



# General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

## First Committee

7<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 11 October 2022, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

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

*The meeting was called to order at 3 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 for our thematic discussion segment will close today at 6 p.m.

We will now turn to our list of speakers for today, and I urge all delegations taking the floor to kindly keep in mind the suggested time limit for statements.

**Ms. Mrad** (Lebanon): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and through you, Sir, we extend our congratulations as well to the members of the Bureau and wish you all success in conducting the work of the Committee.

Lebanon aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Iraq on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the statement delivered by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

The United Nations was founded after the horrors of the Second World War with the aim of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It is for that reason that the Charter of the United Nations enjoins all States Members to settle their disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace, security and justice are not endangered.

We stress that peace is best built through diplomacy and dialogue within the framework of the institutions of global dialogue, especially the United Nations. It is important for all nations to respect and uphold the principles of international law, including international humanitarian law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

We have heard many Member States reflect on the birth of the United Nations and its shared values of peace, justice, equality and dignity for all and saving successive generations from the scourge of war. However, despite those august ideals, we are convening today as the world is still witnessing devastating conflicts, agitation and disputes that imperil the stability of the whole planet, in the midst of belligerent, rampant threats to resort to nuclear materials for military purposes, putting the future of humankind at stake.

Lebanon is of the view that every armed conflict will result in unnecessary human suffering and destruction with global ramifications. In situations of conflict, the most vulnerable tend to suffer most during and after the conflict.

We meet today after convening the long-awaited Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in which the unfortunate inability to reach a consensus on an outcome document was a big disappointment, especially to non-nuclear State parties. However, that was not the only shortcoming at the NPT Review Conference. We have witnessed a blatant unwillingness of nuclear-weapon States to make practical commitments under

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the first pillar of the Treaty. Lebanon therefore calls for the full implementation of all previous commitments assumed by nuclear-weapon States at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences to attain a total dismantling of their nuclear arsenals and leading to a world free of nuclear applications for military use.

The convening of two sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in 2019 and 2022, under the presidencies of Jordan and Kuwait, respectively, are commendable steps on the path towards achieving nuclear disarmament. Lebanon will preside over the upcoming session of that conference in November and will take stock and build on the previous progress with the aim of bringing the process forward and realizing qualitative added value on that level.

Progress unfortunately remains slow, particularly with the absence of Israel, the only party in the region that possesses nuclear weapons. We recall that Israel's compliance with international non-proliferation obligations is a prerequisite for a region free from weapons of mass destruction and for peace and security in the region. However, keeping the momentum and galvanizing multilateral efforts are required to capitalize on all endeavours deployed so far in achieving the ultimate goal.

The enormous challenges posed by weapons of mass destruction should not lead us to lose sight of the dangers associated with conventional weapons. Lebanon shares with other countries the deep concern about the challenges resulting from the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We welcome the outcome document resulting from the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms in July and look forward to following up on its implementation in preparation for the holding of the fourth review conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms in 2024.

Lebanon reiterates its commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the importance of striving to achieve its universalization. Lebanon has painful experience with such weapons, as a result of the enormous cluster munitions used by Israel against it in the 2006 war.

Lebanon welcomes the conclusion of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications

in the Context of International Security, established by resolution 73/27, and its adoption of a consensus-based outcome document. And we look forward also to reaching a successful outcome from the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, established by resolution 75/240, and notes the adoption of the open-ended working group's first annual progress report by consensus.

Lebanon also stresses the need to protect outer space from an arms race, contamination and pollution. We stress the need for the international community to preserve outer space as a common human property, available exclusively for peaceful use. And we stress the need to reach a legally binding international instrument that would ban the placement of weapons in outer space. The weaponization of outer space would have catastrophic consequences for humankind as a whole in the event of outer space conflicts. In that respect, we welcome the establishment of an open-ended working group by the General Assembly in its resolution 76/231, entitled "Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours".

We also stress the need to take the necessary measures to ensure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, Lebanon reiterates its belief in the importance of multilateral diplomacy as the cornerstone of international relations. Upholding that principle would enhance the global non-proliferation regime and reinforce the work of the United Nations at this watershed moment, where challenges are interlocked and require eminently transformative solutions.

**Mr. Pary Rodríguez** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair. Allow me to reiterate the full support of my delegation for your work.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), as well as that to be delivered by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. I make the following remarks in my national capacity.

The divisions and tensions among the great Powers, accompanied by the modernization of nuclear weapons and the immense military spending of almost \$2.1 trillion, put our peoples on the brink of a conflict unheard of since the Cold War. My country is in a region with a long-standing tradition of promoting disarmament and non-proliferation. That is why we consider that the mere presence of nuclear weapons represents an existential danger for humankind. The catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons have profound implications for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development and the health of future generations.

We regret the lack of a concrete result at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The lack of consensus that led to the failures of the ninth and tenth Conferences not only represents 12 years of lack of political will, but also reveals the particular interests of the nuclear-weapon States, which run counter to peace and the collective security of humankind and are incompatible with the commitments made to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their military and security policies.

For the aforementioned reasons, we condemn any type of nuclear test anywhere in the world for the purpose of developing or improving existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types. We stress the importance of achieving the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible, and encourage States, especially those listed in annex 2, to ratify it. We also welcome the extension by the United States and Russia of the New START Treaty and hope that it will allow greater control of nuclear weapons and effective supervision in terms of their qualitative development. Within that framework, we call for compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in its entirety.

My delegation also wishes to highlight the holding of the first Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which produced concrete results: a political Declaration condemning all nuclear threats, regardless of the circumstances, and an Action Plan that charts the path to achieving the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons complements the NPT, since in addition to being the first international treaty on nuclear weapons that incorporates a gender perspective on the subject, it

reinforces the NPT by strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards regime and the application of its article VI. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons also complements the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, creating a regime under articles 6 and 7 to assist victims of nuclear weapons tests. We reiterate once again our call on the States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it promptly.

Moreover, regarding the use of weapons of mass destruction, Bolivia categorically rejects the use of chemical weapons, which is unjustifiable and criminal and constitutes a serious violation of international law and against life itself. In that context, we welcome the exhaustive work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We hope that the work of that organization can continue to develop in a depoliticized way.

We also reiterate our support for the provisions against the use of biological weapons and hope that the next Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, as well as the Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, will allow a space for dialogue in which States parties can reaffirm their commitment to strict compliance with and effective implementation of the Treaties. At the same time, we welcome the holding of the Conference on Disarmament this year. Convinced of its importance, we call for the exhaustion of all avenues of dialogue in order to reach consensus on a balanced and complete programme of work that takes into account the security interests of all States.

Bolivia condemns instances of threats of malicious cyberactivity or malicious use of new information and communication technologies that may adversely affect the integrity of State infrastructure and security. Such actions violate international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, and their purposes are incompatible with the objectives of the maintenance of international stability and security. My delegation welcomes the results achieved to date by the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, established by resolution 73/27, and acknowledges the need for further work, as well as confidence-building and capacity-building measures for Member States aimed at improving the stability and security of cyberspace.

Regarding the development of outer space, Bolivia, like many delegations, recognizes outer space as heritage of humankind that must be used rationally and equitably and explored exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit and interest of humankind, under conditions of equality and without discrimination, regardless of the degree of technological, scientific and economic development. We reject any intention to militarize outer space. On the contrary, it is necessary to strengthen closer international cooperation and better governance of activities and its use in the service of sustainable development. We hope that work can be done as soon as possible to create an international mechanism or legally binding agreement to verify the strictly peaceful use of outer space and prevent an arms race therein.

Finally, we believe that the erosion of international arms controls should spur us to combine efforts to ensure that disarmament is at the centre of global efforts to maintain and promote international peace and security. We should work to establish a regime that promotes capacity-building, primarily in developing countries, in particular due to the emergence of increasing difficulties.

**Mr. Tchalaré** (Togo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, the Togolese delegation would like to extend to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau its warmest congratulations on your election. My delegation wishes you every success in your mission and assures you of its support. We would also like to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco, for the work done by the Committee under his leadership.

Togo aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), respectively, and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

The seemingly increasing difficulties that we have been experiencing globally in recent years are undeniable reminders of the precious nature and incalculable value of peace. In international political and security environment, shaken by upheavals of all sorts, we must make sincere and solid commitments and take concrete actions to ensure a more optimistic and less apprehensive vision of our shared future.

Togo endorses the calls for nuclear disarmament that have been reiterated at this and previous

sessions. My country reaffirms its position in favour of complete, immediate, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we welcome the success of the first meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was held in Vienna from 21 to 23 June. We welcome the adoption at that meeting of a Declaration and Action Plan that emphasize the universalization of the Treaty, a reaffirmation of the objective of eliminating nuclear weapons, assistance to the victims of nuclear weapons, environmental sanitation measures, international cooperation and assistance, the principles of inclusiveness and cooperation among stakeholders in Treaty implementation, gender mainstreaming, the establishment of an intersessional structure for the implementation of the Treaty, and collaboration with scientific circles, among others.

Turning to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Togo is very concerned about the failure to reach consensus on a final document at the tenth NPT Review Conference. My country takes this opportunity to emphasize the importance of consistent implementation of the NPT and once again invites non-States parties to ratify or accede to the NPT in order to ensure its universalization and the full implementation of its three pillars: non-proliferation, cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and complete nuclear disarmament. Togo would also like to emphasize the complementarity of the aforementioned legal instruments, the final objectives of which are nuclear disarmament. In that regard, my country welcomes the many calls for the negotiation of a comprehensive convention on nuclear disarmament. Togo would also like to emphasize the central role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the context of nuclear disarmament and our commitment to the Pelindaba Treaty, to which it is a party. The complete universalization of the zones would constitute a major step towards nuclear disarmament.

The issue of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is very worrying, given the security situation prevailing in certain parts of the world. Togo reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and to the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, the implementation of which at the national,



regional and global levels will contribute significantly to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in those weapons. In that regard, my country welcomes the consensus adoption of the final document of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, and hopes that the recommendations contained therein will be implemented.

Turning to the management of surplus munition stocks, Togo is closely following the negotiations taking place within the Open-ended Working Group to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management. We stand ready to contribute to the elaboration of a set of political commitments that would comprise a new global framework that addresses existing gaps in the management of the entire life cycle of ammunition, in accordance with resolution 76/233. However, we consider it necessary to recall that those commitments can in no way call into question the sovereign right of each State to defend itself, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

With regard to security in cyberspace, Togo reiterates its support for the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 and commends its Chair, His Excellency Mr. Burhan Gafoor, Permanent Representative of Singapore, for his leadership. Togo, which participates in the work of the aforementioned group, welcomes the adoption in July of its annual progress report and hopes that consensus will prevail throughout the mandate of the Working Group.

Finally, Togo urges the entire international community to pursue the efforts necessary to achieve the disarmament objectives contained in the relevant General Assembly resolutions. To that end, our grounding in the values of multilateralism must be renewed. Multilateralism should not be an empty word; it should be an action, a tangible attitude and a reality.

In conclusion, I would like to recall the following words of wisdom passed down by Nelson Mandela to our world: “Negotiation and discussion are the greatest weapons we have for promoting peace and development”.

**Ms. Jimenez de la Hoz** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Chair, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship. I assure you of

my support and that of my delegation in bringing the work of the First Committee to a successful conclusion.

Spain aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

We are currently in an unprecedented situation, marked by threats to international peace and security that make the work of this Committee more relevant than ever. Since February, we have witnessed Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, which has undermined the very foundations of the principles of the United Nations and whose consequences reverberate across the world, threatening global peace and security. In these especially difficult circumstances, Spain wishes to reaffirm the validity of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the need to respect international law. We reiterate our firm condemnation of the aggression of the Russian Federation, which has already cost too many lives and must stop. We insist that Russia comply with international law and withdraw all its troops from Ukraine.

The threats to use nuclear weapons are yet another example of Russia’s violation of international law. Those threats also represent an escalation that is not only extremely serious and unacceptable in the context of the military aggression against Ukraine, but also further undermines the international nuclear non-proliferation architecture, endangering international peace and security. In that context, Spain wishes to express its concern over the outcome of the recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. After a month of intense negotiations, practically all delegations made an effort to be flexible and, in an exercise of responsibility, reached a compromise that, while imperfect, would have allowed the Conference to end successfully. Unfortunately, a single delegation, that of the Russian Federation, made consensus impossible, further eroding the Treaty.

A period of uncertainty is now dawning, one in which we will have to work harder than ever to advance resolutely towards general, complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament. To that end, Spain is committed to building bridges among groups of States with varying sensitivities, such as those of the Stockholm Initiative. Spain reiterates its firm commitment to the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and advocates the resumption of negotiations as soon as possible to adopt a fissile material cut-off treaty

and a moratorium on its production until such time as a treaty enters into force. Similarly, Spain supports the holding of another session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, and expresses the desire for all parties to participate in its development.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, endorsed by Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), made a fundamental contribution to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and regional stability. We appeal to the Iranian authorities to carry out the negotiations to facilitate a return to compliance with the Plan by all parties. We fully support the determined efforts of Mr. Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in that regard and the essential work of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We are following developments in North Korea with great concern. We urge the authorities of that country to respect the relevant Security Council resolutions, refrain from new missile and nuclear tests and engage in a dialogue leading to its complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

The upcoming ninth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention will be a great opportunity to reverse the negative trend of the international disarmament architecture. We must promote the adoption of concrete and practical measures, such as an effective verification protocol, and reject attempts by certain delegations to manipulate the tools of the Convention.

Spain once again condemns in the strongest terms any use of chemical weapons. We applaud the objective and professional work carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in response to the use of such weapons in the conflict in Syria, and we urge the authorities of that country to fully comply with their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. In the same way, we call for the clarification, through exhaustive and transparent investigations, of the worrisome use of chemical weapons in other settings. We hope that the fifth Review Conference in May 2023 will assist in strengthening the Convention.

We have built a strong framework to address the challenges posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. That includes such instruments as the Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Programme

of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, which seek to mitigate the negative impacts of those weapons, including the exacerbation of armed violence, the facilitation of the commission of terrorist acts and the violation of international humanitarian law. Any failure of these instruments endangers peace, reconciliation, security and sustainable development. We must continue to support the capacity-building of States with fewer resources so that they can face address that scourge with greater guarantees.

Contamination caused by anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions continues to hinder the development of many communities. Spain remains committed to supporting demining efforts, actively participating in convention bodies and making the capacities of our institutions available to the international community through training courses at different levels and demining actions carried out by our armed forces deployed in peace operations.

The rapid development of artificial intelligence carries benefits, but also poses potential threats to the health and safety of individuals if there is no appropriate regulatory framework. Given the evolution of autonomous lethal weapons systems, Spain joins others in supporting proposals aimed at regulating systems that incorporate technology in accordance with the norms of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The events of the past year show the need to intensify the work of the Open-ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours. We must move towards a framework that allows outer space to be maintained as a peaceful, secure, stable and sustainable environment for all. Actions such as anti-satellite missile tests are incompatible with that objective. We urgently need to address the increase in malicious and illegal incidents in cyberspace. An action programme to advance the responsible conduct of States in cyberspace would be an important step. We must collectively and systematically manage the growing impact of emerging disruptive technologies in cyberspace and avert its fragmentation into spheres of influence with incompatible standards and regulations.

Export control regimes are an effective tool to promote responsible transfer of military or dual-use

equipment and technologies. Spain will continue to apply the highest standards in that area and contribute to the training of third-party States.

The paralysis that afflicts certain disarmament forums should not discourage us. Instead, we should redouble our efforts to revitalize structures that are more necessary than ever. In that regard, we urge the members of the Conference on Disarmament to overcome internal differences and adopt an ambitious programme of work.

I conclude by expressing the hope that our deliberations at this session of the First Committee will generate an open discussion that allows for rapprochement. To that end, the Committee can count on the firm commitment of my delegation.

**Mr. Milambo** (Zambia): I wish to thank you, Mr. Chair, on behalf of the Zambian delegation for according me an opportunity to deliver this statement on disarmament and international security. I also want to congratulate you on your election as Chair and pledge my country's support during your tenure.

The Zambian Government aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV2) and wishes to add a few points.

As we convene during this session, the world is at a crossroads. With the threat of a possible nuclear war lingering, it is worth noting that nuclear weapons are the most dangerous weapons in the world. They can kill millions and destroy the environment and lives of future generations through their long-term catastrophic effects. Zambia, in that respect, remains concerned over the continued impasse in the United Nations disarmament machinery, in particular in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In that connection, we support international efforts aimed at revitalizing the work of the Commission. In that regard, Zambia remains committed to general and complete disarmament and to supporting regional and international efforts targeting the total elimination of nuclear weapons. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Zambia is committed to their respective universalization and pledges to continue supporting regional and global efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Africa, through the Pelindaba Treaty, supports the use of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes and, in that respect, each party undertakes to conduct all activities for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, under strict non-proliferation measures, and to provide assurances of exclusively peaceful uses. State parties to the Treaty are compelled to conclude an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards agreement for the purpose of verifying compliance, and not to provide source or special fissionable material, or equipment or material specifically designed for the processing, use or production of special fissionable material for peaceful purposes to any non-nuclear-weapon State, unless subject to a comprehensive safeguards agreement concluded by the IAEA.

It is from the foregoing that Zambia believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones are a viable avenue for reducing global security concerns and, above all, a means through which confidence can be strengthened among States. Furthermore, the Zambian Government recognizes that the threat of nuclear terrorism is real and the complex and dynamic nature of the subject requires proactive measures and constant threat assessment. Zambia therefore supports international measures to combat nuclear terrorism and stresses the importance of the cooperation of all nations to ensure that terrorists do not have access to nuclear weapons or any other controlled substances.

It has been noted that one of the dangers of outer space is that anything can be used as a weapon that can destroy important satellites or other devices. The weaponization of space would destroy strategic balance and stability and undermine international and national security, as well as disrupt existing arms control instruments, in particular those related to nuclear weapons and missiles. Those effects would lead inevitably to a new arms race. Meanwhile, space weaponization would also seriously disrupt the arms control and disarmament process. As outer space is the common heritage of humankind, it is important that it be preserved. Therefore, Zambia will continue to support positions that aim to achieve that cause, including transparency in outer space activities. Further, those activities should be for peaceful purposes.

We are aware that the proliferation of the illicit trade in and use of small arms and light weapons poses a significant threat to global, regional and national peace and security, as well as to the social and economic

development of many countries. There is also a close link between the illicit trade in small arms, terrorism, organized crime, drugs and human trafficking. In that regard, Zambia is committed to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Zambia underlines the fact that considered effort at the national, regional and international levels is required to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, and that their uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world has a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences.

In conclusion, Zambia is aware of the issues that affect the advancement of women in international peacekeeping efforts and has therefore partnered with Canada in the implementation of bilateral technical assistance and training partnerships with the Zambia police service. The Elsie Initiative has had significant success in the area of gender equality in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Zambia is therefore well positioned to share best practices and develop test initiatives to increase women's meaningful participation in uniformed military and police roles.

**Mr. Feruță (Romania):** I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. Romania will support your work.

In addition to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), I would like to make additional remarks in my national capacity.

We meet in a fundamentally altered security environment, marked by increased tensions and global challenges that continue to erode the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The illegal, unjustified and unprovoked military aggression of the Russian Federation against its neighbour, Ukraine, has brought us to an unprecedented phase of escalation. This is the most severe crisis since the end of the Second World War, and is one that blatantly violates the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules-based international order. It is still incomprehensible that such aggression is being perpetrated by a permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear-weapon State, a status that requires the highest level of responsibility. Romania resolutely condemns the Russian aggression and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's

independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Since 24 February we have been witnessing the dramatic consequences of that invasion and have been faced with the unthinkable. In this war, Russia has used all categories of conventional weapons, as well as cyberattacks and disinformation. As a nuclear-weapon State, it has also preferred nuclear threats and engaged in unheard-of nuclear rhetoric. That behaviour stands in sharp contrast with its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It also contradicts the Budapest Memorandum and is a major departure from the long-standing policy jointly agreed and promoted by nuclear-weapon States.

A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. That was restated in January and all of us in this room and beyond should keep restating that principle. Russia's military actions in and around Ukraine's civilian nuclear facilities pose direct threats to safety and security and it puts us all at serious risk. Furthermore, Russia has been making false and unsubstantiated claims against Ukraine and other countries regarding legitimate capacity-building programmes for biosafety and biosecurity. We reiterate our call on Russia to end its illegal war, to completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders, to cease its nuclear rhetoric, to uphold its international commitments, to recommit to the principles enshrined in the statement of the leaders of the permanent members of the Security Council and to engage constructively in genuine dialogue.

Romania reaffirms its continued support for the NPT as a cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and an important element in the promotion of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Romania actively participated in the tenth Review Conference of States Parties this year. We share the disappointment that, in spite of all the efforts of the NPT community, no substantial outcome was reached, as Russia blocked consensus. However, the lack of a final document must not be perceived as a failure. The NPT stood the test of time and all the other State parties were ready to support the final draft. That in itself speaks to the enduring value of the NPT. We are also encouraged that States were able to engage in meaningful conversations and overcome their differences with respect to so many issues on the NPT agenda.



The next NPT review cycle, which is about to start soon, should build upon the good work already done and Romania remains fully committed to upholding and strengthening the NPT, preserving its integrity and promoting its universalization and full implementation. Romania remains fully committed to a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the objective of the NPT, and advocates a gradual and pragmatic process of nuclear disarmament based on a step-by-step approach, ensuring undiminished security for all.

We reiterate our full and continuous support for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in implementing the safeguards system, in promoting the benefits of peaceful use of nuclear energy and in verifying States' compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Developments and events over the past several years have underscored the critical role of the implementation of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements and the Additional Protocol. We believe that this constitutes the best verification standard under the NPT and we continue to call for universalization without delay.

Romania also remains concerned about regional proliferation challenges. We strongly condemn the illegal launch on 4 October by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of an intermediate range ballistic missile that flew over the territory of Japan, and we are deeply worried about the continued advancement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including reports that it is preparing to conduct a seventh nuclear test. The complete, verifiable and irreversible nuclearization of the Korean peninsula remains an absolute imperative and priority, and we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resume meaningful denuclearization talks with relevant parties to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

The situation surrounding the Iranian nuclear programme is also worrying. We urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to return to full compliance within the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and to resume full cooperation with the IAEA, including by resolving the outstanding issues that will allow the Agency to provide assurance that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful.

This year marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention

and the fiftieth anniversary of the Biological Weapons Convention, which are central pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Romania looks forward to contributing actively to their respective upcoming Review Conferences.

Outer space, as has been mentioned, has also become a critical environment as space-based systems are now indispensable for our planet. The immediate priority of the international community is indeed to ensure the safe and responsible conduct of space activities. The illicit trade in and diversion and unauthorized use of conventional arms, in particular small arms and light weapons and their munitions, continue to pose serious threats to peace, security, stability and sustainable development throughout the world. We call on all United Nations Member States, in particular the major arms exporters, importers and transit countries, to join the Arms Trade Treaty, as it is the only legally binding international instrument to regulate the transfer of conventional arms and ammunition.

In these times of heightened tensions and conflict, the need for strengthened transparency, in particular in the field of expenditures related to military enhancements is even more relevant. In this regard, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to this year's draft resolution entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures" (A/C.1/77/L.63), traditionally submitted by Romania and Germany. We urge Member States to support the draft resolution, as it underpins a major principle of building trust and confidence among States. In these challenging times, the role of the First Committee is more important than ever. Romania remains resolved to actively contribute to all those efforts, ongoing and future.

**Mr. Song Kim** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. My delegation looks forward to cooperating with you to ensure the success of this meeting.

It is the unanimous desire of humankind to live peacefully in a world free of aggression and war, but contrary to such aspirations and the demands of the international community, arms races are fiercely under way on an unprecedented scale, worsening the security environment around them. Today the high-handedness and arbitrariness of the United States in its

attempt to sustain hegemony serve as a root cause that triggers arms races in various parts of the world. The United States is now forming politico-military blocs one after another — such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and the trilateral security partnership known as AUKUS in the Asia-Pacific region — under the pretext of restoring democracy and strengthening alliances. It is more deeply engrossed than ever before in its moves towards increased military expenditure, including the transfer of nuclear-powered submarine technology, the deployment of nuclear strategic assets, the reinforcement of forces and arms sales, thus totally destroying the security balance.

The reality proves that general and complete disarmament is just a mirage. Peace and stability can never settle on the globe as long as the forces that systematically threaten the security environment of other countries and regions remain. Those forces are in desperate pursuit of hegemony by way of predominance of power.

The United States military expansion finds the clearest manifestation on the Korean peninsula. This year alone, the United States has made forward deployment of numerous strategic assets and cutting-edge hardware, such as the B-52H, B-2A and F-35A aircraft, and handed over enormous arms and equipment to the South Korean authorities. In August, it conducted the large-scale Ulchi Freedom Shield joint military exercise with south Korea by mobilizing tens of thousands of United States troops and the South Korean army for the first time since 2017. In late September, it also staged a war game around the Korean peninsula for the first time in five years, with the involvement of 20 warships, such as the strike force of the United States nuclear aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan* and nuclear submarines. The list of United States military build-up moves is endless. Nevertheless, the United States whitewashes its reckless military expansion, claiming that it is for safeguarding peace, strengthening alliances and maintaining the rules-based international order. All these facts clearly prove that the failure of the Korean peninsula to escape the vicious cycle of aggravated tension is attributable to the ceaseless aggressive war games and military build-up of the United States and its followers.

It is in exercise of the basic right to self-defence, which is clearly stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea arms itself with self-

defensive means to counter the heinous hostility of the United States, which has inflicted indescribable misfortune and pain upon our people and poses a persistent nuclear threat and blackmail. I take this opportunity to affirm clearly that the main mission of our self-defence capability is to deter 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 to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The nuclear disarmament process, to which the United Nations has given priority since its founding, is now facing a serious challenge. Today the ringleader undermining the foundation of the non-proliferation regime is none other than the United States, which indulges in nuclear threats and blackmail against sovereign States and even goes as far as nuclear proliferation, with a view to realizing its strategy of hegemony, in flagrant contravention and violation of international law. In order to realize the complete abolition of nuclear weapons, the United States, the first user of nuclear weapons and the biggest nuclear-weapon State in the world, should take the lead in nuclear disarmament and refrain from providing a nuclear umbrella, sharing nuclear weapons and transferring nuclear technology. To ensure stability on the Korean peninsula, the United States must unconditionally rule out the military threat against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That includes stopping the arms build-up and joint military exercises with South Korea that mobilize United States nuclear assets and dissolving the United Nations Command in South Korea.

Today the revival of Japan's militarism and its rise to a military Power are taking shape as one of the most serious threats to regional peace and stability, including on the Korean peninsula, and there is a need for increased vigilance by the international community against it.

As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will not deploy its nuclear weapons in the territory of other countries or share these weapons with them, neither will it transfer nuclear weapons and their related technology, equipment and weapons-grade nuclear materials. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea also remains consistent in its position against biological and chemical weapons and opposes the militarization and weaponization of outer space. The Democratic People's

Republic of Korea will continue to fully discharge its responsibilities and role in safeguarding peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in the world.

**Mr. Valtýsson** (Iceland): Let me join colleagues in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I wish you all the best in your leadership of the work of the First Committee.

Iceland aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Denmark, on behalf of the Nordic countries, and by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). Allow me to highlight a few key issues from a national perspective.

We are meeting at a critical time. The global security landscape has not been more precarious since the Second World War. Growing tensions, distrust and lack of compliance have increasingly become all too prevalent, leading most States to the realization that the global community needs to reinvigorate and recommit to the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. As we meet, we are seeing that some of the key agreements that have underpinned decades of global disarmament efforts are being seriously tested and undermined by non-compliance and rapidly growing security challenges.

The sad fact is that the ongoing military aggression of a Member State with a permanent seat on the Security Council against another State Member of the United Nations has all but eliminated any prospects for advancing the arms control agenda. It is tragic that the Russian Federation has engaged in a totally unprovoked and unjustifiable military action against Ukraine. That gross violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, undermining international peace and security, is utterly condemnable. Iceland stands in absolute solidarity with Ukraine in its fight to defend its people, its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The nuclear rhetoric and even threats of use of nuclear weapons coming from the Russian authorities are of particular concern. That repugnant rhetoric, combined with serious attempts of the invading Russian armed forces to play fast and loose with the safety of nuclear energy facilities in Ukraine, is deplorable. Let me take this opportunity to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its pivotal role in contributing to international peace and security through its safeguard agreements and the untiring work to ensure the safety of the nuclear power plants in

Ukraine. The illegal and aggressive behaviour of Russia regarding the Zaporizhzhya power plant is disgraceful.

Also, the increasingly rogue behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with its illegal nuclear programme in violation of Security Council resolutions, is a serious threat to the non-proliferation regime and global security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must return to compliance with its international obligations, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), IAEA safeguards arrangements and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

We must not give up on our common aim of a world free of nuclear weapons. The failure to reach consensus on advancing the implementation of the NPT at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties is sadly a further testament to the irresponsible behaviour of the Russian Federation. Some 140 States were willing and ready to move forward with the implementation of the NPT, while a single State — namely, the Russian Federation — prevented that will from being realized. However, the NPT will continue to play its crucial role in nuclear disarmament and in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons while at the same time safeguarding the benefits of nuclear technology for civilian use. The next review cycle offers the opportunity to learn from the past and re-energize efforts for the full implementation of the Treaty, not least article VI. If the message from the Reykjavik Summit of the nuclear Powers in 1986 — nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought — has ever been applicable, it is today.

That harsh reality reinforces the need to make full use of various supporting agreements and mechanisms that cement existing nuclear disarmament arrangements. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has, for more than 25 years, enjoyed the strong support of a great majority of the United Nations Member States. It is high time that all States that are not already members sign and ratify the Treaty, particularly those States belonging to annex 2 of the CTBT. Furthermore, Iceland reaffirms its strong support for commencing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty — a treaty that would provide another important pillar to existing non-proliferation arrangements.

With the Chemical Weapons Convention, we agreed that the use of chemical weapons should be an echo from a distant past, not a weapon of war or political tool, as we have experienced in recent years

in Syria and with the outstanding case of Mr. Navalny. Such use of chemical weapons is utterly unacceptable by anyone, anytime, anywhere. All such incidents should be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators of such heinous crimes held accountable. Iceland strongly supports the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its ongoing investigative efforts.

Iceland supports stronger efforts to counter the increased vulnerability of the international community to biological threats — a vulnerability brought to the fore with the coronavirus disease pandemic. The ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention later this year must address this issue in earnest and take concrete steps to reinforce compliance and implementation.

Although weapons of mass destruction are currently demanding most of our attention, the importance of preserving, universalizing and developing treaties and initiatives in the sphere of conventional weapons is critical for global security and sustainable development and has direct implications for many of today's conflicts. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to undermine peace, development and human rights. We call on all United Nations Member States to join the Arms Trade Treaty. The effective implementation of the Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is key to reversing that negative trend. Iceland welcomes the significant role those arms control instruments play in protecting civilians and preventing gender-based violence in conflict situations.

The growing critical role of information technology in our everyday lives, demanding access to open, free, secure and safe cyberspace, has exposed our vulnerability to irresponsible behaviour, disinformation, invasive surveillance and attacks by State and non-State actors. We need to reinforce our efforts to create a single process to develop a programme of action for advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. Iceland welcomes the increasing attention given to outer space activities and assets, which are of growing importance for our societies and sustainable development overall. It is imperative to ensure that those activities continue to be peaceful and that they benefit all.

Finally, Iceland reaffirms its strong belief that every effort should be made to ensure that women have an active and equal role in every arms control and disarmament process. We are encouraged by positive steps taken in relation to strengthening gender perspectives and diversity in various arms control forums. Let us reinforce and broaden that positive work to help us better meet the challenges we face.

**Mr. Syrymbet** (Kazakhstan): I join others in warmly congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau on their election. I would like to assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support in the important undertaking of ensuring the success of the Committee's work.

This year's session of the First Committee takes place at a critical juncture, amid a number of serious converging crises: the conflict in Ukraine; deepening divisions among nuclear-armed States; alarming rhetoric related to nuclear weapons use; the persistent after-effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; the fragmentation of global supply chains due to military action and unilateral coercive measures; as well as the global climate emergency. Those challenges have further exacerbated growing distrust and disagreements between nuclear and non-nuclear countries and have severely diminished the binding character of international disarmament and peace and security agreements. However, the most dangerous trend is the diminishing confidence among the nuclear Powers, leading to a spiralling confrontation, at the cost of global stability and a new round of nuclear arms race.

Kazakhstan is firmly convinced that disarmament is a key domain where confidence-building measures are most needed. Therefore, taking practical steps to eliminate nuclear weapons is more effective than pledges to never wage a nuclear war. Certain nuclear-armed countries argue that security conditions are not yet conducive to nuclear disarmament. In response, we say that security conditions will never be completely favourable for nuclear disarmament. Instead, concrete measures in disarmament will themselves create better security conditions and should be continually pursued. The world must not forget that reliance on nuclear arsenals in no way assures strategic security but only prompts asymmetric responses with potentially catastrophic consequences, from which there will be no recovery.



We welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in January 2021, which demonstrates the readiness of the international community to take concrete action to combat nuclear threats. At the same time, Kazakhstan regrets that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to adopt a consensus-based outcome. However, some elements in the draft final document provide a basis for future work under all pillars. We join others in firmly reiterating the collective conviction that the TPNW and the NPT are mutually compatible and reinforcing, particularly, with regard to article VI of the NPT.

We believe that the temporary voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing by the nuclear Powers cannot be an alternative to the legally binding Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The speedy entry into force of the Treaty is a *sine qua non* for the non-proliferation regime. Furthermore, we once again call on the remaining annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty immediately to preserve the CTBT's place in the international disarmament architecture.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones remain an important element of global disarmament efforts. Together with its regional neighbours, Kazakhstan established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia in 2006. We wholeheartedly support the further expansion of such zones in the Middle East, North-East Asia and Europe as a prerequisite for global peace and stability.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to represent a formidable biological threat, and the international community must digest lessons learned and remain vigilant to possible misuse of biological agents as tools of warfare. Hence, collective resources must address future pandemics and the eventuality of the deliberate or unpremeditated harmful use of advanced biotechnologies. That is why Kazakhstan has proposed and is working with interested parties to establish an international agency for biological safety. The agency and its activities will be firmly anchored in the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We encourage all interested Member States to join those discussions to foster dialogue among the BWC States parties.

Today an increasing number of States are actively building up their missile arsenals. Ballistic missiles in particular are being used more frequently in armed conflict, including by non-State actors. Despite their

role in strategic doctrines and political significance, global regimes and norms controlling missiles remain underdeveloped and require legally binding multilateral instruments. A field of increasing concern is competition in outer space, which is rapidly becoming a theatre of weaponization. Hence, security, even in the realm of outer space, as in others, is best guaranteed through cooperation and the rule of law, backed by effective and practical measures for verification and enforcement.

Another emerging area that requires attention is the fast-paced introduction of autonomous weapons systems, with direct and indirect effects across the spectrum of disarmament and international security issues, including nuclear-weapon doctrines, outer space security and cybercapabilities for hostile acts. We are aware that no weapon system could ever be capable of making judgments in conformity with humanitarian principles, as the application of international humanitarian law is predicated on human judgment and accountability.

Finally, besides focusing on aforementioned issues, we must also address some key challenges, such as the disconnect between commitments and implementation of agreements; the increasing obsolescence of the United Nations disarmament set-up, as demonstrated by the stalemates in the Security Council and the Conference on Disarmament; the lack of a holistic human security perspective; and the need to put people and the planet first, knowing that billions of dollars have been spent on weapons rather than on sustainable growth and prosperity. Any dialogue on trust must be backed up by verification and the certainty that confidence-building measures will be accepted.

In closing, we must be driven by the determined pursuit of every opportunity to carry forward the momentum for disarmament, build strong guarantees of peace and security, and work jointly for a safer and more secure tomorrow for all.

**Mr. Alwasil** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the First Committee. I also congratulate your deputies and the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that your abilities will ensure the success of the work of the Committee and the achievement of the desired results. I would be remiss in not thanking your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the sisterly Kingdom of Morocco, for his efforts

in conducting the work of the Committee during the seventy-sixth session.

My country's delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency the Ambassador of the sisterly Republic of Iraq on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1.77/PV.2).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes in the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in achieving a balance among its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Kingdom has acceded to the Treaty and contributed to international efforts aimed at ensuring the universality of the Treaty and the comprehensive elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, pursuant to article VI of the Treaty. We have also proceeded from our belief that security and peace will never be achieved through the possession of lethal weapons.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that priority today should be given to building professional capacities and investing in human resources while advancing communities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The danger of weapons of mass destruction lies in the fact that they are prone to mistakes, technical failures or accidents in any nuclear plant due to natural calamities that might lead to the leakage of nuclear material in the air and water.

My country is of the view that the first step towards ensuring the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is to establish zones free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction all around the world, especially in the Middle East. In that vein, we recall what has been stressed by the Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT, where Israel, the only State in the Middle East that has still not acceded to the Treaty, has been called to accede expeditiously to the NPT and subject all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system. That would contribute to maintaining peace, security and stability for all the peoples of the region. In that context, my country stresses that the 1995 resolution contained in the annex of document NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, remains in effect until all its targets and objectives are realized. We also stress the importance of the outcomes

of the 2010 Review Conference to ensure a Middle East free of nuclear weapons.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls on Iran to implement its obligations with respect to its nuclear programmes. My country believes that addressing that dossier is an important step towards achieving security and stability and building trust among the countries of the region.

The Kingdom stresses the inherent right of all countries to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in line with IAEA safety and security standards, procedures and supervision. We also support the facilitation of transfer of technology and expertise on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Kingdom urges countries with advanced nuclear technology to assist less developed countries and to remove any obstacles hindering the transfer of technology to those countries.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stresses the important role played by the IAEA in empowering countries to develop their own capabilities and capacities and in supporting their programmes to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear weapons, train human resources and contribute to spreading the culture of nuclear energy use for peaceful purposes.

It is important to ensure that outer space be used for strictly peaceful purposes and that space technology not be used for non-peaceful objectives or the development of any ballistic missile technology. International conventions have contributed to promoting the peaceful use of outer space, regulating activities and behaviours therein and ensuring the regulation of outer space without restricting the inherent right of every State to its peaceful use.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports international efforts aimed at empowering women in the field of disarmament and achieving a balance in the employment of both genders in that domain. My country has taken practical steps to support the employment of Saudi women who possess scientific and professional skills in international posts and in the field of disarmament, as well as peacekeeping operations.

**Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania):** At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of Lithuania's cooperation and support.

Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1.77/PV.2). In our national capacity, I would like to stress the following.

We reiterate our condemnation in the strongest possible terms of Russia's deliberate and unprovoked war. The unjustified invasion of its peaceful neighbour has grossly violated international law, undermined global security and even shaken the foundations upon which the United Nations was built. We demand that Russia immediately and unconditionally ceases its military actions and withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. Lithuania strongly condemns the illegal referendums, which took place under military coercion. The results of such actions are null and void and we will not recognize them. We also condemn Belarus for its support to the Russian aggression against Ukraine and reiterate our call on the Belarusian authorities to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by their country's international obligations.

We resolutely condemn indiscriminate and deliberate missile attacks launched by Russia on residential areas, power stations, railways, trade centres and bridges in Ukrainian cities. At present, Russia's military actions are threatening to cause yet another nuclear disaster. The occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant by the Russian military forces and the presence of Russian military equipment, as well as the Rosatom personnel at the site, undermine its security, increase the risk of a nuclear disaster and put the operating staff under immense pressure. The shelling and occupation of Ukraine's nuclear facilities, or using them as a shelter is unprecedented. We are deeply concerned that each of the seven indispensable pillars outlined by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been compromised as a result of the Russian aggression. Lithuania fully supports the Director General's recommendation to establish urgently a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, but the recent shelling of the South Ukraine nuclear power plant shows that it is not enough. The only sustainable solution for nuclear safety is the unconditional withdrawal of all Russian armed forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine.

Russia's aggressive and irresponsible nuclear rhetoric is unacceptable and directly contradicts

Russia's role as one of the five permanent members (P-5) of the Security Council, as well as the commitment it made in the P-5 leaders' January statement on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races. Russia has also violated the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, under which the nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their commitment to respecting the independence, sovereignty and existing borders of Ukraine. The same Memorandum also gave security assurances to Belarus after it declared its territory nuclear-free in 1990 in the Declaration of State Sovereignty and acceded to the NPT as a non-nuclear State party in 1992. Therefore, we are very concerned by recent constitutional amendments and irresponsible public statements made by Belarus expressing its readiness to host Russia's nuclear weapons on its territory. That would run contrary to the international obligations of Belarus under the NPT as a non-nuclear State.

Lithuania regrets that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was not able to adopt its final outcome document due to Russia's blocking of consensus. However, we continue to support the NPT as a cornerstone of global nuclear disarmament. Our ultimate goal remains achieving a world without nuclear weapons by implementing all elements of the NPT, including article VI, building on the principles of effectiveness, verification and undiminished security for all.

Before the Russian aggression against Ukraine, there were some welcome developments, including the agreement reached between the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the New START Treaty for an additional five years. We recognize that the United States is ready to expeditiously negotiate a new arms control framework to replace the New START when it expires in 2026. However, negotiations require a willing partner operating in good faith, which is not the case with the Russian Federation today. Lithuania remains convinced that future arms control arrangements should include all types of nuclear weapons. We also welcome the transparency efforts of some nuclear-weapon States to report on their nuclear weapons stockpile. In that regard, we call on China, which is increasing its nuclear weapons capabilities, to demonstrate responsibility and join nuclear arms control talks.

As part of its aggression against Ukraine, Russia has also engaged in a campaign of disinformation and State-controlled propaganda in spreading

unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations against Ukraine and other countries regarding biological and chemical weapons, while risking the exposure of the Ukrainian population to toxic chemicals through its deliberate attacks against civilian industrial facilities. Let us recall that Russia has a track record in the use of chemical weapons, as well as in sowing disinformation that seeks to undermine the international rules-based order. Lithuania strongly supports the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, which is the only independent international instrument for investigating the alleged use of biological weapons.

Lithuania is gravely concerned about Iran's violations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which are in certain cases creating irreversible proliferation implications. We strongly urge Iran to reverse all activities inconsistent with the JCPOA and to return, without any further delay, to its full implementation, including of all transparency measures. Timely and full cooperation with the IAEA remains more crucial than ever.

We strongly support international efforts towards the full denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Until then, sanctions must remain in place and be fully implemented. We condemn all illegal launches of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the most recent, which flew over the territory of Japan. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease all destabilizing actions, abide by its international obligations under multiple Security Council resolutions and re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community.

We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to abide by a moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, and to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty. Pending a future fissile material cut-off treaty in force, we also call on all States concerned that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

In conclusion, we reiterate our strong commitment to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation,

and call on all States to respect their obligations and commitments in this field.

**Ms. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election and wish you every success.

My country's delegation aligns 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).

The armed conflicts that are ongoing in many regions of the world are a source of concern to the international community and pose a threat to the security, safety and stability of communities. The negative impacts of the spread of armed conflicts impel the international community to exert greater efforts to intensify measures and activities that would strengthen disarmament strategies at all levels. In addition, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons, poses a threat to States and peoples and violates the human rights of communities.

The state of Qatar reiterates the importance of respecting all treaties and conventions on nuclear disarmament and all other weapons of mass destruction in order to rid the world of those weapons, which threaten humankind. We call on all States to adhere to those treaties and conventions in order to achieve peace and security and protect future generations and ecosystems from the spread of those weapons. In that context, we regret that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was held in August, did not result in a consensual final document.

A Middle East that is not free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction is a concern to all countries of the region. My country's delegation is disappointed by the lack of progress in that regard and the failure to implement commitments undertaken at the 1995 NPT Review Conference, as well as the steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and 2010 action plan, not to mention the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

The State of Qatar welcomes once again the holding of the United Nations Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. Two sessions of the Conference have already been held and we support



the sisterly Lebanese Republic in presiding over the third session, planned for November. We express our hope that all States of the region will cooperate to ensure the success of the Conference and enable it to achieve its desired objectives of strengthening peace and security regionally and internationally.

In the context of the positive contributions of the State of Qatar to regional and international coordinated efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, in particular in the Middle East, Doha hosted from 12 to 15 September the first Arab symposium on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, which was organized by the Qatar National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons, in cooperation with the League of Arab States. The symposium focused on assessing the multilateral framework and the future of the NPT and its Review Conferences, as well as the issue of making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar once again reiterates its commitment to international mechanisms and measures for disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, as well as to eliminating weapons of mass destruction in order to achieve regional and international peace and security.

**Mr. Tun** (Myanmar): First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. I assure you of our delegation's full cooperation and support.

Myanmar associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

History tells us that the fruitful outcomes of the First Committee have played an indispensable role in building peace and security. Usually, we meet around this time in good spirits, believing that our work will drive global disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms to advance the causes of peace and security. Our work this year, however, is overshadowed by geopolitical tensions — surely the highest since the end of the Cold War — that are intensifying as we speak. We have barely survived a pandemic. Conflagration between major Powers, if not a world war, is the last thing we need. Therefore, we need to now reaffirm our faith in the work of the Committee, not as an

intellectual exercise, but for the sake of present and future generations.

This year has seen a very high level of nuclear threats. Vertical proliferation by nuclear-armed States and explicit threats to be the first user of nuclear weapons made by a major nuclear Power waging an unjustifiable war of aggression have pushed us closer to the brink of nuclear war. The only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination in a verifiable and irreversible manner.

It is disappointing, therefore, that efforts to reach consensus on the final document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed. This indicates that stronger multilateral efforts and more flexibility on the part of the States parties are needed to fulfil our commitments and obligations under the NPT, to implement the pillars of non-proliferation and the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and to establish a world free of nuclear threats. Myanmar continues to stress that the NPT remains the indispensable international agreement for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Full compliance with the Treaty, especially by nuclear-armed States, is of the utmost importance for peace and security. We cannot emphasize enough that the NPT is not a license for nuclear-armed States to monopolize nuclear weapons; rather, it is an agreement under which States renounce weaponizing nuclear energy in exchange for nuclear-armed States committing to pursue nuclear disarmament in a serious manner.

Myanmar welcomes the successful convening of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That Treaty, support for which is increasing steadily, is contributing to strengthening norms against nuclear weapons. Myanmar signed the Treaty in September 2018 and had planned to ratify it in 2020, but was thwarted by the illegal coup staged by the military junta against our people and against peace.

We also reaffirm our commitment to preserving South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and to fully implementing the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. Myanmar is of the view that nuclear-weapon-free zones are important to strengthen global peace and security. Myanmar fully agrees that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones contributes to our collective efforts towards

disarming nuclear weapons. We therefore support the establishment of such zones in areas where that has yet to be accomplished.

A total of 176 States have ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. That represents significant progress of which we all should be proud. However, the entry into force of the Treaty is long overdue, and we once again urge all annex 2 States that have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so at their earliest opportunity.

As in previous sessions, we will be submitting the draft resolution entitled “Nuclear disarmament”. The provisions of the draft resolution are all the more pertinent this year, given the heightened nuclear risks. We thank Member States for their support and co-sponsorship last year and invite their continued support this year as well.

Regarding chemical weapons, we note with satisfaction that 99 per cent of declared chemical weapons stockpiles have been verifiably destroyed. We strongly condemn all uses of chemical weapons, and stress that the perpetrators of any use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

The spectre of weaponized pathogens grew during the coronavirus disease pandemic. Yet the potential of the Biological Weapon Convention is hampered by its lack of a verification mechanism. A non-discriminatory, legally binding protocol is urgently needed to close that gap.

Notwithstanding some setbacks, we have made significant achievements in curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but conventional weapons are proliferating at a brisk pace and with deadly consequences. Death and destruction caused by conventional weapons easily dwarf those caused by weapons of mass destruction. It is crucial that proper due diligence be observed to ensure that such weapons are not transferred or sold to State or non-State actors who are willing to employ them to perpetrate genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and serious violations of human rights.

In my country, Myanmar, many people have fallen victim to the military junta, emboldened and enabled by a steady stream of weapons from countries that have ignored the pleas of Myanmar’s people and the international community to stop arming the inhumane military junta. The military has been using those weapons for the sole purpose of terrorizing our people

in order to keep itself in power. It relies heavily on the air force, which is not sustainable without foreign supplies, to mount assaults against innocent people. Myanmar’s crisis is still unfolding. The world has seen the brutality, inhumanity and barbarism of Myanmar’s military against the people. Recently, on the afternoon of 16 September, the junta’s air force made a strafing run over a school in Let Yet Kone village, in Sagaing region, killing 13 people, including seven children as young as seven years old. Their body parts were shredded by junta projectiles sold to them by Member States. That was not the first, second or third time, and it will not be the last time that the military kills unarmed civilians.

I would like to stress that the lives of our people depend on the decisive action of Member States to stop selling weapons and associated technologies to the Myanmar military. As long as the military retains its access to weapons and technologies, it will continue to commit its brutal and inhumane atrocities against the people, including children. They might get good terms from the inhumane military junta for those weapons, but they are making themselves co-sponsors of dreadful violence against innocent Myanmar people. I wish to conclude my statement by appealing again to those countries exporting arms, associated technologies and machine tools to the military regime to stop doing so now.

**Ms. Zacarias (Portugal):** I congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your recent appointment. You can count on the full cooperation of our delegation.

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

Earlier this year, the five permanent members of the Security Council issued a joint statement affirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought. Soon thereafter, Russia started threatening to use nuclear weapons in the framework of its unprovoked and unjustified aggression on Ukraine. We know that this is not the only war in the world, but beyond the death and destruction it generated, this war is an attack on international law and the rules-based multilateral order. It puts at risk not only one region or one continent, but the whole world, as it has a global negative impact in many areas, from food security to nuclear safety.

Russia was the only country to block the consensus on the final document of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We regret that outcome, which, however, does not undermine the validity of this Treaty, which has contributed to reducing both stockpiles and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as to fostering cooperation in peaceful uses. We urge all States that have not yet joined that fundamental instrument to do so.

We also need to strive for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We commend the countries that have ratified the Treaty during the past year, and we urge all States that have not yet signed or ratified the instrument to do so, as well as to commit meanwhile to a moratorium on any nuclear explosions. In that context, let me also reiterate the need to facilitate the start of the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, which is long overdue. Such negotiations should take place in the Conference on Disarmament, whose enlargement we defend as a way to address its lack of representativeness.

Peace and security are a goal shared by the international community at large, but nuclear-weapon States have a particular responsibility. Convergence among those States is crucial to tackling our challenges. One of those challenges is the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We condemn yet another launch of a ballistic missile by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as its statements that it will continue to develop its missile and nuclear programmes, and that it does not rule out the possible use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by its international obligations and to take up the offer for dialogue towards a diplomatic solution.

We also hope for a diplomatic breakthrough on the resumption of the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and we urge Iran to cooperate in full with the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has a central role in that regard. A positive outcome of this process would be good news for the whole world, and in particular for the Middle East, which we hope may develop into a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

We also look forward to a positive outcome of both the ninth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the fifth Review

Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention. One key element in that context is the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons. We should uphold it as the sole independent tool that allows States to request an investigation.

International humanitarian law and human rights law must be applicable to all means and methods of warfare, so that we can prevent the malicious use of technology, as well as the weaponization of cyberspace and outer space. We are committed to preventing an arms race and to reducing threats in space by exploring norms of responsible behaviours and their respective monitoring.

We are encouraged by the first annual progress report on information and telecommunications (see A/77/275), and we look forward to progress, in particular on a programme of action to advance responsible behaviour in cyberspace, which could serve as a platform for greater cooperation and capacity-building.

We welcome the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems and hope for consensus recommendations regarding the development of a normative and operational framework. We also praise the consensual result of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the progress of the Open-Ended Working Group on conventional ammunition. We welcome the efforts pursued by the Ottawa Convention in disarmament diplomacy, with a view to demining vast territories during and after conflicts. Last but not least, we stress the need to universalize the Arms Trade Treaty.

The challenges we face call for a greater involvement of civil society, with a view to better reflecting the particular impact of those challenges on children, youth and women, whose full, equal and meaningful participation we defend. We trust that the consultation process towards the new agenda for peace suggested by the Secretary-General in his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), will contribute to that greater involvement and participation. Portugal looks forward to a concrete, forward-looking, result-oriented debate in that regard.

**Mr. Yakut** (Türkiye): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your

election. Please rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

We are convening this year under particularly challenging conditions for international peace and security. The threats to the rules-based international order and the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture have reached new heights, especially in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine, which we have rejected from the start. My country finds that grave violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations unacceptable. We also reject the recent decision to annex Ukrainian territories. The attacks by Russia against several cities of Ukraine that resulted in civilian casualties yesterday are deeply worrying and unacceptable. We reiterate once again our strong support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty.

We are deeply concerned over the heightened nuclear rhetoric in the war in Ukraine. The reaffirmation, as recent as the beginning of this year, by the nuclear-weapon States that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought was much welcome, but those words have value only when they are adhered to in practice. The safety and security of Ukraine's power plants are also of serious concern. We support the tireless efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to assist Ukraine, notably the IAEA support and assistance mission to Zaporizhzhya and the Agency's continued presence at the facility. The illegal annexation of the Zaporizhzhya region and seizure of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant further increase the nuclear security concerns in the region. We reiterate our support for the resolution of this war based on a just peace that will be reached through negotiations. Since the onset of the conflict, Türkiye has actively contributed to diplomatic efforts, the results of which are known to everyone.

The erosion of trust and confidence in international relations has been feeding geopolitical rivalries and instability and accelerating an arms race for quite some time now. In that process, important arms control instruments have either eroded or become defunct. In order to reverse that trend, we need to uphold international norms, fully implement obligations and commitments, restore dialogue and promote transparency and confidence-building measures.

As regards the nuclear weapons cluster, I would like to underscore the importance of the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. It is regrettable that the opportunity provided by the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT could not be seized, as there was no consensus on a final document. We hope that this will not hamper global efforts for nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Regardless of the outcome, the obligations and previous commitments under the NPT remain valid and their implementation constitutes an urgent priority. We will continue defending the strengthened implementation of the NPT across its three pillars and its universalization.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are instrumental for global disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Türkiye reaffirms its unwavering support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We take positive note of the conference process that has been under way since November 2019 and hope there will be further progress this year.

Having marked its twenty-fifth anniversary, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains a top priority. We call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is a vital instrument for regional and global stability. We call for the Plan's revitalization and encourage the parties to pursue ongoing diplomatic efforts towards a successful conclusion.

My country is gravely concerned over the ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which have reached unprecedented levels this year, as well as the possibility of a new nuclear test. Türkiye supports a diplomatic solution that would ensure the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We also reiterate our continued support for the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty at the Conference on Disarmament.

The global norm against the use of chemical weapons has been undermined in recent years. We condemn in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere, which constitutes a



crime against humanity. We commend the integrity and professionalism of the investigative bodies of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and underscore their contribution to efforts to ensure accountability for chemical weapons use, particularly in Syria.

We emphasize the critical role of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and call for the successful completion of the ongoing comprehensive review process. We also reiterate our strong support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. The upcoming ninth Review Conference of the latter presents a good opportunity to establish structures that would contribute to the effective functioning of the Convention and strengthen its implementation.

In the field of conventional weapons, Türkiye is committed to the effective implementation and strengthening of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Arms Trade Treaty is also an important instrument in this field. We welcome the successful conclusion of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States Parties this year and look forward to further progress during the fourth Review Conference in 2024.

The ongoing work of the Open-ended Working Group on conventional ammunition management will contribute to global efforts towards the safe and secure management of ammunition. Being a member of all four export control regimes, Türkiye diligently implements a robust export control mechanism. We support the Ottawa Convention as the cornerstone of international efforts to end the casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. Türkiye fully implements the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Improvised explosive devices and lethal autonomous weapons systems continue to be important focus areas.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is critical for the sustainable use of outer space and hence a matter of priority for us. We will continue to support international cooperation and the promotion of standards of responsible State behaviour, as well as transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

Türkiye remains concerned with the increasing number and severity of cyberattacks worldwide. We need to promote the implementation of the existing normative framework regarding responsible State behaviours in cyberspace. The establishment of a programme of action will contribute to the efforts in that direction. We also welcome the consensus adoption of the annual progress report of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies this year (see A/77/275).

Türkiye supports a robust United Nations disarmament machinery, of which the First Committee is an important pillar. Despite current challenges, we must explore all avenues for cooperative work in this Committee. My delegation stands ready to contribute to our collective endeavour in that understanding.

**Mr. Pereira Sosa (Paraguay)** (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we congratulate you, Sir, and wish you success as you lead our work. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau, particularly our colleague from Bolivia. You have the full support of my delegation for this session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. The full version of this statement will be available online.

The current difficult international security situation reminds us once again that world peace is fragile and that the use or threat of force to settle disputes has not disappeared. Geopolitical tensions and belligerent conflicts, among many other interconnected issues, are rattling entire continents and hurting the global economy even more. This is taking place even as we continue to recover from one of the most tragic times in our recent past. Military spending has reached a new record, and it is unacceptable that it should continue to increase when there are so many needs in a world engulfed by serious humanitarian crises that affect the most vulnerable sectors of our societies, especially women, children and the elderly.

It is truly worrying that leaders of nuclear-weapon States make constant references to the use of all their weaponry. In that regard, my country is of the view that, beyond our real differences, we must collaborate in the search for a shared way forward. What is, for some, synonymous with security, is just the opposite for the vast majority — a latent risk that puts the

collective security and well-being of present and future generations at risk. In addition, the use and threat of use of those weapons constitute a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. The only guarantee we have against the use of nuclear weapons is their total prohibition and elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner within a specified time frame.

In that regard, while we welcome the results achieved at the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we regret the continued failure to adopt a final outcome document or recommendations at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which would have made progress in the implementation of the Treaty possible. That failure occurred despite the efforts made by the vast majority of States parties and the President of the Conference.

In the same vein, we must reiterate that the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be its only use. Any deviation from that use constitutes a serious risk for humanity. Likewise, we reiterate our recognition of the efforts carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency, especially the current work of its technical staff in Ukraine.

Transnational organized crime in all its manifestations continues to be a threat to the stability of entire regions and to global security. Its multiplier effect undermines the foundations of our institutions and societies. Closely linked to the aforementioned is the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, their parts and components. Naturally, trade in their ammunition cannot be looked at in isolation either. That contemptible scourge, which does not care whether the illicit trade and diversion to non-State actors or unauthorized users is carried out in areas of armed conflict or for criminal purposes, in addition to causing destabilization and influencing development, has a particularly concerning impact on women, girls and boys, as it is also a breeding ground for other types of related transnational crimes. In that regard, we highlight the efforts made to adopt a final consensus document at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Accordingly, the obligations and commitments on the issue of

conventional ammunition must have a central place in the discussions.

As those present here know, in late July the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 adopted, by consensus, its first annual progress report (see A/77/275). In that regard, we highlight the effort and commitment of the delegations and, in particular, give special recognition to the Chair and the team of the Singapore delegation. Likewise, we understand that it is of fundamental importance to advance in the building of mechanisms that contribute to the full and effective implementation of the results of other initiatives that preceded the current Working Group and that, in fact, served as the basis for our current work.

All the instances to which we have previously referred are our spaces for dialogue, negotiation, work, consensus and respectful dissent, where we must understand that what unites us is far greater than what separates us. They are also in themselves trust-building mechanisms and spaces to put our insights into action. In all these instances, international and regional cooperation are of fundamental importance, not only to the development of our capabilities and the transfer of good practices, technologies, but also to the implementation of shared policies, strategies and programmes.

We are facing complex global challenges and have various crises on the horizon. In these moments of economic, social and health recovery after the pandemic, in addition to the terrible situation in Ukraine and its associated humanitarian challenges, solidarity and cooperation are imperative and we must pool our best collective efforts so that the United Nations can deliver effectively on its role with respect to the three pillars of the Organization: peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. As my President pointed out a few days ago, “[m]ore than ever, the world needs temperance, dialogue and moderation” (A/77/PV.4, p.36). We live in times that demand concrete political commitments and not generic attitudes. Our peoples expect answers from us. Let us hope that we can live up to this exceptional moment in our history. To that end, delegations can count on the firm commitment of Paraguay.

**Mrs. Breshanaj** (Albania): Let me start by joining others in congratulating you, Sir, and the other

members of the Bureau on your election as Chair of the First Committee, with warmest wishes for a successful session.

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

Listening to the statements made by other representatives, it seems that we all agree on one point — the international system is under serious threat. The core principles of the Charter of the United Nations are being challenged and we are facing a completely different reality from that of last December. Allow me to quote a Russian colleague, who said that “we are working under emergency circumstances of the gravest crisis of international security”. I would like to recall, for the sake of transparency, that it was Russia itself that started this unprovoked war, violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and going against the peaceful aspirations of a free, democratic country to develop and prosper.

Let me reiterate our firm position. Albania is against this unprovoked, unjustified war of choice by Russia and we strongly condemn its military aggression in Ukraine. We completely despise the sham referendums conducted in part of Ukraine’s territory and will never recognize the illegal annexation proclaimed by Russia. We consider it to be another illegal act of aggression, carried out in defiance of international laws and the United Nations Charter. It is so sad to hear the Russian delegation justifying their unprovoked war, the killings of thousands of civilians, innocent women and children, by insulting the vivid memory of those who really suffered under the brutality of the Nazi regime. Nothing can justify this war.

Russia’s irresponsible behaviour, with its unacceptable nuclear rhetoric and repeated threats to use nuclear weapons, has put joint arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament efforts at imminent risk, blatantly violating its commitment under the Budapest Memorandum on security assurances. As a result of Russia’s military aggression and indiscriminate attacks on several nuclear sites, we remain deeply concerned over the growing nuclear safety and security risks in Ukraine. The Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, occupied by the Russian forces, is at serious risk. We fully support the recommendation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to

establish a secure perimeter around the nuclear power plant and call for its immediate implementation.

Another sad moment for the non-proliferation agenda is the failure of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt the long-awaited consensual outcome because Russia decided to block it despite the efforts of all delegations and Ambassador Zlauvinen, President of the Conference, to reach consensus. Albania will continue to promote universal adherence to and full implementation of the NPT as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The IAEA plays a crucial role in monitoring the discouragement of nuclear weapons and for the non-proliferation regime as a whole.

We are deeply concerned over the continuous violations by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea of relevant Security Council resolutions through sustained development of its nuclear and missile programmes, including ballistic missile launches at an unprecedented frequency. Just this year, there have been around 40 launches. We strongly condemn the dangerous launch of a long-range ballistic missile over Japan on 4 October. The Security Council unanimously has held the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea accountable for that unlawfulness, calling for it to abandon all nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and related programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return to negotiations and diplomacy.

We call on Iran to engage in good faith and seek realistic and lasting solutions, as we are convinced that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains the only tool for the international community to be reassured in a verifiable way that Iran’s nuclear programme is and remains dedicated solely to peaceful purposes. Iran must fully cooperate with the IAEA and provide comprehensive and accurate records on outstanding safeguards issues. Albania strongly supports the tireless efforts of the European Union in achieving a resumption of the JCPOA and in urging Iranian authorities to seize the given diplomatic momentum in full transparency.

As High Representative Nakamitsu rightfully described, “the prospect of active hostilities in domains such as [...] cyberspace is becoming increasingly likely” (*A/C.1/77/PV.2, pp. 3-4*). I would like to draw the

Committee's attention to the latest massive cyberattacks that have been launched against my country in an unsuccessful attempt by one State to inflict damage to the critical infrastructure, erase digital systems, steal data and paralyse online public services in order to destabilize, create chaos and insecurity in the country. An in-depth investigation provided us with indisputable evidence that the cyberattack was orchestrated and sponsored by the Islamic State of Iran through the engagement of several non-State actors that enacted the assault. We consider this to be a blatant breach of the norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace and a clear act of aggression against a sovereign country. In that sense, Albania believes that it is imperative to define rules that ensure security and stability in cyberspace within the framework of the United Nations, grounded in the United Nations Charter and existing international laws. We support the proposal for a draft resolution on a programme of action to advance responsible State behaviours in cyberspace and encourage all members to endorse this action-oriented initiative.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate Albania's full support for the disarmament agenda, arms control, non-proliferation and confidence-building measures. Albania is committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We echo the call for the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as for the immediate start of negotiations on and the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. Albania strongly supports the sustained implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), considering that threats posed to international security by terrorists or other non-State actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction remain very imminent. The Chemical Weapons Convention continues to be a remarkable success of effective multilateralism. We strongly support the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty and will continue to counter the threats posed by the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

We will continue to encourage active engagement and cooperation with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and other stakeholders. The meaningful and effective inclusion of women in all aspects of international peace and security, with rights equal to those of men, remains at the focus of our

work, including in the First Committee, in line with the women and peace and security agenda.

**Mr. In den Bosch** (Netherlands): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

In addition to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

The international rules-based order is under immense pressure and the European security environment has changed dramatically. In this forum in particular, we cannot disregard the unprovoked and unjustified acts of aggression against Ukraine, which have serious consequences for international security and stability and grossly violate international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. The Netherlands continues to condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's aggression and atrocities against the people of Ukraine, as we have seen yesterday and today in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities. We expect Russia to immediately withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders, which include the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson oblasts. We strongly condemn the recent illegal referendums and call on all States and international organizations to reject the illegal Russian annexation of Ukrainian territory.

In the light of that complex security environment and the rising geopolitical tensions, we welcome the commitments of States parties at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Let me underline once more that all States parties, minus one, recommitted to their past pledges and showed a willingness to adopt the draft outcome document, which sometimes deviated far from the preferred national positions. That sends a strong message that the NPT remains key to international peace and security and, in our view, is and remains the only credible path to a nuclear-weapon-free world. Moreover, it is a powerful display of support for multilateralism.

The near completion of the destruction of declared stockpiles of chemical weapons can also be considered an important achievement of multilateralism. Still,



the use of chemical weapons in recent years in Syria, the attempts on the lives of Sergei Skripal and Alexei Navalny, as well as the assassination of Kim Jong-nam, are clear warnings that the global community must remain vigilant. The Netherlands will preside over the upcoming review conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention and is committed to giving the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons the tools it needs to fulfil its mandate. The continuing disinformation campaign by the Russian Federation further underlines the necessity of maintaining a strong, nimble and impartial organization.

The Netherlands is fully committed to the strengthening and implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We see an urgent need to make strides towards an effective verification mechanism for investigating possible breaches of the Convention. Furthermore, every effort should be made to protect the integrity of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, since it is the only existing independent mechanism to investigate alleged uses of biological weapons.

The Netherlands is deeply concerned by the Democratic Republic of Korea's escalation of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes and its recent launch of a missile over Japan. For that reason, the sanctions regime as adopted by the Security Council should be implemented fully and effectively by all United Nations Member States until the Democratic Republic of Korea takes concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

Equally concerning is the fact that Iran continues its enrichment activities and has failed to seize the opportunity to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Therefore, we urgently call on Iran to return to compliance.

In the light of rapid technological developments, the Netherlands emphasizes that the international governance around the responsible development, deployment and use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the military domain has to be strengthened. To that end, the Netherlands will host a ministerial conference to promote responsible use of AI in the military domain. The objective of that high-level conference, on 15 and 16 February 2023, in The Hague, is to agree on a common international agenda that will ensure that the development, deployment and use of artificial

intelligence in the military domain will be within the parameters set by existing international law. We invite ministers from all over the world to engage with us and address those challenges.

Regarding lethal autonomous weapons systems, the Netherlands remains actively engaged within the Group of Governmental Experts discussions. Further regulation is required, and autonomous weapons that cannot be used in accordance with international humanitarian law should be explicitly prohibited. Having said that, the Netherlands strongly believes that all countries should have equal access to the peaceful uses of technology and therefore underlines the importance of the existing security frameworks for technology transfers.

Ever more frequent and destructive malicious cyberactivities pose a serious threat. Therefore, all Member States should abide by the United Nations framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. We support the programme of action as the best way forward, since it presents an inclusive, permanent platform to put the existing consensus framework into practice.

With regard to outer space, we should ensure that all humankind, including new space actors and users, will be able to benefit from the economic and societal opportunities in the space domain. We believe that the most pragmatic and immediate way forward is through a step-by-step, behaviour-based approach. Supported by monitoring and verification, and not excluding the possibility of legally binding instruments, such an approach will help to reduce the risks of conflict in outer space.

Turning to conventional weapons, we call on all our Arms Trade Treaty partners to remain committed to providing transparency about arms exports and imports, and urge all countries, especially major arms exporters, to make arms export reports publicly available.

The Netherlands very much welcomes the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, led by Ireland, and related to that, calls upon all States to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions as well. Likewise, significant progress has been made since the signing of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, but some challenges remain. The recent contamination of vast areas, such as those in Ukraine, is especially worrisome.

Increased efforts are needed in order to accomplish our common goal of a world free of landmines.

Achieving gender equality, empowering all women and girls and including and amplifying the voices and concerns of underrepresented groups are key priorities for the Netherlands in the common quest to achieve a secure, just and prosperous world for all. It is of the utmost importance that we continue to work together to enhance gender equality, inclusion and diversity through effective multilateralism.

In conclusion, let me underline that The Netherlands will continue to promote multilateralism as the key principle for addressing today's challenges. This meeting provides us with important opportunities to further strengthen the framework of treaties and conventions that are crucial to ensuring a secure and prosperous world built on the fundamentals of the rules-based international order.

**Mrs. Liolocha** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation takes this opportunity to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chair of the Bureau of the First Committee and to congratulate all the members of the Bureau who are supporting you in this difficult task. We assure you of its full cooperation. My delegation remains confident that your expertise and leadership will lead our work to a successful conclusion.

The Democratic Republic of Congo associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

International security and world peace have always been the concern of the United Nations. However, today more than ever, our world is facing increasingly worrying situations. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed our common vulnerability, which has had repercussions, even for our work, with severe constraints and restrictions that have limited our ability to move. The fact that we were not able to prevent this virus from crossing our borders should make us think about what would happen to this world if an accident were to occur following the intentional or accidental misuse of nuclear weapons.

Since nuclear weapons are the most harmful weapons, given the incalculable humanitarian and environmental consequences that could result from

their use, the world must work more than ever for non-proliferation with a view to achieving the total elimination of these weapons. This is so because the effects of the use of nuclear weapons will not remain within national borders; they will have profound effects on States far from the target areas, including those in nuclear-weapon-free zones. After such an attack, no adequate humanitarian response would be possible.

It is in this context that the Democratic Republic of the Congo participated in the Humanitarian Initiative conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, spoken out on the need to fill the legal void on nuclear weapons and endorsed the pledge presented by Austria at the 2014 Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. The Democratic Republic's commitment is manifested in its policy on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, as well as in its compliance with its international obligations under the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Indeed, my country's ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Pelindaba Treaty, which makes Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and its signature of the additional protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement remain to this day the proof that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is working towards the emergence of a peaceful nuclear sector. Similarly, my country supported the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) by being present at the ceremony opening the Treaty for signature on 20 September 2017 and deposited its instrument of ratification on 22 September.

As the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains firmly committed to playing its role in promoting the principles of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we regret that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT could not reach consensus on a final outcome document that supports the implementation of commitments in a concrete and balanced manner under the Treaty's three pillars. However, we are encouraged by the entry into force of the TPNW and the progress made in its implementation through the holding of its first Meeting of States Parties in Vienna last June. While stressing that the NPT remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime for achieving nuclear disarmament, the Democratic Republic considers the NPT and the TPNW to be two complementary instruments and that the latter builds on existing norms and reinforces the obligations set out in Article VI of

the NPT. We therefore continue to encourage States that have not yet done so to accede to the TPNW, as it constitutes an important step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. If we are sincere in our quest for disarmament, we have a collective responsibility to ensure the universalization of the Treaty.

As a signatory State of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Democratic Republic of Congo supports the promotion of the Treaty and calls for its entry into force. It is therefore essential and in the interests of the international community that the States listed in Annex 2 join the Treaty to allow its entry into force. The absence of consensus on such an important issue of international security is a disappointment to us.

While reaffirming its support for the IAEA, my delegation believes that the pursuit of a nuclear programme for peaceful purposes is an inalienable right of every State. We emphasize the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination and call on the Agency to continue to promote technical assistance and cooperation in the fields of science and development.

The problem of anti-personnel mines and the increasing use of small arms and light weapons, explosive devices of war and other conventional weapons remains a major concern for my country. Indeed, since its independence and more particularly over the last two decades, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been the victim of several armed conflicts. This situation is the source of illicit arms trafficking and the widespread use of mines and explosive remnants of war that kill and affect the lives of thousands of people and therefore constitute a real threat to peace, security and development.

Indeed, civilian populations living in targeted areas are the first victims of these lethal devices that have been left behind by armed groups. Similarly, internally displaced persons have greater exposure to explosive remnants of war when they return to their places of origin. This exacerbates poverty and limits the population's ability to develop. The implementation of the various international standards in this area is urgently needed.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is of great concern to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is why it participated in the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, which was held

from 27 June to 1 July 2022. We welcome the consensus reached in the final document that was adopted and look forward to the implementation of the recommendations contained therein.

With regard to the management of surplus ammunition stocks, the Democratic Republic continues to follow the negotiations taking place in the open-ended working group and hopes that it will succeed in establishing a new global framework by consensus that addresses the existing gaps in the life cycle management of ammunition, in accordance with resolution 76/233.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo participated in the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and welcomes the adoption by consensus of its report. In this regard, we encourage all States Members of the United Nations to participate in the Register, which remains a voluntary transparency and confidence-building mechanism set up to enable countries to account for their conventional arms transfers. In order to make the work of the Register visible and effective, my country advocates the allocation of additional resources to its regular budget.

For my delegation, the placement of weapons in outer space is incompatible with sustainable peace. We call for the strengthening of transparency and confidence-building measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. Outer space security requires goodwill and constructive global action.

With regard to cyberspace security, the Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes the progress on discussions in the open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 and hopes that consensus will continue to guide the discussions in the working group.

In closing, my delegation once again reiterates its full cooperation and hopes that this session will have a positive outcome.

**Mr. Leucă** (Republic of Moldova): Mr. Chair, allow me first to congratulate you on the assumption of the Chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in fulfilling your important mandate.

The Republic of Moldova aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), and I would like to highlight a few points in my national capacity.

The world is facing ever-growing geopolitical tensions and multifaced challenges that threaten international peace and security. Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine has put the fundamental principles of the United Nations to the test, shattered global security and triggered a European energy crisis, global food shortages and an economic downturn. This war is an attack on the rules-based international order and on nuclear safety.

We have all been appalled by the massive Russian missile attacks conducted recently against Ukrainian cities, especially on civilian and critical infrastructure. These attacks are causing human losses and suffering and significant destruction.

According to the verified airspace-monitoring data, three of the cruise missiles launched from the Russian military ships located in the Black Sea on targets in Ukraine have crossed Moldovan airspace. The Republic of Moldova firmly condemns the violation of its sovereign airspace. That incident created serious risks to the security of my country.

We strongly condemn the so-called referendums illegally organized by the Russian Federation in the Ukrainian occupied regions of Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Donetsk and Luhansk. Conducting those pseudoreferendums during the ongoing war and using them as a pretext to annex a part of Ukrainian sovereign territory occupied by force is a serious violation of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and other fundamentals of international law. The Republic of Moldova will not recognize the results of those illegal actions and reiterates its strong support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

We express great concern about the military activities in and around Ukraine's nuclear sites and the dangerous rhetoric about the possible use of nuclear weapons. All these warring developments pose a great risk — not only for the region, but also for the entire world. In that sense, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of stopping the shelling in and around those sites with a view to avoiding catastrophic consequences.

Against that backdrop, we reiterate the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of non-proliferation and disarmament. While deploring the failure of the tenth NPT Review Conference in August to reach a consensus-based outcome, we highlight the critical need

of walking back the nuclear rhetoric and pursuing the disarmament-related goals set in 2010. Full compliance with the NPT's provisions and its universalization are critical to pursuing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in good faith and in a rules-based international system.

While maintaining the momentum on the nuclear disarmament agenda, we also highlight the relevance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We note with deep concern the failure by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the provisions of the CTBT and urge the country to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and to take concrete actions towards achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of its nuclear-weapons-related programmes.

Proliferation, excessive accumulation and misuse of conventional arms has a wide range of negative humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. The Republic of Moldova attaches great importance to the effective implementation of the conventional arms control instruments. Their rules and obligations must be respected and their guidelines followed.

In that connection, we reaffirm our strong support for the Arms Trade Treaty, as the first legally binding instrument establishing common standards for the international transfer of conventional arms. It is imperative to reduce the unregulated availability of conventional arms and small arms and light weapons in areas of conflict or potential conflict by ensuring strict transfer controls and safe destruction of surplus weapons, as well as by helping affected Governments to deal with all aspects of these problems.

Time and again, the Republic of Moldova has requested a complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces based in the Transnistrian region of our country. Our position remains unchanged. Furthermore, we reiterate our call for the complete removal and destruction of the ammunition from the Cobasna stockpile, which now, more than ever, poses a silent threat to the security and stability of the entire region.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming once again the role of the First Committee in multilateral discussions on disarmament, and, in view of multiple challenges to international peace and security, the Republic of Moldova is fully committed to the disarmament agenda, with the United Nations playing



a central role in ensuring the universalization and implementation of existing treaties.

**Mr. Pedroso Cuesta (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2) and the statement to be delivered by Argentina on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

This year, we started the work of the First Committee on the heels of an event of historic significance: the first successful Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Regrettably, we also witnessed yet another failure of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which again concluded without any agreed outcome, taking us further away from the ultimate goal of achieving nuclear disarmament.

We remain convinced that the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner is more than a long-standing legitimate aspiration; it is a matter of survival for humankind. Nuclear disarmament must continue to be the highest priority in the field of disarmament. Cuba will continue to promote the universalization of the NPT in an ongoing manner.

We are proud to belong to the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, later proclaimed also as a zone of peace. We support the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

We reaffirm our commitment to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. We hope that the forthcoming review conferences of those instruments will contribute to promoting their full implementation.

We support a legally binding protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. We regret that

the United States has objected to the adoption of that instrument.

We reject selective, biased and politically motivated approaches to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the creation of mechanisms and procedures that go beyond the technical mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We call on the sole possessor State to complete the destruction of its declared stockpiles by the deadline.

We condemn the imposition of unilateral coercive measures that limit or impede, in a discriminatory manner, the exercise of the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as well as the promotion of international cooperation and scientific and technological progress of Member States in the biological and chemical fields. Such actions, of a markedly illegal nature, undermine the socioeconomic development of the States that suffer from them, while contravening the provisions of several legally binding instruments in the field of disarmament.

We reject the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba, which violates the provisions of articles X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We reiterate our call for the adoption, as soon as possible, of a protocol banning autonomous lethal weapons. We also advocate the establishment of regulations for the use of weapons with some autonomy, in particular military attack drones.

We reiterate our commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We stress the need to address the root causes of this scourge. We will therefore continue to advocate for increased international cooperation. We reaffirm the right of States to acquire and possess arms for their self-defence and security needs.

We support the continuation of the work of the General Assembly's open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) — a mechanism that enables States to discuss that topic of increasing international importance in a transparent and inclusive manner and on an equal footing. We reject the covert and illegal use of ICTs and radio space to subvert the legal and political order of States, as well as the use

of such technologies to commit and encourage acts of terrorism.

We condemn the continued incitement and financing of violent acts in Cuba through digital networks from the territory of the United States. We call for an immediate end to such policies, which undermine national sovereignty and are incompatible with peace, security, development and cooperation among States. We support the exclusively peaceful use of cyberspace and outer space. There is a need for legally binding instruments that address the regulatory gaps in both areas.

We welcome the resumption of the substantive work of the Disarmament Commission this year. We urge that it adopt specific recommendations on the issues under its consideration. We call for the fulfilment of the negotiating mandate of the Conference on Disarmament and the safeguarding of its procedures and practices.

We will continue to promote the maintenance and strengthening of the disarmament machinery in strict adherence with multilateralism, as well as the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

**The Chair:** As we have 42 speakers left on the list of speakers, and we are expected to end the general debate tomorrow, it is my intention to propose to the Committee tomorrow morning that we extend the general debate to Thursday, 13 February, to ensure that we can exhaust the list of speakers.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in the exercise of the right of reply.

**Mr. Namekawa** (Japan): I would like to exercise the right of reply in relation to the remarks about Japan made by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Under the Constitution, Japan has adhered to the basic precept of maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy, not becoming a military Power, not posing a threat to other countries and observing the three non-nuclear principles.

Under those precepts, Japan will never change the course that it has taken as a peace-loving nation. We ensure the transparency of the contents of our defence-related expenditure by adhering to strict civilian control of the military. Also, the purpose of our defence-related expenditure is to enable the Japan Self-Defence Forces to carry out their duties and missions to secure the lives and peaceful livelihood of the Japanese

people, as well as to contribute to the peace and security of the international community. In that course of action, Japan will continue to ensure a high level of transparency in its defence-related expenditures.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, we are forced to take the floor in the right of reply in order to reject the baseless accusations against the Russian Federation in connection with the special military operation in Ukraine.

However, today we would like not to focus on Ukraine, but to respond to the claims made by the representative of Moldova regarding the military contingents that were said to be on Moldovan territory. We consider it necessary to provide some clarity on that matter.

The Soviet 14th Guards Army, the successor of which is the Operational Group of Russian Forces in the Transnistria region of the Republic of Moldova, was stationed in the vast territory of the south-western region during the period of the Soviet Union. Both components of the military presence, as part of the contingent of peacekeeping forces in the security zone with a clearly defined mandate, and as part of the Operational Group of Russian Forces to carry out the task of protecting the ammunition depots in the village of Cobasna, are derivatives of the unresolved conflict — a situation for which the Moldovan side bears its fair share of responsibility.

Signed at the level of the Presidents of the two countries on 21 July 1992, the Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova remains in force. The Joint Control Commission and the Joint Peacekeeping Forces subordinate to it, including the Russian contingent, were established and are operating. Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 3, of the Agreement, a protocol on the number and deployment of peacekeeping forces was adopted on 28 July 1992. That document provides for the presence on the territory of Moldova of six Russian battalions, one of which is in reserve, as well as a helicopter squadron and a communications support group. In reality, today the number of Russian military personnel is much lower. There are just two battalions, replacing each other on a rotational basis — a total of about 1,200 people. Military personnel, who are not formally part of the peacekeeping contingent, are involved in protecting

the warehouses. Ammunition with a long shelf life is reliably protected against theft.

The status of the Russian troops under the Agreement on the Principles for the Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova is fixed as being subject to negotiations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova. That is the way in which it should be viewed.

The agreement on the legal status, procedure and time limits for the withdrawal of the military detachments of the Russian Federation temporarily stationed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova was negotiated voluntarily and in accordance with international law, although it was not ratified by the Russian side owing to the objections of members of the State Duma.

Attempts to interpret the Agreement on the Principles for the Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova as not creating a legal basis for peacekeeping forces are unfounded. It is an effective mission to maintain peace and stability in the security zone and in the region as a whole, which was recognized in the documents of the 1999 Istanbul Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In particular, the Declaration of that forum praised the ongoing mediation efforts of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the OSCE in the negotiation process on the future status of the Transnistria region within the Republic of Moldova, specifically noting the positive role of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces in ensuring stability in the region.

Committed to the process of the political settlement of the Transnistrian problem, in which the Russian Federation acts as a co-mediator and guarantor on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, the Russian side is aware that any attempts by the parties to the conflict to absolve themselves of responsibility for compliance with the provisions of the Agreement in the current situation of stalled political negotiations between Chisinau and Tiraspol and in the internationally recognized 5+2 format risk returning the unresolved conflict to the hot phase.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am compelled to take the floor to denounce the allegations made by the delegation of Albania against my country. Regarding those unfounded accusations, I would

like to call the attention of the Committee to the letter dated 10 September 2022 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2022/685). Iran categorically denies and denounces any unjustified and unilateral attribution for the alleged cyberattack on Albania's infrastructure.

Furthermore, it is highlighted in the letter that such fictitious and false claims are based on fabrications and wrong assumptions levelled only for political agendas. The Islamic Republic of Iran has long been the primary target and main victim of cyberattacks, including from Stuxnet and Duqu, against its vital infrastructures. The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its persistent position that cyberspace and the information and communications technology (ICT) environment must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Last but not least, the paragraph 7 of the letter specifies that:

“Despite the Republic of Albania's hasty, unwarranted and unilateral decision to sever its diplomatic relations, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in good faith, stands ready to cooperate and engage constructively to clarify the unfounded accusations levelled against Iran.”

Albania has so far just made politicized accusations and disrespected, among other things, its commitments regarding the clarification of any claimed ICT incident.

**Mr. Kim Sangjin** (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to take the floor to exercise its right of reply in response to the statements made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First, on military exercises, we reiterate that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has launched more than 40 ballistic missiles this year alone, including its recent launch, on 3 October, of an intermediate-range ballistic missile. Moreover, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now ready to conduct a seventh nuclear test and has openly pursued its dangerous nuclear ambitions, significantly lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons, while threatening the possibility of a pre-emptive nuclear attack. The Republic of Korea and the United States combined defence and deterrence posture, including the joint exercises, is a response to the military threat

from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Taking such defensive measures — and they are indeed defensive — is the bare minimum of the duty of a responsible Government.

That leads me to my second point, concerning the United Nations Command, which is officially recognized by Security Council resolution 84 (1950) and continues to contribute to maintaining peace and security on the Korean peninsula. That resolution, as well as others, clearly states that “the armed attack upon the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea constitutes a breach of the peace” (*Security Council resolution 84 (1950), first preambular paragraph*). If the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had not invaded the Republic of Korea and started the Korean War against its fellow countrypeople, there would be no United States troops or United Nations Command on the Korean peninsula today. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unilateral demand for the United Nations Command to be dissolved does not make sense.

When the Cold War ended, we all wanted a détente on the Korean peninsula, and that aspiration is reflected in the basic agreements on the relations between the Republic of Korea and Democratic People's Republic of Korea and in the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula of the early 1990s. Instead of implementing that Declaration — which it refused to do — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea avoided inspection from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and refrained from explaining its suspicious activities. And when push came to shove, it announced its withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The international community has made numerous and tireless efforts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue over the past 30 years. We had even stopped joint military exercises over the past few years, as the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea just mentioned. But this is where we are now. And over the course of the years, the NPT regime has been seriously undermined. Any attempt by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to justify its position and potential use of nuclear weapons, including in its new nuclear forces law adopted on 8 September, will not be recognized by the international community under any circumstances.

I take this opportunity to again strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop every kind of provocation and return to the denuclearization talks. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is obligated under the relevant resolutions of the Security Council to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Before I conclude, my delegation would like to bring to the Committee's attention that Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations stipulates that the Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council resolutions, which are not something we can simply opt not to recognize.

**Mr. Song Kim** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to exercise its right of reply in response to the provocative statements delivered by the representatives of South Korea and Japan.

First, as for Japan's comment, we have made it clear that Japan's moves to revise its peace constitution and possess pre-emptive strike capabilities are precisely the main factor and the great threat that is undermining regional peace and stability and aggravating the situation. While clamouring for a nuclear-free world, Japan still opposes the abandonment of the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons, sticking to the nuclear umbrella of the United States. It seeks to continue its moves to become a military Power under any circumstances and is scheming to revise its defensive strategy to institutionalize pre-emptive strike capabilities in its national policy. For all intents and purposes, Japan is seeking an ulterior motive to justify its preparations for an invasion, and we will continue to closely watch Japan's dangerous military moves. Japan must reflect on the possible dire consequences of its moves to become a military Power.

As for the provocative statement made by the representative of South Korea, our military drills were carried out amid the ongoing dangerous military drills staged by larger-scale combined naval forces involving a United States aircraft carrier, an Aegis destroyer and a nuclear-powered submarine in the waters of the Korean peninsula. The United States, based on an agreement to provide more intensive extended deterrence to South Korea against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's adoption of the law on the policy of State



nuclear forces, brought the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan* task force into the waters off the Korean peninsula on 23 September to stage joint naval drills with South Korea in the East Sea of Korea from 26 to 29 September and joint anti-submarine drills together with Japan and South Korea on 30 September.

Under such inevitable circumstances, we were compelled to decide to organize military drills under the simulation of an actual war at different levels in order to check and improve the reliability and combat power of our State war deterrence and send a strong military reaction warning to the enemies. We are sharply watching the precarious security environment on the Korean peninsula and all the military moves of the enemies, and we will firmly take all military counter-measures if necessary.

The United Nations Command in South Korea is an illegal, ghost-like entity. It was cooked up by the United States so it could pursue its ambition to dominate the whole Korean peninsula after the Second World War. The United Nations Command has really stood in the way of peace and security on the Korean peninsula. That is a well known fact. South Korea is arguing that, because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea withdrew from the NPT, the situation on the Korean peninsula has gone from bad to worse, but that is totally wrong. First of all, the withdrawal from the NPT is a sovereign decision by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We have to bear in mind that, after the Second World War and, more specifically, after the occupation of South Korea by the United States, the United States has persistently maintained a hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, mobilizing nuclear assets and conducting various kinds of military drills with South Korea. That is why the situation on the Korean peninsula has gone from bad to worse and is the case every time military exercises are conducted.

We once again reiterate that we totally reject the relevant Security Council resolutions, as they encroach on our sovereignty, our right to development and the existence of our Government, and it is really the fallout of the hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mrs. Breshanaj** (Albania): I take the floor to respond to the statement just made by the representative of Iran. Once again, for the sake of transparency and truth, let us make clear that Albania was targeted twice

recently in a large-scale cyberattack — I repeat, twice. The goal was to cause damage, steal data, intercept electronic communications and shut down the entire digital system of the Government and all online public services, which constitute 95 per cent of public services in Albania, in an attempt to paralyse the whole country and create chaos and insecurity. Fortunately, the attacks failed to achieve their goal of destroying our critical infrastructure.

As the Government of Albania already officially announced, a lengthy and thorough in-depth investigation has confirmed beyond any doubt that the cyberattack that wanted to bring a sovereign country to its knees was an act of State-sponsored aggression orchestrated and carried out by the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is not a fiction. Nothing can justify such behaviour. It was a blatant breach of the norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Albania cannot remain idle in the face of such a malicious attack. Those unlawful acts must be condemned and must be treated accordingly, including in the First Committee, by maintaining the focus on cybersecurity and investing in prevention and helping Member States to build resilience.

**Mr. Leucă** (Republic of Moldova): I did not intend to take the floor, but I would like to respond to the statement just made by the delegation of the Russian Federation. I would like to refer to our earlier statement in which we brought up issues that have repeatedly been mentioned in different forums at different levels. In that regard, I would like to add to what I mentioned in my statement and what we have reiterated many times: our request to the Russian Federation to withdraw its military forces from and destroy its ammunition in Moldova, in line with the 1999 Istanbul Summit outcome document

**The Chair:** Requests have been made to exercise a second right of reply. However, may I kindly request that the second right of reply be limited to one minute, because we have to be sensitive to the fact that our interpreters have been working with us the whole day, and they must be, I am sure, fairly exhausted.

**Mr. Hirochika** (Japan): I will be brief. I must exercise the right of reply once again to address the repeated allegation about Japan made by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like once again to make clear that under its Constitution,

Japan has adhered to the basic precept of maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy, not becoming a military Power that poses a threat to other countries. Japan will never change the course it has taken as a peace-loving nation. And Japan will continue to make every effort to contribute to the peace and security of the Asian region, as well as the international community, as a whole, in cooperation with its close allies and partners.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Once again, I have to reject all the unsubstantiated allegations against my country. We are ready for clarification. However, the Albanian Government has failed to respond to our frequent requests. Therefore, there is nothing to accuse Iran of, and we have to conclude that all the allegations are unilaterally made. We therefore invite the Albanian Government to cooperate with Iran, free of any influence from either any terrorist cult that it has hosted or any other Government.

**The Chair:** I would make the plea to all other delegations requesting the exercise of the second right of reply to limit their remarks to one minute.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to respond to the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Moldova to point out that all matters relating to the presence of Russian military contingents on the territory of the Republic of Moldova must be resolved through the legal mechanisms established to that end. In that regard, the key instrument is the agreement on the principles of a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the

Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova of June 1992. It is on the basis of such documents and such a legal framework that those issues should be resolved.

**Mr. Kim Song** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I will be very brief for the sake of the time. I will respond to the statement made by the representative of Japan. Japan is trying to make a last-ditch effort to justify its military moves. Given the revision of the Guidelines for Japan-United States cooperation of 2015, the automatic intervention of self-defence forces in case of emergency, the revision of its defence strategy and the institutionalization of pre-emptive strike capability, all of them clearly show that Japan is making a desperate effort to become a military Power. Japan is therefore exploiting external threats to justify its military moves in order to realize its wild ambition for invasion. We strongly oppose such military moves, and we also want to caution Japan to carefully reflect on the dire consequences of its military moves.

**The Chair:** We have more than exhausted the time available for this meeting. Before we adjourn, let me remind delegations that the list of speakers for the thematic debate closed today at 6 p.m. The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. sharp in this conference room. We shall continue with the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. I appeal to all delegations to be punctual to enable us to proceed with our work in a timely manner.

*The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.*