



# General Assembly

*Official Records*

## Disarmament Commission

**377<sup>th</sup>** meeting

 Monday, 4 April 2022, 11 a.m.  
 New York

*Chair:* Mr. Mabhongo ..... (South Africa)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.*

### Opening of the session

**The Chair:** I declare open the 2022 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Let me start by offering my thoughts on the work of the Commission as its Chair. I have the privilege of chairing the Commission after three years of hiatus, but I am mindful of the serious challenges that it is facing as it begins its work. Behind the manifestations of many of the current serious challenges to international peace and security lies a serious lack of trust, which feeds instability in conflict zones and raises tensions among major military Powers. It also impedes progress in nuclear disarmament while driving the relentless expansion of military budgets.

With a view to preventing dangerous military competition through activities such as the modernization of nuclear arsenals and the militarization of outer space, in 1998 the General Assembly conferred on the Disarmament Commission a specific mandate to discuss the subject of nuclear disarmament as one of its main substantive agenda items. For the 2018 session, Working Group I, on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, discussed the Chair's paper, which formed the basis of an initial draft paper for the period from 2018 to 2020. The Group also met in 2019, albeit in a shorter time frame and in an informal setting, to make proposals and react to ideas put forward in the 2018 paper. The combination

of proposals was also made without prejudice to any additional proposals that delegations might wish to make in future.

The topic of nuclear disarmament has in fact been discussed since 2006, and I hope to see progress this year. I am also pleased that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be held this year. Let us use the Conference to take decisions that will improve the implementation of the NPT's three pillars. As a South African, I am pleased with my country's full commitment to the NPT. South Africa set an example in the early 1990s by showing that it was possible to voluntarily dismantle a nuclear-weapon programme. Our commitment to non-proliferation led us to sign the Additional Protocol. We also have extensive experience with the use of nuclear techniques for development, working with the International Atomic Energy Agency in areas such as agriculture, water, energy and industrial applications.

The agenda item on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities was first considered by the Commission in 2018. However, since then, it has been considered formally only at one session. The informal consultations held in 2019, though certainly useful, were limited by the lack of full participation by all major spacefaring States. Nine years have passed since the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities concluded its work. Since that time, there have been significant technological, military and political developments that

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 U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



could have grave implications for the future security and sustainability of outer space. New processes and proposals have been put forward to address various aspects of those problems. However, there is still considerable scope for reviewing the implementation of agreed transparency and confidence-building measures, and particularly at a time when the building and restoration of trust are so urgently needed. It is therefore my hope that this year's session will signal a renewal of the Commission's engagement under this agenda item.

The Disarmament Commission is an integral part of the multilateral disarmament framework. For nearly half a century it has played an important part in advancing the disarmament agenda and enhancing international security. However, thanks to the outbreak of the coronavirus disease and certain organizational problems, the Commission has been unable to hold a substantive session since 2018, which means that it now has an invaluable opportunity not only to advance the discussion on nuclear and outer-space issues but also to conduct substantive deliberations on them with a view to arriving at agreements. I therefore want to highlight the particular importance of our work this year. It is important for the Commission to resume its substantive work. The United Nations disarmament machinery is intended to provide a process for building trust and confidence through its work in creating and formulating global norms. I therefore call on all delegations to work together to ensure a successful outcome for this substantive session whereby we can maintain this body's solemn legacy.

It now gives me great pleasure to give the floor to Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to make her remarks.

**Mrs. Nakamitsu:** It is my great pleasure to address the members of the Disarmament Commission today as it opens its 2022 substantive session after a hiatus of three years. At the outset I would like to congratulate Ambassador Xolisa Mabhongo on his election as Chair and to express my sincere gratitude to him for undertaking informal consultations on organizational issues. I assure you, Mr. Chair, that the Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to assist you, the members of the Bureau and indeed all delegations during this session.

The Disarmament Commission has been confronted by extraordinary challenges in the past three years,

particularly the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and certain contentious issues related to the organization of its annual sessions. Although the Commission could not hold its substantive sessions during that time, I would like to commend the many efforts to resolve those organizational issues. I am pleased that the Commission is resuming its substantive work this year, continuing to address the existing agenda items — nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities.

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest disarmament priority for the United Nations for the simple fact that they are the only weapons with potentially existential consequences. Any use would cause a humanitarian and environmental catastrophe. The situation we are seeing at the moment is a stark reminder that the danger that a nuclear weapon might be used is not abstract. It is very real. That risk is now higher than at any time since the height of the Cold War. The prospects for mistakes, miscalculation and escalation are terrifying. The development of new conventional-weapon systems with strategic effect and the burgeoning nexus between nuclear weapons and new domains in cyber and outer space only magnify the prospects for miscommunication and miscalculation. In recent weeks we have seen a resurgence of the narrative that nuclear weapons provide the ultimate guarantee of security. It is a false narrative. The possession of nuclear weapons endangers our collective security. At no time is that more apparent than in periods of crisis, including today. As Secretary-General Guterres has said repeatedly, nothing can justify the use of nuclear weapons.

The security and sustainability of outer space is an increasingly important topic. Interest in the exploration and use of outer space is accelerating rapidly. Our dependence on outer space in our daily lives has continued to grow, and outer-space systems are vital to understanding and solving global problems such as the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action. At the same time, after decades of remarkable cooperation, outer space is once again devolving into an arena for geopolitical and strategic competition. An increasing number of States are treating outer space as a potential domain for active hostilities. We have seen the testing and deployment of terrestrial-based anti-satellite systems. Those

developments are now taking place against a backdrop of unprecedented international security challenges. The rapidly deteriorating international security situation is eroding trust, as well as confidence in the viability of internationally agreed norms. It is even affecting the ability of multilateral disarmament institutions to develop agreed solutions.

It is precisely in times like these that we should preserve and further develop measures that can build trust and confidence. We must also do so in the understanding that such measures often serve as building blocks for more ambitious measures. After all, it is widely recognized that transparency and confidence-building measures can form a basis for the consideration of concepts and proposals for legally binding obligations. That is why implementing agreed transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities remains a salient priority. Over the next three weeks, the Commission will have an opportunity to review, consolidate and further elaborate on the measures formulated by the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. I would encourage the Commission to focus in particular on aspects where its recommendations could give needed guidance to States and fill gaps in existing practice. One such area could be the information-exchange measures on national space-security policies and military expenditures.

The work of the Commission should be seen as complementary to other work streams within the framework of the United Nations that address outer-space security and sustainability. In that connection I am pleased to note that the open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours will hold its first session next month in Geneva. It is worth recalling that many State submissions to the report of the Secretary-General on the topic last year (A/76/77) included proposals for the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures.

I was also encouraged by the decision this year of the Conference on Disarmament to establish subsidiary bodies, one of which is dedicated to addressing the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The issue of outer space is of particular interest to the Secretary-General. In his report entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) he proposed a multi-stakeholder dialogue on outer space as part of the Summit of the Future 2023, bringing together Governments and other

essential space actors. The dialogue could seek a high-level political agreement on the peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space, move towards a global regime for coordinating space traffic and agree on principles for the future governance of outer-space activities. I therefore hope that the outcome of the Commission's consideration of this agenda item will also inform the outcome of the Summit of the Future.

The continued fraying of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime is worrying. It is both a cause and a consequence of the current geopolitical tensions and conflict. The enduring paralysis in the multilateral disarmament machinery cannot continue if we are to build a safer and more secure world. The erosion of arms control must be halted. All States should be held fully accountable for strict compliance with their obligations and full implementation of their commitments under the treaties and instruments to which they are party. Even before the pandemic and the current crisis, the disarmament machinery had long been hobbled by its prolonged stagnation, particularly in the Conference on Disarmament. In 2017, the Disarmament Commission ended an 18-year drought in agreements with its consensus adoption of a set of recommendations on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. Unfortunately, the subsequent halt to its substantive work dashed hopes that the Commission would provide fresh impetus to multilateral disarmament. The work of the Commission this year is therefore more important than ever to our collective effort to strengthen the disarmament machinery.

Now is not the moment to abandon dialogue and diplomacy. It is precisely a time for all States to come together to reinvigorate it. I appeal to everyone here to do so not despite the current crisis but because of it. It is incumbent on the members of this universal body to work collectively and to focus on narrowing the differences between their positions, strengthening areas of commonality and devising recommendations for practical measures that can reduce the risk of nuclear war and help us take steps towards our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Forging agreement on the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures will help to prevent an arms race in outer space and preserve it as a realm for exploration and peaceful uses.

The Secretary-General has said on numerous occasions that the world needs a new vision for disarmament, one that takes account of the geopolitical,

technological and cultural changes that have accelerated in recent years. That should be the lens through which the Commission views its assignment — the responsibility for devising a framework that will protect not just us today but the world of future generations. In 1978, when the Disarmament Commission was re-established at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, it was given a special mandate described in General Assembly resolution 71/82 as

“the specialized deliberative subsidiary body of the General Assembly that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations on these issues”.

I ask everyone here to work together to fulfil that important mandate during this substantive session and contribute to our collective efforts to enhance international peace and security. Let us remember that out of past crises in history, new arms-control and disarmament agreements were born as an integral part of security arrangements.

**The Chair:** I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her statement.

### Organization of work

**The Chair:** At its organizational meeting this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.376), the Commission adopted the agenda for the 2022 substantive session. The Commission also decided that 2022 should be considered as the second year of the three-year cycle. If there are no comments, I will move on.

### Election of other officers

**The Chair:** It is my understanding that there is general agreement on the candidatures for the Chairs of the Working Groups. If there are no objections, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect by acclamation Mr. Kurt Davis of Jamaica and Mrs. Szilvia Balázs of Hungary as the Chairs of Working Groups I and II respectively.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** On behalf of the Commission and the members of the Bureau I would like to warmly congratulate the newly elected Chairs of the Working Groups and to wish them every success in discharging their duties. I am sure they will make an important contribution to the smooth workings of the Commission

this year. On a more personal note, I would like to say that I will count on their support and counsel.

I would now like to bring the attention of members to the draft schedule of meetings contained in document A/CN.10/2022/CRP.1, circulated by the Secretariat, and to the fact that 15 April is an official United Nations holiday, while 22 April is an official United Nations floating holiday as designated by General Assembly resolution 76/237. May I take it that the Commission decides to conclude its 2022 substantive session on 21 April?

*It was so decided.*

### General debate

**The Chair:** The Commission will now begin its general exchange of views, based on the list of speakers inscribed for the general debate. I would urge delegations that have not yet done so to enter their names on the list as soon as possible, as we plan to conclude the general debate tomorrow at 1 p.m.

To maximize the time available to us during the segment for the general exchange of views, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all who wish to take the floor. Delegations with longer statements may deliver a summary and submit the full statement in written form for posting on the eStatements portal by emailing them to e-statements@un.org. I want to remind all delegations already inscribed on the list to keep in mind that a rolling list implies that they should be prepared to speak at any time, possibly sooner than they had originally planned. I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements, which is 13 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of groups and eight minutes for delegations making statements in their national capacity.

**Mr. Ke (Cambodia):** I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

ASEAN welcomes the timely convening of this substantive session after its postponement for consecutive years, and we congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the 2022 substantive



session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We are confident that your leadership will facilitate the best possible outcome. You can be assured of our support and constructive participation. ASEAN recognizes that the persistent threats to international security make it increasingly important to preserve and strengthen the nature, role and purpose of the various forums of the United Nations disarmament machinery. ASEAN believes that the UNDC, with its universal membership, will continue to play a unique role in building trust and confidence among Member States on various issues in the area of disarmament.

With regard to nuclear weapons, ASEAN believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are best addressed through multilateralism, with all countries carrying out their obligations responsibly. ASEAN remains deeply concerned about the potentially catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and the risks posed by their continued existence. We therefore deplore any conduct of nuclear tests. All ASEAN member States have ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we urge the annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible so that its entry into force can finally be realized.

ASEAN recognizes the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and calls on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of their existing obligations, particularly those under article VI. We urge all parties to work in good faith for the success of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the same time, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a historic agreement that contributes to global nuclear disarmament and complements other existing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

ASEAN reaffirms the importance of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. We reiterate our commitment to preserving South-East Asia 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 (SEANWFZ). ASEAN stresses the importance of the full and effective implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty, including through the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the

SEANWFZ (2018-2022). We reaffirm our commitment to continuing to engage with the nuclear-weapon States and ramp up the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty. We also continue to support the ongoing efforts to establish such zones globally, especially in the Middle East.

ASEAN reiterates that all States have a right to the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology, especially for their economic and social development. We will continue to strengthen our cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. In line with all of this, ASEAN supports the full and effective implementation of other relevant efforts, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament.

Regarding outer space, ASEAN recognizes access to outer space as an inalienable right of all States. We believe that the exploration and use of outer space should be exclusively for peaceful purposes, in the collective interest of humankind. All activities in outer space should be conducted in accordance with international law and the principle of the non-appropriation of outer space. Since it is incumbent on all States to ensure that the use and exploration of outer space remain peaceful, the General Assembly must play a vital role in fostering continued dialogue on current issues and challenges in this area. ASEAN welcomes the establishment of an open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/231.

We also support other activities and initiatives that help deepen understanding on issues pertaining to space security. Within our region, the ASEAN Regional Forum has made contributions in this connection by organizing space security workshops. Going forward, activities in outer space should not remain the exclusive preserve of a small group of States. ASEAN encourages strengthening capacity-building programmes, with particular emphasis on developing countries, in order to ensure that outer space is a common heritage of humankind that all States can avail themselves of both in principle and in practice.

In conclusion, ASEAN stands ready to play its part and contribute further to the discussions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space,

with a view to advancing our common goals with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security.

**Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt): I congratulate you, my brother Ambassador, on assuming the chairship of the Disarmament Commission, and wish Mrs. Nakamitsu a very good morning. Allow me to read this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States in Arabic.

*(spoke in Arabic)*

At the outset, the Arab Group would like to express its sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, on assuming the chairship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission this year. We also congratulate Jamaica and Hungary on chairing the Commission's two Working Groups. The Arab Group emphasizes its cooperation with you, Mr. Chair, the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups with a view to ensuring the success of this session and resuming the work of the Commission, which has held no formal meetings for the past two years. The Group affirms the Commission's centrality as a deliberative United Nations forum that is an integral part of the United Nations disarmament machinery and that deliberates on disarmament issues in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Arab Group welcomes the decision adopted at the Conference on Disarmament in 2022 establishing five subsidiary bodies that will tackle the items on the Conference's agenda. We hope that the decision will reinvigorate the Conference on Disarmament and end its decades-long stalemate, since it is the only deliberative forum on disarmament in the context of related United Nations mechanisms.

The Arab Group stresses that the world cannot achieve peace, security and stability with nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is therefore imperative to rid humankind of these weapons in an irreversible manner, with international monitoring and verification. The myriad human and financial capabilities devoted to these inhumane weapons must be redirected to development, especially at this critical time in the world, when tensions and armed conflict are increasing regionally and internationally.

The Arab Group underscores its deep concern about our continued failure to achieve tangible progress on nuclear disarmament and the repeated failure to commit to the implementation of the second decision of the 1995

Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 13 steps detailed by the 2000 NPT Review Conference, in addition to the 2010 Review Conference's final document and action plan. The nuclear-weapon States have clearly washed their hands of setting any specific timetables for implementing their international commitments to eradicating nuclear weapons. In that context and in the light of the non-implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the consensus outcome of the 2010 Review Conference, the Arab Group believes that establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a collective responsibility and that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East is part and parcel of the NPT indefinite extension deal. We underline that the 1995 resolution is still valid until its implementation and all its objectives are achieved.

We would like to stress once again that working to free the Middle East of nuclear weapons is a collective responsibility at the international level. The Arab Group has assumed its part of the responsibility. It remains for the other parties in this area to assume theirs. Otherwise, the credibility and sustainability of the NPT will be seriously jeopardized in ways that threaten the stability of the disarmament system and international security. All the Arab States have acceded to the NPT and have subjected all their nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Israel, however, has so far not taken those steps despite all the United Nations resolutions and requests in that regard. The Arab Group reiterates that establishing a Middle East free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction represents the fourth pillar of the NPT and is as important as the Treaty's other three pillars.

Since 1995 and up to this very moment, we have observed no tangible progress on that commitment, despite the fact that the resolution was part and parcel of the 1995 agreement that led to the Treaty's indefinite extension. From a legal point of view, the non-implementation of one of the pillars of this deal therefore casts doubt on all its other pillars. The Arab Group would like to point to the General Assembly's adoption of decision 73/546, which mandated that the Secretary-General hold a conference to negotiate a convention establishing a Middle East free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, listen to the various opinions and reach an agreement

by consensus and the free will of Member States, based on the 1995 resolution as its terms of reference. The Group welcomed the first and second sessions of the Conference, held in November 2019 under the chairship of Jordan and November 2021 under the chairship of Kuwait, with the participation of all invited parties except Israel. We call on all parties to participate constructively in that conference in order to reach a binding treaty. In that regard, we call on Working Group I, on nuclear disarmament, to support all regional and international efforts to establish a Middle East free from nuclear weapons and to include that in its final recommendations, while urging Israel to engage actively in the Conference on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons.

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, combined with the fact that nuclear-weapon States have not met their nuclear-disarmament responsibilities, means that the international community has to assume double the responsibility for ensuring the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In 2017, we witnessed an important historical and unprecedented development in the establishment of the first legally binding instrument to ban nuclear weapons, creating a new basis for organizing nuclear disarmament and establishing nuclear arms as inhumane weapons that run counter to international humanitarian law and directly threaten international peace and security. The Group of Arab States pledges to continue its positive contributions to international efforts to ensure nuclear disarmament, in line with the States' commitments to implementing various international treaties and resolutions and other multilateral forums.

The Arab States hope that the discussions of the Disarmament Commission can help to enhance the ongoing efforts and achieve success at the tenth NPT Review Conference, especially in the light of the tensions we are witnessing worldwide. We call for an immediate start to negotiations on an international legal instrument requiring the nuclear-weapon States to provide security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States, ensuring that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances, while recognizing that such safeguards are not an alternative to the nuclear-disarmament objective. The Arab States hope that the Commission's current session will yield clear recommendations and outcomes for nuclear disarmament. That will depend on the political will

of the nuclear-weapon States that have deliberately impeded such recommendations for many decades.

While the Arab Group welcomes the addition of a special item to this session's agenda pertaining to confidence-building recommendations for preventing an arms race in outer space, any result achieved by the Commission must be in line with a number of principles. First, outer space is a common human heritage and a common good. Any human activity in outer space must therefore be undertaken in accordance with all United Nations frameworks to ensure its comprehensive, global, non-discriminatory nature based on international consensus.

Secondly, any effort to regulate the use of outer space should aim to promote its use in the interests of all the peoples and countries of the world. It should not be used for military purposes, and every State's inherent right to use outer space for other reasons must be respected.

Thirdly, we must ensure that outer space is free from conflicts, wars and weapons until we have achieved a global, legally binding instrument that is applicable and verifiable. We must therefore refrain from placing any offensive or defensive weapons in outer space and work to prevent any potential arms race or the harmful use of any objects in outer space.

Fourthly, we must stress the importance of working to promote full access to technology exchanges in the field of outer space through technical cooperation and assistance, while building the relevant capacity of developing countries. The Arab Group welcomes the formation of an open-ended working group aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space and looks forward to using it in cooperation with other Member States to achieve the goals we desire.

In conclusion, the Arab Group hopes that the Disarmament Commission's current session will make comprehensive and balanced recommendations that will help to reinvigorate disarmament efforts worldwide, and we once again pledge to support your efforts, Mr. Chair, in that regard. I want to thank everyone here, including the interpreters, and to apologize for my lengthy statement.

**Mr. Pildegovičs** (Latvia): I deliver this statement on behalf of Estonia, Lithuania and my own country, Latvia.

Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your leadership of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and assuring you of our countries' full cooperation.

This year we are marking the seventieth anniversary of General Assembly resolution 502 (VI), which established the Disarmament Commission in its initial form. Although it has evolved and transformed over decades, its ultimate goal remains unchanged. The history of the Commission embodies the unwavering aspiration of Member States to build confidence and seek balanced disarmament. Unfortunately, as we evaluate the security environment currently around us, we have to conclude that many of the goals driving United Nations disarmament efforts have yet to be met. We are witnessing a large-scale aggression in Europe that has seriously disrupted international peace and security. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to immense suffering for the Ukrainian people and the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War. The images of the brutal killings of innocent civilians in Ukraine have been shocking. The international community should spare no effort to ensure that those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity are held to account. We also want to point out that another UNDC member, Belarus, has enabled this criminal aggression.

The impact of Russia's war is reaching far beyond Ukraine. Russia's actions breach the foundations of the international rules-based order, including the Charter of the United Nations, and erode trust within the international community as we observe the stark contrast between Russia's words and its deeds. One may ask how we can collectively advance global disarmament goals when existing agreements are breached and mutual confidence is undermined in such a blatant way. We believe that an overwhelming majority of Member States provided a firm answer to that question on 2 March, when the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-11/1, entitled "Aggression against Ukraine", with 141 votes in favour. The resolution demands that Russia immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and recalls all States' obligation under Article 2 of the Charter to refrain from the use or threat of use of force in their international relations against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State. Collective action to ensure that rules and norms are being upheld is an important priority if we are to

return to the path of building international security and stability, including in the area of disarmament.

Our States advocate for a progressive yet pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament. We support the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, but we also see the need to ensure strategic stability and account for security realities. Unfortunately, recent steps by Russia, including statements on putting its nuclear forces on high alert, have further complicated the security environment. In that context, we would like to recall the signing on 3 January of the Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and call on Russia to act in accordance with its letter and spirit by ceasing its dangerous and irresponsible nuclear rhetoric. We await the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the appropriate platform for meaningful discussions on the most pressing nuclear proliferation and disarmament matters.

Turning to outer space, the other topic to be discussed in the weeks to come, we would like to highlight the importance of a safe, secure and sustainable outer space. It is in our collective interest to pursue transparency and confidence-building measures in order to promote responsible behaviour in outer space. We need to preserve the immense potential that outer space provides for peaceful activities and development. For those reasons, we welcome the establishment of the open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours and call for constructive engagement by all Member States in the process.

Let me conclude by expressing the hope that the discussions we will have in the next few weeks will further strengthen our common understanding of the importance of the rules-based international order and lead to a renewed commitment to upholding it.

**Mr. Koba** (Indonesia): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and the Chairs of the Working Groups on their election. The Movement assures you and the members of the Bureau of its full support and cooperation. I also wish Ramadan Mubarak to all friends and colleagues observing the holy month.



NAM underscores its position regarding the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in those areas. In that regard, the Movement reaffirms the centrality of the UNDC as the sole specialized body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery to deliberate on specific disarmament issues and submit concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. NAM stresses the urgent need for achieving concrete results in the current UNDC cycle and to that end urges all Member States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, to show the requisite political will and flexibility. The Movement stands ready to cooperate actively and constructively with all parties in order to reach agreement on substantive recommendations under agenda items of the Commission.

NAM reiterates its deep concern about the lack of progress in the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments by nuclear-weapon States. We urge them to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their relevant multilateral legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — reaffirmed during the Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT — and the unequivocal undertakings that they provided at the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. We reiterate the continuing validity of those obligations and commitments until they are fulfilled.

NAM stresses that progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all their aspects is essential to the strengthening of international peace and security. In that context, the Movement stresses that nuclear disarmament, as the highest priority established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and as a multilateral legal obligation, should not be made conditional on confidence-building measures, non-proliferation efforts or so-called strategic stability. We reaffirm our principled position on nuclear disarmament, which remains NAM's highest priority, and on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, and stress the importance of ensuring that efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation are made in parallel with simultaneous efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament.

NAM is concerned about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons

and the possibility of their use or the threat of their use. The Movement underlines that General Assembly resolution 68/32, together with its most recent version, resolution 76/36, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", provides a concrete road map for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament through the rapid commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a speedy conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. NAM affirms the importance of humanitarian considerations in the context of the elimination of nuclear weapons and the promotion of nuclear disarmament. In that context, we reaffirm the need for all States to comply with the applicable international law at all times.

We reaffirm how urgent it is that we prioritize the conclusion of a universal and unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument to effectively assure all non-nuclear-weapon States that there will be no use or threat of use of such weapons under any circumstances, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. We noted the entry into force on 22 January 2021 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and hope that it will contribute to furthering the global objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. NAM States that are party to the Treaty are fully committed to its implementation and to engaging constructively in the first meeting of its States parties in the work of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. NAM reaffirms the importance of nuclear-weapon States' application of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and universal verifiability in all measures related to their fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations and undertakings.

NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of its States to develop research, production and uses related to nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear-fuel cycle for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. We emphasize that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Non-proliferation control agreements should be transparent and open to the participation of all States, and should not impose restrictions on access to the material, equipment and technology that are required by developing countries for peaceful purposes. NAM stresses that issues related

to proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means. Measures and initiatives taken in that regard should be within the framework of international law and should contribute to the promotion of international peace and security.

NAM States parties to the NPT regret the failure to reach consensus on a final outcome document for the ninth NPT Review Conference. That failure should serve as an incentive to work harder towards achieving nuclear disarmament. We also stress the importance of fulfilling the commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Treaty.

The Group of Non-Aligned States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons supported General Assembly decision 73/546, on “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”, with regard to the successful convening of the second session of the Conference under the presidency of Kuwait. The Group endorses its outcomes, including the adoption of rules of procedure and the establishment of an informal working committee, supports the convening of subsequent sessions and urges all countries in the Middle East, without exception, to participate actively in them and conduct good-faith negotiations aimed at concluding a treaty establishing such a zone. The Group stresses that the 1995 resolution and other decisions on the subject adopted within the context of the Review Conferences will remain valid until their objectives are achieved. The implementation of decision 73/546 is without prejudice to their validity and should not be construed as replacing them. Pending the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, NAM demands that Israel — the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT or declared an intention to do so — renounce its possession of nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT without preconditions or further delay, promptly place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards and conduct its nuclear-related activities in conformity with the non-proliferation regime. NAM is very concerned about Israel’s acquisition of nuclear capability and calls on it to refrain from continuing to develop and stockpile a nuclear arsenal.

NAM underscores the need for strong and genuine political will in support of the multilateral disarmament machinery, particularly negotiations in the Conference of Disarmament, which is the sole

multilateral disarmament negotiating body. NAM reiterates its call to the Conference of Disarmament to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without any further delay, so that it can overcome its long-standing deadlock and start substantive work on the four core issues on its agenda. In that context, NAM calls for a speedy start to negotiations in the Conference of Disarmament on the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.

NAM remains seriously concerned about the potentially negative security consequences of the deployment of strategic missile defence systems, which could trigger an arms race and lead to the further development of advanced missile systems and an increase in the number of nuclear weapons. We recognize the common interest of humankind and the legitimate sovereign rights of all States in the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes. NAM expresses its serious concern regarding the threats to international peace and security represented by the possible weaponization of outer space and its transformation into an arena for warfare and armed conflicts.

The Movement re-emphasizes the urgent need for commencing substantive negotiations in the Conference of Disarmament on a legally binding and multilaterally verifiable instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including prohibiting any placement of weapons in outer space and any use of force or threat of force against outer-space objects. In that context, NAM takes note of the joint Russian-Chinese draft treaty on preventing the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer-space objects, which represents a good basis for further discussion of the issue. We noted the General Assembly’s adoption of resolutions 73/30, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and 73/31, on no first placement of weapons in outer space. We also welcome the valuable progress made through the discussion of the Group of Governmental Experts on further effective measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/250, and regret that a consensus on its final report was blocked by one State. NAM further urges all Member States, especially those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for promoting international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for

peaceful purposes and the maintenance of international peace and security.

In conclusion, the Movement underscores its full support for the work of the UNDC, which must be intensified through invigorated political will in order to achieve meaningful outcomes advancing global disarmament and non-proliferation.

**Mr. Penaranda** (Philippines): Mr. Chair, the Philippines congratulates you on your election to lead the 2022 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We also congratulate our colleagues from Jamaica and Hungary on their election as Chairs of the two Working Groups. We thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her illuminating remarks and the Secretariat for lending its usual steadfast support.

The Philippines aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Cambodia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

It is more important than ever that we are convening a substantive session of the UNDC, particularly given the extraordinary challenges of the past several weeks. We are hopeful that this session will be a success as we navigate today's challenging security environment. We look forward to working together with delegations to be able to agree on concrete recommendations on the two items on our agenda, nuclear disarmament and outer space. With the agreement on the holding of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in August, it would be ideal if the outcome of the Commission could make a positive contribution to the Review Conference's success.

For the Philippines, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the regime for global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As we prepare for the upcoming NPT Review Conference, the Philippines remains committed to preserving the gains of the 2010 Review Conference through the implementation of the agreement in the 2010 outcome document, and specifically its 64-point action plan. On that note, we share the continuing grave concerns about nuclear-weapon States' sustained modernization of nuclear weapons, development of new types of weapons of mass destruction and continuing refinement of existing nuclear weapons. We call on them

to honour their disarmament commitments without further delay and urge them to reinforce the certainties that underpin the credibility of the NPT. Action 5(c) of the 2010 action plan provides that nuclear-weapon States shall commit to accelerating concrete progress leading to disarmament, and that to that end, nuclear-weapon States should diminish rather than increase the role and significance of nuclear weapons in their military and security policies.

No country has used nuclear weapons since 1945, and no country should ever use or threaten to use nuclear weapons at any time. Action 5(e) of the action plan also notes the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in further reducing the operational status of nuclear-weapon systems in ways that promote international stability and security. Action 7 mentions the need for assuring non-nuclear-weapon States about the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The tenth Review Conference could be the impetus for generating fresh new energy into our work of implementing our collective obligations and confirming the sacred, solid place that the Treaty occupies, more than 50 years after its founding. We also welcomed the entry into force in 2021 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the forthcoming convening of its first meeting of States parties in Vienna in July.

Taking the arms race into outer space undoes every effort to stop such weapons from spreading and prevent the threat of their use on the ground. We recognize the need for an effective instrument for halting and preventing an arms race, including nuclear arms, in outer space, in full awareness that the absence of agreed norms enhances risks to outer-space security. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 75/36 (A/76/77), which summarizes threat perceptions and presents possible pathways to promoting responsible space behaviour. It provides food for thought for Member States as we pursue a common agenda that links the workstreams related to outer-space disarmament and to the peaceful uses of outer space. The Philippines also welcomes the open-ended working group to consider the issue of outer space that will be convened in Geneva this year and in 2023.

The UNDC's task of thrashing out the critical issues in the next three weeks only appears herculean. But it is not, as long as we are guided by your able leadership on how to move forward, Mr. Chair, and have the cooperation, flexibility and good faith of

fellow delegations. We look forward to a productive and meaningful session.

**Mr. Sithole** (South Africa): First of all, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your leadership of the 2022 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, as well as the Working Group Chairs on their election.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We are glad that we can resume our discussions in the Disarmament Commission after three years when we were unable to meet to discuss the vital topics of nuclear disarmament and recommendations for promoting the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space, with the goal of preventing an arms race. In these challenging times, which have been characterized by strained relations and a world emerging from a globally devastating pandemic, we must find refuge in multilateralism as the best means to move us clear of crises with potentially catastrophic consequences. We should therefore all reaffirm our commitment to the Disarmament Commission for deliberating on critical issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

The Disarmament Commission has made valuable contributions to our work on disarmament and international security in the past. Given the current security environment and heightened tensions, we must do all we can to revive and strengthen its work in order to enable it to fulfil its vital responsibility. The last time the Commission made progress was in 2017, on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We need to do all we can to show how relevant the Commission is in assisting us in achieving our global disarmament and international security imperatives. South Africa remains concerned about the lack of progress we have seen in nuclear disarmament for more than two decades, and we therefore hope that our deliberations during this session will be based on strong political will and good faith so that we can get the Commission back on track.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, we join the majority of Member States that have expressed deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would devastate humankind in the event of a nuclear detonation, whether by intent

or accident. It is therefore only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the legally binding assurance that they will never again be produced that we can be free of the threat of nuclear weapons.

We also remain deeply concerned about some nuclear-weapon States' continuing modernization of nuclear arsenals and their means of delivery, in flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the solemn undertakings made at the previous NPT Review Conferences. My delegation hopes that the long-awaited tenth Review Conference in August will live up to expectations, as only bold efforts and a strong outcome can show the world the essential commitment of all nations to addressing this looming and ever-present threat. We once again call on all States parties to the NPT to honour their obligations and faithfully and without preconditions or further delay implement all commitments agreed to at the 1995, 2000, and 2010 Review Conferences, including the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation also wants to once again reaffirm the inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. South Africa believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are elements of the NPT that are inextricably linked, and that therefore progress on both elements is essential to realizing the objectives and purpose of the NPT.

South Africa welcomed the historic moment on 22 January 2021 of the entry into force of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a significant achievement since this Commission last met that we should all recognize. The Treaty's aim is to stigmatize and delegitimize nuclear weapons based on the adverse and indefensible humanitarian consequences of their use. The Treaty goes hand in hand with the intention of the NPT and the humanitarian pledge, which was proposed by Austria and endorsed by 108 countries. We therefore look forward to the convening of the first meeting of States parties to the Treaty in Vienna in June.

South Africa continues to view the recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities, with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space, as vital to the maintenance of international



peace and security. The Commission must therefore do all it can to make substantive progress on preventing space from becoming a new arena of conflict. My delegation firmly believes that the best way to promote order, safety, security and sustainability in outer-space activities, and to preserve outer space as a domain solely for peaceful activities, is through continued international cooperation and dialogue. We will therefore continue to support and engage in international efforts to develop rules and norms for responsible behaviour in space. This is necessary in order to ensure that we are all able to benefit from the peaceful uses of outer space, regardless of our level of scientific, technical or economic development.

In conclusion, the dangers that we face from a nuclear threat and the potential for turning outer space into a new realm of conflict cannot be understated. We must all be guardians of international peace and security. We must therefore denounce and act to eliminate the potential devastating destruction of the Earth and the expansion of conflict to outer space. In that regard, we look forward to earnest and meaningful discussions in this session of the Disarmament Commission.

**Ms. Fisher** (United States of America): I thank the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, for her thoughtful remarks. On behalf of the United States delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the Government of South Africa on your election to lead the 2022 session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC). You have my delegation's full support.

We are meeting today amid the most serious threats to the stability and safety of Europe since the end of the Second World War. Russia's decision to unleash a premeditated and unprovoked war of choice on Ukraine is a shameful attempt to stop the people of Ukraine from proceeding on the path they have chosen — the path of a democratic, sovereign Ukraine capable of forging its own destiny. We call on President Putin, his Government and the Russian military to honour Russia's international obligations and commitments, end its war of aggression against Ukraine, withdraw Russia's troops from Ukrainian territory and respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its own people. The United States will continue to stand by Ukraine as it defends itself and works towards a peaceful future.

In the same vein, we will work to defend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its special place in the hierarchy of non-proliferation instruments. This UNDC session convenes a few short months ahead of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In 2020, we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, a milestone that has offered the parties to the NPT an opportunity to reflect on the Treaty's accomplishments and recognize the shared interests it embodies. After two years of pandemic-related delays, we plan to use the NPT Review Conference in August to identify ways to strengthen the Treaty for the next 50 years and beyond. We recognize that Russia's war on Ukraine, which remains as unjustified as it was premeditated and inhumane, will cast a shadow over the Review Conference. That may well be, but Russia's actions also make it clear that it has never been more important to reflect on the value and necessity of the NPT, which continues to constrain the spread of nuclear weapons and advance our shared security as we work towards our ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The United States remains committed to working in bilateral and multilateral forums on the disarmament agenda. We will continue to identify, develop and pursue diplomatic opportunities to enhance strategic stability, reduce nuclear risk and strengthen international security. We are participating in efforts to improve risk reduction and advance nuclear-disarmament verification. Efforts such as these are representative of our continued dedication to the spirit of the NPT.

Turning to Working Group I, we would first like to offer our best wishes to Mr. Kurt Davis, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations. We appreciate the work of the Working Group's Chair, and he has our full support. We also commend its focus on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The United States is willing to work with the previous Chair's non-paper, and like other countries, we have proposed revisions. The United States believes that all States must play a part in working together to fashion a world in which nuclear weapons are eventually no longer necessary to maintain international peace and security. The United States intends to contribute constructively to the further discussion and development of the non-paper, and we hope that this year will pave the way for consensus recommendations.

We also offer our best wishes to Mrs. Balázs of Hungary and commend her efforts as Chair of Working Group II, on outer-space transparency and confidence-building measures. We are pleased to play a role working on transparency and confidence-building measure objectives. President Biden's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance clearly states that we will explore and use outer space for the benefit of humankind and ensure the safety, stability and security of outer-space activities. As part of those efforts to strengthen stability in outer space, the United States will continue to pursue multilateral and bilateral transparency and confidence-building measures to encourage responsible actions in outer space and its peaceful use.

If we are to make progress on space security and stability, our efforts cannot be concentrated only on legally binding and fundamentally flawed arms-control agreements focused solely on the placement of weapons in outer space. We must expand our approach to take into account additional potential threats to international peace and security. That includes threats from ground-based anti-satellite systems, including the irresponsible and dangerous anti-satellite missile test that Russia conducted on 15 November 2021. That test, which was planned after years of Russian denials of its development of anti-satellite systems, created long-lived debris that will threaten satellites and other space objects vital to all nations' security and economic interests for decades to come. The United States Space Priorities Framework notes that as space activities evolve, the norms, rules and principles that guide outer space must also evolve. Moreover, we believe that transparency and confidence-building measures can address immediate threats, and can be developed and implemented more quickly than legally binding instruments.

The Commission has played a valuable role over the years, and it can do so again. Its ability in 2017 to reach consensus recommendations on conventional weapons was a clear demonstration that the existing consensus-based multilateral forums of the United Nations can and will deliver results when States' interests are aligned. For its part, the United States will do all it can to promote a successful UNDC session this year and beyond.

**Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, on assuming the chairship of the Disarmament Commission for this session, and to the members of the Bureau and the representatives of Jamaica and Hungary,

who are chairing the two Working Groups. I want to assure you of Egypt's full support and cooperation with a view to seeing the Commission's work succeed.

Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered by me, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The international tensions that we are currently witnessing represent undeniable confirmation of the importance of implementing all commitments related to nuclear disarmament. They are in part the result of recent increased discussion of the role played by nuclear weapons in the military doctrines of certain countries that seek to upgrade them, which further increases the tension levels and pushes countries towards the possibility of a new international arms race. In the past few years, against the backdrop of those developments, United Nations disarmament mechanisms have continued to stagnate for many reasons, some related to the work of the mechanisms, as has been the case with the Conference on Disarmament, as well as those resulting from the coronavirus disease pandemic, which has prevented the holding of a number of important meetings, such as the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We therefore hope that the Disarmament Commission will resume its work this year after a two-year interruption.

The fact that we are holding the Commission's meetings this year is significant not only because of the aforementioned international tensions, but also because of what the meetings represent and the Commission's ability to arrive at substantive recommendations, especially with regard to nuclear disarmament, at the end of its meetings as a necessary and important prelude to the tenth NPT Review Conference, which will now be held in New York in August. In that context, Egypt looks forward to seeing the Commission reach substantive recommendations under the two items on its agenda, that is, nuclear disarmament and outer space, with a view to restoring trust between various parties and limiting the signs we are currently seeing of an arms race in both areas, which would not benefit humankind in any way but would rather be a waste of the resources that are desperately needed for sustainable development.

With regard to the item on nuclear disarmament, we hope that the Disarmament Commission's

recommendations will once again reaffirm the importance of the commitment to nuclear disarmament in accordance with enshrined in article VI of the NPT, as well as many of the other commitments in the final documents and resolutions of the NPT Review Conferences.

In view of the fact that the Treaty has not yet been universalized and the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the 2010 Review Conference action plan are still not implemented, Egypt, together with its sister Arab countries, worked to adopt General Assembly decision 73/546, which decreed the holding of a conference on a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East on a basis of consensus and the free participation of Member States. The first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction took place in 2019, presided over by our sister State the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The second session, in 2021, presided over by our sister State of Kuwait, achieved unprecedented success, adopting rules of procedure for the Conference and establishing an informal working committee to hold consultations between the Conference's formal sessions.

The progress made by the Conference gives us hope that every State in the region, particularly Israel, will participate in the subsequent sessions, in order to work on universalizing the Treaty and the application of the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards in the region. We also look forward to the participation of observer delegations. The positive developments in the second session, along with the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, are important advances. It is also our hope that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will soon enter into force, and we underscore the primary responsibility of nuclear-weapon States that have not yet acceded to it.

With regard to the Commission's other agenda item, on outer space, we also hope that it will be able to adopt recommendations that will contribute to preventing an arms race in outer space and will build on previous recommendations and efforts in that regard. I also welcome the open-ended working group established last year on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours.

In conclusion, as we begin our work, I call on all Member States to maintain the momentum that the Commission created beginning in 2017, when it was able to adopt substantive recommendations for the first time since 1999. We hope that this trend will continue so that we can reduce the current tensions in the international arena.

**The Chair:** I have been informed that the Russian Federation would like to take the floor at this stage under rule 113 of the Assembly's rules of procedure. I would just like to clarify with the representative of the Russian Federation whether this is a point of order on procedure, because delegations will have the right to reply on substantive issues at the end of the meeting.

**Ms. Shestopalova** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): No, this is not a right of reply. This is a comment in accordance with rule 113. A number of previous speakers have given a significant amount of time to the situation in Ukraine. We oppose the politicization of our specialized disarmament platform, and we count on your assistance, Mr. Chair, with a view to depoliticizing the work of the Disarmament Commission.

**Ms. Jáquez Huacuja** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is very pleased to see you leading the Disarmament Commission (UNDC), Mr. Chair. South Africa is a friend and ally of Mexico, and its historical example has guided the efforts of those of us who seek to maintain and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. The fact that this is the first time in three years that the Commission is meeting substantively is worth celebrating. However, we cannot maintain a congratulatory tone considering that we are meeting against a bleak backdrop of war, which has in particular brought renewed attention to the existential threat that nuclear weapons represent for the survival of humankind and the possibility that they might be used again, giving our work a sense of urgency.

"Enduring international peace and security cannot be built on the accumulation of weaponry by military alliances nor be sustained by a precarious balance of deterrence or doctrines of strategic superiority. Genuine and lasting peace can only be created through the effective implementation of the security system provided for in the Charter of the United Nations and the speedy and substantial reduction of arms and armed forces, by international agreement and mutual example, leading ultimately to general and complete disarmament under

effective international control. At the same time, the causes of the arms race and threats to peace must be reduced and to this end effective action should be taken to eliminate tensions and settle disputes by peaceful means.” (*General Assembly resolution S-10/2, para.13*)

The words I have just read are not good wishes from Mexico. They are quoted verbatim from the final document of the 1978 first special session on disarmament of the General Assembly, the same session that laid out the design and mandate for the disarmament machinery, including the Commission, which is obliged to follow up on those agreements and issue recommendations accordingly. That language shows the validity of much of what was agreed on in the first special session on disarmament, as well as the distance that remains to be traversed. That is why I am deeply concerned about the fact that the disarmament machinery is still failing to fulfil its mandates. Every year that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva does not adopt a programme of work, as is happening at the moment, that work is replaced by deliberations in subsidiary bodies, usurping and duplicating the work that the Disarmament Commission should do. If we add to this that the UNDC has been unable to meet until now, or to issue recommendations on nuclear disarmament since 1999, we are witnessing serious distortions in the disarmament machinery, at a time when the world is paying renewed attention to the issue that the Commission should be debating for the benefit of all.

We hear over and over again that multilateral forums do not operate in a vacuum, and that the current international situation is hindering our ability to reach agreements, especially on matters of peace and security. However, history has shown us that at times of great tension, such as at the height of the Cold War, we have been able to reach international agreements of great importance for international peace and security, as well as for the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The multilateral forums were created precisely to provide the space to discuss and seek shared solutions to shared issues. Should we not be more focused on making these forums work effectively? Should we not be doing everything we can to preserve rather than undermine them? We urge all United Nations members to reflect on whether the forums that we have encourage decision-making processes and solutions or inhibit them. If they are not working, we should decide calmly

and firmly to reform and change them. We will not consent to paralysis, inaction, duplication or pretence in the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery. The credibility of the disarmament machinery, and of the United Nations, depends on the agreements we reach, provided that we actually work rather than simply keep ourselves busy. At the end of the day, it also represents the difference between the law of the jungle and civilization, and the order underpinned by this Organization and the values and principles enshrined in its Charter.

Let us first focus on the fact that the UNDC is holding its first substantive session in three years and deliberating on the two issues on its agenda, formally, effectively and with an outcome. That will send a positive signal to the world, which is watching the capacity of the United Nations to work and address its current problems. You can count on Mexico in these efforts, Mr. Chair, and on our commitment to achieving successful results during this session.

**Mr. Chindawongse** (Thailand): I would like to join others in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over this long-awaited session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We have every confidence that you will lead us in a fruitful and productive session. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election as well as the Chairs of the Working Groups.

Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Cambodia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and would like to make the following additional points.

First, we cannot overemphasize the importance and value of the UNDC’s work as the only specialized body in the United Nations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation with universal membership. As a key part of the global disarmament machinery, the Commission helps solidify trust in multilateralism by pursuing dialogue and common ground. Member States should therefore use this session to work together on reinforcing a strong foundation for our collective arms-control efforts.

Secondly, as the danger of nuclear weapons and their devastating consequences — both to people and our planet — continues to hang over us all, Thailand reaffirms its commitment to international obligations



under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We call on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitments, in particular under article VI, to a full, balanced implementation of the NPT's three pillars. We also urge all parties to work in good faith for the success of the upcoming tenth NPT Review Conference, and we hope that this session of the UNDC will jump-start the conversations needed for a successful meeting.

Thirdly, the best guarantee of humankind's security from the threat of nuclear weapons is a world free of nuclear weapons. Let us not forget that the well-being of generations and the gains of sustainable development and progress can all be reversed, if not swept aside, if nuclear weapons are detonated. Thailand therefore supports initiatives that seek to re-energize, complement and reinforce existing international efforts in achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons. As such, the swift entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons helped to solidify nuclear disarmament as a moral and ethical imperative as well as a legal obligation. We encourage all Member States, whether or not they are party to the Treaty, to participate in its first meeting of States parties. In the meantime, we also support efforts to prevent the use of nuclear weapons and reduce the risk of their use. In that connection, Thailand would like to recall the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' statement on disarmament and non-proliferation issued earlier this year, welcoming the joint statement of 3 January by the five nuclear-weapon States on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races, and we hope that the latter will continue to comply with the commitments they reaffirmed.

Fourthly, we must also continue to reaffirm and implement our existing obligations, including within our respective regions. As the depositary State of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), also known as the Bangkok Treaty, Thailand reiterates its commitment to preserving South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons, based on the Treaty, and free of all other weapons of mass destruction, as called for in the ASEAN Charter. We encourage the nuclear-weapon States and the States parties to the SEANWFZ Treaty to work constructively with a view to ensuring the nuclear-weapon States' speedy accession to the Protocol to the Treaty. Thailand also attaches great importance to universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to

the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, a right that is guaranteed by the NPT on the basis of the respective safeguards agreements and in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, whose invaluable contributions, including in the area of nuclear safety, we continue to support.

Fifthly, on outer space, Thailand recognizes that in recent years we have seen considerable development and interest in space applications, which demands that we must continue to improve trust and confidence and build on existing efforts to maintain outer space as a domain exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of humankind, particularly in terms of socioeconomic and technological development and sustainable development as a whole. We hope that this session of the UNDC will enable us to deepen our discussion on enhancing space security through greater transparency, confidence-building and enhanced cooperation. Indeed, the promotion and enhancement of mutual trust and confidence, and the promotion of confidence-building measures, will go a long way to generating an atmosphere conducive to disarmament.

Finally, as global dynamics, trends and security challenges that have a bearing on disarmament continue to evolve and unfold, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that the UNDC rises to the occasion and makes the relevant recommendations in fulfilment of its mandate. We must remember that the deliberations and decisions made here are not utopian but have practical, real-world consequences. For its part, Thailand will make every effort to contribute constructively to the Commission's important work.

**Mr. Hossain** (Bangladesh): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the Chair of the 2022 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I also warmly congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and I would also like to share details of our national position.

The increasingly volatile security situation around the world makes a compelling case for reinvigorating the entire disarmament machinery, including the UNDC. We attach great importance to the work of the Commission, as the sole deliberative body with universal membership, in building and fostering consensus on critical issues related to general and

complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament. My delegation stresses how urgent it is to achieve concrete results in the current UNDC cycle, and to that end we urge all Member States, and nuclear-weapon States in particular, to show genuine political will and flexibility.

Bangladesh's commitment to general and complete disarmament is total and unwavering. It is our constitutional obligation and remains a fundamental tenet of our peace-centric foreign-policy objectives. Guided by that principle, Bangladesh remains at the forefront in assuming higher obligations under all the major multilateral disarmament treaties. We believe that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security lies in the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It was based on that belief that we ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We welcomed the Treaty's entry into force and would like to see it fully implemented by all, including States in possession of nuclear weapons, as a matter of priority. We look forward to the first meeting of States parties to the Treaty with a view to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

We believe that investment in nuclear weapons can neither achieve nor guarantee global peace and security. We call on all nuclear-weapon States to implement their treaty obligations without delay and to demonstrate strong resolve at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), so that we can produce a meaningful, tangible and sustainable outcome that will further strengthen the NPT regime.

We reiterate our concerns about the past two decades' protracted impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, due to a lack of consensus on a programme of work. That situation must be addressed diligently and urgently.

We reaffirm the inalienable right of every Member State to pursue the peaceful use of nuclear energy in compliance with the relevant safeguards and safety and security measures. In our national context, we remain committed to further deepening our existing cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency by enhancing our capacity for compliance.

Bangladesh emphasizes the inalienable right of all Member States to explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes. Based on that belief, we became a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of

Outer Space last year. We believe that regardless of their capacity levels in space-science research and technology, all States ought to be able to contribute their perspectives and concerns when defining the future rules for outer space. We reiterate our call for a legally binding international instrument for preventing the weaponization of outer space.

The pandemic has reminded us that weapon stockpiles do not save human lives and cannot guarantee peace and security. We remain deeply concerned about the rise in global military expenditure that has sadly continued even in this pandemic. Those funds could be better used to protect our planet and people, guarantee peace and prevent future pandemics.

We are confident that under your able stewardship, Mr. Chair, this UNDC session will help to advance our work in the desired direction. We assure you of our delegation's unstinting support for your work and that of the Chairs of the Working Groups.

**Mr. Wu Jianjian** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your leadership of this session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC). The Chinese delegation stands ready to cooperate with you and all delegations to work for positive results during this session.

The international security landscape is undergoing complex and profound changes. We are seeing traditional security crises and non-traditional security challenges appearing one after another. The world, already fraught with uncertainties, has entered a new phase of turmoil and transformation. One country in particular is holding on to a Cold War mentality, pursuing unilateralism and self-interest and seeking its own absolute security. That backdrop has rendered international and regional security situations more complex. Our global strategic stability and balance are being challenged. The multilateral arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes are under attack. In the face of a new era and a complex international situation, China advocates building a shared future for humankind. We call on countries to establish a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable concept of security and to further global security governance jointly, thereby contributing to the maintenance of world peace and stability. China will firmly defend true multilateralism, encourage greater equity and rationality in the international security

order and work tirelessly for a world of lasting peace and universal security.

Of all the nuclear-weapon States, China has the most stable, consistent and predictable nuclear strategies and policies. Since the first day of our possession of nuclear weapons, we have actively championed their complete prohibition and destruction. We have never wavered in pursuing a defensive national defence policy and nuclear strategy of self-defence. China has and will continue to keep its own nuclear capabilities to the minimum reliable level needed for State security. China never competes with any country in terms of input, quantities or scale.

States with the greatest nuclear arsenals bear a special and primary responsibility with regard to nuclear disarmament. They should therefore continue to substantially reduce their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding way. One particular country is pursuing its own absolute security by vigorously modernizing its nuclear weapons and enhancing their role in State security policy, in an attempt to evade its nuclear disarmament responsibilities that is an obstacle to the international nuclear disarmament process. Besides that, certain countries are intent on proceeding with nuclear cooperation in total disregard for international concerns and with grave risks for nuclear proliferation. Such actions violate the purposes and principles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), jeopardize regional peace and stability and undermine the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. China urges those countries to honour their nuclear non-proliferation obligations and work diligently to uphold the international non-proliferation regime and maintain regional peace and stability.

At the beginning of this year, with China's active participation and positive facilitation, the leaders of the permanent five members of the Security Council issued a joint statement on preventing nuclear war and avoiding an arms race, emphasizing that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought and reaffirming their vow to refrain from targeting one another or any other State with nuclear weapons. It was the first time that the permanent five had issued a statement on nuclear weapons, sending a message about the importance of maintaining global strategic stability and reducing the risk of nuclear conflict. The message also has major significance for our achievement of our nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals. We

will continue to work for those goals by deepening our cooperation and enhancing mutual trust, thereby contributing to global nuclear disarmament and the nuclear non-proliferation process.

The security situation in outer space is serious. One particular country is vigorously pursuing military strategies in outer space and seeking dominance there. It has been researching, developing and experimenting with outer-space weapons and weapon systems and seeking to deploy them, thereby escalating the risk of an arms race in outer space. In our view, the conclusion of a new international legal instrument through negotiation is the best way to address the security issues in outer space, and it is imperative to achieve that now. Outer-space transparency and confidence-building measures are limited by virtue of being voluntary and therefore cannot replace negotiations or international legal instruments. Moreover, there should be no preconditions for negotiations. The so-called code of conduct on outer-space activities conflates the security risks of an arms race in outer space with potential security issues related to its peaceful use. It takes an overly broad, vague and highly subjective approach to regulating behaviour in outer space and could thereby provide one particular country with a pretext for shifting blame and responsibility, leading to a further loss of focus in multilateral arms control in outer space.

In recent years China, Russia and many other States have campaigned actively for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty preventing the weaponization of outer space and have put forward a draft of such a treaty. In 2018 and 2019 the Group of Governmental Experts on further effective measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, with the support of China and Russia, fully evaluated the outer-space security situation, assessed the status quo and the weaknesses in the existing international legal instruments and engaged in extensive discussions focused on elements of future legal instruments. Though the Group failed to produce a report, it held the deepest and most substantive discussion on outer-space arms control that had taken place in decades. Those efforts are further proof that a negotiated legal instrument on arms control in outer space is not only supported by major political will and a sound technical foundation but is increasingly and urgently needed.

The UNDC is the only multilateral deliberative body on disarmament, and its role and status are irreplaceable. Over the years it has put forward many

valuable suggestions on advancing international arms control and the disarmament process. Some norms developed in this way have become guiding documents in various areas. This year is one of transition in the current review cycle. China hopes that we can all participate actively and practically in the substantive discussions on the two agenda items and strive for progress in the current cycle.

**Mr. Murillo Quesada** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the Chairs of the two Working Groups, on your election to lead the work of the Disarmament Commission. You can count on my country's full support in the work ahead of us.

The international order has changed a great deal since we last met. Nuclear-weapon States have made no progress on their commitment to general and complete disarmament and have continued their vertical proliferation. To quote Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, nuclear weapons do not guarantee security, in fact quite the opposite. Costa Rica considers that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to ensure international peace and security.

The current events in Ukraine, especially those of 4 March in Zaporizhia, only confirm how close we are to a nuclear incident. We must try to prevent those kinds of violations of international law in forums such as this one, especially when they endanger us as a species. We therefore ask for respect for Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts, which states that nuclear electrical generating stations shall not be made the object of attack, even where these objects are military objectives.

Fortunately, our hopes were renewed on 22 January 2021, when we reached ratifications by more than 50 States of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), enabling its entry into force. In addition to those States parties, there are 37 signatory States and 40 that have given their support to the Treaty in various resolutions of the First Committee and the General Assembly. Thanks to the TPNW, it is now against international law, and therefore illegal, to use, develop, test, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons. Despite its importance, however, the TPNW is one instrument among many others that complement and strengthen the norms of the

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime.

We also want to keep in mind the outcomes of previous NPT review processes, such as the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1995 and 2000, and in particular the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to achieving the total elimination of their arsenals while respecting their obligations to observe the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability, as laid down in the Treaty. Costa Rica considers that those commitments, including the extensive 2010 action plan under the three pillars of the Treaty, remain in force and valid until fully implemented.

I would now like to turn to the subject of Working Group II, on outer space. Even before the invasion of Ukraine, some States had openly declared that they would pursue offensive capabilities in outer space in order to protect their national security. In an unstable context, that is a threat to international peace and security. We should be very worried about the possibility that there are States conducting activities in space or using it for purposes that are not necessarily peaceful. That is why we believe that not only should there be no weapons of any kind in space, but it should not be a pathway through which weapons such as ballistic missiles can travel.

Costa Rica is of the view that the international system already has a clear legal regime that protects operations in space. However, we also believe in improving that regime with new instruments, adapted to new realities. We therefore welcome the efforts aimed at negotiating a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, such as the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on further effective measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, mandated under resolution 72/250 and presented on 31 January 2019. Costa Rica adheres to the basic principles of the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. The Commission should therefore demand clear positions, aimed at strengthening the spirit of article I of the Outer Space Treaty, and emphasize the concept that space belongs to all of us equally and that every State, without any discrimination and regardless of its degree of scientific, technical and economic development, has the right to access outer space under equal conditions



in order to carry out exclusively peaceful activities. In this multilateral framework and in the various regional bodies, we should encourage and ensure that space is used and explored exclusively for peaceful purposes, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty. It is also vital to ensure that the UNDC focuses on combating the placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space and in particular the militarization of celestial bodies and outer space.

The agreements related to the peaceful uses of outer space should be reviewed and updated to ensure that they are appropriate to the current geopolitical context. For example, their provisions related to arms-control instruments could be updated to fill legal gaps that have emerged with time and, especially, technological advances. Costa Rica reiterates that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space contributes to efforts to prevent the arms race in outer space, since development for all nations without distinction translates into global security.

Since 2016 Costa Rica has worked on creating an aerospace cluster. We decided that space research and exploration should be carried out in accordance with the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Just over three years ago, Costa Rica became a space nation with the launch of its first satellite, which measures the effects of climate change for our whole region as well as our country. In the one year that has passed since our country has had its own space agency, our activities in space have become increasingly complex, involving a growing number of public, private and academic actors forming an international space community in our country. Today that community has 36 companies specializing in electromechanical systems and software development, generating high-quality, well-paid jobs, which also contributes to creating security.

Finally, we believe that international cooperation is essential to maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. In that context, cooperation complements the efforts of countries like ours that little by little are beginning to get involved in the world of space science and technology and their peaceful applications. We therefore welcome the participation of non-State actors in the discussions on this topic.

**Mr. Castañeda Solares** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow us to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau, on

your election to guide the work of this second year of the triennial cycle of the Disarmament Commission. We also congratulate Jamaica and Hungary on chairing the two Working Groups. I want to assure you of Guatemala's full support and collaboration in ensuring the successful conduct of the work of the Commission.

In the wake of our unfortunate inability to continue the work of the Commission after 2019, my delegation would like to emphasize the Commission's importance as the only specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery for considering specific disarmament issues and presenting concrete recommendations on them to the General Assembly. Given the current international environment, in which threats to peace and security are becoming more frequent, with armed conflicts and frequent acts of terrorism, and faced with the risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors or the possibility of new nuclear incidents, it is more necessary than ever to address the issues before us today. Spending on arms continues to rise, while we are told that there are not enough resources to tackle the challenges afflicting our peoples, such as hunger, poverty and disease. On top of that is a lack of quantitative progress in terms of reducing nuclear arsenals and the growing threat that nuclear-weapon States are modernizing or adding to them, based on the fallacious argument that such weapons are essential to their national security.

My country is firmly committed to the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and is a strong advocate for general, complete and verifiable disarmament. We are convinced that it is possible for all of us to exist in a world without nuclear weapons, and that maintaining international peace and security without resorting to nuclear deterrence, besides being an ethical imperative, is an achievable objective and in line with the purposes for which the United Nations was founded. In that context, my country is proud to be a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first densely populated zone free of nuclear weapons and has served as a model for the creation of other, similar zones, as well as reminding the nuclear Powers that our countries reject the existence of these weapons of mass destruction. In adherence to those principles, on 15 March my country gave domestic approval to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and we expect to deposit our ratification with this Organization in the next few weeks.

My country reiterates its position that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons complements the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and strengthens its three fundamental pillars of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We believe it is timely that the recommendations to be issued from this session of the Disarmament Commission will coincide with the upcoming NPT Review Conference, offering States an opportunity to strengthen the Conference's outcome document.

With regard to the issue of the practical application of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities, my delegation reiterates its concern about a possible arms race in outer space, taking into account that it could become an arena for military clashes, which would be contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as a tragedy for human life. Guatemala supports the adoption of a treaty on the prevention and prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space. We have expressed our commitment to that proposal in various multilateral forums, and we support any initiative that contributes to formulating an international legal regime on the subject. Until an international treaty is adopted to regulate the issue, we believe we should continue implementing international transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space, while keeping in mind that they can never be an alternative to the disarmament regime.

My delegation reiterates that the exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, should be exclusively for peaceful purposes, in accordance with international law, and for the benefit of all nations, regardless of their level of economic, scientific or technological development.

The international community is facing challenges in its efforts to strengthen approaches that encourage disarmament. What is most needed in that regard is the expressed political will of the international community and a set of concrete, scheduled and verifiable actions that can enable us to leave rhetoric behind and move to action. You can be sure, Mr. Chair, that my delegation will contribute constructively to the deliberations of the two Working Groups during this cycle of the Disarmament Commission.

**Ms. Squeff** (Argentina): At the outset, Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate you, as well as the members

of the Bureau, on your elections, and to wish you every success in the 2022 session of the Disarmament Commission. You can count on my delegation's help in the Commission's crucial work in support of the interests of international peace and security. We also congratulate Hungary and Jamaica on their assumption of the chairships of the two Working Groups.

Argentina attaches enormous importance to the disarmament machinery and its preservation. The global situation regarding disarmament and non-proliferation presents us with challenges that require the international community to work constructively, seeking the broadest possible consensus and with a view to the ultimate goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. My delegation believes that in the current difficult international context, the best way to achieve concrete progress is through inclusive and constructive dialogue that takes into account the interests and concerns of all Member States, taking advantage of the deliberative nature and universal membership of the Commission. In pursuit of general and complete disarmament, my country does not believe that the virtues of a tiered approach are incompatible with the goal of the total elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons. While such a ban could take the form of a legally binding instrument, concrete measures are also required if we are to achieve any kind of effectiveness. To that end, it is essential that the nuclear-weapon States participate in negotiating measures that can produce concrete results in terms of disarmament, strengthen the verification regime and consolidate the achievements made in the field of non-proliferation.

The Argentine Republic has a substantive nuclear programme that has now existed for more than 70 years. Its peaceful vocation and commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation have been clearly demonstrated. In that context, my delegation is pleased that agreement was reached on holding the next Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in August. The Review Conference, presided over by Argentina, will serve to affirm the importance of defending the balance of obligations and rights for its States parties that is still valid today, more than 50 years later. The delay that we have seen in States' honouring of their obligations on complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament, as established in article VI of the NPT, does not mean that the commitment has vanished. On the contrary, it affirms the need to once again call loudly for its fulfilment.

My delegation would also like to highlight the adoption of resolution 76/52, entitled, “Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials”, which was presented jointly for the first time by Brazil and Argentina in the framework of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, and was adopted by consensus. The resolution demonstrates the international community’s support for the trust-building process and the bilateral cooperation model in the nuclear arena between the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Argentine Republic, a corollary of which was the creation in 1991 of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials. The Agency’s contribution, along with other important instruments such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, has strengthened regional and international security and has been vital to establishing the Latin American and Caribbean region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Argentina recognizes the shared interest of all humankind in this area and the sovereign right of every State to participate in the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes, and we believe firmly in the benefits that its use can bring to human development. Argentina opposes the militarization of outer space and supports strictly limiting its use, as the common heritage of humankind, to improving living conditions and advancing peace among the peoples that inhabit our planet.

We also reaffirm the fundamental role played by the Outer Space Treaty in preserving outer space for peaceful purposes and promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to maintaining international peace and security and furthering international cooperation. Preventing an arms race in outer space and prohibiting the placement or use of weapons there would help to avert a serious danger to international peace and security. However, the current regime has a gap, since it includes no legal restrictions on conventional weapons in Earth’s orbit. That gap is even clearer considering that the Treaty’s provisions expressly prohibit the testing of any type of weapons on the moon or other celestial bodies.

For all those reasons, my delegation supports negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty that prohibits the placement of weapons in outer space. Until that happens, there can be no question that it is appropriate and essential to adopt international transparency and confidence-building measures on outer-space-related activities. It is our

understanding that binding measures such as those that have been mentioned could be adopted, in particular those related to the notification and tracking of activities in outer space. Argentina favours a comprehensive approach with the understanding that an instrument for preventing an arms race in outer space should both regulate behaviour and monitor capabilities, equipment and technologies. In turn, and taking into account the dual nature of space technologies, particular attention should be paid to avoiding elements that could affect the right to develop and acquire technology and equipment for the peaceful use of outer space. In that context, it is also important to note that a possible instrument on this matter should contain provisions on capacity-building that correspond to the obligations it lays out.

In that context, Argentina believes that verification is one of the main challenges to formulating a binding instrument, mainly because of the technological difficulty involved, especially as objects grow ever smaller. It would therefore be a priority to come up with a scenario with a greater level of trust and mutual responsibility. Regional and universal cooperation in the development of space activities is an important tool in that regard, enabling us to create synergies and an awareness of the benefits that space science and technology can bring to sustainable development.

**Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your leadership of the Disarmament Commission this year, and to wish you every success. We also congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the two Working Groups. We feel sure that your efforts will lead to a successful outcome for the Commission after its two-year hiatus, and that it will continue to play its role as a vital platform for discussing the challenges and risks that are facing international peace and security in the area of disarmament.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made earlier on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Jordan is deeply concerned about the lack of real, tangible progress in nuclear disarmament and in implementing agreed commitments in that context. We support international efforts to prohibit nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and reiterate the importance of promoting all initiatives aimed at furthering our common disarmament objectives.

To that end, we call for an inclusive and balanced dialogue that can ensure the success of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to be held in New York in August. We hope that the Conference will be able to adopt a comprehensive document reflecting a broad consensus in the areas of disarmament and the universalization of the Treaty, as well as the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In the run-up to the Review Conference, we hope to see States engaged actively in constructive negotiations and able to issue a final document that reflects the will of the international community in the area of disarmament. That demands that we strengthen disarmament diplomacy, as the NPT provides. We also hope that the Disarmament Commission will make progress during the current session, especially in the area of nuclear disarmament, which would contribute to the success of the Review Conference, something that must be a priority considering the current tensions in the world.

In that context, we also call on all States to consider the outcome of the two sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. They stressed the desire of the participating States of the region to establish such a zone in order to strengthen international peace and security by adopting a legally binding agreement that contributes to abolishing such weapons in the region. Jordan calls on Working Group I, on nuclear disarmament, to support the efforts of the States of the region and urge them to actively participate in the work of the Conference in order to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

With regard to the agenda item on preventing an arms race in outer space, Jordan underscores the importance of preventing any such arms race while maintaining the right of all States to use outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes. We support international efforts to work for common objectives on the basis of the outcome achieved by the Group of Governmental Experts on further effective measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space in accordance with resolution 72/250.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, I reiterate my delegation's full support for the work of the Disarmament

Commission, and we look forward to working closely with all States during your stewardship of this session.

**Mr. Bahr Aluloom** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to sincerely congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the 2022 session of the Disarmament Commission. We hope that your diplomatic expertise and competence will help us achieve positive results, and we fully support you and the members of the Bureau in ensuring the success of the session. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Kurt Davis of Jamaica and Mrs. Szilvia Balázs of Hungary on their respective elections as Chairs of Working Group I, on nuclear disarmament, and Working Group II, on outer space.

The delegation of Iraq aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The delegation of Iraq once again stresses the pivotal role played by the Disarmament Commission as the multilateral deliberative forum for disarmament issues within the United Nations. It is therefore important, especially in the light of the current difficult international circumstances, that we redouble our efforts to arrive at an agreement on recommendations that can address the concerns of all Member States and help to create a world of peace and security.

The Government of Iraq is deeply concerned about the continuing existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use or threat of use. We are also concerned about the continued absence of tangible progress in the area of nuclear disarmament. We firmly believe that the full and complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee that there will be no use or threat of use of such weapons. In that regard, Iraq once again reiterates its unwavering commitment and support to all disarmament conventions and treaties, especially those related to weapons of mass destruction, and its belief in the importance of achieving their universality as soon as possible. Nuclear disarmament must remain a top priority on the international agenda, and we should initiate negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament without delay in order to achieve a non-discriminatory, international and verifiable treaty that would prohibit the possession, development, production, storage, transfer and use of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame.



Iraq also emphasizes the urgent need to develop a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument giving non-nuclear-weapon States guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That is a top priority. We call on all countries participating in this session of the Commission to spare no effort in showing the political will and flexibility needed to arrive at practical and comprehensible recommendations for achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in order to ensure a secure and prosperous future for future generations.

Iraq attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole forum for negotiating disarmament issues. The entrenched positions of Member States unwilling to show the flexibility needed for the work of the Conference to be resumed have resulted in a decades-long stalemate and led to a number of disarmament issues being treated outside the Conference, which also hampers the work of other United Nations disarmament mechanisms. In that regard, Iraq welcomed the Conference on Disarmament's most recently adopted decision, establishing five subsidiary bodies to discuss the items on its agenda. We hope that it will help revitalize the Conference and overcome the deadlock.

Iraq believes that outer space is the common heritage of humankind and should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. Outer space must be within reach of all if all are to reap the benefits of space technologies and services, which can contribute to economic growth and improve living conditions around the world. We once again express our support for all initiatives aimed at strengthening the peaceful and equitable use of outer space. The delegation of Iraq also underscores the importance of prohibiting any placement or deployment of weapons in outer space, whether for defensive or offensive purposes, as well as preventing the possibility of a costly and destructive arms race. Iraq believes that all States, particularly those with major space capabilities, should take the necessary measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, which will be crucial to strengthening international cooperation in exploring outer space and using it for peaceful purposes. In that regard, we call for considering the adoption of a legally binding instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space as soon as possible.

In conclusion, we once again reiterate our support and readiness to cooperate with you, Mr. Chair, on

adopting recommendations that respond to the concerns of all Member States.

**Mr. Ruidíaz Pérez (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the Disarmament Commission, and wishing you every success in your work this year. We are committed to contributing actively and positively to our deliberations.

Chile associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Chile remains a firm supporter and promoter of general and complete disarmament, while always prioritizing debate in a broad, transparent and democratic multilateral space, in line with its foreign policy. We adhere firmly to the principle of indivisible international security, meaning that all States, regardless of their size or power, have a shared responsibility to contribute to building a rules- and cooperation-based international order. That is why we emphasize the importance of the Disarmament Commission, the specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery that enables us to conduct debates on priority issues with a view to producing substantive recommendations.

Nuclear disarmament is a priority for Chile. The international community must make progress in ensuring the non-proliferation of these weapons of mass destruction, which compromise humankind's very existence. That is why it is essential to include this subject in the Commission's discussions. Chile believes firmly that we must maintain our common goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons without further delay. Besides being an ethical imperative, maintaining international peace and security without resorting to nuclear deterrence is an achievable goal that is also in line with our system of human rights protection. This is particularly important in view of the current international environment, which has been shaken by threats of mass destruction made in open violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We agree that the outlook today is not encouraging, and the slow pace of nuclear disarmament has increased frustration among Member States that do not have nuclear weapons. Concerns are growing about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from the use of a nuclear weapon, not to mention what a global nuclear war would entail, but that

scenario can and should change. On 24 August 2021, Chile's National Congress ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and we are proceeding with the deposit of our instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General. With that, our country, together with 58 others so far, is leading the world in the fight against the possession of nuclear bombs.

Regarding the second item on our programme of work, Chile recognizes the importance of incorporating the topic of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities along with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. We therefore urge for affirming the common interest of promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes and for the benefit and interests of all humankind, regardless of individual countries' levels of social, economic or scientific development. Chile appreciates that transparency measures and the development of activities in outer space, which we will discuss in this session, must be aligned to achieve the standards needed to prevent an arms race in outer space, which include a legally binding instrument.

In conclusion, we call for increasing trust and transparency in order to achieve the Commission's objectives. We therefore urge everyone to let pragmatism, commitment, cooperation and the greatest possible flexibility be our guides for this session. It is the responsibility of us all to respond to the concerns of the international community on these matters.

**Mr. Tchalaré** (Togo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Mr. Chair, the delegation of Togo would like to express its warm congratulations to you and the members of the Bureau on your election. We wish you every success in your mission and assure you of our support. We also want to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu for her remarks.

Togo aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

The difficulties that humankind is experiencing in terms of peace and security have given us a better understanding of the crucial importance of those two factors for global political, economic and social stability. In that regard, my delegation would like to reaffirm its position in support of disarmament in all its aspects. Togo welcomes the commitment of the Secretary-

General, who has prioritized the issue of international peace and security. We believe in the relevance of commitment three of the Secretary-General on peace and conflict prevention, especially his action aimed at reducing strategic risks, investing in prevention and peacebuilding and supporting regional prevention. Incidentally, we are particularly pleased that this meeting is being held, as it shows the Organization's resilience in the face of the coronavirus disease.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, Togo calls for ensuring that nuclear energy can be used for peaceful purposes. With a view to reducing the nuclear risk considerably, we also want to take this opportunity to invite States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), whose effective implementation requires the guarantee of universality. We hope that the outcome of the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT will be different from that of the previous one, which unfortunately failed to adopt a consensus document. We also want to make the same appeal to States not party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, specifically those listed in its annex 2.

We welcomed the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and encourage States that are not party to it, in particular nuclear-weapon States, to seize this historic opportunity to accede to it. We also welcome the holding of the first meeting of States parties to the Treaty, scheduled to take place in Vienna in June. We hope that this important meeting will create reassuring prospects for nuclear disarmament around the world. Like other States, Togo believes that we need to develop a coherent and unified legal framework on nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we join the many calls for the negotiation of a comprehensive convention on nuclear disarmament and hope that the issue will be discussed during this session of the Commission.

With regard to conventional weapons, Togo is following attentively the various negotiation processes based on their respective legal instruments. The problem of conventional weapons is of such importance that States must examine it if we are to improve the existing legal framework. In that regard, Togo welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 76/233 of 24 December 2021, establishing an open-ended working group responsible for defining a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address existing gaps in ammunition management

throughout its life cycle, and whose first meeting is scheduled for this year. In addition, we hope that the eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, scheduled to take place in Geneva between 22 and 26 August, will constitute an important step in the implementation of the Treaty. Togo also reaffirms its adherence to 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, adopted in 2005 by the General Assembly. Their implementation will be discussed at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, which is scheduled for this year and in which Togo will take part.

I want to reaffirm my country's position that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes. In our view, the exploration of outer space should serve to help us deal with the economic and social challenges we face. The Togolese delegation therefore welcomed the adoption last year of resolutions calling for ensuring the use of space for peaceful purposes.

Since achieving international sovereignty, Togo has always valued the idea of nuclear disarmament as an essential condition for establishing lasting peace in the world. That is why we are party to the NPT, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Togo is also a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In addition, on 11 March 2020 my country signed a five-year technical cooperation framework agreement with the International Atomic Energy

Agency to support its efforts in the area of sustainable development. On 4 June 2020 our National Assembly enacted a law on the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy, for which our Council of Ministers adopted a decree establishing a national authority for nuclear safety and security.

Aware of the importance of disarmament to our countries' peace, security and stability, and in collaboration with the United Nations, Togo has decided to organize a high-level conference on political transitions and the fight against terrorism in the Sahel and in West Africa, regions that have been affected by political and security crises for a number of years. Its objectives are to improve understanding of recent trends and developments in the countries of West Africa and the Sahel region that are dealing with the scourges of insecurity and terrorism and to reflect on ways and means to contain the threat of terrorism and remain mobilized in the face of that danger before, during and after periods of political transition. This important diplomatic meeting, which will take place in Lomé on 21 April, will also be an opportunity to share good practices in conventional arms control, because the issue of terrorism and the kinds of insecurity it can create call for considering matters of arms trafficking. The conference is expected to lead to the adoption of a declaration from Lomé on political transitions and the fight against terrorism in the Sahel and West Africa. We therefore hope that we will all be involved in making the Lomé conference a real success.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*