference.

We firmly reject any suggestion that AUKUS is regionally destabilizing. The partnership is underpinned by our collective commitment to supporting an international order that respects the rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes, free from coercion.

**Mr. Al Ashkar** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I find myself compelled to take the floor to exercise my right of reply to clarify certain aspects in response to what was mentioned in the statements by the representatives of Estonia and the United Kingdom.

At the outset, I would like to stress that Syria unequivocally condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by whomsoever and under

any circumstances. Syria has totally eliminated its stockpiles of chemical weapons, as was affirmed before the Security Council in June 2014 by the Head of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Any mention of non-compliance by Syria with its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) is not true and is rejected by us. Since acceding to the CWC, Syria has been keen to fully cooperate with the Organization and has completely eliminated its chemical stockpile in record time under the very difficult and complex circumstances known to everyone.

The most recent 106th report on cooperation was submitted by Syria to the OPCW on 15 September. Syria has been communicating with the OPCW Technical Secretariat in a constructive and positive manner, and we have provided all facilities to the Technical Secretariat team on its most recent visit to Syria on 11 September.

I would like to strongly reaffirm that continuing to doubt Syria's cooperation with the OPCW is unacceptable. Syria has spared no effort to work with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and has adopted a constructive and positive approach to dealing with the issues raised by the Technical Secretariat, because Syria believes that dialogue — and not casting doubt on and politicizing the work of the OPCW — is the only way to resolve such issues.

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

Russia's delegation continues to use the First Committee to spread its lies and manipulations. Everyone knows who started the war back in 2014. Russia launched its aggression in eastern Ukraine and invaded and occupied Crimea. Russia also deployed illegal formations in eastern Ukraine that it has continued to support ever since. And it is precisely those illegal formations that have terrorized the population of Ukraine generally and of Donbas in particular. So rather than focusing on that, I would like to bring the following points to the attention of Member States.

Today, using strategic aircraft, Russia launched missile attacks that were unprecedented to a degree we had not seen in the war until now, throughout all of Ukraine. They were preceded by cruise-missile strikes on densely populated residential areas of Zaporizhzhya, where at least 22 missiles fell, leaving 16 people dead and about 100 injured in the space of two days. At least 83 missiles and 17 kamikaze drones were sent today from Russia, Belarus, the Caspian Sea and temporarily occupied Crimea, killing 11 people and injuring 64 others. According to the preliminary data, 45 missiles were intercepted and nine kamikaze drones supplied by Iran were destroyed by air-defence forces. The critical civilian infrastructure of many Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv, Zaporizhzhya, Dnipro, Zhytomyr, Khmelnytskyi, Ternopil, Lviv and others, was targeted. Residential areas have been left without power or water.

Russia's new wave of terrorist acts aimed at destroying Ukraine's civilian infrastructure are proof of its status as a terrorist country that attacks civilians when it is losing its war of aggression against Ukraine on the battlefield. Nothing was done to provoke Russia to unleash missile terror. Russia had been hitting Ukraine constantly with missiles before the Kerch Bridge was damaged. Shifting the blame onto the victim by suggesting that Russia is responding to provocation is totally misleading. Russia's attacks on the eve of the cold-weather season are aimed at intimidating the civilian population, wreaking havoc and undermining Ukraine's resolve to liberate the parts of its territory that Russia has temporarily occupied.

Russia's actions define its war against Ukraine as unequivocally genocidal. The last time a nation in Europe saw atrocities on such a scale was during the Second World War. Since Russia began its full-scale war on 24 February, it has fired more than 3,500 missiles at Ukraine, hitting mostly civilian infrastructure. The constant campaign of terror against the civilian population is a clear demonstration of Russia's refusal to engage in real negotiations. Terrorism is a crime that must be punished. Terrorism at the State level is one of the most heinous international crimes, threatening not just one lone actor in the world but the entire international community. Ukraine never wanted this war and did nothing to provoke it. Ukraine is dealing with a State — a terrorist State — that does not want peace.

**Mr. Vaaras (Finland):** I also want to exercise our right to respond to what was said by the representative of the Russian Federation.



First, let me tackle the anti-Russian claims. Of course I am speaking on behalf of my country, but I trust that this applies to Western countries more generally. I can say that despite the fact that the Soviet Union attacked Finland several times in our recent history, in general terms, Finns still do not hate Russians. Finland has no anti-Russian campaigns. And I repeat, people in Finland do not hate Russians.

However, Russia's illegal aggressions in Georgia in 2008, in Crimea in 2014 and now in other parts of a sovereign and independent Ukraine make it practically impossible to like the Russian leadership and its puppet representatives. I am nonetheless pleased to see that some Russian representatives are on the side of the truth and do not want to lie or defend the killings of Ukrainian civilians, families, women and children. We witnessed that a few months ago when a brave Russian representative in Geneva left his position. Not all State representatives of Russia are afraid to express their opinions. I want to emphasize that the anti-Russian claims come only from Russia and are aimed at the Russian people, in a desperate attempt to justify the aggression in Ukraine.

Secondly, in the context of Nazism, neo-Nazism and the drug-using Nazi Government of Ukraine — or whatever it is that Russia is saying — again, that is just a desperate attempt by Russia's Government to justify its illegal war in Ukraine. If there were any sense in the claims made by Russia's representatives, I suppose Ukraine's representatives here would be wearing Nazi symbols or greeting us with the straight-arm salute. But seriously, no one here trusts those claims about Nazism. A growing number of people in Russia do not trust those claims. Russian academics have never trusted those claims. And yet despite the fact that Russia is slaughtering and torturing innocent civilians in Ukraine, no one here is calling the Russians Nazis, although the definition of their aggressions might warrant that. People do understand that the Government of Russia and its representatives are not the same as the Russian people. I therefore want to appeal to the representatives of the Russian Federation and to urge them not to use such language here. They are not the Russian State media and their audience is not the Russian people. I ask them to refrain from Russia's absurd claims and language here.

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

**Ms. Deelen** (European Union): On behalf of the European Union (EU), I too would like to exercise our right of reply in response to the statements we just heard from the Russian Federation. I would also like to commend our Finnish colleague for the excellent statement he has just made, which I fully support.

The European Union urges the Russian Federation to stop its disinformation and propaganda campaign. We categorically denounce the horrible and unfounded accusations that Russian officials continue to spread in their attempts to legitimize the Russian Federation's illegal war against Ukraine. The European Union also categorically rejects any questioning of the very existence of Ukraine as an independent and sovereign State.

Moreover, the EU firmly rejects and unequivocally condemns Russia's illegal annexation of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions following the sham referendums conducted at gunpoint in September as Russia continues its war of aggression against Ukraine. The results of the sham referendums are null and void and can have no legal effect whatsoever. They blatantly violate international law, as well as Ukraine's Constitution and its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. They took place amid widespread and systematic abuses of human rights, as well as the intimidation of Ukrainian citizens by Russia and its illegitimately appointed authorities in Ukraine's occupied territories. Those illegal votes therefore do not represent the expression of the free will of the people living in those regions of Ukraine.

**Mr. Bakradze** (Georgia): I am exercising our right of reply in response to Russia's statement concerning Georgia's territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which are currently occupied by Russia. Russia stated that those two regions of Georgia became independent States through the free expression of the will of the people. We want to remind Russia that more than 300,000 ethnic Georgians and members of other ethnic groups have been expelled from those regions through ethnic cleansing. They represented a major part of the population of the two regions. We therefore cannot speak of the free will of the people. Those parts of Georgia are integral parts of our country under international law, and we will never accept the enforced changes that were made to Georgia's internationally recognized borders.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am compelled to take the floor to exercise my delegation's right of reply with regard to the reference made to

Iranian drones. In fact, as we made clear in our previous right of reply (see A/C.1/77/PV.5), the claims that Russia has used Iranian drones in the war against Ukraine are nothing that we can confirm. We believe that those claims are baseless, and that in fact the transfer of military equipment to any party of the conflict will merely postpone the opportunities for peace. The only position of my delegation and my country is in support of a peaceful settlement of the dispute.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We feel compelled to respond to the statements made on behalf of the delegations of Ukraine, Finland, the European Union and Georgia.

With regard to Georgia, we all know very well that it was not Russia that attacked Georgia but rather the Saakashvili regime that attacked South Ossetia in August 2008. On top of that, a similar action was being prepared against Abkhazia in a culmination of Tbilisi's long-term policy of force against those minority populations, leaving them with no choice but to ensure their own security and their right to exist through their self-determination as independent States. In repelling Georgia's aggression, we ensured the survival and peaceful future of the peoples of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent States.

Where the actions of the Russian armed forces are concerned, there is a reason for them. Data from criminal forensics experts and operational information indicate that the 8 October explosion creating a diversion on the Crimea Bridge was an act of terrorism aimed at destroying part of Russia's critical civilian infrastructure. It is also clear that the terrorist attack was commissioned, executed and planned by Ukrainian special forces. The Kyiv regime has long been using terrorist tactics, including by killing public figures, journalists and scholars in both Ukraine and in Russia; shelling towns in the Donbas, as has been happening for more than eight years;

committing acts of nuclear terrorism, if we consider the rocket and artillery strikes on the Zaporizhzhya power plant, as well as the special forces' three terrorist attacks on the Kursk nuclear power station on Russian territory, repeatedly damaging its high-tension power lines; and carrying out a slew of other terrorist attacks and similar attempts to damage my country's pipelines and electricity infrastructure, including an attack on a section of the TurkStream gas pipeline.

All of that has been confirmed with objective evidence, including the testimony of detainees involved in committing those terrorist attacks. Through its own actions, the Kyiv regime has therefore for all practical purposes joined the list of the most heinous international terrorist groups. It was simply impossible to leave such crimes unanswered, which is why this morning, at the suggestion of the Ministry of Defence and as planned by the Russian General Staff, a massive air-, sea- and land-based long-range, high-precision attack was launched against Ukrainian energy, military command and communications facilities. If the attempts to carry out terror attacks continue, Russia's response will be harsh and commensurate with the threat posed to the Russian Federation, and no one should have any doubts about that.

**The Chair:** We have exhausted more than the time allocated for this meeting. The interpreters now need a respite.

I would like to remind delegations that the list of speakers for the thematic debate will close tomorrow, Tuesday, 11 October at 7 p.m. All delegations intending to take the floor should inscribe their names on the list before the deadline. The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. sharp in this conference room. I appeal to all delegations to be punctual so as to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

*The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.*