



General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

378th meeting

 Monday, 4 April 2022, 3 p.m.
 New York

Chair: Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa)

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

General debate (continued)

The Chair: Regarding the list of speakers for this general exchange of views, I urge delegations that have not yet done so to enter their names on the list as soon as possible.

To maximize the time available to us for this segment, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I should remind all delegations already inscribed on the list that a rolling list implies that they should be prepared to make their statements at any time, possibly sooner than originally scheduled.

I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the maximum 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. Pedroso Cuesta (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba supports the statement made this morning by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.377).

We would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the Disarmament Commission at this year's substantive session. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups.

We are pleased that the Commission has resumed its substantive work, and we attach great importance to it as a specialized deliberative body, in line with our commitment to supporting the disarmament machinery. We welcome the consensus that was reached to continue considering the agenda items from the Commission's 2018-2020 cycle, referred to in General Assembly resolution 73/82, given that the Commission has not held a formal substantive session since 2018. We call for the adoption of specific recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly on the items under consideration on nuclear disarmament and outer space.

Our work should focus primarily on recommendations for achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament, with our foremost priority being the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Such recommendations could drive progress towards that goal, especially this year, which will see the first meeting of States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The entry into force in January 2021 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a milestone on the path to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world, but additional efforts are required. The very existence of nuclear weapons continues to threaten the survival of humankind.

We support the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and encourage the continuing observance of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, as an opportunity for raising the

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international community's awareness of the danger of such weapons. We also support the continued convening of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. The nuclear-weapon States' lack of progress in fulfilling their obligations under article VI of the NPT has undermined the Treaty's credibility, and that trend must be reversed. Non-proliferation is not an end in itself but a stepping stone to nuclear disarmament.

It is also important for the Commission to agree on recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities, with the goal of preventing an arms race there. However, such measures should not be put forward as an alternative to disarmament. The negotiation and speedy adoption of a treaty on the prevention and prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space is vital and will supplement the existing legal regime. Any recommendations issued by the Commission that concern outer space should be prepared in a way that respects the mandates of the United Nations bodies that consider the various aspects of the issue.

Mr. Chair, let me conclude by reaffirming my delegation's support to you in discharging your duties to ensure the successful outcome of the work of the Commission.

Mrs. González Hernández (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to welcome you, Sir, and congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission as it resumes the work of its three-year cycle. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and wish them success during the course of the 2022 session.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Uruguay is committed to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and to revitalizing multilateralism in support of universal and complete disarmament. We also urge States to become parties or signatories to the international conventions and agreements in this area, with a view to both prohibiting and preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons, and indeed any kind of weapon that threatens international peace and security. In that regard, my delegation is deeply concerned about the increase in global and regional tensions and the new and destabilizing arms races involving both strategic arms and conventional weapons, as well as worrying trends in politics that could undo the gains that our

disarmament institutions have achieved in the past. In these times, with the latent threat of use of nuclear weapons still persisting and representing a danger to us all, the Disarmament Commission is a critical element of the disarmament machinery as a deliberative body of the General Assembly, with universal membership.

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that Uruguay considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to be the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament regime and also stresses the importance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). We are therefore pleased that both the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the first meeting of States parties to the TPNW will soon take place, and we appreciate the efforts of the Commission in their support. We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is closely linked to the maintenance of international peace and security, and that when multiple regions prohibit nuclear weapons, that has a positive influence on other areas of the world. We therefore underscore the importance of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Our country is concerned about the fact that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force, and we therefore call on the States that have not yet ratified it to do so without delay.

Regarding the second item on our programme of work, my delegation recognizes the importance of incorporating the topic of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities. We welcome the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Every State here has the responsibility to work to avert an arms race in outer space by preventing the placement of weapons and devices there that could trigger it. Uruguay therefore supports the adoption of a treaty on the prevention and prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space and is ready to continue working on the issue.

In view of everything I have mentioned, we welcome the Commission's adoption of its programme of work and are pleased that this year's session will be held in the appropriate format. It is important for delegations here today to commit to supporting the work of the Commission to ensure that the outcome and eventual recommendations it yields will contribute to

international peace and security in the context of an ongoing global crisis.

Mrs. Narayanan Nair (India): On behalf of the delegation of India, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the 2022 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We assure you of our delegation's full support and constructive participation as you guide our work. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Kurt Davis of Jamaica and Mrs. Szilvia Balázs of Hungary on their election as Chairs of the two Working Groups and Mr. Zhangel'dy Syrymbet of Kazakhstan on his election as Vice-Chair of the Commission. And we thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her thoughtful remarks earlier today (see A/CN.10/PV.377).

India associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.377).

India is pleased that the Disarmament Commission, a vital part of the disarmament triad that also includes the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee, has been able to convene its 2022 substantive session after a hiatus of almost three years. In the context of the current geopolitical developments, our deliberations in the Commission assume even greater salience. As the only deliberative body within the United Nations on disarmament issues, the Commission plays a significant role as a platform for dialogue and cooperation, with its universal membership bringing together all Member States. The Commission has had important achievements in the past with its successful adoption of a number of guidelines and recommendations.

India considers the UNDC's work very important and looks forward to genuine dialogue that can create convergences and achieve the aims that were set out at the first General Assembly special session devoted to disarmament. In the final document of that session (resolution S-10/2), Member States collectively reaffirmed that ending the arms race and achieving real disarmament were vitally important and urgent tasks. However, four decades have passed and the international community has yet to effectively meet that historic challenge or the shared objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. India has been consistent in its support for global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament, which we firmly believe can be achieved through a time-bound, step-by-step process underwritten by

a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework. India precisely summarized that approach in a working paper submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 (CD/1816) with a number of proposals that remain relevant today. In line with its own vision and that of NAM, India has supported negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon convention in the CD.

Without prejudice to the priority attached to nuclear disarmament, we hope that negotiations will commence immediately in the CD towards a fissile material cut-off treaty, based on CD/1299 and the mandate it outlines. India has been participating constructively in the meetings of the subsidiary bodies established this year in the Conference on Disarmament and hopes that their substantive work will pave the way for negotiating legally binding instruments in that forum.

India has submitted a draft resolution to the General Assembly entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" every year since 1982, requesting that the CD commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in any circumstances. We have also submitted a draft resolution to the Assembly entitled "Reducing nuclear danger" every year since 1988, drawing global attention to the hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons and calling for steps to reduce the risk of the unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through de-alerting and de-targeting. Those two resolutions demonstrate our shared commitment to the common goal of nuclear disarmament.

My delegation looks forward to meaningful deliberations on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space under Working Group II. We maintain that while universal and non-discriminatory measures can play a useful complementary role, they cannot be a substitute for legally binding instruments in the field. India is a major spacefaring nation, and I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our position on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We remain opposed to its weaponization. We have not and will not resort to any kind of arms race in outer space. We remain committed to maintaining outer space as an ever-expanding frontier for the cooperative endeavours of all spacefaring nations. It is incumbent on all spacefaring nations and others to contribute to safeguarding outer space as the common heritage of humankind and preserve and promote the benefits

flowing from space technology and its applications for all.

We continue to support the substantive consideration of the prevention of an arms race in outer space within the multilateral framework of the United Nations. We remain committed to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament towards a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. India was an active participant in the Group of Governmental Experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which last met in March 2019. We also participated in the deliberations on transparency and confidence-building measures that took place during the informal meeting of the UNDC in April 2019.

Last year, at the seventy-sixth session of the First Committee, India voted in favour of four of five draft resolutions submitted under the outer-space cluster — that is, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space; on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space; on the no first placement of weapons in outer space; and on transparency and confidence building-measures in outer-space activities. India remains committed to playing a leading and constructive role with other partners to consolidate and strengthen the international regime for outer space as one that is universal and non-discriminatory and reinforces the safety of all legitimate space actors. India looks forward to in-depth discussions that can help us realize those objectives.

In conclusion, India hopes that our work this year in the UNDC will galvanize the disarmament machinery's pursuit of collective security in an increasingly turbulent environment. India stands ready to contribute to that process and work with fellow Member States to achieve our collective objectives.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC) during this year's substantive session, and to assure you of the Brazilian delegation's full support. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, as well as the Chairs of Working Groups I and II, on their respective elections.

After four years of successive postponements of the UNDC's substantive session, Brazil is extremely pleased to be taking part in the session this year. At a time that calls us to reflect deeply on the effectiveness of the disarmament machinery, we hope that delegations

will engage in this forum in a constructive manner and, most importantly, that they will not take for granted the decades-old efforts to keep disarmament at the top of the multilateral agenda. The more challenging the times, the greater the energy that we should put into the daily work of preserving the relevance of the disarmament agenda. With that in mind, we are ready to discuss concrete recommendations that could inform the negotiations to be carried out both in the forthcoming tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to take place in August, and the 2022 session of Conference on Disarmament, which this year established subsidiary bodies, including one dedicated to nuclear disarmament and another to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We are ready to take advantage of this window of opportunity and the Commission's universal membership to better explore all possible recommendations in those fields.

Regarding the first item of this session's agenda, we should recall that nuclear disarmament is a long-standing objective of the international community. Given the indiscriminate power of nuclear weapons and the existential threat that they pose to humankind, there have been a number of initiatives and proposals for pursuing their elimination since their beginning. That issue was the subject of the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 1(I)), which affirmed the objective of eliminating atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction from national armaments. More than 70 years have passed since then and, regrettably, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain contentious issues on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

I want to take this opportunity to reiterate Brazil's belief that the only assurance against the dangers and risks posed by the possible use of nuclear weapons, intentionally or accidentally, is through their total elimination in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner within a multilaterally agreed time frame. We believe that the Commission should keep its focus on three main aspects pertaining to nuclear disarmament — transparency, irreversibility and verification. Discussions on verification could build on both the principles of disarmament verification agreed to in 1988 by the UNDC and the 2019 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (A/74/90).

As a State party to the NPT and as part of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, Brazil is also firmly committed to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation. In its 30 years of existence, the Agency has shown itself to be a sophisticated and reliable verification arrangement, celebrated and recognized as such in General Assembly resolution 76/52. In our view, the key to sustaining the non-proliferation regime lies in combating incentives for proliferation. In that context, any approaches that focus exclusively on non-proliferation while neglecting the efforts of the disarmament pillar only reinforce the views of those who criticize the regime for treating nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States unequally.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons is increasing tensions, fostering suspicion and hindering cooperation among States all over the world. The current trend among countries to continue modernizing and improving their nuclear arsenals only worsens the international security environment. It goes against common sense to believe that States can ensure their strategic stability through permanent, unaccountable military build-up by modernizing nuclear arsenals and their means of delivery. That certainly does not make us feel safer — quite the opposite. It is therefore important for the Commission to consider the issue of the modernization of nuclear arsenals in the deliberations of its current cycle.

The elimination of nuclear weapons is not only a legal obligation undertaken by States parties to the NPT but a moral and ethical imperative for the entire international community. Bearing that in mind, Brazil supported the process that led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which entered into force last year, and subscribed to the humanitarian approach embedded in the Treaty. We want to take this opportunity to reiterate that the TPNW is a necessary complement to the NPT. It levels the normative playing field for all weapons of mass destruction, based on which actors can take further steps towards their accountable destruction and elimination. In that regard, we expect that this session of the UNDC will recognize the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, as discussed in the NPT and the TPNW. In our view, we should never consider it controversial to recognize this as a horror that humankind has already experienced and that must be avoided at all costs.

We consider the UNDC's consideration of the second item on its agenda timely. Our reflections on the operationalization of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space can certainly foster a constructive environment for future discussions in subsidiary body 3 of the Conference of Disarmament, as well as in the open-ended working group on preventing an arms race in outer space, which is due to begin its substantive work in May.

In recent years we have witnessed a series of breakthroughs in the field of space exploration with far-reaching implications. Against that backdrop, Brazil believes that outer space should remain a domain of peaceful and scientific exploration for the common good of humankind. We regularly participate in confidence-building mechanisms at the multilateral level such as the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, which discussed ways to prevent the militarization and weaponization of outer space. We welcomed its final report (A/68/189), adopted by consensus, and especially its emphasis on international cooperation between both spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations. For the current UNDC session, Brazil believes that recommendations to promote transparency and confidence-building measures should focus on promoting the responsible behaviour of States in their activities in outer space. That approach can be beneficial, in the sense that such recommendations can provide specific input for discussions on the voluntary norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour in outer space and general input for discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Furthermore, we underscore that in accordance with the report, voluntary political measures can form a basis for the consideration of concepts and proposals for establishing future legally binding obligations. Brazil hopes that the recommendations of the UNDC will foster debate on outer space in 2022 and prepare the ground for constructive discussions in different multilateral forums, with the aim of bringing about concrete outcomes to address this long-standing issue.

Finally, the multilateral disarmament machinery has played a crucial role in fostering dialogue and confidence among States, contributing to the promotion of peace and security. We would like to specifically underscore the important results that have been achieved at previous sessions of the Disarmament Commission, including, as others have mentioned, the 1988 principles of verification, the 1996 guidelines for

international arms transfers, the 1999 guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the 2017 recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. The current security situation is undoubtedly complex, with a vast array of challenges looming. Nevertheless, the Commission has been able to agree on specific issues and adopt recommendations at critical times in the past. Let us make that happen once again.

Mr. Aidid (Malaysia): Malaysia aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier today by the representatives of Cambodia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.377).

My delegation welcomes the successful convening of this substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) after a hiatus of several years. Malaysia congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your election, and we have every confidence in your leadership.

Amid the heightened geopolitical tensions and uncertainties of the global security environment, the UNDC, in which every Member State is represented, has an important role to play as a multilateral deliberative body whose mandate encompasses a broad range of disarmament issues. It is Malaysia's hope that we will collectively be able to advance the UNDC's work on the specific agenda items it has been tasked with considering during this session.

The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations affirms the determination of the people of our Organization to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. As a corollary to that noble aspiration, we should seek to endow future generations with the promise of peace, something that from Malaysia's standpoint, and that of many others, cannot be reconciled, in principle or in practice, with the continued existence of any weapons of mass destruction. General and complete disarmament is not one of several viable options. It is the only means for ruling out the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that any potential use of nuclear weapons would inevitably entail. The fate of the world cannot continue to rest precariously on the ability of nuclear-weapon States to prevent the use or threat of use of such weapons. Regrettably, there has been no indication that the situation is improving. Rather, the constant modernization and upgrading of nuclear arsenals, as well as the reports that they have

been placed on high alert, throws into sharp relief the real danger that they represent.

Regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is essential that we address the three pillars of the Treaty — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology — in a comprehensive and balanced manner. Malaysia further recognizes the continued importance of transparency, adherence to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) full-scope safeguards and the relevant provisions of the NPT and the IAEA's critical role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology by all States.

Malaysia reaffirms its support for the continued implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We call on all the parties to move forward and build on the recent talks to restore the Plan of Action by leveraging their strong political will and common desire to ensure peace, security and prosperity. As part of the ongoing efforts to advance nuclear disarmament in a manner that complements the NPT, Malaysia looks forward to the first meeting of States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in Vienna in June. Nuclear-weapon-States' establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and their related provision of legally binding negative security assurances are vital measures for enhancing the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

In our own region, Malaysia underscores the urgency of resolving all outstanding issues pertaining to the signing and ratification of the protocol of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as soon as possible, in line with the aspirations of ASEAN's leaders, as articulated in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint for 2025. While Malaysia recognizes that ASEAN member States have different views about the way forward, we believe that sustained dialogue with the nuclear-weapon-States will facilitate meaningful progress. We also believe that ASEAN can draw on the successes achieved by our friends in other regions vis-à-vis the protocols in their respective nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties. Exchanging our views will enable us to better understand the relevant legal, political and security considerations, and ultimately preserve South-East Asia as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality. Malaysia also reiterates the importance of the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and looks forward

to participating constructively in deliberations on that issue during this session.

Regarding the Korean peninsula, Malaysia is deeply concerned about the reports of the launching of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile in March by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, despite its decision in April 2018 to halt all nuclear tests and missile launches. Malaysia urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and calls on the relevant parties to work for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Turning to the second item on the Commission's agenda, Malaysia recognizes that outer space should be protected and used exclusively for peaceful purposes. In its efforts to strengthen the peaceful uses of outer space, Malaysia continues to seek opportunities for collaboration with the international community within the international legal framework for the benefit of humankind as a whole. We also underscore the importance of capacity-building for developing countries in order to reduce disparities in terms of access to outer space as a common heritage of humankind. In conclusion, we would like to assure you, Mr. Chair, of our continued support during this session's deliberations.

Mr. Kulháněk (Czech Republic): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and assuring you of my delegation's full support. I would also like to congratulate our colleagues from Hungary and Jamaica on their election as Chairs of the two Working Groups.

Now let me turn to the matter at hand. First of all, as the growing reports of Russia's savage onslaught in Ukraine continue to shock the world — most recently with the atrocities apparently discovered in the town of Bucha — I would like to express the Czech Republic's full solidarity with Ukraine and its people. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified act of aggression against Ukraine, which grossly violates international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as well as undermining the basic tenets of international security and stability.

In compliance with resolution ES-11/1, entitled "Aggression against Ukraine", adopted in the General Assembly with the support of 141 Member States, Russia

must immediately cease its military actions, withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders. The Czech Republic resolutely supports Ukraine's inherent right to self-defence and its armed forces' valiant efforts to defend its territorial integrity and population, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. Russia should ensure the protection of all civilians, including women and children, at all times, in accordance with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Russia must also end its disinformation campaign and cyberattacks.

The Disarmament Commission was established in 1952 by General Assembly resolution 502 (VI), with a clear mandate to prepare proposals for a treaty to facilitate the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and armaments, including the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. And we have indeed come a long way since then. New United Nations bodies have been created, notably the Conference on Disarmament — as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum — and we have concluded numerous disarmament treaties, both inside and outside the United Nations system. Nevertheless, the UNDC's original noble cause is, for the most part, still valid and will remain so until humankind finally admits that we can live without all weapons of mass destruction and with a minimum level of armed forces.

I have to say that it seemed as if the progress towards disarmament was rather positive until the fateful day of 24 February, which marked a turning point. A major armed conflict broke out on European soil, profoundly transforming the entire security landscape and creating economic, social and environmental ripple effects around the globe. Something that was unimaginable for at least two generations of people has overnight become part of our everyday reality, and we will all end up paying a huge price. As a result, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals is under threat because States may become increasingly reluctant to commit the necessary resources. The same goes for climate-change mitigation measures. What is more, we will inevitably face a new arms race that is driven by national security considerations.

The so-called global village where we searched for new ideas on how to cope with global problems is

no more. In fact, more and more people will inevitably have to grapple with the most basic issues. But from the point of view of multilateralism, although the global impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine will be long-lasting, there is no need to start from scratch. We still have the same rules we have spent decades creating, and we will not stop insisting on their validity and enforcement. Nor should we accept the use of new, artificial terms designed to conceal the true nature of what is happening or the true intentions of the parties. Let us call a spade a spade and stick to vocabulary that most people can clearly understand — terms such as “military aggression”, “war”, and “civilian casualties”. I cannot help thinking that it is ridiculous to talk seriously about disarmament during a time of war. Let us therefore talk about how the UNDC can contribute to bringing an end to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Ms. Alldridge (United Kingdom): On behalf of the delegation of the United Kingdom, I would first like to congratulate South Africa and you personally, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2022 session. It goes without saying that you can count on our delegation's full support as you guide the work of the Commission.

Last year, the United Kingdom published its Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Foreign and Development Policy, which outlined the deteriorating security environment and the scale, complexity and diversity of the threats facing the United Kingdom and its allies. It highlighted the risks posed by new disruptive technologies, alongside long-standing proliferation concerns about the activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran. But it also pointed out the growing challenge posed by major nuclear-armed States that are willing to flout international norms of behaviour. Russia's unprovoked and premeditated attack on Ukraine, a sovereign and democratic State, is casting a dark shadow over the work of the disarmament community. The United Kingdom is unwavering in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Together we must all unequivocally condemn this aggression, which is a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The United Kingdom stands with Ukraine and will work with our friends and allies around the world to ensure that Ukraine's sovereignty and independence are restored. It is now vital that Russia urgently de-escalate and withdraw its troops. It must be held accountable, and it must stop undermining democracy, global stability and international law.

Against that backdrop of heightened global tensions, it is now more important than ever that we preserve and strengthen the arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. It is vital that we, as the international community, refresh our thinking in order to ensure that we are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.

The existing nuclear architecture of treaties, norms and organizations has played an integral role in reducing global security challenges and fostering trust between nations. As we see more challenges to that system, we must galvanize our efforts to ensure that those institutions are resilient and capable of responding to current and future security challenges. Strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the international nuclear architecture is an important place to start. No other mechanism can address the non-proliferation, disarmament and developmental issues that we face. We look forward this year to the long-awaited tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, which offers an opportunity to reflect on the successes of the Treaty and reaffirm its central role in keeping our world safe for the past 52 years.

While the United Kingdom remains deeply committed to achieving the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, it is important for us all to recognize that the deterioration in the security environment has hindered progress towards complete and total disarmament. In the current security environment, as we set out in our working paper for the NPT Review Conference entitled “Getting to a world without nuclear weapons”, the international community should focus its efforts on working together to reduce the risk of nuclear use and deepen the work on the technical and practical challenges to disarmament so that we can make rapid, substantive progress when the time is right. Areas ripe for further technical work include improving transparency to build confidence and trust among the nuclear-weapon States, building verification mechanisms that will enable future disarmament and deepening our understanding of the principle of irreversibility and what it means in practice.

The United Kingdom's national implementation report details the actions we are taking to make progress on that journey, including our leading work on nuclear-disarmament verification, championing transparency and advancing risk reduction, alongside our efforts to secure the entry into force of the Comprehensive

Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty within the Conference on Disarmament. We recognize that the nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility to uphold the NPT and implement their obligations under it. The United Kingdom remains committed to making progress on disarmament and strategic risk reduction with other NPT nuclear-weapon States. The United Kingdom takes its responsibilities seriously and calls on the other nuclear-weapon States to do likewise.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is another important objective for the preservation of international peace and security. Space is fundamental to the way of life of all people on Earth, with our societies and the global economy increasingly dependent on access to space systems. Preventing the start of conflicts in outer space is therefore essential. The technological advances and economies of scale in recent years have enabled more States to gain access to space services and technology. That has resulted in a contested space environment where commercial and non-State actors compete and that is congested with a growing volume of satellites and debris. But the global debate on how we keep space systems secure has not kept up with that rapid pace of change. The risks of misperception, miscalculation and conflict in or through space are increasing. That concern was the United Kingdom's motive in bringing to the First Committee an initiative on reducing space threats in October 2020.

The United Kingdom is delighted to see the progress we have all made in the General Assembly on tackling threats in, to and through space. There was overwhelming support for setting up an open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible space behaviours in support of our overarching objective of preventing an arms race in outer space, and we look forward to seeing the group begin its substantive work in May. While the United Kingdom welcomes calls to ban the testing of direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles, we must not forget that many of the threats we face are not as visible as missiles. There are other ways to degrade and damage space systems, and we should include them in our work, taking a holistic approach. A space system is composed of three equally important segments — the satellites that operate in space, the ground-based infrastructure that controls and launches satellites, and the data flows between satellites and the Earth-based infrastructure. It is therefore important that we move past the outdated

idea that work to prevent an arms race in outer space is only about weapons in space, and move towards the much broader construct of mitigating and managing threats against space systems. If we do not do that, and instead work only on a draft treaty to ban weapons in space, we may unfortunately actually promote an arms race in outer space and foster malign State activity in space in peacetime.

In conclusion, this session of the UNDC is taking place against a very challenging security backdrop. It should focus our minds on the importance of approaching the issues we face with a pragmatic and constructive attitude, and with renewed energy, in order to find creative solutions to make our world safer and more prosperous for generations to come. The United Kingdom looks forward to engaging in the two Working Groups and hopes for a productive UNDC session this year.

Mr. Jardali (Lebanon): Mr. Chair, let me begin by congratulating you on your election to lead the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I also want to congratulate the Vice-Chair of the Commission and the Chairs of the Working Groups on their election.

Lebanon aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.377).

The items on the Commission's agenda for this session, nuclear weapons and outer space, are two of the most pressing matters in international peace and security. It is vital that we strive to agree on concrete recommendations on nuclear disarmament and confidence-building measures in the context of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, especially when we take into account the current international security environment. The fact that the Commission has not been able to convene or agree on recommendations for the past three years should act as an impetus for us to redouble our efforts during this cycle.

The tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is set to take place in August, and in that regard we are very concerned about countries' increasing development of nuclear capabilities and reliance on them for defence strategies, reminiscent of the nuclear arms race of the Cold War. The threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use is not a theoretical

one. The international community is at a very delicate juncture and should seize the opportunity presented by the Review Conference to put the world back on a track towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, by agreeing on an outcome that strengthens the NPT and the non-proliferation regime. It should be an opportunity to stress yet again that all States, especially nuclear-weapon States, have an obligation to make progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, while simultaneously pushing for the implementation of the three pillars of the NPT. We stress that the nuclear-weapon States have an obligation to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with their relevant legal obligations under the NPT. We also emphasize the importance of fulfilling the commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

The adoption at the 1995 NPT Review Conference of a resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction played an integral part in the indefinite extension of the NPT. Lebanon welcomed the successful outcomes of the first and second sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, presided over by Jordan in 2019 and Kuwait in 2021, as a mechanism for implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. That effort reflects the serious intentions of the Review Conference's participants — except for Israel — to work towards establishing such a region. As the only possessor of nuclear weapons in the region and a State that is not a party to the NPT, Israel cannot continue defying the will of the international community and must comply with the international norms and non-proliferation rules.

The special responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States, especially the obligations and commitments of the three NPT depositary States — co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution — should be upheld in order to implement the Treaty in its entirety. Such a commitment could put the region on the much-needed path to security and stability.

Lebanon stresses the need to protect outer space from an arms race, as well as contamination and pollution, and to preserve it as a common human property exclusively for peaceful uses. There is an urgent need for the commencement of substantive negotiations on a legally binding and multilaterally verifiable instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space that includes elements on the prohibition of the placement

of weapons in outer space and the prohibition of the use or threat of use of force against outer space objects. Reaching recommendations on transparency and confidence-building measures to prevent an arms race in outer space is a required interim step until a binding treaty is agreed in that regard.

The arms control regime is weaker than ever, and the disarmament agenda has stalled, at a time when tensions in international security relations have reached their highest levels in generations. We need to refocus the conversation on nuclear weapons disarmament and ensure the peaceful uses of outer space by States. This UNDC session should bring about meaningful outcomes, and it is the responsibility of all States to exert every effort and demonstrate the will and flexibility necessary to achieve that end.

Mr. Segura Aragon (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of El Salvador, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which comes after a lengthy hiatus in the Commission's work owing to the coronavirus disease pandemic, among other factors.

As a founding Member of the Organization and a signatory to the Charter of the United Nations, El Salvador remains firmly committed to and supports unconditionally all initiatives for promoting and strengthening disarmament, international security and the culture of peace worldwide.

Our country supports all actions aimed at strengthening the disarmament regime and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as all efforts aimed at renewing the international community's commitment to moving towards the definitive elimination of weapons of mass destruction, through multilateral negotiations and guided by the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency.

Our delegation reiterates the importance of the Disarmament Commission's resumption of its work as a universal deliberative body of the United Nations, whose tasks include considering issues of relevance to Member States in the fields of disarmament, peace and international security and developing recommendations to address those challenges. In view of what I have just mentioned, we are excited to be taking part in this session. It is an opportunity to address very important issues in order to develop concrete recommendations, in

compliance with the mandate of the General Assembly and the purposes of the Disarmament Commission.

We welcome the proposed topics for discussion in the context of developing recommendations for achieving nuclear disarmament and securing the transparency measures needed for preventing an arms race in outer space. We are compelled by the current international circumstances to continue our discussions on the challenges posed by nuclear weapons, taking into account that an arms race involving the threat of use of nuclear weapons or, more seriously, the actual use of such weapons, would have devastating consequences for the entire planet.

My country takes this opportunity to reaffirm its regional commitment to support the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, adopted at the second summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014, which underscores, among other things, the urgent need to move towards the primary objective of general and complete disarmament, under strict international control, as well as the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In that regard, I would like to ask the other actors involved to ensure that regional efforts transcend borders, nationalities, levels of development and languages, and to respect one another and coexist peacefully, with dignity and hope for our future generations.

In that connection, we will continue to reiterate the importance of complete nuclear disarmament, without delay or preconditions, and that the presence of nuclear weapons in the national security schemes of nuclear-weapon States is not a deterrent mechanism but a latent threat that affects all countries and regions of the world. In that regard, we welcome and acknowledge the convening of the first meeting of States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in Vienna in June. Our country is a party to the Treaty and will actively participate in that meeting.

The Treaty is an important instrument whose provisions pertain to the prohibition on the possession, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. All of those provisions are vital, and we believe that they complement and reinforce the agreed international norms on nuclear disarmament.

We also welcome the convening of tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in August. The Review Conference comes at a key moment, when all Member States must redouble their efforts to move towards general and complete disarmament and conclude the agreements that have been anticipated for a number of years.

With regard to outer space, El Salvador takes this opportunity to reiterate the position we expressed at the Commission's previous session (see A/CN.10/PV.370) — that we support and encourage the use and exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes only, for the benefit of humankind and not to its detriment. We understand that the issue of dependence on space technologies, particularly on technologies whose infrastructure supports operations in terrestrial cyberspace, has regained substantial importance since the Commission last convened.

However, the significant increase in the risks that come with using those technologies means that we must address and counter the challenges. My delegation aspires to a peaceful, safe and secure outer space from which we can all benefit.

In conclusion, El Salvador wishes the Commission every success during this substantive session. We hope that the deliberations will present many substantive and innovative avenues for responding to the major disarmament challenges we currently face.

Ms. Low (Singapore): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We also congratulate the Deputy Permanent Representatives of Jamaica and of Hungary on their elections as Chairs of the Working Group on nuclear weapons and the Working Group on outer space, respectively.

Singapore aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier today by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.377). I would like to make the following comments in my national capacity.

We welcome the reconvening of the UNDC after some challenges over the past three years. The Secretary-General's *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, which was issued in 2018, remains pertinent today, perhaps more than ever.

In the context of a deteriorating international security environment and increasing threats to international peace and security across all regions, there is a pressing need for us to continue constructive dialogue on nuclear arms control and disarmament, as well as concrete action to prevent the use and halt the testing of nuclear weapons. We also reaffirm the role of the UNDC as the sole specialized deliberative body to consider and make recommendations on various issues in the field of disarmament.

I would like to make three suggestions on how we can take concrete steps forward.

First, States must maintain and strengthen their commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Singapore remains committed to the objectives and the three mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT.

In order to uphold the legitimacy and relevance of the NPT, we must use all relevant forums to make collective and concerted efforts to overcome the divisiveness and mistrust that exists both between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, and among nuclear-weapon States themselves. In that regard, we encourage all Member States to engage constructively to achieve successful outcomes at this session that can serve as a good basis for the discussions at the upcoming tenth NPT Review Conference, to be held in August.

Secondly, Singapore supports the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and encourages all countries, in particular the eight remaining annex 2 States, to ratify it as soon as possible so that it may enter into force. We also urge States that have already signed and ratified the CTBT to refrain from taking actions that go against the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

Thirdly, we must make progress in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as building blocks towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Singapore encourages efforts to achieve genuine and lasting peace and a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East through open and constructive dialogue involving all relevant parties.

Closer to home, we reaffirm our commitment to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). We will continue to work closely with our ASEAN partners and the nuclear-weapon States to resolve outstanding issues in accordance with the

objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty and work for the collective signing and ratification of its Protocol by nuclear-weapon States, without reservations.

Singapore supports the UNDC's continued deliberations on issues in the field of outer space. It is critical that outer space remain a peaceful global commons, as human activity in outer space continues to grow and we become increasingly reliant in our daily lives on essential services that use technologically advanced applications in space. Singapore is therefore committed to preventing an arms race in outer space and building consensus on international norms in space.

In that regard, we look forward to the first substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours, to be held in May. We reiterate the importance of holding further discussion on an open and inclusive international framework to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space utilization and the security of space. We look forward to fruitful discussions with other Member States to address the critical issues of nuclear weapons and outer space over the next few weeks.

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): I would like to start by joining others in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and assuring you of Ireland's full support. Ireland strongly supports the United Nations disarmament machinery and its three mutually reinforcing pillars, which remain central and irreplaceable: the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission.

Four years have passed since the Commission last met in its substantive form. The United Nations disarmament machinery and its various instruments simply cannot function properly without Member States' willingness to engage and work to reach agreement on what can sometimes appear to be intractable issues of international security and global politics. We are hopeful that this session of the Commission can facilitate constructive engagement to show us how we can further promote disarmament for the benefit of all.

Nonetheless, we cannot ignore the grave situation in which we are meeting. Ireland strongly condemns Russia's war against the Ukrainian people, which violates the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Threats to unleash forces that cannot be controlled, including nuclear weapons, are utterly

unacceptable and cannot be justified. Such actions threaten to undermine the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Ireland has long argued that nuclear weapons offer no security and that their use would result in catastrophic humanitarian consequences. The continued existence of nuclear weapons remains a challenge to global security, an affront to our planet and abhorrent to our peoples. We must redouble our efforts in pursuit of nuclear disarmament. We need to see the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear-disarmament measures and the fulfilment of obligations and commitments within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The tenth NPT Review Conference, to be held in August, is an opportunity to tackle that head on.

We look forward to the first meeting of States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), to be held in June, at which they will set out concrete plans for the full implementation of the Treaty's humanitarian-centred objectives. The Treaty has already re-energized debate on nuclear disarmament and, for many States, acts as a practical expression of their commitment to implementing article VI of the NPT.

More than 20 years have passed since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and it is time for a genuinely equal contribution by women and men to the goal of global peace and security. We see disarmament as having a key role in fulfilling the women and peace and security agenda. Integrating disarmament considerations into the women and peace and security agenda is a priority for Ireland, as is the integration of that agenda into our initiatives and actions. Ireland's third national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) reflects our commitments in that area.

We are proud to co-chair the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group. Through the work of the Impact Group, we have taken practical steps towards gender equality and the inclusion of gender perspectives in the disarmament machinery, while highlighting how under-representation can reinforce existing biases and exclude the perspectives of half of the population. We must work collectively to address the issue in order to ensure diverse participation and the full, meaningful and equal participation of women and men. Ireland's concern about the disproportionate, harmful impact of ionizing radiation on women and

girls, as acknowledged in the TPNW, gives further impetus to our work for nuclear disarmament.

Ireland highlights the importance of the broad engagement and participation of civil society as vital partners across all disarmament forums. Civil-society campaigns played an instrumental part in disarmament efforts in recent years. Civil society plays an important role in the framework of treaties and conventions, while also providing crucial services, from victim assistance to capacity-building. We must ensure that civil-society engagement is prioritized and supported so that the disarmament machinery is genuinely inclusive.

Ireland greatly values the work of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. The Institute's research on disarmament and international security has made an invaluable contribution to our work towards establishing a more peaceful and secure world by producing research of the highest quality and convening and facilitating difficult discussions across a broad range of disarmament topics. Ireland has long offered support for its activities, including financial support.

Ireland is firmly committed to preventing an arms race in outer space and preserving a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and to the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis for all. We look forward to advancing those values through discussions in this forum.

No matter how difficult it may seem, we must continue to cooperate and engage on disarmament issues. We cannot continue to neglect our collective responsibilities. While not perfect, multilateralism still offers the only real hope for cooperative, constructive engagement and for maintaining peace and security. We know that a narrow focus based solely on self-interest is not a sustainable approach. It takes courage and leadership to look beyond our short-term national interests, but that is what is required to reinvigorate the work and effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Andersen (Norway): As this is my first time taking the floor, let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair, as well as the Vice-Chairs on their elections, for this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We are pleased that the UNDC has managed to resume its work after not being able to meet for four years.

Norway remains committed to working to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Any use of nuclear weapons would have global ramifications, and the humanitarian consequences would be catastrophic.

Norway remains committed to preventing an arms race in space in order to maintain it as a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable environment that is accessible to all. We therefore support the establishment of an open-ended working group on responsible State behaviour, as proposed by the United Kingdom in the First Committee. We must never forget that disarmament is ultimately about protecting people's lives.

The international security environment has been degrading for a long time. It took a sharp turn for the worse when the Russian Federation illegally invaded its peaceful neighbour Ukraine in February, in blatant violation of international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We condemn Russia's attack on Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. Russia must unconditionally withdraw its troops.

The war, and in particular the dangerous rhetoric on nuclear weapons, also jeopardizes the positive developments we saw before the invasion. The extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the establishment, last year, of a strategic stability dialogue between the United States and Russia was highly welcome. We also welcome the joint statement affirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, which was issued in January by the leaders of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains an overarching goal, and we look forward to the tenth NPT Review Conference. We must do our utmost to ensure that the Review Conference strengthens the Treaty along all three pillars. Nuclear disarmament verification is essential for future arms reductions. Norway will continue its engagement in that area, including by chairing the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, the first session of which was held in February. We are pleased to note the substantial engagement in that work on the part of a growing number of States.

But we must do more to move the nuclear disarmament agenda forward. The Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament is well-designed to advance the disarmament pillar of the NPT. It has put forward

concrete and action-oriented recommendations. We hope to mobilize broad support for the Stockholm Initiative, including from nuclear-weapon States.

A separate proposal from the group behind the Initiative addresses the need for a broad range of nuclear risk-reduction measures. It includes concerns about the devastating humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. Norway will work to increase the focus on humanitarian consequences, in line with the consensus final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The principle of irreversibility when implementing nuclear disarmament measures is broadly supported but is not understood universally. Norway is working with the United Kingdom on a multilateral dialogue on how to apply the principle in practical terms. The aim is to increase confidence and predictability in disarmament processes.

We urge the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Progress must also be made on the negotiation and conclusion of an effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. In addition to intensifying our efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and strategic stability, Norway is committed to maintaining its engagement in nuclear arms control. We will also continue our efforts to promote gender equality and diverse participation in disarmament processes and support initiatives to involve the younger generation in that work.

Mr. Rai (Nepal): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups on your elections for the 2022 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I wish everyone success in their efforts to steer the Commission towards a successful outcome and would like to assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support in the deliberations of the work of this session.

I would like to align my statement with that delivered earlier today by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.377).

The world stood up for global peace and security when it established the United Nations, thereby epitomizing our collective choice of peace over war, development over destruction and prosperity over poverty. However, today we are standing on the edge of destruction, with the return of geopolitical and complex

security threats permeating international borders. Uncertainty and mistrust among countries has become heightened. Escalation of armed conflicts, unrelenting arms races, increasing military expenditures and rising levels of terrorism have made the world ever more insecure. The apocalyptic threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, has become more real.

Greater challenges demand greater unity. That is why my delegation urges everyone to unite for peace. That is our only chance if we want humankind to survive and thrive in harmony and peace. Nepal strongly supports multilateralism and the rules-based world order.

We therefore support strengthening the United Nations disarmament machinery to achieve the objective of international peace and security, as envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations. To that end, as a specialized and deliberative body, the UNDC is tasked with the particular responsibility to submit concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. My delegation hopes that this session succeeds in generating consensus outcomes.

The threat of nuclear weapons has persisted for more than seven decades. My delegation is concerned about the nuclear-weapon States' lack of progress in implementing their disarmament obligations as outlined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nepal reaffirms its principled position that global peace and security can be ensured only through the time-bound, general and complete disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. As a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), Nepal urges all Member States to demonstrate genuine political will and exercise the utmost flexibility in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, all non-nuclear-weapon States should be assured of non-exposure to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, under any circumstances. As a party to the NPT and a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Nepal emphasizes that nuclear-possessor States should respect the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability in the area of nuclear weapons in order to ensure their total elimination. Nepal looks forward to the successful outcome of the tenth NPT Review Conference, to

be held in August, with a view to consolidating our commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament.

Nepal supports the inalienable rights of States parties to the NPT to the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology under the framework of the Treaty. As the host country of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal continues to support regional disarmament mechanisms and the participation of young people and women in disarmament forums.

We are fully convinced that global peace and security are connected to other cross-cutting issues. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, which envisions advancing a comprehensive and integrated approach to peace and security by addressing cross-cutting issues such as climate change, cyber-related risks, organized crime and corruption.

Nepal maintains its view that the exploration and use of outer space should be carried out for the wider benefit of humanity. All countries, irrespective of their size and level of economic or scientific development, should have an equal opportunity to access space technologies and share their benefits. We reject the weaponization of outer space. We must develop the necessary legal and institutional international governance frameworks to prevent any potential conflict in outer space. Those frameworks should promote and facilitate latecomers such as least-developed countries by enabling them to utilize outer space for their development and prosperity.

In that regard, Nepal supports the full implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities, as outlined in the final report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189). We welcome the convening in Geneva this year of an open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, as well as the report of the Secretary-General (A/76/77) on the same topic.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that as a specialized, inclusive and deliberative body, the Disarmament Commission has a central role in fostering cooperation and understanding on non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures for lasting peace. For a safer world, we need strong political will and resolute commitment more than ever. Let us

commit to engaging constructively with one another with the shared objectives of establishing enduring peace, underpinned by mutual respect, mutual trust and sustainable development.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to this position of responsibility and express our hope that under your leadership we will be able to create positive momentum in the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). The Russian delegation stands ready to offer you its full support in that regard.

Russia consistently supports reinforcing the central role that the United Nations plays in maintaining global strategic stability and international security and strengthening the arms-control and non-proliferation regimes. We have always seen the task of comprehensively strengthening the United Nations disarmament machinery, of which the UNDC is an integral part, as a top priority. In 2018, the Commission began a new three-year work cycle with a new agenda. Our job is to do the work of reaching agreement on recommendations for achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as facilitating the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space.

The international environment regarding security and strategic stability has lately become increasingly worrying. The arms-control system that has traditionally been a central supporting structure in that regard is undergoing a crisis on a scale that is unprecedented in recent history. Many essential arms-control agreements are being broken or terminated, owing in large part to the destructive activities of the United States, which has been aggressively trying to gain a decisive military and strategic advantage. The development and deployment of a global missile defence system in various regions of the world, combined with a build-up of non-nuclear precision weapons capable of meeting strategic objectives, is a significant destructive factor putting international security and strategic stability in jeopardy. In violation of its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the United States has continued to deploy non-strategic nuclear weapons on the territories of some non-nuclear European States while also modernizing them and their means of delivery. NATO has continued the practice of so-called joint nuclear

missions, which involve non-nuclear members of the Alliance in training on handling nuclear weapons and their use. These practices must stop. Nuclear weapons should be returned to the national territory of their possessor and the infrastructure for their deployment in Europe eliminated.

Against that extremely alarming backdrop, we would like to underscore that Russia has consistently sought to make a substantial practical contribution to ridding the world of the threat of weapons of mass destruction. We are fully committed to the noble goal of building a world free of nuclear weapons. We firmly believe that genuine progress on nuclear disarmament can be made only through consensus decisions and a policy of balanced, gradual reductions based on the principle of indivisible security and the need to maintain strategic stability. Based on that course of action, the Russian Federation has taken consistent steps to reduce and limit its nuclear weapons for many years. We have complied strictly with the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. In February 2021 the Treaty was extended for another five-year term on our initiative. Last year the United States and Russia established a comprehensive strategic stability dialogue based on an agreement between our Presidents. The United States suspended that dialogue indefinitely in February, and we have taken note of that. For our part, we believe that the accumulated problems in the area of strategic stability will not vanish by themselves. In principle, Russia remains open to constructive political and diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and seek comprehensive, mutually acceptable solutions to existing problems based on the principle of indivisible security and the equitable mutual consideration of the concerns of the parties.

It is also regrettable that we are hearing provocative and speculative insinuations from some irresponsible Western politicians and experts regarding the alleged possible use of nuclear weapons by Russia during its special military operation in Ukraine. Such falsehoods have no rational foundation of any kind. They are designed to fuel anti-Russian hysteria and their intended audience is unfamiliar with the fundamentals of Russia's security and defence policies, which are strictly defensive. Despite the fabrications that we have heard today, Russia's use of its nuclear capabilities would be possible only in response to the use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction against it or its allies, or in the event of an aggression against our country using conventional weapons that posed

an existential threat to the State. Those criteria can in no way be applied to the scenario currently unfolding in Ukraine. Moreover, Russia firmly adheres to the precept that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Our country has consistently promoted that precept and related principles and reaffirmed them in joint statements and documents, including at the highest level, together with the United States and China, as well as within the forum of the five nuclear-weapon States.

We would also like to mention that Russia's declared moratorium on deploying intermediate- and shorter-range ground-based missiles remains in force. Its future will of course depend on the scale and substance of the actions that NATO States have been taking to build up their forces and equipment on our western borders and supply arms to the current Ukrainian authorities. Meanwhile, we should point out that the Pentagon is continuing to implement its decision to deploy intermediate- and shorter-range ground-based missiles in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. We reiterate our call to Washington to show prudence and abandon those plans.

Russia has always advocated for a strengthened non-proliferation regime based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which has recently been seriously tested. On the one hand, we are seeing clearly exaggerated demands from those who champion nuclear disarmament, along with active promotion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which runs counter to the NPT and weakens the nuclear non-proliferation regime. On the other, Washington is continuing its course aimed at dismantling the established system of non-proliferation and arms-control agreements. In the circumstances, ensuring the sustainability of the NPT is a key priority for the maintenance of global stability.

The tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be held in August to consider the functioning of the Treaty since 2015. It will be a good opportunity to try to reverse the negative trends that have built up and that could further erode the non-proliferation regime. We also note the unacceptable situation with regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The Treaty has been open for signature for more than a quarter of a century, but it has yet to become a functioning international legal instrument.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an important element of the non-proliferation regime. We consider the establishment of such zones, in accordance with article VII of the NPT, and the signing by the nuclear-weapon States of protocols providing security assurances to nuclear-weapon-free-zone States, as important factors in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and regional security and stability.

We are concerned about AUKUS, the partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, and its negative impact on the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We believe that the partnership is provoking tensions in the international security arena and creating an environment that could spiral into a new arms race, and not just in the Asia-Pacific region.

One of Russia's foreign-policy priorities continues to be keeping outer space free of weapons and preventing an arms race there. We consider that just as important as the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The risk of space becoming a springboard for aggression and war has recently become quite real. A number of States are pursuing policies aimed at placing weapons in outer space, increasing the potential for the use of force, kinetic and non-kinetic, with the possibility of both using space objects and of targeting them, as well as using outer space to conduct field operations designed to achieve military superiority. Ambitious programmes are being implemented to develop weapon systems designed for the use or threat of use of force in space, from space and towards outer space. All of this may have dire consequences for international peace and security as well as arms limitation and reduction in general.

In the circumstances, it is crucial that we develop a legally binding instrument on preventing an arms race in outer space that includes guarantees against the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against space objects or with their help. We consider the Russian-Chinese draft treaty on those issues to be a good basis for that. The international initiative and political commitment on the no first placement of weapons in outer space, currently the only actually existing instrument aimed at maintaining an outer space free of weapons, could serve as an interim step towards establishing such a treaty. Thirty States are already participating fully in it. When discussing issues of security in space activities and transparency and confidence-building measures in the context of

preventing an arms race in outer space, we should also build on the efforts being made in other forums, especially the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We believe that with the necessary political will, members in the UNDC can and should overcome their differences, work actively and constructively on its agenda items and achieve effective, consensus results.

In conclusion, I would like to note that a number of delegations have persistently raised questions about the situation in Ukraine in the discussions of this specialized body. In that connection, I want to make the following points.

The tragedy of Ukraine, which has been transformed into an instrument for the realization of Western States' geopolitical ambitions, is the most acute problem of our time. The bloody anti-constitutional coup d'état that took place there in 2014 with Washington's direct support resulted in Kyiv's eight-year aggression against the civilians of Donbas, who refused to accept and support the new authorities. The results of the coup have been a rebirth of neo-Nazism, widespread Russophobia and violations of fundamental human rights, especially of the country's Russian-speaking population. The situation has seriously worsened since the beginning of the year. We have received convincing evidence that Ukraine was preparing a full-scale invasion of the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics in order to eliminate them. In mid-February, Kyiv announced its plans to acquire its own nuclear weapons. We could no longer stand idly by. We had no choice but to support Donetsk and Luhansk and launch a special military operation to demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine.

We are now facing an unprecedented propaganda campaign by Ukraine and its Western sponsors, which are trying to use modern technologies to promote fakes and invent stories about the actions of the Russian military in Ukraine. However, the facts show that it is Ukrainian radicals who have participated in the crimes that are being attributed to us, no matter how hard our Western colleagues may try to prove the opposite in the most despicable ways. In that regard, the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council has violated basic principles of the Council's work and rules of procedure. Fearing the truth, it has twice declined our request to hold a Council meeting regarding Ukrainian nationalists' brazen provocations in the town of Bucha. We hope that we will not see such dirty tactics in this forum and that it will not become a platform for spreading fakes and propaganda.

Mr. Tamaura (Japan): At the outset, on behalf of the Japanese delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, as well as the Government of South Africa, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. Japan appreciates the reconvening of the substantive session of the UNDC and hopes that meaningful discussions will be held this year.

As this is a venue for discussing issues of international security, I am compelled to start by stating Japan's position with regard to the situation in Ukraine. As stated in General Assembly resolution ES-11/1, which received the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States, Russia's aggression is in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and an infringement on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Any unilateral change of the status quo by force is totally unacceptable. Japan condemns it in the strongest terms and urges Russia to withdraw its military forces from Ukraine. As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan is fully aware of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. We want to stress once again that such a tragedy must never be repeated. In the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Japan reiterates that the use of nuclear weapons will never be tolerated and warns against any threat by Russia involving the use of such weapons.

Japan is also gravely concerned about North Korea's continued development of its nuclear and missile capabilities. On 24 March, North Korea launched an intercontinental-class ballistic missile, which fell within Japan's exclusive economic zone, about 150 kilometres off the mainland of Japan. Japan strongly condemns that impermissible and outrageous act, which poses a grave and imminent threat to Japan's security and a serious challenge to the international non-proliferation regime. Japan reaffirms its firm commitment to the complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament of all of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges. Japan urges North Korea to abide by all the relevant Security Council resolutions and to return at an early date to full compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

We should continue to work to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons through realistic and practical

measures. The NPT is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and we will spare no effort to achieve a meaningful outcome for its tenth Review Conference. Japan also attaches great importance to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as to the creation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, for achieving substantive progress in nuclear disarmament. We welcomed the recent ratification of the CTBT by the Gambia and Tuvalu and urge all States to sign and ratify the Treaty. Japan also urges all the relevant States to declare or maintain existing moratoriums on nuclear-weapon test explosions so that the Treaty's entry into force can be realized. We also reiterate the importance of an immediate start to negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, based on the Shannon Mandate. Pending the commencement of negotiations, Japan calls for a moratorium on fissile material production.

Nuclear risk reduction is another important topic. While we must keep in mind that the ultimate nuclear risk reduction is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, until that is achieved we must reduce the risk of their use. The importance of nuclear risk reduction is emphasized in General Assembly resolution 76/54, entitled "Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons", which was submitted by Japan to the First Committee and adopted by the Assembly last year with 158 votes in favour, as well as in the framework of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, in which my country participates. Japan believes that efforts should be made during this session to build consensus in that area.

An accurate understanding of the realities of the use of nuclear weapons should be the starting point for all efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. An understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons should underpin our work. In that regard, Japan urges political leaders and young people all over the world to see with their own eyes and feel with their own hearts the realities and consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

Today all States are reliant on space for peace and prosperity. Space systems provide services that are fundamental to daily life and security. At the same time, we are witnessing an increasing number of State and non-State space actors diversifying their activities

and the development and deployment of their counter-space capabilities with insufficient transparency regarding their space doctrines, policies and activities. Japan is firmly committed to maintaining outer space as a peaceful, safe, secure and sustainable environment and looks forward to advancing discussions on reducing space threats by building norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours based on resolutions 75/36 and 76/231.

Japan underlines the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures as pragmatic ways to increase trust and prevent misunderstanding and miscalculations in space activities, an issue that we discussed in the workshop we hosted online last year. We look forward to having meaningful discussions on the subject during this UNDC session, building on the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities. It is important that we continue to work together to produce constructive results that accord with the Commission's original mandate. In cooperation with the Chair and Member States, Japan will endeavour to ensure that this year's UNDC session leads to a positive outcome.

Mr. Leschenko (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your election.

We are pleased to see that the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) has finally been able to convene its substantive session after a three-year hiatus. Our delegation also recognizes that the UNDC, with its universal membership, plays an important role in promoting the disarmament machinery. However, given the fact that the Russian Federation is currently waging a war of aggression against Ukraine, we cannot continue business as usual within the United Nations, including in the UNDC. Since the first days of its new wave of unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, launched on 24 February, the Russian Federation's armed forces have been attacking Ukraine from Russian and Belarusian territory, as well as the temporarily occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and Crimea. The Russian troops fire missiles and attack with aviation, tanks and artillery. They also use explosive weapons with wide-area effects, such as cluster munitions and thermobaric bombs, which are causing civilian injuries and severe damage to

civilian infrastructure, including residential buildings, hospitals, maternity hospitals and kindergartens.

As today marks the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, we would like to stress that since Russia started its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the aggressor State has been actively planting mines on Ukrainian territory, including anti-personnel mines. It is even committing war crimes against children by mining toys and shiny objects that attract kids' attention. Russia is also conducting illegal activities and piracy in the Black Sea through its use of drifting mines, which renders them weapons of indiscriminate nature and one that also poses a threat to international shipping. Russian armed forces have attacked and seized Ukrainian nuclear power plants and other facilities, creating an unprecedented nuclear threat to Ukraine and the entire international community. By starting this unprovoked fight and unjustified war, the Russian Federation has violated practically every arms-control regime there is and has de facto destroyed the security and arms-control architecture in Europe as a whole.

We are not surprised that the Russian Federation circulates misinformation about Ukraine. We are currently facing a new wave of such misinformation on weapons of mass destruction in my country. After a series of absurd statements by Russian officials about the alleged creation of a dirty nuclear bomb in Ukraine, the Russian disinformation machinery has switched to alleging the use of biological and chemical weapons. Ukraine adheres strictly to the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we stress the important role of those indispensable instruments in disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Russia's public statements about the alleged development of biological weapons in Ukraine and chemical attacks should be considered misinformation and provocation. Russia often blames someone else for something it does itself. A clear example of that was its accusation that Ukraine had threatened to attack Russia, which the Russian Federation then used as a pretext for its own military invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine demands that the Russian Federation immediately cease its aggression against my country and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from Ukraine's entire territory, within its internationally recognized borders, including the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk

and Luhansk regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. That would be a first vital step towards restoring European security and stability, including the regional arms-control architecture.

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): Today we meet at a critical juncture in twenty-first-century history. We are witnessing Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear-weapon-possessor State, carrying out a totally unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. We affirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. President Putin's order not only to wage war but also to place Russia's strategic nuclear forces on high alert has created a security situation not seen in Europe since the Second World War. In fact, it is dangerous to the entire world. We also deplore Belarus's decision to renounce its nuclear-neutral status with respect to the stationing of nuclear weapons. That blatantly confrontational move will further jeopardize the fragile security situation in Central and Eastern Europe.

The future of the rules-based order of the United Nations is at stake. We cannot stand silent before the ongoing situation caused by Russia's aggression, which is beyond outrageous. We condemn Russia and Belarus's aggression in the strongest possible terms and appeal to all our like-minded partners around the world to stand against it. We call on Russia to de-escalate the tensions that it has itself created. The attack on Ukraine and the irresponsible rhetoric concerning nuclear weapons are also affecting a wide swathe of our discussions on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, including in the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). This new context will stay with us for months and years to come. We are faced with the extremely challenging task of rebuilding mutual trust and common understanding based on the principles of diplomacy, dialogue and shared responsibility. That may not be an optimistic message for the Disarmament Commission, but perhaps it can help bring the Commission back to the basic reason for its existence, which is to prevent real wars, like the wars we are seeing today.

Over the years, the UNDC formulated consensus principles, guidelines and recommendations on a number of subjects that the General Assembly endorsed. Since 1999, however, such an endorsement has happened only once, in 2017. Nevertheless, the decision to convene this year's session proves that we may yet have constructive exchanges in the forthcoming period.

There are many pressing disarmament challenges related to weapons of mass destruction that need to be addressed, ranging from the strategic stability situation to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the cornerstone of the entire nuclear non-proliferation system. In these difficult times, Poland will continue to do its share in actively contributing to the work of all disarmament and non-proliferation forums. However, we cannot move on as if nothing has happened in Ukraine. This war, orchestrated by the Russian President and his Belarusian apprentice, puts a question mark over all of the international community's endeavours related to peace and security.

Ms. Feste-Guidon (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chair, as well as all the members of your team, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission.

We cannot ignore the fact that our international security environment has been sharply deteriorating as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia is violating the most fundamental principles of international law and the European security architecture to which it subscribed. Its unjustified aggression is undermining the trust we need to underpin all serious and credible disarmament processes. What is therefore needed in the current context is to reduce the strategic risks. France is ready to play its full part in that crucial effort. The President of France has made it clear that the fundamental aim of our strategy is preventing war. We have always been of the view that nuclear weapons must not be developed as tools of intimidation, coercion or destabilization.

As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, France reaffirms, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), its full commitment to creating the conditions for a nuclear-weapon-free world based on the principle of undiminished security for all. Realistic nuclear disarmament must be achieved gradually and pragmatically and take into account the strategic context. Faced with the spectre of another arms race, our priorities for nuclear disarmament, which are known, include negotiating in the Conference on Disarmament a fissile material cut-off treaty to prevent the quantitative development of nuclear arsenals, deepening the work on nuclear disarmament verification and universalizing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which just marked its twenty-

fifth anniversary. Nuclear proliferation crises have not gone away. On the contrary, in its most serious provocation in five years, North Korea launched an intercontinental ballistic missile on 24 March. In that context, and with the tenth NPT Review Conference looming, it is essential to preserve the authority of the NPT as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime.

Space has become a place of rivalry and confrontation between Powers. For some it has become a competitive arena of increasing tensions, undermining its status as an arena for the peaceful and responsible use of all. Meanwhile, the number of outer-space objects has grown exponentially. That combination of factors can increase the risk of misunderstandings and uncontrolled escalations. In that regard, anti-satellite tests constitute an irresponsible behaviour in space, as their debris is likely to create very long-lasting effects on the space environment. France is a country committed to the peaceful and responsible uses of space. We believe that an approach focused on State behaviours is the one best suited to improving space safety and security pragmatically and rapidly, and it aims to reduce the risk of conflict and escalation.

In conclusion, France reiterates its commitment to disarmament in order to strengthen our collective security, at a time when it has been drastically undermined.

Mrs. Jakob (Germany): Mr. Chair, I would first like to echo my colleagues in congratulating you, the Vice-Chair and the Chairs of the Working Groups on assuming your respective roles.

It is certainly difficult to discuss the topic on our agenda when past commitments and engagements have been put into question or are simply broken. However, achieving peace and security is one of the main objectives of international cooperation and the very reason why we are here today. Germany remains firmly committed to that task. There has never been an easy answer to the question of how to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war on Ukraine — a sovereign State that voluntarily renounced its nuclear-weapon status in 1994 in exchange for guarantees of respect for its borders and statehood, from Russia, among others — is not just unacceptable as a breach of international law and the Charter of the United Nations that is causing tremendous suffering and human tragedy in Ukraine. It has also dealt a severe blow to the efforts to make headway on nuclear disarmament

and the implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The promising achievements and commitments in the run-up to the tenth NPT Review Conference — the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the establishment of a strategic stability dialogue between the United States and Russia and the January statement by the leaders of the permanent five members of the Security Council, which included the precept that a nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought — have now all been put in question by Russia's escalatory and irresponsible steps, which undermine its credibility as a responsible nuclear-weapon-State.

We welcome the plans to hold the tenth NPT Review Conference in August. The NPT remains the irreplaceable framework for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and it is a living treaty. A successful outcome would mean achieving progress on all three of its pillars. In particular, we must show that article VI matters, both in practical and normative terms. That is why the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament developed a road map with more than 20 meaningful steps to advance nuclear disarmament. We continue to invite all NPT States to lend their support to those proposals, and we call on the nuclear-weapon States to take the steps necessary for their implementation.

Germany remains strongly committed to, and engaged actively in, both the Stockholm Initiative and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was opened for signature 25 years ago, and its entry into force is long overdue. We renew our call on all States that have not signed and ratified the CTBT to show leadership — and to do so now. We want to see the CTBT enter into force.

Equally important is the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which remains one of the key elements for creating the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Another key to progress on nuclear disarmament is developing and further elaborating mechanisms for nuclear disarmament verification. Sound and efficient procedures are a prerequisite for establishing a world free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament verification is also a case in point, which shows how nuclear-weapon-States and non-nuclear-weapon States can work together very effectively. Just this week, Germany and France are conducting an exercise that

simulates the verification of the dismantling of a nuclear warhead.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued development of its nuclear weapons programme and ballistic missile arsenal has become a major challenge to the global non-proliferation efforts and must be met with unity and resolve. Its recent resumption of intercontinental ballistic missile testing only exacerbates our profound concerns. Only by abandoning its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner can North Korea regain the trust of the international community, expect sanctions relief and lay the groundwork for sustainable peace in the region.

Regarding Iran, the full implementation of all the provisions contained in Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and both its annexes remains essential. The E3/EU+3 delegations in Vienna have worked for many months to restore the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as quickly as possible. We urge all participants to seize this opportunity and finalize the agreement that is on the table as soon as possible. Moreover, we echo once more the Security Council's call on Iran not to undertake activities with ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches.

On outer space security, Germany continues to promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable and peaceful space environment and remains strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Outer space must remain a common good to be used for the benefit of, and in the interests of, all humankind. It is highly urgent for us to address security challenges in the space domain as a result of evolving technologies, the increasing relevance of outer space for security, the increased dependencies of our societies on space assets and services, and the growing numbers of human-made objects in space and space debris. We are concerned about the progressive development of counter-space capabilities.

Moreover, the threats created by the potential misuse of directed energy or the conduct of outer space activities in the electromagnetic spectrum and cyber attacks have the potential to not only disrupt or degrade space systems, but they also generate mistrust that can lead to potential escalation.

Considering the characteristics of outer space, particularly the dual-use issue and difficulties regarding attribution and verification, the most pragmatic and realistic way to increase security and prevent misperception and miscalculations at this point in time is to agree on norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour and increase the transparency and predictability of space activities.

For that reason, Germany is an ardent supporter of resolution 76/231, on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours and the relevant Open-ended Working Group. Our goal remains increased shared understanding and awareness of the threats and security risks related to outer space and the adoption of an actual agreement on, and the implementation of rules for, responsible behaviour. That might help to build trust in order to subsequently take more ambitious steps, potentially leading to a comprehensive, effective and verifiable legally binding instrument designed to cover the relevant threats related to outer space.

From our perspective, the draft treaty proposed by Russia and China on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space does not sufficiently address the threats and risks related to outer space security.

First, it covers only space-based systems; ground-based counter-space capabilities, which constitute significant and serious threats to space systems and the space environment, are not explicitly included in the scope of the draft treaty. In that respect, Russia has also failed to reconcile its approach with the fact that it already possesses and continues to develop and test capabilities that can be regarded as weapons.

Secondly, the draft treaty has no workable definition of a space weapon and no verification measures and cannot address the risks emanating from the dual-use nature of space systems. In view of the dual-use nature of almost all objects in space — that is, their potential to be used for harming other space-based systems — we believe that such an approach is not feasible.

We are convinced that it would be more useful to address the security threats and risks related to outer space in a comprehensive manner, to increase transparency and confidence-building measures and to promote consensus-building regarding responsible behaviour. We therefore call on all States to constructively engage in the incremental and inclusive process offered by the Open-ended Working Group on

Reducing Space Threats Through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours, which will begin its work in May.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): After impediments and postponements to meetings over recent years, my delegation welcomes the convening of the 2022 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which will enable us to conduct in-depth discussions on the priority security issues on our agenda.

Côte d'Ivoire would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the Commission and to assure you that our delegation will participate constructively in this session.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made this morning on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.377). I wish to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

It is now more urgent than ever to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as that is the only way to protect people from their use or threat of use. In that context, Côte d'Ivoire would like to remind the nuclear-weapon States of the commitment they made in January to work to prevent nuclear war and avoid nuclear arms races.

Firmly committed to the principle of complete nuclear disarmament, my country supports, as an effective means of achieving that, the universalization and practical application of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the first legally binding multilateral instrument in the field. As one of the first signatories to the Treaty in 2017, and having just ratified it, Côte d'Ivoire calls on all countries that have not yet done so, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to follow suit.

We fervently hope that the first meeting of States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in June, will be an opportunity to make tangible progress on nuclear disarmament. We place the same hope in the outcomes of the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Côte d'Ivoire is similarly convinced of the decisive role of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in the nuclear disarmament architecture. We regret, however, that that important legal instrument, which was adopted in 1996, has not yet entered into force owing to a lack of the necessary ratifications. My country

therefore reiterates its plea for the universalization and entry into force of that Treaty in order to guarantee the prohibition of all forms of nuclear testing, including nuclear-weapon laboratory test explosions.

It is vital to increase awareness of the catastrophic consequences that nuclear weapons could have on humankind's survival. My country would like to reaffirm its support for the initiative on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and to call for the broadest possible support for that mechanism in order to achieve concrete progress on disarmament.

It is also urgent to strengthen actions to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and Côte d'Ivoire's foremost priority in that regard is to support the establishment of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones such as the one established in Africa by the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Pelindaba. Such zones undoubtedly contribute to international security, peace and stability, and we must promote their establishment in all regions of the world.

In response to the new opportunities in the field of outer space exploration, in 2019 the African Union established the African Space Agency to coordinate the continent's space strategy and make better use of the immense opportunities that space offers for the welfare of humankind, including in terms of social, economic, scientific and technological development.

However, such an undertaking can be carried out successfully only in a stable and secure space environment. Preserving that environment is therefore important, as is preventing the weaponization of outer space and military confrontations from occurring there. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire would like to reaffirm its commitment to the principle of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, for the good of all peoples and for the benefit of all countries, regardless of their level of economic and scientific development.

We therefore urge all States, in particular those with significant space capabilities, to work to prevent an arms race in outer space and refrain from actions contrary to that objective, as well as to conduct their activities in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its full commitment and readiness to participate in collective efforts to provide sustainable responses to the major security challenges we are facing.

Mr. Louafi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for this year. I also sincerely congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections, as well as Jamaica and Hungary for assuming the chairmanship of Working Groups I and II. My delegation is ready to cooperate with you, Mr. Chair, and with the other members of the Bureau, as well as the Chairs of the Working Groups, to ensure the success of this session and the resumption of the Commission's work after a two-year hiatus.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/CN.10/PV.377).

Our work in the Disarmament Commission, as a deliberative body of the General Assembly, is to consider the various issues of disarmament in order to develop recommendations for achieving, inter alia, progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and implementing its mandate. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the decision of the Conference on Disarmament at its current session to establish five subsidiary bodies related to its agenda items. Pursuant to that decision, Algeria is tasked with coordinating with the subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament. My delegation hopes that our deliberations will result in recommendations that live up to the aspirations of the international community in order to address the current international security challenges. We support all practical approaches that can help us collectively achieve positive outcomes and facilitate the related deliberations.

My delegation would like to make the following points on the first substantive issue, namely, nuclear disarmament.

Algeria is firmly committed to strengthening international peace and security and believes, along with the absolute majority of Member States and the entire international community, that the most important priority is to achieve nuclear disarmament by achieving the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, because they pose the greatest existing threat to humankind.

We stress that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and is a main component of the collective security system. It is important that the NPT be universal and that all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, respect its provisions, given their special responsibility to uphold their commitments and obligations vis-à-vis nuclear disarmament, pursuant to article VI of the NPT, as well as the commitments and obligations of its successive Review Conferences.

Despite the commitments and obligations that have been made, the world still faces many risks from nuclear weapons, which many States have made the main pillar of their military doctrines and a deterrent tool of their security policies. Such mutually destructive doctrines and nuclear arsenal modernization programmes constitute, in and of themselves, a threat to humankind.

The outcomes of many international conferences clearly show the magnitude of the adverse humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons and the devastation the world could face as a result of the use of such weapons. Assistant Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu pointed out in her briefing this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.377) that nuclear weapons are a genuine threat. Believing that the only guarantee of avoiding the risks of nuclear weapons, their proliferation and the dire effects of such weapons is their complete elimination, Algeria took the initiative of signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We welcomed its entry into force in 2021 and look forward to the first Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, to be held in June.

My delegation welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of a decision to negotiate a binding treaty on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in accordance with the pledge adopted by Member States at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. The Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which held its second session in November 2021, strives to establish such a zone and constitutes a practical and extremely important step towards achieving security, stability and peace in the region and the world at large.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is also essential for nuclear disarmament.

The delegation of my country also welcomes the establishment of an open-ended working group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and looks forward to cooperating in that framework with other Member States to achieve the objectives of relevant General Assembly resolutions. We would like to note the following elements with regard to the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space.

Stating that outer space is a common heritage of humankind confirms the need to limit the exploration and use of outer space to peaceful purposes in order to maintain peace and security, while promoting cooperation in accordance with the principles stipulated in the relevant international laws, especially the Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space contained in General Assembly resolution 1962 (XVIII) and 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.

It is important that outer space be used to meet sustainable development needs, enhance technology transfers and promote technical cooperation and assistance among States in the field of outer space exploration, especially for the benefit of developing countries. The two risks that threaten outer space more than ever — the militarization of outer space and the emergence of a new dynamic in the arms race — are concerning in view of their dire consequences for international peace and security, especially in the light of the current fragile international legal regime pertaining to outer space. The current regime is not sufficient to prevent a nuclear arms race in outer space and is marred by many shortcomings.

In that regard, we call for additional collective efforts, particularly within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, to strengthen the existing international legal framework and demonstrate the political will required to establish a legally binding international instrument on preventing an arms race in a comprehensive and balanced manner. Such an instrument would prevent the placement of defensive and offensive systems in outer space and the use of force or armed attacks against satellites, in addition to prohibiting the development, possession or testing of weapons that could target objects in outer space.

Voluntary measures to enhance transparency and promote outer space activities would indeed provide additional support, but they cannot be a substitute for

establishing a legally binding treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the appropriate negotiating framework of which would be the Conference on Disarmament, with a view to formulating rules and measures to respond to the concerns of all parties.

In conclusion, I hope that the current session of the Disarmament Commission will produce integrated and balanced recommendations that contribute to revitalizing disarmament efforts at the global level. We reiterate our support for your efforts, Mr. Chair, in that regard.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, may I remind delegations that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention.

Ms. Shestopalova (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today brazen anti-Russian rhetoric is being heard in various international forums. Regrettably, the United Nations Disarmament Commission is no exception. The situation in Ukraine, which many delegations raised in their statements as if on command, does not fall within the competence of the Disarmament Commission. The statements made under fabricated pretexts and containing one-sided assessments once again prove the desire of some countries to turn our platform into an arena for settling political scores, which is completely unacceptable. We call for the most decisive response possible to reject that stunt.

The Russian delegation notes that introducing political issues into the work of our Commission sets a dangerous precedent, undermining the foundations of its future work. It deals an irreparable blow to the Commission's international reputation. The delegations that spoke before us unfortunately provided a new batch of false information on Russia's ongoing military operation in Ukraine.

We recall that the Russian air force is carrying out targeted strikes on military infrastructure. It is not using cluster munitions, and neither is it placing drifting mines in the Black Sea. We urge the States members of the Commission to return to substantive, depoliticized discussions, in accordance with the mandate of this unique platform, which has secured its status as a professional international body.

On another matter, in connection with the interest expressed by a number of delegations concerning the anti-satellite test successfully conducted by the Russian

Ministry of Defence on 15 November 2021, I would like to give a first-hand explanation so that the members of the Commission have an objective picture.

We conducted the test in question owing to the need to improve our defence capabilities. The fragments of space debris formed as a result of the test are being closely monitored by the Russian Ministry of Defence space control system and do not pose a threat to the operations of spacecraft of other States, including the International Space Station. The test was conducted in strict compliance with the generally recognized norms and principles of international law. Our country did not violate any commitments in that regard.

We call on all States that are concerned about this matter to wait before carrying out any assessments of the launch and to first carefully study the documents that contain the international, political and legal obligations in that regard. That would at the very least prevent the international community from being misled.

Mr. Kim In Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to take the floor in exercise of its right of reply to respond to the statements made by the representatives of Japan, Germany and others.

My delegation rejects those provocative statements about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as they dangerously misrepresent the nature of the situation in and around the Korean peninsula. As I have stated clearly on several occasions, we have never acknowledged the illegal United Nations resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea because they seriously encroach on sovereign States' rights to self-defence and development. It is the inherent right of a sovereign State to increase military capabilities for self-defence in the face of a maximum military threat from outside forces.

Demanding that my country renounce its right to self-defence is tantamount to denying its sovereign rights. It is totally ridiculous that the same countries keep silent about the United States large-scale joint military exercises and frequent introduction of nuclear assets in and around the Korean peninsula, while making accusations only against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea about its regular and planned self-defence measures. They are obviously applying double standards and blindly following the United States hostile policy against my country.

The principle of finding a solution to a problem is to find out its root cause before coming up with a prescription for it. The Korean peninsula remains in a vicious cycle of tensions and confrontation due to the United States persistent hostile policy and double standards applied against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea made a strategic decision to pre-emptively suspend nuclear tests and test launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles in order to build trust, in the hope of putting an end to the world's most antagonistic relationship — that between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States — and opening a new cooperative era of peace and prosperity.

However, in the past few years alone, following the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States summit, the United States has conducted hundreds of joint war drills, which it had committed itself to halting. And it also conducted tests of all kinds of strategic weapons, while shipping ultra-modern means of attack into South Korea and bringing nuclear-strategic weapons into the region around the Korean peninsula, posing a grave threat to the security of our State.

All the facts I just mentioned clearly prove once again that, unless the United States deep-rooted hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is definitively terminated, the United States will, as ever, remain a long-standing threat to our State, our system and our people.

Under the current circumstances, it is quite reasonable for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comprehensively reconsider the confidence-building measures taken pre-emptively and proactively in the past and to resume all its temporarily suspended activities.

It is the steadfast, strategic goal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to build a more reliable force to counter the long-term military threats from the United States. We remain committed to steadily increasing our war-deterrent force as a means of self-defence in order to deter and bring under control all kinds of dangerous attempts and menacing moves, including growing nuclear threats from the United States and other hostile forces.

With regard to the statement made by the representative of Japan, it is universally known that Japan has expedited its plans to revise its Constitution

and is gradually building up arms, citing reasons of total defence, in pursuit of vengeance for its defeat in the Second World War. Japan has grown into a force of aggression that cannot be set at naught.

The Japanese Government, having defined its neighbouring countries as foes at will, does not today hesitate to urge a military offensive by deploying its aggressive forces in the skies, land or waters of a sovereign State — that is a graphic account of the extent of Japan's invasion manoeuvres.

History clearly remembers that, in the previous century, Japan invaded other countries for the purpose of world domination, massacring many innocent people and inflicting immeasurable misery and suffering. It is crystal-clear that, if the frantic arms build-up by Japan — the war-criminal State — were to be seen through a different lens, a claim of threats from the neighbourhood would be all it would take to enable Japan to repeat its bloody history of aggression.

Japan should see clearly that the circumstances it is in today are completely different from the time when it occupied Korea by force and used it as a stepping stone to invade continental China, subsequently igniting the Pacific War.

Ms. Alldridge (United Kingdom): I must respond to the statement made by the Russian representative, in which they commented on the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council. It is factually inaccurate to claim that the United Kingdom blocked a Russian request for a Council meeting on the events in Bucha. A meeting on that topic is scheduled tomorrow, in line with the Council's provisional rules of procedure and previous precedents.

I would also like to add that it is shameful that the Russian Government continues to conduct information operations against Ukraine in a transparent attempt to justify military action, just as it did when invading in the first place.

Let us be clear. Russia's assault on Ukraine is an unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric attack against a sovereign democratic State. The United Kingdom and our international partners stand united in condemning the Russian Government's reprehensible actions, which are an egregious violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We will continue to support the Ukrainian Government. The United Kingdom and the international community stand against

this naked aggression and for the freedom, democracy and the sovereignty of nations around the world.

Ms. Fisher (United States of America): I regret having to take the floor today to exercise our right of reply to the statement delivered by the representative of Russia.

My point concerns Russia's long list of unsubstantiated accusations against the United States and Ukraine. Those accusations are patently absurd. That is exactly the kind of disinformation that we warned Russia was going to engage in, and in which it has repeatedly engaged in the past. It is an obvious ploy by Russia to falsely divert attention away from its premeditated, unprovoked and unjustified attacks in Ukraine.

It is important to clearly state that Ukraine does not possess nuclear weapons. The International Atomic Energy Agency has confirmed that there is absolutely no evidence that Ukraine's Government is seeking to develop nuclear weapons. Since its independence, Ukraine has consistently and publicly renounced the development, acquisition and use of nuclear weapons.

It is also important for all of us to condemn the Russian Federation's reckless attacks in the vicinity of peaceful civil nuclear facilities in Ukraine.

With regard to NATO nuclear weapons, United States nuclear weapons in Europe are under central control and are not transferred to the possession or control of other countries. NATO arrangements with respect to basing United States nuclear weapons in Europe are fully consistent with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That issue was thoroughly discussed during the NPT negotiations, and the Treaty itself reflects the United States position on that.

Regarding AUKUS — the trilateral cooperation between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States — we will be fully clear about the non-proliferation obligation with respect to the three parties. Australia remains fully committed to its status as a non-nuclear weapon State, in full compliance with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. That has not and will not change.

To the contrary, Australia is a global leader in non-proliferation efforts. It does not and will not seek nuclear weapons. It has committed to not enriching or reprocessing nuclear material and will remain

a non-nuclear-weapon State that complies with its obligations under the NPT. The criticisms that I heard at today's meeting are hypocritical, as the States that are criticizing us are not only nuclear-powered but also have nuclear-armed submarines.

Over the past three decades, Russia has invaded two neighbouring countries, Ukraine and Georgia, and has failed to abide by its commitments to withdraw forces and munitions from Moldova. Russia has interfered in foreign elections. It has used chemical weapons in attempted assassinations, both on its own soil and abroad. It has violated international arms control and commitments and has increasingly demonstrated obstructionist behaviour in multilateral forums. It is also violently attempting to seize the territory of a neighbouring State.

Regarding the other accusations that were made, we trust that the representatives here will recognize them for what they are. We call on Russia to stop spreading misinformation, halt its military operations in Ukraine immediately, return its troops and equipment to Russia and cease all further aggression against Ukraine.

Mr. Leschenko (Ukraine): I would like to respond to my Russian colleague. I would just like to say that her remarks once again point to an inadequate perception of the current reality. In the anti-Ukrainian frenzy, Russian military forces are destroying Ukrainian civil infrastructure, killing Ukrainian people and destroying hospitals, kindergartens and schools.

They are not carrying out targeted strikes on Ukraine's military infrastructure, as claimed by my Russian colleague, who I believe is from Moscow. The truth is that no one in Ukraine invited Russian military forces to its territory. The Ukrainian people perceive Russian military forces only as aggressors and robbers — criminals. And the entire Ukrainian population has stood up to fight that aggression. This is not a war of Ukraine's choosing.

(spoke in Russian)

I can see women — probably from Moscow — as part of the Russian delegation. I would like to say that Russia is waging a brutal war on our country. I want to tell the women in the delegation: do not send your children to the war in Ukraine. Do not send them to kill civilians, women and children on our territory. Do not send them to be killed themselves. Convince other mothers and wives not to send their sons or husbands to

this insane, dirty war of occupation. Find the strength to face the truth.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus has always actively and consistently advocated for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Ukraine. We created all the necessary conditions for the conclusion of the Minsk agreements and the subsequent work of the Trilateral Contact Group to peacefully resolve the situation in eastern Ukraine. In the current circumstances, we believe diplomatic methods to be a priority. We are making every effort to organize the negotiation process to help the conflicting parties find points of contact in their positions and stop the bloodshed.

The Belarusian army has not taken part, and does not take part, in Russia's special military operation. Various claims regarding the participation of Belarusian soldiers in the special military operation in the territory of Ukraine are unfounded, which has been repeatedly stated by representatives of the Ministry of Defence of Republic of Belarus.

Several strikes on Ukrainian military infrastructure from the territory of Belarus on the first day of the special operation were of a preventative nature and occurred owing to the availability of confirmed information that rocket attacks were being planned from the territory of Ukraine onto towns in Belarus just across the border. The strengthening of military capacities of the Belarusian armed forces is a natural response to the build-up of NATO troops, along with their equipment, in dangerous proximity to our borders.

Mr. Tamaura (Japan): On behalf of the Government of Japan, I wish to exercise our right of reply in response to the statement that the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea just made. The claims that North Korea made about Japan are groundless.

Under its Constitution, Japan has adhered to the basic precept of maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy, while not becoming a military

Power that poses a threat to other countries and observing the three non-nuclear principles. Under those precepts, Japan will never, ever change the course it has taken as a peace-loving nation. Our defence capability is and will be for Japan's defence in the future. We ensure the transparency of the content of our defence-related expenditures by adhering to the strict civilian control of the military.

I would also like to emphasize that, for more than 70 years, since the end of the Second World War, Japan has regarded the facts of history in a spirit of humility and has consistently respected democracy and human rights and contributed to the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the international community.

The Chair: I would like to remind delegations that the second intervention in right of reply is limited to five minutes.

Ms. Shestopalova (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will keep my remarks brief. Regrettably, the discussion that has been unfolding serves only to confirm that little good can come from politicizing our forum. We are delving into topics that are outside the mandate of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

However, I would like to take this opportunity in exercise of the right of reply to respond to the esteemed representative of the United Kingdom, in connection with her remarks about Russia's proposal to hold a meeting of the Security Council on the events in Bucha. The United Kingdom's refusal to convene such a meeting at Russia's request is unprecedented in the practice of the Council. It is unimaginable. We requested that the United Kingdom presidency hold such a meeting, and we received a refusal. Mr. Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations, gave a detailed press conference on that matter today, and I would suggest that those present here familiarize themselves with it.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.