



General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

First Committee

8th meeting

Wednesday, 12 October 2022, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Pieris(Sri Lanka)

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

Agenda items 90 to 108 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: Today the First Committee will meet all day. In that regard, delegations can exercise their right of reply at the end of the day.

Before proceeding, I would like to consult the Committee on the organization of work for today. As members are aware, the Committee is supposed to complete its general debate today, and it is agreed that at least one and a half hours of the general debate will be devoted to statements by representatives of civil society. There are 42 speakers still to be heard in the general debate. On average, given the number of rights of reply, we have heard approximately 19 to 20 speakers per meeting. After consulting the Bureau, I would like to propose that the Committee continue its general debate tomorrow in order to exhaust the list of speakers and to hear from the civil-society representatives. Immediately after that, the Committee will begin its debate on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and programme planning, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable. If there are any comments on that proposal, please make them now.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chair, for this very timely proposal. My delegation has one question about it. We are all aware that the time limit for the submission of draft resolutions in the First

Committee has always been linked to the end of the general debate. Should we decide to extend the general debate, would that also automatically entail a change in the deadline for the submission of draft proposals? Would the deadline be extended to the start of our thematic discussions, that is, by one day until lunch time on 14 October?

The Chair: I call on the representative of the Secretariat to respond to that request for clarification.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the First Committee): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for the question. To clarify, the decision on the submission of all draft proposals was taken at the organizational meeting of the First Committee (see A/C.1/77/PV.1), and that information is contained in document A/C.1/77/CRP.1, which also includes a reference to the general debate on the two non-substantive disarmament items, that is, the debate on programme planning and the revitalization of the General Assembly, to be held tomorrow.

Essentially, what the Chair proposes is to take advantage of the holding of the general debate tomorrow, Thursday. Given the number of speakers subscribed to date, there will be time to allow the general debate on substantive issues to continue on Thursday. Therefore, the proposal is not exactly linked to the fact that the deadline for the submission of draft proposals is tomorrow at noon. From the perspective of the Secretariat, I would like to recall that the deadline is established in order to ensure that all the draft proposals are issued in a timely manner for action by the Committee. If members review the programme

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0601 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

22-62617(E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



of work of the First Committee in previous years, the deadline for submission has always been set on a Thursday, which allows the Secretariat to submit all the documents before the weekend for processing so that the Committee can consider and adopt in a timely manner the proposals to be considered during the action phase. We also need time for the Budget Office to consider all the proposals, hence the Thursday deadline. I hope that clarifies and responds to the questions just raised by the representative.

The Chair: Are there any other comments? May I therefore take it that the Committee agrees to proceed accordingly?

It was so decided.

Mr. Nyanid (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections to head the First Committee. I wish to assure you, Sir, of the support and cooperation of my delegation in the accomplishment of your mandate.

My delegation supports the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, which is one of the purposes at the very heart of the creation of the United Nations. By pursuing that task with determination, the United Nations will be able to affirm its role in the context of maintaining international peace and security, as well as shared development, which was envisaged by the founders. For my delegation, disarmament must move forward while avoiding a new arms race so that security can be strengthened for all. My delegation also aligns itself with the provisions of resolution 1378 (XIV), of 20 November 1959, which establishes general and complete disarmament as the goal of negotiations. It also calls on us to overcome the many related obstacles and shore up political will in that area, which is conducive to a climate of greater trust.

For my delegation, disarmament is essential to the general mechanism of peacekeeping, as it is one of the essential elements and a precondition for defending our world and future. Cameroon has ratified the main instruments that underpin the international regime for non-proliferation and nuclear security and is convinced that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely reached among the States of the concerned regions, such as the Treaty of Pelindaba on the prohibition of nuclear weapons in Africa, bolster

peace and security at the regional level, strengthen the non-proliferation regime and contribute to the achievement of the nuclear disarmament goals. My delegation is hopeful that the work to create new nuclear-weapon-free zones will continue by mobilizing the greatest number possible. Cameroon reaffirms its resolve to ensure non-proliferation remains on the agenda of the United Nations bodies tasked with disarmament issues.

Progress achieved at nuclear security summits — such as the fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the extension of the New START Treaty on measures to reduce and limit strategic offensive weapons, and the signing in January 2022 by the five nuclear Powers of a declaration stressing that no nuclear war can be won and therefore should never be fought — show that we can move forward in the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda as long as there is a constructive and pragmatic spirit. However, my delegation regrets that disarmament efforts are floundering, as evidenced by the failure of the latest NPT Review Conference. Cameroon calls on countries to continue using dialogue, diplomacy and negotiations to ease tensions, reduce risks and eliminate nuclear threats. My delegation urges States to safeguard the non-proliferation treaties by renewing their commitments to fully implement the NPT.

My delegation commends the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, which strives to envisage modalities for nuclear disarmament on the basis of shared awareness of new security risks. It draws attention to the need to acknowledge the evolution of all types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery and to clarify what distinguishes strategic from conventional weapons. Moreover, my delegation notes the importance of a legal framework in accordance with international norms for cybersecurity and the use of outer space. My delegation also notes that the lack of balance between nuclear disarmament and credible disarmament in other sectors, whether those of chemical, biological or conventional weapons, anti-missile defence systems or outer space, could lead once again to a destabilizing arms race scenario.

My delegation is concerned by the possibility of an arms race in outer space. The militarization of outer space activities is a threat not only to the peaceful use of space but also to the survival of humankind. We call for reflection on how best to overcome the current

challenges to the exploitation and peaceful use of outer space, in particular the prevention of its militarization. In that regard, Cameroon suggests that cooperation should be bolstered, as well as the related fledgling legal framework, without harming the right to develop and acquire technologies and equipment for the peaceful use of outer space. My delegation therefore supports the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, which are discussion platforms and forums in which States may exchange experiences in order to find viable and lasting solutions to the many challenges linked to the exploitation of outer space.

My country supports the significant reduction in illicit arms trafficking. Arms control is key for promoting peace and security and finding lasting and coherent solutions, given that small arms and light weapons are indeed weapons that cause massive destruction. Cameroon supports efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity of States to prevent violence, terrorism and criminality. In that regard, disarmament education that promotes a culture of peace and non-violence is crucial. My delegation is of the view that we must emphasize awareness-raising around disarmament-related questions and focus on approaches aimed at reducing and eliminating violent conflicts and encouraging efforts to promote national and international security. It is also important to strengthen trust among countries, which will allow them to build stronger relationships and lead to greater stability. My delegation is convinced that investment in disarmament and arms control is a direct, long-term investment in peace and security. Broader recognition of that fact will help make the world safer, more prosperous and better prepared to overcome the challenges of the twenty-first century.

In conclusion, my delegation is pleased to have hosted, from 30 May to 4 June, the fifty-third ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, as well as the activities to commemorate the Committee's thirtieth anniversary. At the national level, we note that the process to establish institutional mechanisms to implement the convention, namely, national commissions, is well under way. Cameroon calls for a greater number of assistance initiatives, which will allow States to build solid institutions tasked with effectively combating illicit arms flows, the consequences of which we know very well.

Allow me to reiterate the importance of focusing on what unites us rather than what divides us. We must agree on an approach towards establishing a future that is action-oriented and based on a spirit of shared responsibility. The approach must be inclusive and based on dialogue, mutual trust and transparency. We must work together to define concrete and achievable measures. We must take into account the efforts that have already been made in objectively different situations, as well as the views that we have in common. Only through such a pragmatic and realistic approach will we be able to make the tangible progress needed to create a world that is safer for us all.

Mrs. Ly Diop (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation assures you, Mr. Chair, of its full support for the smooth conduct of the work of the First Committee.

Our work continues to be conducted in a context in which weapons remain a serious threat to international peace and security. Every day, the hope that we once had with respect to the question of disarmament grows dimmer. We must therefore urgently reverse that negative trend. To do that, there is no alternative to strong multilateral cooperation on all arms control and disarmament issues.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, my delegation is convinced that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons remains their complete, irreversible and verifiable elimination. In that spirit, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other relevant international and regional instruments must enjoy the support of all Member States. However, we regret the lack of a consensual outcome document, which led to the failure of the tenth NPT Review Conference. We hope that the next review cycle will allow us to make progress in implementing the commitments made at previous Review Conferences. It is above all the responsibility of nuclear States to agree on a more realistic and ambitious programme to reduce their nuclear arsenals and to grant negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States.

It should also be borne in mind that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two interdependent and equally important objectives. There can be no effective disarmament if the existing nuclear States continue to modernize their nuclear arsenals and if other countries circumvent the instruments in force in order to acquire nuclear weapons. Furthermore,

non-proliferation measures must not impede the inalienable right of every State to develop the research, production and peaceful use of nuclear energy, without discrimination or hindrance and under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Such peaceful use of nuclear energy is important for our efforts to achieve sustainable development, particularly in areas such as energy, food, health, water and environmental protection.

It is equally important that the annex 2 States ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible, thereby allowing for its entry into force. Similarly, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be encouraged. That is why Senegal reiterates its adherence to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which strengthens Africa's position as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and invites all States to support the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In addition, we must be equally determined to make progress in the implementation of international instruments relating to the prohibition of biological, chemical and radiological weapons, which, like nuclear weapons, threaten the survival of humankind. Furthermore, as the coronavirus disease has increased our digital dependence, security threats in cyberspace deserve our full attention. We therefore have a duty to ensure the success of the Open-ended Working Group on the Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for the period 2021 to 2025.

The proliferation of conventional weapons in theatres of conflict requires us all to fully implement arms-trade regulation instruments. That is why, as a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Senegal invites countries that have not yet done so to sign and/or ratify that Treaty. My country also calls on all States, in particular arms-producing countries, to ensure that the supply of arms is limited to duly authorized Governments and entities. In the same vein, it is important that every State ensure the complete, regular and timely submission of its reports on international arms transfers under the ATT, the Register of Conventional Arms, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) relating to small arms and light weapons. In that regard, it is up to us to implement the recommendations of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Implementation of the Programme of

Action, in particular with regard to considering the impact of technological developments on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, as well as strengthening international cooperation and assistance in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the ITI.

In addition, the prohibition of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, in the spirit of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions, must be established in principle in view of the humanitarian consequences of those inhumane weapons. It also seems judicious to us, in the framework of the technical and financial assistance provided to the affected countries, to help them carry out their demining programmes, and that particular attention be paid to the socioeconomic rehabilitation of victims.

I cannot conclude without expressing once again my delegation's deep concern about the chronic deadlock affecting the ability of disarmament bodies to function, in particular the Conference on Disarmament. This lethargy should push us to use greater collective awareness and concrete action to calm our differences and allow the spirit of consensus to prevail in these bodies in which we hope to achieve the ideal of a world free from the scourge of arms.

Ms. Bartolini (San Marino): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau on your election and to wish you a productive session.

San Marino aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), and I would like to make some comments in my national capacity.

While we are still facing the consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic, many parts of the world are also facing severe crises and conflicts that are becoming more and more complex, creating great instability in all regions. With the ongoing devastating war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, this instability has reached unprecedented levels. San Marino firmly condemns any violation of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations. The aggressive nuclear rhetoric and the repeated threats that have been used bring us back to the darkest times of our history. San Marino firmly condemns such acts and reiterates that any use or threat of use of any weapon of mass destruction is totally unacceptable and of the utmost concern. Currently,

nuclear tension has reached an unprecedented level, raising the risk of an unprecedented disaster. I would like to reiterate the call of the Heads of State of the Republic of San Marino to all parties involved in this crisis to renounce the use of force and to reopen the channels of dialogue and negotiation so that politics and diplomacy may prevail. But, sadly, today the threat of nuclear weapons being used is more tangible and closer than ever. San Marino firmly believes in the words recently pronounced by the Secretary-General: nuclear weapons are the most destructive power ever created. They offer no security — just carnage and chaos.

An eventual detonation, whether by accident or design, would indeed have catastrophic humanitarian consequences for humankind, because of their massive destructive capability and indiscriminate nature. Despite this undeniable fact, hundreds of billions of dollars continue to be spent on the modernization and delivery systems of these weapons. Furthermore, these activities are clearly in contradiction with the commitments undertaken under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. San Marino regrets that, at this critical time, and despite the long negotiations, the tenth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was not able to adopt its final document, a document that, although far from perfect, contained some useful commitments. Unfortunately, we have missed another chance to uphold this fundamental instrument and to make progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. San Marino reiterates its full support for the NPT, the obligations and past commitments of which remain valid.

The entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) represents a historic milestone in our disarmament architecture. San Marino welcomes the increasing number of countries that have signed and ratified this instrument. San Marino also welcomes the positive outcome of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty, which delivered a strong signal of commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. San Marino urges all States committed to our final goal of a world without nuclear weapons to join the TPNW.

I would also like to reiterate San Marino's support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are deeply concerned that more than 25 years after the opening for signature of the CTBT, this

instrument has not yet entered into force. Universal adherence to the CTBT is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

This year we have continued to witness the indiscriminate bombing of cities, which has killed, wounded and trapped civilians in their own homes. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas now represents the main cause of civilian suffering in armed conflicts. The use of these weapons causes indiscriminate harm, and it has a devastating impact on individuals and communities. In addition to the unacceptable number of casualties provoked by the use of such weapons, we underline that civilians suffer from long-lasting physical harm and psychological trauma. They also suffer from serious consequences due to the destruction of critical civil infrastructure and from the inability to access vital services, such as hospitals and schools. Consequently, they are often forced to abandon their houses and remain displaced for years or even decades. The Republic of San Marino appreciates the conclusion of the consultations on the text of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, which addresses the devastating and long-lasting humanitarian impact of the use of explosive weapons in such areas. I would like to thank Ireland for its tireless work and dedication to this major humanitarian problem. San Marino looks forward to the conference in Dublin next month for the adoption of this important instrument and I am glad to announce that San Marino intends to endorse it. This Declaration is a big step forward towards the protection of civilians and it also represents a positive example of multilateralism.

San Marino is also encouraged by another positive outcome, the one that was reached this year at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The regulation of conventional weapons, including small arms, is fundamental to strengthening peace and security in every region of the world. San Marino underlines the importance of a gender perspective and of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in every disarmament process in order to promote and achieve sustainable peace and security. San Marino also underlines the importance of the full participation of young people and the active role of civil society on matters related to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Finally, it is disturbing to see that global military spending continues to rise, while an alarming number of people are struggling even to buy food. The military budget needs to be reduced so that we can invest more in multilateralism, in conflict prevention, in different security strategies and in sustainable solutions for our planet.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). CELAC wishes to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

The region has a long tradition of promoting and pursuing disarmament and non-proliferation, with the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1967 as a fundamental milestone. We believe that these issues are of the highest priority and that they should continue to be included on the agenda of the United Nations because they are essential to the maintenance of international peace and security and are a pending First Committee issue. In that regard, we reiterate our conviction and commitment to continue to promote general and complete nuclear disarmament as the highest priority of the international community.

CELAC reaffirms the need to move towards the main objective, which is nuclear disarmament, and reiterates its support for any measure that promotes the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verification. We express our opposition to the modernization of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new ones. In the same vein, we reiterate the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in the strategic doctrines and security policies of States.

We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as a cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, is crucial to achieving nuclear disarmament and international security. We therefore call on the States that are not parties to the NPT to adhere to it as non-nuclear-weapon States, unconditionally and without further delay. We regret that the tenth NPT Review Conference, which took place from 1 to 26 August in New York, concluded without the consensus needed to adopt a final document. We reaffirm our region's commitment to the NPT and

the full implementation of its three fundamental pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In addition, we reaffirm the inalienable right of States to develop research on and the production and peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination and in accordance with articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT. The effective implementation of the NPT requires, in addition to the negotiation of a treaty that prohibits the production of fissile material, concrete actions to reduce nuclear risk. Equally fundamental is the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Therefore, we welcome the Treaty's ratification by Dominica, completing the adherence thereto of all CELAC countries.

CELAC takes note of the first Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which took place from 21 to 23 June 2022 in Vienna, and the election of Mexico to chair the second Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty in 2023. The TPNW has joined the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and the NPT on the path towards the elimination of these weapons of mass destruction in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner and in accordance with clearly established deadlines.

CELAC reiterates its firm conviction that the complete elimination of chemical and biological weapons is a disarmament and non-proliferation priority. CELAC therefore emphasizes the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and of their universalization through adherence by all States. Also important is the full implementation by States parties of all their provisions and requirements. An important review conference will take place this year. I am referring to the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which will take place from 28 November to 16 December. That represents another of the pillars of the non-proliferation and weapons of mass destruction disarmament regime. We are convinced of the need to redouble efforts in international cooperation, by virtue of article X of the Convention, for the full, balanced, effective and non-discriminatory application of all its provisions, and the need to reach an agreement on verification.

The CELAC Member States recognize that the sustained manufacture, transfer, diversion and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, their parts,

components, ammunition and excessive accumulation, as well as their uncontrolled distribution in many regions of the world, have a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. They also pose a serious threat to the peace, security, stability and sustainable development of our peoples. CELAC hopes that the Arms Trade Treaty can contribute to an effective response to the serious consequences that the illicit trafficking of and unregulated trade in arms represent for many peoples and States, particularly through the diversion of weapons to non-State actors or unauthorized users, often linked to transnational organized crime. We also hope that this Treaty can aid in conflict prevention and in the eradication of armed violence and violations of international law and international humanitarian law. At the same time, we call for a balanced, transparent and objective application of and respect for the sovereign right of States to legitimate self-defence, in accordance with article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

We welcome the adoption by consensus of the final document of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We will continue to work for the full implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, promoting the application of controls that reduce and eradicate the scourge of diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

We maintain that the problem of anti-personnel mines, in particular their humanitarian consequences, still requires the attention of the international community. We therefore underline the importance of cooperation for de-mining and assistance to victims.

CELAC Member States share the common interest of promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes only, for the benefit and in the interests of all States, regardless of their level of social, economic or scientific development. We are convinced that an arms race in outer space and the placement or use of weapons there are not only serious threats to international peace and security, but would affect the sustainable development of our countries. In this regard, we support the negotiation within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As long as this does not take place, the adoption of

international transparency and confidence-building measures in activities related to outer space is, undoubtedly, suitable and necessary.

We also wish to acknowledge with gratitude the important work carried out by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in assisting the countries of our region in the implementation of disarmament policies.

In conclusion, we wish to highlight once again the firm commitment of the CELAC Member States to the work of this Committee, and we trust that this will be a fruitful session. For this you can count on our full cooperation.

Mr. Alenezi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and through you the other members of the Bureau, on your election to manage the work of the First Committee. We assure you of the full support of my country's delegation for your efforts to ensure the success of the work of the Committee at its current session. We are confident that your well-known experience and wisdom will assist you in managing the Committee well.

My country associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of friendly Indonesia and the brotherly Republic of Iraq on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of Arab States, respectively. We thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her comprehensive statement (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

The State of Kuwait reiterates its position on the importance of multilateralism as the best way to overcome the challenges of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to promote international cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations and various disarmament mechanisms. We believe that what prompts all of us to undertake efforts to accomplish our common goal of general and complete disarmament is the human aspiration to achieve genuine peace and security, eliminate the danger of wars and save human, economic, intellectual and other resources to be used for peaceful purposes.

While we welcome all the progress made in the area of disarmament, we are concerned about the failure to fulfil agreed commitments and the continued deliberate neglect of the repeated calls of the international community to achieve the universality of

various relevant treaties and conventions, most notably the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are well aware that the only and optimal way to guarantee the non-use of nuclear weapons is to bring about their total elimination.

We are disappointed at the failure of the tenth NPT Review Conference, held in August, to adopt an outcome document. We call on all Member States to redouble their efforts and converge their views on addressing our common challenges in order to adopt a comprehensive and balanced outcome document at the upcoming eleventh Review Conference.

The second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction was presided over by the State of Kuwait in November 2021. That session allowed the Conference to adopt working methods, create a non-official working group to continue inter-session consultations and adopt a final report. We would like to express our appreciation to all those who participated in the second session of the Conference and contributed to its success. The State of Kuwait expresses its hope that the upcoming third session, to be presided over by the sisterly Lebanese Republic in November, will also be successful and achieve tangible progress. We assure the Committee that we will assist all participants at the third session in the hope of building on the progress made and establishing a road map that leads us to achieving our desired goal.

We recall that the resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to NPT to create a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East remains an integral part of the indefinite extension of the NPT. We urge the States that bear a special responsibility as sponsors of 1995 resolution, as well as the other States in the region that did not participate in the second session, to reconsider their position and participate so that no State is excluded, eliminated and subject to restrictions or preconditions. That desired goal is irreversible and not subject to be waived. When implemented, it will constitute one of the most important confidence-building measures in the region. It will save the countries of the region from being exposed to the dangers of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; contribute to promoting the disarmament and non-proliferation international regime; improve

and promote relations among States; establish security and stability at the regional and international levels; and facilitate and encourage cooperation in the field of nuclear energy and its peaceful uses.

Mr. Suleiman (United Republic of Tanzania): The delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania wishes to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and all the other members of the Bureau on your elections. My delegation assures you of its full support and cooperation. Tanzania is honoured to be part of this October gathering, which seeks to collectively reflect on the global commitment to address the necessary measures against all forms of security threats.

Tanzania aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia (see A/C.1/77/PV.2) on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively. I wish to complement those statements with the following remarks.

The seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly is being held during a period in which the world is going through a difficult economic and security situation caused by the ongoing war in Eastern Europe. It was never imagined that in this age war could occur in Europe, but it has. In addition, the world has witnessed a cycle of violence and conflict in several countries. Moreover, some countries have continued to experience long-term hostility, to the point of causing tension not only among themselves but in the whole world. That situation provides the following lessons.

There is no community or country in the world that is always and permanently secure. Peace is a value that if not taken care of can be easily lost. If peace is lost, it is difficult to restore. The loss of peace has a great cost that can never be compensated. Efforts to protect, develop and restore peace constitute a continuous process. All of that reminds us that the enhancement of international security is not a temporary process but a part of the life cycle of communities. In that regard, my delegation emphasizes that the culture of enhancing peace initiatives should always be maintained, especially in the current period of globalization. Therefore, Member States are encouraged to continue to work tirelessly to maintain and restore peace and security in the world.

The proliferation of conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons, landmines and cluster bombs, is considered the most urgent security challenge

for individuals, societies and States worldwide. They fuel civil wars, violence, organized crime, insurgency and terrorist activities. They certainly pose a serious threat to every individual. The United Republic of Tanzania, as a signatory of various international legal instruments, reiterates its full commitment to supporting international community efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, in compliance with the existing legal instruments. My delegation believes that disarmament is still an important element of maintaining international peace and security. Therefore, we commend the ongoing efforts of the United Nations and all other actors in addressing the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. In that sense, let me assure the Committee that Tanzania will continue to support measures against the proliferation of dangerous weapons that are an indiscriminate threat to our current and future generations.

In addition, Tanzania wishes to emphasize that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is an appropriate measure to adopt against nuclear danger. Therefore, nuclear-weapon States are encouraged to commit themselves to the total elimination of those weapons. Tanzania welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear-Weapons on 22 January 2021. It recognizes that a considerable number of countries are parties to disarmament agreements; however, we call upon all Member States, in particular the so-called nuclear-weapon States, to voluntarily fulfil their obligations. We urge all Member States to align with international initiatives by entering into the following agreements: the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear-Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The United Republic of Tanzania joins other Member States in encouraging the use of non-lethal nuclear technology, and we kindly appeal to the International Atomic Energy Agency to remain seized of, and to continuously provide the necessary scientific and technical support to, Member States. The Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission, in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency, has played a key role in promoting, regulating and significantly improving peaceful and non-lethal nuclear capacity in various areas, including in the areas of mining industries and energy production.

Tanzania still recognizes the United Nations as an appropriate platform for monitoring, coordinating, controlling and regulating multilateral disarmament initiatives. We are convinced that, through global solidarity, common understanding and trust among actors, we can achieve our goal. Therefore, all our desired goals on disarmament cannot be attained if we continue to divert attention away from implementation of the agreed measures. In that regard, it is crucial for all nations to stick together under the United Nations platforms if we are to achieve our goal.

Tanzania recognizes the threats posed by non-State actors with regard to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and weapons of mass destruction. As noted by previous speakers, today there is a higher risk than ever of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors. As technology continues to advance and terrorists continue to gain more territory, the access to those weapons by non-State actors is also becoming more likely. In that regard, Tanzania stresses that Member States should take the necessary measures to prevent terrorist groups from acquiring such weapons. We therefore call on all Member States to continue to support all initiatives against terrorist activities.

In conclusion, the United Republic of Tanzania reminds all Member States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, that solid political will, commitment and transparency are vital in addressing the issue of disarmament. In addition, our delegation wishes to reiterate that multilateral and regional platforms, especially the United Nations, are the pillar and catalyst of peace processes. Therefore, we will continue to be part of United Nations initiatives to foster peace and security in the world.

Mrs. Theofili (Greece): First, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. I wish you every success.

Greece fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (EU) (see A/C.1/77/PV.2) and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine has been condemned repeatedly and in the strongest possible terms. At the same time, it has severely impacted multilateral negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, as the recent outcome of the tenth Review Conference

of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) illustrates. The Charter of the United Nations is the bedrock of our international rules-based order, and with multilateralism at its core, the United Nations system is best suited to address, negotiate and ultimately resolve the challenges of our global community. Today the global community is at a crossroads, with the collective security mechanisms under duress. Revitalizing multilateral disarmament negotiations, especially after the disappointing outcome of the tenth NPT Review Conference, must be considered an urgent priority.

Strengthening the multilateral framework for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is today more important than at any time since the détente. We cannot lose focus in our drive to commence negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. As always, we support the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Greece fully supports the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the personal engagement of its Director General in order to ascertain that nuclear safety and security is guaranteed at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, and that all IAEA safeguards on all nuclear material are maintained. For Greece, adherence to and respect for the safeguards agreements and the IAEA safety standards and security architecture are non-negotiable.

Furthermore, we are concerned by the lack of progress in reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The prospect of missing that window of opportunity will have detrimental effects for regional and global stability, which are already under severe strain. The EU has been a steadfast supporter of the revitalization of the JCPOA. We urge Iran to cooperate constructively with the IAEA on pending issues, as well as to do its utmost, while taking every opportunity that will allow negotiations to conclude successfully in the immediate future.

We support the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, which seeks to pivot away from crisis management towards managing emerging risks, as the sources of instability are interdependent and complex.

Furthermore and with regard to explosive weapons in populated areas, the war in Ukraine has once again brought to the fore the impact of

explosive weapons on populated areas. The explosive weapons in populated areas negotiations, which were inaugurated in 2019 after extensive and constructive deliberations, resulted in a draft political declaration based above all on international humanitarian law. The Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from Humanitarian Harm arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas provides a balanced approach in the implementation of international humanitarian law without, however, eliminating the use of a particular type of weapon.

In another forum addressing conventional weapons, the sixth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), under French leadership, agreed to extend the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. To date, the Group has provided a normative and operational framework within the CCW, which has ensured compliance with international humanitarian law. Furthermore, we must once again stress the importance of the 11 guiding principles that constitute the foundation of the normative and operational framework for emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We remain strong supporters of the principles that there must be accountability for the use of lethal force and that human control must always be exerted over the application of that lethal force. We look forward to further constructive discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts.

Revitalizing strategic arms control diplomacy lies at the heart of our common effort to maintain international peace and security. The First Committee has an important role to play, and we believe that it should and can be a catalyst in building much-needed trust and confidence in this undertaking.

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

The current state of the global security environment has strained international efforts in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. As we continue to recover from the impacts of the coronavirus disease, security challenges continue to become much more complex, outpacing our ability to address them

individually. A recommitment to multilateralism is therefore paramount. In that context, Brunei Darussalam believes that multilateralism is key to addressing all issues related to global disarmament and non-proliferation. Brunei Darussalam continues to support the United Nations as the key forum for strengthening our collective resolve to maintain and strengthen the universal norms on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We believe the work of the First Committee remains important as a means for countries to engage constructively in setting and preserving important norms and principles, with full respect for the rule of law. For us, disarmament with respect to weapons of mass destruction remains indispensable in securing a future that is safe and sustainable. We therefore continue to support the Secretary-General's 2018 report *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*.

In Brunei Darussalam, those efforts will be underpinned by our continued commitment to the various international treaties and conventions to which we are party, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention.

Allow me to focus on five points.

First, we welcome the conduct of the tenth NPT Review Conference in August, following its postponement for the past two years. In that regard, we also note the conclusion of the first Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW held in June 2022, which saw the adoption of a political declaration and action plan, which will help set the course for the Treaty's implementation and are important steps towards our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Secondly, Brunei Darussalam commends the invaluable contributions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in advocating for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and preventing its use for military purposes, especially as nuclear weapons. However, we remain concerned about the dangers posed by nuclear weapons, given their serious humanitarian and environmental risks and consequences. As such, we acknowledge the IAEA's central role in that endeavour.

Thirdly, as the international community continues its work towards complete nuclear disarmament, ongoing efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones should not diminish. Brunei Darussalam would like to

reiterate ASEAN's commitment to the preservation of our region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. In moving forward, Brunei Darussalam reaffirms its support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in order to promote greater trust, confidence-building and an environment that is conducive to peace processes.

Fourthly, the past few years have witnessed the continued use of chemical weapons. The re-emergence and unaccounted use of such weapons around the world has had a damaging impact on international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The loss of innocent lives and the suffering of those affected are serious reminders that more needs to be done to uphold the fundamental tenets of the CWC and prevent the use of chemical weapons, which is a serious violation of international law. To address the threats of chemical weapons nationally, Brunei Darussalam has adopted a whole-of-Government approach and is currently in the process of establishing a national chemical management committee and finalizing comprehensive legislation. In addition to working closely with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), we also look forward to engaging other countries for the purpose of capacity-building in ensuring the full and effective implementation of the CWC.

Fifthly, as we rely more and more on information and communication technologies in our daily lives, we are also increasingly exposed to cyber threats. On that note, Brunei Darussalam reiterates its support for efforts to promote secure, inclusive and responsible State behaviour in cyber space, including through the Open-ended Working Group on the Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies.

In conclusion, Brunei Darussalam would like to reiterate the importance of the First Committee's work as part and parcel of the overall goal of the United Nations to promote sustainable development and build a better future for all. To that end, Brunei Darussalam will continue to work constructively with all countries and relevant bodies to help attain positive and tangible outcomes in the Committee.

Ms. Cano Franco (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Panama congratulates you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections.

Panama aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The Republic of Panama is aware of the existing challenges and threats against international peace and security. My country calls for dialogue, as it is the only way to resolve disputes and consequently, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, to establish the conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained. As a State Member of the United Nations, Panama maintains its firm respect for the fundamental purposes and principles of the Charter and advocates the preservation of international peace and security, a responsibility shared by all States, irrespective of their size. We are aware that the impact of the so-called “arms race” on humankind is negative, lasting and irreversible, while also constituting an attack against international peace and security and the economy, as well as the deliberate and systematic destruction of the environment. The arms race is also an attack on life itself, as the resources dedicated to the production, trade and distribution of weapons of all kinds could instead be directed to international cooperation and could assist the countries that need it to make progress in sustainable development.

We firmly believe in strengthened, inclusive and renewed multilateral cooperation as a positive path towards peace. In that regard, it is essential that States work collaboratively to establish measures that discourage the arms race. Working together to maintain peace and avoid the use of force has been, is and must continue to be the main objective of the United Nations. Since its origins, decisive steps have been taken for that purpose. However, the challenges that the international community faces today for the maintenance of peace and security are diverse, complex and very real. Unlike in the past, however, we face them with greater determination, organization and unity.

Panama has demonstrated a historical commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the existing disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We are of the view that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially new types of weapons and systems, constitutes a serious threat to peace, democratic stability, development and human security at the national and international levels. The possession

of those weapons by non-State actors is a problem that concerns all States and peoples in the interconnected world in which we live, and it must be addressed through multilateralism, which is the only way to find effective strategies to counteract it. In that regard, Panama welcomed resolution 75/31, entitled “Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference Disarmament”, which reaffirms that effective measures should be taken to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and requests the Conference on Disarmament to keep the matter under review, with a view to making, when necessary, recommendations on undertaking specific negotiations on identified types of such weapons.

As we have stated on previous occasions, we note with concern the prominent modernization of nuclear arsenals, their means of delivery, materials and related technologies, including hypersonic weapons, stealth cruise missiles and artificial intelligence systems, which are evidence of a new arms race that could undermine the principles and objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For our country, the only effective guarantee against the threat posed by nuclear weapons and the catastrophic consequences that their use represents for humankind is their prohibition and total elimination. For that reason, Panama has ratified the main treaties aimed at preventing proliferation, prohibiting nuclear tests and achieving general and complete disarmament. Similarly, we have welcomed the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which constitutes a historic milestone for nuclear disarmament and full compliance with the obligations established in article VI of the NPT. We also welcome the holding of the first Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, held in Vienna from 21 to 23 June.

However, we note with concern the lack of concrete progress on the part of the nuclear-weapon States with respect to the fulfilment of the commitments and legal obligations contained in the NPT and other provisions regarding the adoption of actions leading to the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals. We therefore urge them to comply with their obligations and avoid the threat that the existence and risk of the possible use of those weapons represent for humankind. Panama reiterates its commitment to the NPT and its three pillars, namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation

and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Although the tenth Review Conference of the NPT, held in August, did not result in a consensus outcome document, we value the work done and urge continued talks in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The development and use of new military technologies are also a concern in that, under certain circumstances, they could contribute to or facilitate the commission of violations and abuses of human rights, as well as international humanitarian law. There is also the risk of their acquisition by non-State actors. In that regard, based on a draft resolution submitted by Panama and Austria, the Human Rights Council adopted by consensus resolution 51/22, of 7 October 2022, in which the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council is requested to prepare a study of the human rights implications of new military technologies, taking into account the ongoing discussions in the United Nations system, for submission to the Human Rights Council at its sixtieth session.

Regarding the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, Panama also expresses its concern about the serious humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences of illicit trafficking and urges the effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument, as well as strengthened international cooperation. We reject the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes, and we support the work being carried out to achieve a relevant international legal regulatory framework.

We share the conviction that the use and exploration of outer space must be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes, with a shared vision of the future for the benefit of all countries, in accordance with the principles and regulations of international space law. Peace, multilateralism and cooperation will define the future of the international system and of the world that we will leave to future generations. That path went from being our right to becoming our duty. We must do our utmost to build violence-free societies and an international community that is based on justice and respect for international commitments. Only in that way can we achieve a secure and stable world based on trust, peaceful coexistence and the protection of human rights.

Mr. Tito (Kiribati): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. I wish you every success in accomplishing the First Committee's mandate.

On the occasion of the seventy-seventh session of the First Committee, Kiribati and Kazakhstan jointly reaffirm our commitment to realizing a world free of nuclear weapons and consider it as the main goal of humankind in the twenty-first century. We underline the importance of efforts to address the rights and needs of affected communities through victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance. We have deep concern for the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons and the ongoing humanitarian and environmental harm caused by the use and testing of nuclear weapons.

Together with other like-minded States, we fought hard for a consensus outcome document that touched upon nuclear justice at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The draft outcome document contained a strong reference for the international community to interact with, and directly share, the experiences of the peoples and the communities affected by the use and testing of nuclear weapons in order to understand their humanitarian and environmental impact. We are therefore deeply disappointed that the States parties could not adopt the outcome document. It is very sad indeed for the countless victims of the nuclear legacy, many of whom are in my country, Kiribati, and also in Kazakhstan, where a lot of testing was conducted in previous decades. The last time that the States parties adopted an outcome document by consensus was in 2010.

We are concerned about the lack of progress on advancing the goals of the NPT, including on agreed disarmament commitments. The negotiations in the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) were an effort by non-nuclear-weapon States to make progress on the full implementation of article VI of the NPT. We welcomed the entry into force of the TPNW and the outcomes of the first Meeting of the States Parties to the TPNW, including the Vienna Declaration and Action Plan. We are focusing particular attention on the TPNW's humanitarian goals, embodied in articles 6 and 7, as positive obligations to address the harm resulting from the past use and testing of nuclear weapons and to prevent such harm in future.

We further recommend that States emphasize the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons as a critical issue, considering the current international situation. We encourage all States to contribute to our work on providing nuclear justice for the victims of nuclear weapons by joining the TPNW and to sign and ratify the TPNW to ensure its universality. I want to say that anyone who is human and who believes in the well-being and peace of humankind should join, and anyone who does not is not part of human society, although I am sorry that I have to say that. Finally, we want to underscore the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education. We welcome the educational initiatives of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the efforts of civil society to educate and empower young people.

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): First, Slovenia would like to congratulate you on your election to chair the First Committee, Sir, and to assure you and the Bureau of our full support.

Slovenia aligns itself with the general statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

The current complex challenges in the geopolitical arena are undeniable. The global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture is under enormous pressure and is an enormous responsibility. At the same time, the Russian Federation's invasion of a sovereign country, Ukraine, is a gross violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and is severely undermining global security and stability. We reiterate our strong condemnation of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine. We also strongly condemn the illegal referendums that have taken place under Russia's military occupation. The results of the referendums and the annexations of Ukrainian territory by Russia are gross violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and the Charter. The illegal annexation should not be accepted or recognized by the international community. The brutal war on Ukraine must stop.

In general, we need a huge step forward if we are to make any progress on the global peace and security agenda. The promotion of the universality of international treaties and the implementation of their letter and spirit should be the guiding principles of our foreign policy. We regret that the tenth Review Conference of

the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons did not conclude with the adoption of an outcome document. Nevertheless, the legally binding obligations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and commitments from past Review Conferences remain valid. In line with article VI of the NPT, we must continue to pursue our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. That can be achieved through an effective, irreversible, verifiable and universal approach. Slovenia, as a country with a full-fledged civilian nuclear programme and as an elected member of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the period from 2021 to 2023, looks forward to further strengthening the Agency's contribution to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

There is another key milestone on the path of nuclear disarmament that we must not lose sight of, and that is the elimination of nuclear testing. Steady progress is being made towards the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we welcome that. As we do every year, we continue to call on all States to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay, and we particularly urge the remaining eight States listed in annex 2 to ratify the Treaty.

Slovenia has repeatedly expressed its support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The nuclear deal is a vital part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and must be preserved. We therefore call on Iran to act in accordance with the JCPOA and return to its full implementation. We also encourage Iran to cooperate completely with the IAEA in order to resolve all outstanding safeguards issues.

Slovenia commends the transparent manner in which Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States have approached the potential acquisition of conventionally armed and nuclear-powered submarines by Australia. We expect the AUKUS partners to continue to pursue their goals together with the IAEA secretariat and with full respect for their international obligations. We welcome the report on the IAEA safeguards in relation to AUKUS issued on 9 September by the Director General of the IAEA.

This year's unlawful launches of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are in clear breach of Security Council resolutions and undermine regional and international peace and security. Slovenia renews its urgent call to the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in dialogue with the interested parties in order to enable steps to be made towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. We also call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in negotiations aimed at achieving its return to compliance with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Turning to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), we would like to express our commitment to contributing to a successful outcome of the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties of the BWC and the fifth Special Session of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the CWC. We would like to stress the importance we attach to universal adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention. Slovenia, as a member of International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, will continue to extend its active support to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Let me also be clear that Slovenia fully supports the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

Concerning cyber issues, we welcome the achievements of the Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. We support the proposal for a forthcoming draft resolution on establishing a programme of action to advance responsible State behaviour in cyberspace.

The importance of the gender-disarmament nexus is growing. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), we are committed to supporting gender diversity and the equal, full and effective participation and leadership of women in the work of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control policies.

Finally, I would like to highlight an indispensable component of the global arms control architecture, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Slovenia is a country with a long-standing commitment to mine action and to the goal of a world free of landmines. I reaffirm my country's continued support, including financially, to the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention. In the same vein, I would also like to praise an important achievement, launched by Ireland,

in the area of strengthening the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Mr. Fifield (Australia): I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election. You have my delegation's full support.

We are meeting at a time when international security is being undermined by States prepared to disregard well-established international rules and norms and instead pursue their aims through the exercise of power and aggression. As Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs underlined in her address to the General Assembly last month (see A/77/PV.11), "We cannot accept a situation where large countries determine the fate of smaller countries". That is why Russia's unilateral, illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine cannot be normalized or minimized. Russia's attack on Ukraine is an attack on all smaller countries. Its missile strikes targeting civilians in Ukraine, including in Kyiv, and President Putin's continued threats of escalation are reprehensible. We stand with Ukraine and our partners in condemning Russia's sham referendums. We stand with Ukraine and our partners in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we once again call on Russia to immediately withdraw from Ukrainian territory. We are in no doubt about the appalling consequences of nuclear warfare for humankind, the environment and civilization. President Putin's nuclear threats underline the danger that nuclear weapons pose to us all and the urgent need for progress on nuclear disarmament. Australia has always pursued a world without nuclear weapons, and we will redouble our efforts towards that goal and towards strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

The tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons demonstrated the commitment of all but one of its States parties to advancing the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Treaty continues to deliver tangible security benefits for us all, and so we cannot be deterred by the bad-faith actions of one State. We have an opportunity to strengthen the NPT further through the working group that will be established for the purpose. Australia was pleased that this contribution from the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative achieved the support of States parties, and we will be fully engaged in that important work. Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States will continue to work

closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure that the highest possible safeguards are applied to Australia's naval nuclear-propulsion programme. Australia's commitment to meeting all its obligations under the NPT and the Treaty of Rarotonga fully is steadfast and unwavering.

Australia is proud to be advancing a First Nations foreign policy agenda. As a country that has experienced the consequences of nuclear testing, consequences that were disproportionately borne by our First Nations peoples, we welcome the activities held this year to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We remain determined to see the Treaty enter into force and urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it, and we encourage States to sponsor this year's CTBT draft resolution. Australia also continues to champion the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of people of all genders in international security forums and organizations. This is not just a matter of equality but of effectiveness. Diversity brings strength, creativity and energy. For the same reasons, we fully support the meaningful participation of young people in our field.

Australia condemns the ongoing development of illegal and destabilizing nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the unprecedented succession of destabilizing launches that it has conducted as recently as this past week. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not to resume nuclear testing and to comply fully with the Security Council resolutions requiring it to abandon its nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as its ballistic-missile programmes, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Together with others, we remain deeply concerned about Iran's failure to resolve outstanding NPT safeguards issues in a full and technically credible manner. We emphasize Australia's strong support for the professional work of the Director General and the staff of the IAEA as they seek to implement NPT safeguards in Iran.

In this twenty-fifth anniversary year of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the fiftieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Australia calls on all States parties to recommit to ridding the

world of such weapons. We look forward to working together with BWC States parties to achieve meaningful outcomes at the Review Conference later this year. We must seize this opportunity to break the stalemate of the past two decades.

Conventional weapons contribute daily to human death and suffering in both civil and conflict settings across all regions, and their challenges demand the international community's focused attention. In an environment where enhanced global cooperation is urgently needed, Australia welcomed the consensus outcome this year reached by 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 (A/CONF.192/BMS/2022/1). The conclusion of negotiations on a political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas was another bright spot in 2022. Australia looks forward to formally signing that declaration in Dublin next month. We further encourage all States to sponsor this year's draft resolution on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.

We all bear a responsibility to work together to manage the complex international security challenges in cyberspace, and to focus our efforts on promoting peace and avoiding conflict in that domain. Australia remains firmly committed to meeting those challenges and reaffirms its commitment to acting in accordance with the framework established through the consensus reports of prior groups of governmental experts and the inaugural Open-Ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies.

As a country with rapidly growing interests in outer space, Australia welcomes the progress made so far in the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours. That important discussion is raising awareness of how a behaviour-based approach may help contribute to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and we urge all countries to engage with it.

In conclusion, in taking up our important work in the First Committee, let us keep our shared objectives front of mind and work cooperatively and beyond divisions.

Mr. Pérez Ayestarán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that we have taken the floor in the Committee, let me

first congratulate you on your election, Mr. Chair, and wish you and the other members of the Bureau the greatest possible success under your leadership.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), as well as that made earlier today by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Humankind is going through an alarming phase marked by an increasing and dangerous deterioration in international security agreements, including those related to disarmament and non-proliferation. Growing inequalities, ongoing and new systemic crises at all levels and increasing numbers of armed conflicts, in addition to new types of wars, are some of the signs of this era of dramatic transformations marked by instability, uncertainty and mistrust. Faced with that complex reality, and with the sole objective of preserving international peace and security, the First Committee must direct its efforts at stopping the erosion of trust among the members of the international community, renewing the capacity of multilateralism and international law and safeguarding the Charter of the United Nations in order to facilitate a general de-escalation of conflicts. Disregard for those issues, based on unilateral calculations seeking to achieve strategic supremacy and without regard for the potential for a resurgence of a hypothetical nuclear confrontation, could lead humankind to a tragic impasse. Avoiding this brewing catastrophe is a crucial part of the task before our Organization and especially the First Committee.

The paralysis experienced in the past Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is evidence of the progressive loss of trust among various actors in the international community, but it does not release them from compliance with it. Despite the lack of compromise that made it impossible to reach a consensus at the most recent Review Conference, Venezuela is of the view that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and that its implementation can be very useful in containing and defusing dangerous trends. In that regard, we insist on the need to carry out a comprehensive review of compliance with the provisions of the NPT in its three pillars, with a view to making effective progress towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons through

their total and complete, irreversible, verifiable and non-discriminatory elimination. We also hope that the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will bring us closer to the worldwide goal of eliminating nuclear weapons sooner rather than later.

The elimination of nuclear weapons is a political and moral imperative that concerns all Member States, in particular nuclear-weapon States. As long as they exist, nuclear weapons constitute an impending danger that threatens every form of life on our planet. In that regard, we want to take this opportunity to reiterate that only through political dialogue will it be possible to move towards lasting peace and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, which could bring peace and stability to that entire region. We would like to emphasize that the time has come to change the way this issue has been dealt with and to move towards a proactive, inclusive and constructive approach. We hope for the implementation of confidence-building and reconciliation measures that must necessarily take account of the legitimate and reasonable concerns of the Pyongyang authorities. At the same time, we reject any interference or provocations by Powers outside the region.

Venezuela recognizes the role of nuclear science and technology in the application of national development strategies, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. For that reason we reiterate our support, in accordance with the NPT, for the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and reaffirm the inalienable right of States to research, produce and peacefully use nuclear energy. At the same time, Venezuela condemns the application of unilateral coercive measures against States that in a sovereign manner and in adherence to international law have used this tool, which has the potential to contribute to the comprehensive development of their peoples.

We support the strengthening of the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in its work of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in harmony with the environment and human health. On the other hand, while reaffirming our categorical condemnation of the use of chemical and biological weapons, regardless of where or by whom, as well as our firm support for efforts to completely eliminate such weapons, Venezuela emphasizes the technical nature of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and stresses the importance of avoiding any politicization of it and its work.

Globally, we continue to witness important transformations in the field of information and communication technologies (ICTs), an area that is increasingly associated with the management of almost all human activities. As technology advances, people's tasks everywhere are impacted by these developments. At the same time, legitimate concerns about the security of critical State infrastructure are growing. In that regard, Venezuela stresses that despite the widely divergent approaches to international security in the use of ICTs, the United Nations must play a central role in establishing a legally binding international framework on the responsible and peaceful use of such technologies, one that provides security regarding their use, including against vital national infrastructures, while recognizing the existing technological asymmetries and the need for greater international cooperation and technical assistance in the area.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its commitment to contributing actively and constructively to the work of this important Committee.

Mr. Phillips (Antigua and Barbuda): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the twin-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Bahamas, on behalf of the Caribbean Community, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/77/PV.2).

Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and your Bureau on your election to lead the work of the First Committee at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. We want to assure you of Antigua and Barbuda's full support. We also extend our thanks to Mr. Omar Hilale, the Chair during the seventy-sixth session, and his Bureau for their steady and tireless efforts to guide the work of the Committee.

The many economic-, security- and health-related global crises that we are currently facing have highlighted the fundamental truth that we all need to collaborate and support one another in facing and tackling our shared challenges. In our delegation's view, that analogy can be used in dealing with many of the critical challenges addressed by the First Committee. We must achieve global peace and security, based on our collective benefit, and reject divisive narratives.

We also call on Member States to move beyond broad platitudes and towards tangible commitments to peace and security for the benefit of all our communities.

As an example, Antigua and Barbuda is deeply concerned about the devastating impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Every year we repeat the refrain that the countries of the Caribbean region are not manufacturers or significant importers of small arms and ammunition. However, we continue to see the use of these weapons increase, resulting in violence among our citizens, bringing harm to our economies and suffering to members of our communities. We need to reorient the thrust of our consideration in the Committee's work towards the armed violence that is experienced in societies all over the world. That includes violence involving armed gangs, organized crime and gender-based violence. It is with that in mind that Antigua and Barbuda will sponsor the biennial draft resolution submitted by Trinidad and Tobago entitled "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control", which recognizes women's pivotal role in efforts to address global peace and security. We urge all Member States to continue to support that critical draft resolution. It provides an essential link between disarmament and issues that must be addressed if our work is to have an impact on the lives of the people in our communities.

The international community must ensure that the crucial instruments that address the trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, its accompanying International Tracing Instrument and the Arms Trade Treaty, fully reflect the problem of armed violence in all their considerations. Antigua and Barbuda will continue to raise this issue and to look forward to the support of the international community as we acknowledge the importance of addressing pervasive armed violence using small arms and light weapons, recognizing that the vast majority of deaths and injuries due to such weapons are usually a result of violence and crime against civilians. Tangible steps that can be taken include concerted efforts to remove the silos between the discussions on development and disarmament. Antigua and Barbuda is well aware of the mounting costs of spending on national and regional security and the devastating impact that the trade in small arms and light weapons through the region, and the resulting violence, has on our communities.

Regarding nuclear weapons, it is clear to the people of Antigua and Barbuda that any assessment of the impact of nuclear weapons provides unassailable proof that such weapons cause loss of life and displacement on a catastrophic scale. That destruction also leads to permanent damage to health and the environment and irreparable impediments to socioeconomic development and the social order. Furthermore, as a small island developing State, we are very aware that our strategic location, porous marine borders and socioeconomic realities make us potential soft targets for nuclear terrorism.

Antigua and Barbuda commends the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 22 January 2021 and the convening of its first Meeting of States Parties from 21 to 23 June 2022, at which a declaration and action plan were adopted. It is hoped that the Treaty will contribute to furthering the agreed global objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Antigua and Barbuda ratified the Treaty in 2018 and is fully committed to its implementation. We will continue to engage constructively at the next Meeting of the States Parties to the TPNW to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

On that note, Antigua and Barbuda is disappointed with the consecutive failures of the ninth and tenth Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt a consensus-based outcome document, despite the constructive engagements made, and call on the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate the political will needed to enable the eleventh Review Conference to put forward concrete recommendations on achieving nuclear disarmament, the ultimate objective of the NPT. Antigua and Barbuda reiterates its readiness to engage in future discussions and negotiations in a constructive, transparent and inclusive manner.

Along with the traditional concerns around international security, Antigua and Barbuda acknowledges that technological advances are affecting how we understand international peace and security. With the ongoing instabilities in international security around the world and the mounting evidence of the use of autonomous weapons systems in contemporary conflicts, political leadership is needed to prevent the devastating consequences of allowing the development and use of such weapon systems to proliferate.

Antigua and Barbuda is exploring the potential new risks posed to its territorial sovereignty by cyberattacks. Recent history has already shown us that States must give serious attention to increasing their cybersecurity. Admittedly, the task is somewhat challenging for small island developing States (SIDS) such as Antigua and Barbuda, but we are building our capacity in order to protect the interests of the State and our citizens. We acknowledge the support from the United Kingdom and other development partners in helping Antigua and Barbuda build its capacity in this area.

Antigua and Barbuda has been very pleased to work with the international community on a variety of issues related to disarmament and international security. We welcomed the successful conclusion 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. We have also benefited greatly from the support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly through coordinated support to CARICOM. In the region, Antigua and Barbuda is working with the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security to address our regional security concerns. We have also benefited from bilateral agreements and support from many of our development partners, and we are grateful for their support. Those tangible expressions of assistance, whether through technology transfer, training, project funding or otherwise, are the only way to bridge the capacity gaps that may foster security weaknesses with potentially devastating consequences.

Antigua and Barbuda recognizes the significant role played by civil-society actors in our efforts to achieve peace and security within the CARICOM subregion. Their unique perspective and invaluable contributions to capacity-building and advocacy efforts are welcomed and appreciated. Antigua and Barbuda stands with the international community as we recognize and reinforce the specific ways in which disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control can advance global peace and security and help us achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We also look forward to more engagement and collaboration with SIDS and other underrepresented Member States in these discussions, as we work towards the future we want while ensuring that no one is left behind.

Mr. Cherif (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

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

Our work is being done in a challenging context, exacerbated by the increasing risks and threats facing humankind. Beyond the adverse effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the deceleration in development, the global economic crisis and worrisome climate and environmental issues, we are also witnessing emerging and growing armed conflicts and manifestations of terrorism that are leading to unprecedented instability. At the same time, we are also seeing growing military expenditures that result in growing stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons.

It is that context that highlights the crucial importance of disarmament and non-proliferation. Tunisia reaffirms its support to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a cornerstone of the international disarmament architecture. We also believe that it is crucial for all States to accede to the NPT to ensure its universality. Tunisia believes that nuclear non-proliferation is an absolute priority in the area of disarmament and deplores the lack of progress on the issue, in particular at the ninth and tenth Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We also reaffirm our commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and call on States to sign and ratify it so that it can enter into force. We firmly believe that the holding of a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, as decided under the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, will provide an important opportunity to examine progress made in the area of nuclear disarmament and further promote that noble goal.

It is important to rebuild trust among the various actors in the international community. Such trust is the basis for any engagement and will facilitate negotiations and help to overcome mutual misunderstanding and the

scepticism that often undermines disarmament efforts. Trust, based on transparency and goodwill in honouring commitments, will create positive momentum. We continue to believe that humankind, aware of its vulnerability, will ensure that peace prevails. In that spirit, we commend the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty until 2026 and call for renewed commitments under the Treaty.

With regard to the Korean peninsula, we believe that despite the current problems there it will still be possible to establish a constructive dialogue on denuclearization with a view to achieving a lasting peace that can guarantee prosperity and stability in the countries of the region. We also reiterate our call for the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme. We hope that the negotiations now under way will meet with success.

Tunisia would like to stress the important contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We commend the holding of the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, after the successful holding of the first session in November 2019. The Conference has enabled progress to be made in achieving the goal of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546. Achieving that goal would indeed contribute to bolstering regional and international peace and security. We hope that all the parties concerned will participate in the next session of the Conference, scheduled for November.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Tunisia's commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention and reiterate our call for their universalization. We deplore the instances of the use of chemical weapons that have been recorded in recent years and reiterate our principled position condemning the use of chemical weapons in the strongest terms.

We remain deeply concerned about the security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences of the illicit proliferation and trafficking of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, which remain a serious threat to international peace and security. Tunisia stresses the need for the comprehensive and effective implementation of the Programme of

Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument, and underscores the importance of ramping up efforts to promote international cooperation and assistance in that area. Tunisia is party to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We also supported the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, as we believe that it can make a significant contribution to resolving the issue of the illicit trade in conventional arms, without prejudice to the legitimate right of States to legally acquire conventional weapons and ammunition for their self-defence and security needs.

We share the international community's concern about the increasing militarization of new technologies, which has contributed to an out-of-control qualitative arms race, including at the strategic level. Hypersonic missiles, space-based weapons, preparations for cyberwarfare, lethal autonomous weapon systems and biological and neurological manipulations targeting soldiers are all worrisome developments. We believe that the main players behind those developments have a particular responsibility to reverse the current dangerous trends. We believe that outer space should remain free of conflict and weaponization. We welcome the willingness to convene a multi-stakeholder dialogue on space within the framework of the Summit of the Future. Tunisia supports strengthening international cooperation for the peaceful use of such new technologies and for mitigating the threats posed by their malign use. We also stress the importance of open and inclusive discussions on these issues.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate Tunisia's commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and to assure you, Mr. Chair, of my delegation's cooperation in contributing to the success of the work of the First Committee.

Mr. Diop (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. We also congratulate Algeria, as the Rapporteur of the

Committee, and all the other members of the Bureau. We express our sincere appreciation and thanks to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco, and his Bureau for the great competence and professionalism with which they led the work of the previous session.

Mauritania endorses the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, Iraq and Nigeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of Arab States and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/77/PV.2). I also commend Secretary-General António Guterres, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for their great work and commitment to implementing the relevant international conventions and resolutions, despite the consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic that the world has been dealing with and the international political tensions affecting all the peoples of the world.

I would like to inform the Assembly that the Islamic Republic of Mauritania has been an early signatory to all the major legal instruments in the field of international peace and security. We are the host country for the Permanent Secretariat of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which aims to protect our territorial integrity and take joint action in order to ensure cooperation, peace and security in the Sahel. In November 2018, Mauritania was ranked in Geneva as a country with one of the best records in the world in combating anti-personnel mines and remnants of war. On 7 July 2017, Mauritania joined many other countries in ratifying the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the document that is critical to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We were also honoured to sign the third country programme framework for the period from 2020 to 2024 cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and we have developed a carefully formulated national plan for enhancing nuclear security.

Mauritania underscores the important role that the conventions establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones play in realizing international peace and security. In that regard, we have welcomed the efforts to establish such zones all over the world, including the convening in November 2019 of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, under the presidency of the Hashemite

Kingdom of Jordan and pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546. That session was a success and yielded positive results. We also valued the important outcomes of the second session under the presidency of the State of Kuwait, including the establishment of a non-official working committee to pursue intersessional official consultations. We are eagerly awaiting the successful outcome of the third session, to be held next November under the presidency of Lebanon, in terms of the adoption of further important substantive and procedural decisions.

The current session of the Committee coincides with the fifty-second anniversary of the NPT's entry into force and the twenty-seventh anniversary of its extension. That demands that we all work to safeguard the achievements that have been made and advance towards implementing the related international commitments, among them the legally binding Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, concluded in 2017. The Treaty is a reflection of how important it is to make tangible progress in nuclear disarmament, since the proliferation of such weapons constitutes a direct threat to international peace and security.

We regret that this year the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT failed to produce a final document for the second time in a row, after the similar failure at the previous Review Conference in 2015. Considering the complexity of our current international circumstances, Mauritania believes that we cannot achieve international peace and security in a world where threats posed by the use of deadly weapons and arms race prevail. We must continue and intensify our disarmament efforts even if the current international circumstances are less than ideal.

We welcomed the adoption by consensus of the outcome document 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 a prelude to convening the fourth Review Conference of the Programme of Action in 2024. We hope that the Open-ended Working Group on conventional ammunition will address those weapons at all levels, internationally, regionally and even nationally. We also stress the importance of implementing the Programme of Action while preventing terrorist groups from possessing nuclear weapons. We want to remind the world that implementing article VI of the NPT is the only way to ensure that nuclear States refrain from adopting military doctrines and instead

direct their huge resources and capabilities towards increasing awareness about the dangers that the proliferation of those weapons can pose to humankind.

In our view, the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, which is taking place in exceptional political circumstances resulting from wars being waged in many parts of the world and from the global health situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic, is essential as a reminder to the countries of the world of the dangers of weapons in general and weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in particular. It is vital that we work to totally eliminate them and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, so that States can dedicate their resources and capabilities to building and achieving sustainable development, especially at this critical juncture, when we are seeing continually increasing levels of tension and conflict at the regional and international level.

In conclusion, Mauritania has supported all international efforts to prevent the tragedies that can potentially be caused by nuclear and other such weapons. We call for keeping our channels of communication open and for acting together while respecting the individual characteristics and sovereignty of all countries. We also urge all States to commit to ensuring justice, equality and a culture of peace and tolerance, building an international system capable of achieving justice and establishing a secure and stable world capable of addressing its challenges. We hope that the work of this session will be crowned with the success we all desire.

Ms. Marchand (Belgium): Belgium aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union in its capacity as observer (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), and I have the honour to make some additional points in my national capacity.

This year's First Committee session is taking place at a low point for effective multilateralism. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine shakes the foundation of the international rules-based order. The war constitutes a gross contravention of the United Nations Charter and severely undermines European and global peace and security. The illegal annexation by Russia of four additional regions in Ukraine is a blatant violation of Ukraine's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Nations cannot stay neutral in this conflict or solely lament the war's consequences. They need to take a stance and counter Moscow's attempt at redrawing the world's map by force.

Russia's provocative and dangerous nuclear rhetoric are contrary to its commitments undertaken in the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We are also profoundly concerned by the serious risks resulting from Russia's attacks on Ukrainian nuclear facilities and its illegal takeover of Europe's largest nuclear power plant. We support the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to protect nuclear safety and security at those sites. We also condemn Russia's cyberattacks and its violation of the security guarantees of the Budapest Memorandum.

Russia's war of choice affects the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control regime in many ways. We deeply regret that the tenth NPT Review Conference could not reach consensus on an outcome document, owing to the opposition of the Russian Federation at a time when it was paramount for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. Nevertheless, we call on all parties to take stock of the constructive discussions at the Review Conference and to move forward on issues such as nuclear-risk reduction, disarmament verification and the strengthening of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Progress towards the universalization of the NPT is paramount, and we urge Israel, India and Pakistan to choose the right side of history and join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States.

Addressing serious proliferation crises also remains a top priority. Lack of compliance should be tackled. As Iran refuses a return to full compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), it is developing its nuclear programme at an alarming speed. Iran is also at odds with the legally binding obligations under its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, thus weakening the basis of the NPT's verification regime. These developments demonstrate the importance of Iran ratifying the Additional Protocol, which would be a guarantee for effective control of the nuclear programme beyond any JCPOA expiry date.

North Korea continues to flout the international rules, as demonstrated by its upsurge in missile tests and its legislative changes. Steps aimed at pursuing the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula should be taken. International pressure must be maintained, including through the strict application of sanctions by all States without exception.

We cannot be satisfied by the current pace of nuclear disarmament. Nuclear-weapon States need to undertake further action. No member of the NPT is exempt from its obligations under Article VI. We deeply regret that China is rapidly increasing its nuclear stockpile and is failing to commit to a formal moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapons use. We call on China to acknowledge its responsibility as a global Power and engage in arms-control debates as well as in a dialogue with its peers. We are also concerned by Russia's introduction of new, destabilizing delivery systems.

No State advocating disarmament can refuse to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Promoting the Treaty's universalization remains our priority. We need a legally binding and universal standard, as well as an internationally recognized and effective verification mechanism. There is no alternative to the CTBT, and we are delighted that the CTBT membership is continuously growing.

The multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime needs to be harnessed. This is key to preventing further deterioration of the global security situation. We look forward to strong support for draft resolutions dealing with such multilateral instruments as the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). At the ninth Review Conference of the BTWC later this year we will place special emphasis on the issue of biosafety and biosecurity management, for which we have introduced a working document with cross-regional support.

Belgium strongly supports the United Nations Secretary-General's Mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of chemical, biological or toxin weapons. We will fight against attempts to weaken the independence of this instrument or to subject it to political adjudication.

At the fifth Review Conference of the CWC we will defend the Technical Secretariat against unjustified allegations and work for a firm footing for strengthening the taboo against chemical weapons use.

Weapons of mass destruction strike without distinction, but conventional weapons are the ones taking lives day after day. In line with the Secretary-General's concept of "disarmament that saves lives", we should therefore strengthen conventional-arms control instruments. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

and the Convention on Cluster Munition save lives day after day. More States should join those treaties. In this context, we welcome the recent decision by the United States to bring its policy closer in line with the Ottawa Convention.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons remains a highly relevant forum in matters related to conventional-arms control. It is therefore crucial, within this Convention, to keep building on past achievements and address any new development related to arms control. This is of particular importance, taking into account recent challenges posed by improvised explosive devices, mines other than anti-personnel mines and new uses of incendiary weapons and cluster munitions. The Committee can also count on my country furthering efforts to foster consensus on a normative framework with regard to autonomous weapons systems, as we have done in the past.

We would like to laud Ireland for guiding us through difficult negotiations on a political declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. While duly taking into account existing rules, we believe this consensual political declaration will help strengthen the implementation of international humanitarian law and boost its compliance, since it takes account of recent developments in armed conflict, in particular urban warfare.

With regard to security in outer space, Belgium participates in the activities of the open-ended working group on reducing space threats and supports the mandate of this inclusive platform aimed at developing new behaviour-centred norms and guiding principles. Belgium also supports the United States initiative on destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests as a positive step towards preventing space debris that disrupts in-orbit space activities and services critical for all humankind.

Finally, with regard to cybersecurity, Belgium strongly supports States' responsible behaviour in cyberspace and the implementation of the 11 norms agreed by the General Assembly. We appreciate and support the work of the open-ended working group as well as the efforts of the sponsors of the draft resolution on the Programme of action to advance responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies in the context of international security (A/C.1/77/L.73). Belgium believes that this work plays an important role in providing a safer cyberspace.

Mr. Jiménez (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We offer our congratulations to the Chair and the members of the Bureau on their respective elections. They can count on our full cooperation.

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

Seven years from the completion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is unjustifiable that, amid an unprecedented health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease, nuclear arsenals continue to be expanded, modernized and developed, putting the human species and all living beings in grave danger. It is clear, and therefore we reiterate, that all the economic and financial resources used to modernize nuclear weapons, expand military alliances and foment aggression and destabilization of countries could be used to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda, in order to eradicate poverty and achieve a better world, human development and a dignified life for all peoples.

Nicaragua promotes and is committed to general and complete disarmament and is in favour of the total elimination of nuclear weapons for the benefit of humankind. To achieve that objective is to contribute responsibly and in good faith to living in harmony, peace, tranquillity, progress and development for the happiness of all.

Nicaragua would like to take this opportunity to stress once again to the international community the importance of advancing once and for all towards general and complete disarmament, while keeping in mind that the top priority remains the elimination of nuclear weapons. We attach particular importance to compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the legally binding international consensus instrument of the global system of non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of atomic energy. That is why we regret that we were unable to reach consensus on a final document at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, despite the efforts of the parties and its presidency.

We welcomed the entry into force of the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the successful outcome of its first Meeting of States Parties,

which complements article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and will help to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Nicaragua believes firmly that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones will strengthen the non-proliferation regime and international peace and security and constitutes an important contribution to achieving nuclear disarmament. We regret the failure to implement the 1995 resolution of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and call for implementing it without further delay. We also support efforts to prioritize humanitarian concerns in nuclear-weapon-related issues. At the regional level, we reiterate the importance of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, as well as the validity of the declaration of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States on a zone of peace in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We consider it essential to continue strengthening the legal regime governing activities in outer space in order to guarantee security and transparency in their conduct. In particular, we support the adoption of a treaty on the prevention and prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space, as well as the prevention of the use or threat of use of force against satellites or other space objects. We consider the draft treaty presented by Russia and China in the Conference on Disarmament to be a good basis for negotiations. For the second year, our delegation thanks the People's Republic of China for the submission of its draft resolution entitled "Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security". We believe it to be a very timely one, especially for developing countries in the field of international cooperation and peaceful use.

Our country is committed to preventing, combating and eradicating illicit arms trafficking and has taken the necessary relevant steps. We have incorporated the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, along with its accompanying International Tracing Instrument, into our national legislation, through a special law controlling and regulating firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials. Citizen and human security is one of Nicaragua's strengths. We have been recognized as the safest country in Central America, with a homicide rate of just 7 per 100,000

inhabitants. In that regard, we have developed a series of specific policies and programmes for combating the scourges of our times, which include terrorism, crime and drug-, arms- and human trafficking, among others. We note that international assistance and cooperation are indispensable conditions for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action.

We welcome the work of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, as well as the adoption by consensus of its first progress report (A/77/275) on its sessions on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. That historic process gives all Member States the opportunity to participate and express their views in a transparent manner and on an equal footing on a subject relevant to all.

Much has been said about the stagnation of the disarmament machinery, but we have not yet been able to solve the real problem, which is garnering the political will of certain States in order to make real progress, especially in the area of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Danailov Frchkoski (North Macedonia): North Macedonia focuses special attention and serious efforts on regional stability and cooperation as a component of its foreign policy. As we did two years ago, this year we have once again submitted a draft resolution under agenda item 97 in order to ensure that we keep the item related to the further promotion of good-neighbourliness, cooperation and integration in South-East Europe on the General Assembly's agenda. We started the process many years ago, mindful of its crucial value to the region's security, lasting stability and sustainable development.

After its signing in June 2018, the so-called Prespa Agreement entered into force in February 2019, settling a 27-year-old dispute with Greece by resolving a complex identity dispute through mediation, effective diplomacy and a formal agreement. The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization for 2019 (see A/74/1) rightly mentioned the Prespa Agreement between North Macedonia and Greece as one of the bright spots in the recent history of the United Nations. Another positive result was the Treaty of Friendship, Good-Neighbourliness and Cooperation signed between North Macedonia and Bulgaria, and a third agreement is in the works. That achievement confirms yet again that dialogue and diplomacy can

still function and are the best approaches to settling international disputes and conflicts. Such a milestone should serve as the catalyst for other transformative processes in South-East Europe.

However, the region is still facing challenges and unresolved political disputes, for example between Kosovo and Serbia, as well as the issue of the dysfunctionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which could affect the region's overall stability and potentially drag us backwards. It is time to establish a new era in the Balkans. Our proposed draft resolution for good-neighbourliness and cooperation in South-East Europe, which was first brought to the table in 1997 and has enjoyed the support of members for a long time, is not an end in itself. It should rather encourage the practice of taking bold, brave decisions and diplomatic initiatives as a last resort for resolving outstanding identity disputes and conflicts through negotiated international agreements.

In line with that initiative and suggestion, North Macedonia supports the call for the strong and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. We would like to highlight a good example of successful regional cooperation in this area, which is the activities undertaken by the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre with its supporting partners, especially in phase one of the programme for fighting weapons of mass destruction and for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk protection.

We are following with close attention the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. North Macedonia is a firm supporter of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and therefore supports ensuring accountability for those responsible for crimes at the national and international level. North Macedonia has also adopted a national strategy for cybersecurity with an action plan for 2018–2022 whose implementation is well under way.

Given the current alarming situation regarding the treaties regulating nuclear weapons, North Macedonia shares the concerns about the continued risk of an eventual use of nuclear weapons and the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences that could ensue, especially in the context of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. It will be very important to achieve results with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, revive the Conference on Disarmament and re-establish trust in the disarmament regime and its pillars.

Mr. Salissou Labo (Niger) (*spoke in French*): My delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your and their elections and wishes to assure you of my country's readiness to support your chairmanship to ensure its success.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia (see A/C.1/77/PV.11) on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively. I would like to add a few comments in my national capacity.

The work of the First Committee is being conducted in a context characterized by an international security architecture in crisis, against the backdrop of a massive increase in States' military budgets, the development of their doctrines and their conventional and non-conventional military tools, and the exacerbation of competition and conflict in all common spaces. The major bilateral and multilateral international treaties in the area of arms control were envisaged as safeguards to slow or prevent the increase in the extremes of tensions among the great Powers, but they are collapsing one after the other, without new treaties being adopted. The return of strategic competition among the great Powers and its corollary — that is, the prospect of a high-intensity armed conflict between great Powers with cutting-edge technology — can lead humankind only towards self-destruction, at a critical time when it needs more than ever to remain united to face the other common challenges it faces.

With that in mind, my country reiterates its deep conviction that all actions must be guided by reason and not by passions, and that committing to the values and norms of cooperation and peaceful coexistence with a view to achieving a certain strategic stability will lead to a sustainable and better world. Weapons of mass destruction — whether nuclear, chemical or biological — have no reason to exist in our world, which is characterized above all by the unprecedented interdependence among States in view of the immense economic, environmental and health-care challenges that we must face collectively. In that respect, the absence of an outcome document of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was held in August, has only added uncertainty to an already tense global strategic context.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which my country has already signed and whose ratification process is well under way, must be understood by all as an instrument that is complementary and non-contradictory to the NPT. My delegation is therefore pleased with the holding of first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty in June and the conclusions agreed. The signing and ratification of that instrument by all nuclear-weapon States would undoubtedly pave the way for the institutionalization of the norm of prohibiting nuclear military weapons, which in general would move our world away from a nuclear Armageddon, while restoring confidence, predictability and peaceful relations among States.

Nuclear risks, so often mentioned, underscore more than ever the urgency of the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), another central pillar of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. I recall that the Niger ratified that Treaty on 9 September 2002 and today plays a very active role in the implementation of its provisions by hosting a seismic station in Torodi, in the west of the country. The operation of that seismic station is currently affected by the insecurity that affects that area in general, but all necessary measures are currently being taken to secure the station and allow for the complete renovation of the 16 sites that it houses by the end of this year. In that regard, I commend the invaluable technical assistance provided to my country by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization for that purpose. Moreover, the critical nature of the international strategic context I mentioned raises the alarm with regard to the need for the eight countries listed in annex 2 to the CTBT, which have not yet ratified the Treaty, to do so without delay.

The legitimate concern that we have regarding weapons of mass destruction should not make us lose sight of the daily devastation caused by a number of conventional weapons, in particular in certain geographical areas plagued by terrorism and organized crime. My country, like other Sahelian States, pays a heavy price every day in terms of human losses, whether civilian or military, owing to the uncontrolled proliferation of those weapons. The issue of small arms and light weapons has been of great concern to the Sahelian States in general and to my country in particular since the early 2000s, because of the enormous destabilizing potential of the institutions and societies that are linked to it. The acute nature of the

threat has increased with the proliferation of violent extremist groups in the area, who play an active role in the widespread use of those weapons. In that regard, the Niger has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons of 1 December 2000. It also supports other international, regional and subregional initiatives in the area of combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, in particular the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, to which it has acceded. The political will of my country to implement all the legal instruments on disarmament I mentioned, to which it has adhered, resulted in the creation in 1994 of the Commission nationale pour la collecte et le contrôle des armes illicites, whose daily work contributes not only to the security of the Niger but also to that of the Sahel region as a whole.

Massive and violent cyberattacks targeting water, energy or transport infrastructure are likely, in the opinion of most experts, to affect the lives of populations in a lasting and negative way owing to the obvious strategic risk they present, especially if the perpetrators are terrorist groups. That scenario, which was dismissed outright in debates a few years ago, is no longer a matter of science fiction and must now be considered a serious practical risk. That is why my country supports the initiatives taken in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on the Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies, in particular with respect to the peaceful use of cyberspace, the establishment of norms and codes of conduct in that area and the possible mechanisms for sharing technology with the most vulnerable countries to boost their resilience.

With regard to outer space, because of the strategic continuity it shares with cyberspace, we must also be vigilant to ensure its use remains peaceful. Its free and equitable use by all States that wish to use it should as far as possible be facilitated by international cooperation mechanisms, the modalities of which must be specified. Clear and precise rules and norms, drawing from, among other sources, the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law, must prohibit any desire to militarize outer space by any actor whatsoever. The militarization of outer space is compromising a potential source for the economic

development and improvement of the well-being of an important part of the world's population. My delegation calls on all States to demonstrate responsibility and exercise restraint in the peaceful use of outer space.

Ms. Glasenhardt (Croatia): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. We look forward to working under your able leadership, Sir, and you can count on the support of our delegation.

Croatia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Since our previous session, war has returned to Europe, and the world as we know it has changed. The Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine has challenged the global security architecture and eroded the rules-based international order, with profound consequences for generations to come. That aggression is a blatant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, coming from a permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear-weapon State no less. It is bound to have long-lasting implications, not just for the work of the First Committee but for the United Nations as a whole.

We condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms, just as we condemn Russia's illegal annexation of parts of Ukraine's territory, based on equally illegal referenda. We unequivocally reject those actions and will never recognize them. Croatia stands firm in supporting the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine created an unprecedented situation, in which Zaporizhzhya, an active nuclear power plant and the largest one in Europe, has become the object of shelling. That undermines all principles of nuclear safety and may bring about catastrophic consequences with cross-border impact.

With that in mind, we can only be disappointed that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was unable to adopt a final document owing to Russia being the only State to block consensus. The NPT, however, remains a cornerstone of the global

nuclear non-proliferation regime, a building block for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In preparing for the next NPT review cycle, we must work jointly and constructively to uphold and further strengthen the NPT — the fact that a single country blocked consensus on an outcome document should not cause our approach and commitment to falter. Croatia remains engaged in all efforts towards achieving the universality of the NPT, as well as that of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT), including its early entry into force, which we see as a crucial pathway towards nuclear disarmament. The CTBT has been supported by a great majority of States for more than a quarter of a century. It is high time that non-States parties sign and ratify the CTBT, particularly those listed in annex 2 to the Treaty.

The proliferation challenges that currently face us are numerous and complex, and we need to address them without delay. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes pose a grave threat to international peace and security and undermine the global non-proliferation regime altogether. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We also firmly believe that the Security Council must take bolder steps in countering Pyongyang's proliferation pursuits. In addition, we are concerned about the uncertain future surrounding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which forms an important part of the international non-proliferation framework, curbing both regional and global security risks. We accordingly hope that the parties will be able to find consensus and revive the deal.

Croatia supports the Chemical Weapons Convention and remains committed to its full and effective implementation. We condemn in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. In that regard, we reaffirm our continued support for the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its global endeavour to permanently and verifiably eliminate chemical weapons. We also confirm our support for the Biological Weapons Convention and stand ready to contribute to a meaningful outcome of its upcoming ninth Review Conference. Furthermore, we support the universalization and the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Croatia maintains that a globally free, open and secure cyberspace can be achieved through responsible State behaviour, transparency and confidence-building measures within the existing international legal framework. We should work jointly to ensure that the existing provisions of international law and international humanitarian law are fully respected and implemented in cyberspace.

We are particularly pleased that the United Nations Disarmament Commission was able to resume its work in April after a three-year deadlock, and that 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 concluded successfully with an outcome document reached by consensus. Moreover, we commend the Secretary-General for the continued implementation of the entire women and peace and security agenda, which has proven to be a powerful tool in advocating for the inclusion of women in peacebuilding, conflict-prevention efforts and disarmament alike. Indeed, to create lasting peace, we need women's voices and leadership.

The world as we know it may have changed permanently, and in these new circumstances there is no alternative to international cooperation. We must do our utmost to uphold the Charter of the United Nations and the rules-based international order, while strengthening the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We would like to assure you, Mr. Chair, of Croatia's commitment to that pursuit.

Mr. Davis (Jamaica): At the outset, I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election and assure you of Jamaica's full support. I also express thanks to the Chair and Bureau of the seventy-sixth session for their able leadership of the First Committee during the previous session.

Jamaica aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and the Bahamas on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Caribbean Community, respectively (see A/C.1/77/PV.2), and by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

We gather for this session in a very difficult international political climate. The challenges we face are varied and urgent. From the nuclear disarmament pillar to the work on small arms and light weapons,

and from cyberspace to outer space, pressing matters that affect the security and safety of our people demand our attention, cooperation and action. The big picture may lead us to believe that all is lost. However, it is important that we recognize where progress has been made. Even in the context of the failure of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt a consensus outcome, we take note that the vast majority of States parties were prepared to agree on important commitments, which can still be voluntarily implemented in a show of good faith and support for the Treaty and its aims. Jamaica also welcomes the convening of the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Action Plan. We reiterate that the TPNW is a strong complement of the NPT and an effective tool for advancing our universally shared disarmament goals.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has also languished for too long. It is incomprehensible that, although there is near unanimity on the disastrous effect of any nuclear detonation and a common understanding of the incalculable humanitarian impact of previous or future nuclear testing, a few States nevertheless refuse to commit to banning any further nuclear-weapons tests. Jamaica believes that the CTBT completes the loop to prevent the development, proliferation or any use of nuclear weapons. We therefore call on non-State parties to sign, ratify and accede to the NPT, the TPNW and the CTBT and to pursue their implementation without delay.

It is disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament has still been unable to agree on a programme of work and fully assume its role as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. We are hopeful that the engagements within its subsidiary bodies will serve as a means of relieving the paralysis that has stymied the work of the Conference. Similarly, we look forward to the upcoming discussions in the final session of this cycle of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which will build on the groundwork from last year and this year.

Jamaica welcomes the progress made in the area of conventional weapons and ammunition. The pervasive presence of illicit small arms and ammunition is a daily threat to the health, safety, security and development of the Jamaican people. Preventing the diversion of

conventional arms and ammunition to the illicit market or to unauthorized end-use or end-users is a priority for my country. We therefore fully support all global, regional and national measures to address the illicit trade in conventional arms and ammunition. In that regard, Jamaica reaffirms the relevance of the Arms Trade Treaty and its provisions. We also welcome the successful convening of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its outcome document adopted by consensus. We look forward to the implementation of the commitments contained therein, including for international cooperation and capacity-building.

At the same time, Jamaica is pleased to note the progress being made by the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition. We reiterate that the gaps in through-life ammunition management demand our urgent action and look forward to the further deliberations within the Working Group in the coming year to arrive at a global framework on ammunition management. I use this opportunity to reiterate our call for greater action by countries that manufacture weapons and ammunition to ensure that those items do not make their way into illicit use or trade. We thank the Group of Governmental Experts on the Continuing Operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms for its work and support its recommendations for further action to better account for the international transfer of small arms and to increase participation by Member States.

Jamaica fully supports promoting a gender-perspective in the peace and security pillar. While addressing the specific impacts on women, girls, men and boys, we should also ensure that our efforts fully include women in peace, disarmament and non-proliferation activities.

Turning to cybersecurity, we join others in acknowledging that the world is heading towards an even more digitally engaged society and economy. It is therefore incumbent on us to put in place measures to effectively protect cyberspace from malfeasance and ensure that both the tangible and intangible information and communications technologies (ICTs) infrastructure is safely and securely available to users across the world. Jamaica therefore welcomes the work undertaken to date by the Open-ended Working Group on the Security of and in the Use of ICTs for the period 2021 to 2025. The Working Group's annual progress report reflects not only areas of emerging convergence but also issues on which further work is required. We look forward to continued engagement in that forum and remain hopeful for further progress towards a consensus on how we can together ensure a framework that guides responsible behaviour by States and other stakeholders in cyberspace.

Disarmament and the maintenance of international security are central to our efforts to ensure peace across the world and to achieve sustainable development. Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to our shared duty to address the challenges before us and to make progress for the benefit of our peoples.

The Chair: We have exhausted the time available for this morning's meeting. The next meeting of the First Committee will be held this afternoon at 3 p.m. sharp in this conference room. We will continue the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. After exhausting the list of speakers this afternoon, the Committee will hear an address by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.