



# General Assembly

Official Records

## Disarmament Commission

**382<sup>nd</sup>** meeting

Thursday, 21 April 2022, 4.15 p.m.  
New York

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

*The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.*

### Agenda item 6 (continued)

#### Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session

**The Chair:** The United Nations Disarmament Commission will now proceed to adopt the reports of the subsidiary bodies under agenda items 4 and 5, as well as the draft report of the Commission, contained in documents A/CN.10/2022/L.1, as revised, A/CN.10/2022/CRP.2/Rev.1 and A/CN.10/2022/CRP.3/Rev.1, which have been circulated. Thereafter, the Commission will hear concluding statements by delegations.

To start the process of the consideration and adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies on individual agenda items, I shall first call on the Chairs of each Working Group to introduce their reports.

I now give the floor to the Chair of Working Group I on agenda item 4, entitled “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons”, Mr. Kurt Davis, Deputy Permanent Representative of Jamaica, to introduce the report of his Working Group, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/CRP.2/Rev.1.

**Mr. Davis** (Jamaica), Chair of Working Group I: I have the honour to introduce the report of Working Group I, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/CRP.2/Rev.1.

I would first like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for giving me the opportunity to chair the deliberations of this important Working Group during the second year of the Commission’s three-year cycle. This year, given the significant work achieved in 2018, the Working Group was able to use the Chair’s non-paper contained in document A/CN.10/2018/WG.I/CRP.3 as the basis for discussions on agenda item 4.

For three days there was a robust exchange on the proposals in that paper. Those discussions resulted in my non-papers of 12, 14 and 18 April on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Working Group considered the papers over the course of seven meetings. Agreement on the recommendations proved elusive, and in my view the breadth of proposals in the Chair’s non-paper, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/WG.I/CRP.1, means that the Commission will be faced with a formidable task in terms of reaching consensus at its 2023 session.

The report before the Commission today, which is contained in document A/CN.10/2022/CRP.2/Rev.1, has been adopted by consensus by the Working Group. It follows the pattern of proceeding sessions. It is strictly procedural, and I hope that Working Group I’s report will be adopted by consensus.

At this point, I would like to thank you, Sir, for your leadership and support during this session, and I would also like to express thanks to Mr. Alex Lomaia, the Secretary of the Working Group, his successor,

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Ms. Sonia Elliott, and, of course, our colleagues from the Office for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Tsutomu Kono and Mr. Hideki Matsuno, whose work and support were instrumental in the Working Group's deliberations and the finalization of its work.

**The Chair:** There being no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group I on agenda item 4, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/CRP.2/Rev.1.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** The Commission will now move on to the report of Working Group II on agenda item 5, entitled "Preparation of recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities", as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/CRP.3/Rev.1.

I now give the floor to the Chair of Working Group II, Mrs. Szilvia Balázs, the representative of Hungary, to introduce the report of the Working Group.

**Mrs. Balázs (Hungary), Chair of Working Group II:** I have the honour to introduce the report of Working Group II, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/CRP.3/Rev.1. I would like to thank the members of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for giving me the opportunity to chair the deliberations of the Working Group after three long years of silence. This year, in accordance with the mandate of the Disarmament Commission, the Working Group was allocated agenda item 5, entitled "Preparation of recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189)".

Given that UNDC last formally considered the agenda item relating to transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities in 2018, this year the Working Group intended to first refamiliarize delegations with the topic and thereby facilitate an exchange of views and proposals

throughout the course of the meetings. For six days, delegations deliberated and heard presentations on the agenda item. For two days, they exchanged information on their national space policies. Those extensive deliberations, conducted over the course of the 10 meetings of the Working Group, have resulted in my Chair's summary, which reflects my understanding of the key points raised, without prejudice to the position of any delegation. The summary is intended to provide a basis for the work of the Working Group at the 2023 session. The report before the Commission today, contained in document A/CN.10/2022/CRP.3/Rev.1, provides a procedural summary, and the Working Group has adopted it by consensus. I hope that the report will be adopted by consensus in this plenary meeting as well.

I would like to thank you, Sir, for your leadership during this session. I would also like to thank the representatives of the Secretariat for their support, and the team from the Office for Disarmament Affairs — Mr. René Holbach and Mr. Michael Spies — and the interpreters for their work during the session.

**The Chair:** There being no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group II on agenda item 5, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/CRP.3/Rev.1.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** Now that we have adopted the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, I would like to thank the Chairs of the two Working Groups for their tireless efforts and dedication. The Commission is deeply indebted to them for their able leadership in guiding the deliberations on very complex issues.

We will now begin our consideration of the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/L.1.

I have the pleasure of giving the floor to the Vice-Chair of the Commission, Mr. Zhangeldy Syrymbet of Kazakhstan, to introduce the draft report of the Commission.

**Mr. Syrymbet (Kazakhstan):** On behalf of the Bureau, it is my honour to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the draft report of the Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/L.1. The draft report consists of four sections: "Introduction", "Organization and work of the substantive session

of 2022”, “Documentation” and “Conclusions and recommendations”. I would first like to address the issue of technical updates to the text of the draft report.

In section II, the last sentence should read:

“As the Chair for its session, there was an understanding that the Group of Eastern European States will provide the Chair for the next session of the Disarmament Commission in 2023.”

In the first sentence of paragraph 2, the word “plenary” has been added after “376th”, and “United Nations” has been added before “Headquarters”.

In paragraph 4, the words “for each session” have been added after “Vice-Chair”.

The beginning of the first sentence of paragraph 5 has been amended to “Also at the same meeting”.

In paragraph 9, “United Nations” has been added before “Headquarters”, and the second sentence should read: “In the course of its session, the Commission held seven meetings”.

In paragraph 10, the words “of the Commission” have been added after “the Bureau”.

Similar to previous paragraphs, in paragraph 11, “Disarmament” has been added before “Commission”, and its second sentence should read: “Representatives of the following countries made statements during the general exchange of views”.

Paragraph 15 in section III should read:

“(a) Documents submitted by the Secretary-General.

“The Commission had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the list of documents submitted by the Secretary-General for the Commission for its substantive session of 2022.

“(b) Other documents, including documents submitted by Member States.”

Paragraph 16 in section IV should read:

“In the course of the Commission’s work, the documents listed below, dealing with substantive questions, were submitted and considered:

“(a) working paper submitted by the Russian Federation (A/CN.10/2022/WG.II/WP.1);

“(b) working paper submitted by the Group of Arab States (A/CN.10/2022/WG.II/WP.2);

“(c) working paper submitted by the States members of the League of Arab States (A/CN.10/2022/WG.I/WP.1)”

Lastly, the first sentence of paragraph 17 should read:

“At its 382nd meeting, on 21 April, the Commission adopted, by consensus, the reports of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, as orally revised, to be presented to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.”

As is customary, the final report is a factual description of the Commission’s work and proceedings during the session. The substantive part is comprised of two reports of the Working Groups, which were just adopted by the Commission and are part of the present report.

During this session, the Commission continued to work under the agenda adopted for the current cycle. In keeping with the Commission’s deliberative mandate, oral and written proposals were submitted and contributed to the objectives of the groups. I was privileged to observe the tireless efforts of the Chairs of the two Working Groups and of delegations to address pertinent issues on the substantive agenda items and engage in in-depth discussions with a view to finding common ground. I want to take this opportunity to say that it has been a great honour to serve as Vice-Chair during this session, and in particular to work under the able leadership of our Chair, Mr. Xolisa Mabhungo.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for the counsel and support that her Office has provided to the Bureau and Member States. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Movses Abelian, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, and his team for the excellent organization and servicing of the Commission’s meetings. Last but not least, I would like to express my appreciation to all the interpreters for making it possible for us to understand one another. And I want to commend all members of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts and kind assistance.

With those brief remarks, I recommend that the Commission adopt the draft report, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/L.1, as orally revised.

**The Chair:** We shall now consider the draft report of the Commission. We will examine it section by section.

If there are no comments on section I, "Introduction", I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt it.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** We turn next to section II, "Organization and work of the 2022 substantive session", paragraphs 2 to 12, as orally revised. Does any delegation wish to make a comment on this section?

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to make one small amendment to the proposed addition to section II. A specific reference was made to the 2023 session. It states that

(*spoke in English*)

"the Group of Eastern European States will provide the Chair for the 2023 session of the Disarmament Commission."

(*spoke in Russian*)

In order to provide flexibility with regard to the wording, we would replace "2023" with the word "next". Our work in the Disarmament Commission has varied, and we have recently seen that the Commission has not been able to meet every year. We very much hope that the next session will take place in 2023. However, "Man proposes, but God disposes". So in order to make the wording more flexible and take unforeseen circumstances into account, we propose replacing "2023" with the word "next".

**The Chair:** There being no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt section II, paragraphs 2 to 12, as orally revised, including the oral revision proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** We shall now take up section III, entitled "Documentation", paragraphs 15, as orally revised by the Vice-Chair.

There being no comments or questions, I shall take it that the Commission decides to adopt section III, paragraph 15, as orally revised.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** There being no comments on section IV, entitled "Conclusions and recommendations", paragraphs 16 to 19, I shall take it that the Commission decides to adopt section IV, paragraphs 16 to 19, as orally revised.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** Having adopted all sections of the draft, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the draft report of the Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2022/L.1, as a whole, as orally revised.

*It was so decided.*

### Concluding statements

**The Chair:** Having adopted the report of the Commission, I would like to offer a few thoughts of my own.

This year, the Disarmament Commission resumed its substantive work after a hiatus of three years. I am pleased that Member States demonstrated their high-level engagement, as attested to by a high turnout at both the plenary meetings and the meetings of the two Working Groups. Members have continued their efforts to advance the global disarmament agenda and have endeavoured to take forward multilateral disarmament through the work done during this session.

In that context, the Disarmament Commission has played a critical role by successfully resuming its substantive work and fulfilling its mandate as a specialized deliberative subsidiary body of the General Assembly, with universal membership. In particular, I am pleased that the two Working Groups of the Commission held intensive discussions on the two agenda items entrusted to them.

The members of Working Group I had extensive, robust discussions and exchanges of views on recommendations on achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons on the basis of the Chair's paper from the 2018 session (A/CN.10/2018/WG.I/CRP.3). The members of Working Group II also exchanged general views concerning transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities following a series of informative briefings and presentations on that important topic. And they conducted an extensive review of the 2013 report (A/68/189) of the Group of Governmental Experts on

## Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities.

The disarmament machinery established in 1978 by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament provides a mechanism for promoting dialogue and building confidence among States. I am confident that our work in the Disarmament Commission this year has greatly contributed to restoring trust among States and rebuilding confidence in multilateral disarmament. As one of its pillars, the Disarmament Commission allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues. I sincerely hope that the constructive atmosphere that has prevailed in our work over the past three weeks will pave the way towards agreement on substantive outcomes at the end of the current three-year cycle next year and will create momentum for revitalizing the work of the Commission, the disarmament machinery and multilateral disarmament as a whole.

The Commission will now hear delegations' concluding statements.

**Mr. Goossens** (Netherlands): I would like to thank you, Sir, the Vice-Chair, the Chairs of the Working Groups and the entire team involved in your hard work on this year's United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are very happy to see the Commission alive and kicking again, and we also look forward to continuing our discussions next year with a solid basis laid this year. I want to offer a few brief reflections on the conclusion of Working Group II in particular, as well as on our work this year in general.

First, with regard to the conclusion of Working Group II, space and space technology are by definition international matters. Space cannot be claimed at a national level, and no country can operate independently in outer space without affecting others. Moreover, the use of space assets is certainly no longer the prerogative of major Powers. Given the major interests at stake and the many views associated with them, it is important for stakeholders to join our work and contribute to finding solutions to the challenges that we face. That includes non-governmental organizations, a number of which made important contributions to Working Group II this year, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them once again for supporting our work.

Of course, a shadow has been cast over our work in the form of Russia's war on Ukraine. That invasion has been globally condemned and poses a grave threat

to international cooperation, including on nuclear disarmament and our common work to prevent an arms race in outer space. We call once more on the Russian Federation to end its needless violence.

**Mr. Roethlin** (Austria): As we approach the end of this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), let me congratulate you, Sir, the members of the Bureau, the Chairs of the Working Groups and the Secretariat for steering and aiding us in our successful work. After a hiatus of three years, in the past three weeks the Commission has lived up to its billing as a deliberative body. The discussions that we had were frank and open. The final report of the Commission, including the reports of the two Working Groups (A/CN.10/2022/CRP.2/Rev.1 and A/CN.10/2022/CRP.3/Rev.1), as well as the two Chairs' papers, provides a good foundation for the continuation of the Commission's work next year in the final year of its three-year cycle in 2023.

Despite all those positive points, my delegation feels compelled to raise one worrying issue. We are concerned about one delegation's misuse of the consensus principle, which we hold dear in the Disarmament Commission. Abusing consensus in the form of a veto of reports that are merely procedural not only runs counter to the motives that underlie delegations' quest to find consensus solutions amenable to all, but it also threatens to undermine the work of this body and other disarmament bodies by creating unnecessary impasses. Those concerns are especially pertinent with regard to attempts to reshape or undo some of the most important aspects of the work carried out in Working Group II this year. The presentations that we heard from non-governmental organizations were essential to the Working Group, and it is incomprehensible to our delegation how a factual note in their presentations could strike the discernible fears that we heard raised yesterday in the Working Group.

That being said, the Disarmament Commission will not forget the presentations we heard in Working Group II. I would like to specifically mention the presentations by Ms. Victoria Samson of the Secure World Foundation, who addressed provisions related to the exchange of information on the principles and goals of States' outer-space policies, and Ms. Raju of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, who addressed provisions related to exchanges of information on major military outer-space expenditure. There were also presentations on the provisions related to information

exchange and notifications related to outer-space activities from Ms. Natercia Rodrigues of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), who addressed provisions related to registration practices, in particular under the Convention on the Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space; Mr. Paul Wohrer, of the Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, who discussed pre-launch notifications in the context of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and Mr. Brian Flewelling of ExoAnalytic Solutions, who addressed provisions related to the international sharing of space situational-awareness information.

Additionally, we heard a presentation on the provisions related to risk-reduction notifications from Mr. Dmitry Stefanovich of the Centre for International Security at the Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who spoke about the destruction of space objects in the context of preventing an arms race in outer space. Ms. Iwamoto of Astroscale Japan addressed provisions related to transparency measures for active debris removal from a private-sector perspective. We subsequently heard presentations from Mr. Pavel Podvig of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on provisions related to site visits and technology demonstrations in outer-space disarmament contexts and how they might be applied to outer-space security, and Mr. Noel Stott of the Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre, who discussed provisions related to site visits and technology demonstrations and how they might be applied.

Finally, we heard presentations from Mr. Nicholas Hedman, also of UNOOSA, on provisions related to international cooperation, with a particular focus on the work of his Office in the areas of cooperation and outreach. We heard from Ms. Véronique Glaude of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), who addressed provisions related to consultative mechanisms on the ITU constitution and radio regulations. Lastly, we heard from Mr. Brian Weeden of the Consortium for Execution of Rendezvous and Servicing Operations on coordination and in particular the coordination of the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in the private sector.

In past months, the Russian Federation has systematically tried to purge references to civil-society engagement in various proceedings, not only here in New York but also in Geneva, in an attempt to downplay

the important role that various stakeholders have to play in all of our processes. In a similar vein, over the past few weeks we have seen brazen attempts by the Russian Federation to create an alternative reality around the brutal war and aggression it is waging in Ukraine. That has to stop. Here or there, however, those attempts will not be successful. The truth and facts will always prevail.

Let me conclude by once again expressing our deep appreciation, Mr. Chair, for the important work that you and your team have done for the good of the Disarmament Commission.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, allow me to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your efforts in organizing the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission this year. We were able to engage in substantive discussions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as on preparing recommendations to advance practical measures for transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. That is particularly valuable considering that for organizational reasons the Commission had held no official meetings since 2018. They include the failure to issue visas to several members of delegations participating in these sessions. We would also like to convey our appreciation to the Chairs of the Working Groups for their tireless efforts over the past three weeks, as well as to the interpreters and the Secretariat for their work.

The texts that delegations have worked to adopt at this session of the Commission will lay a foundation for the success of the current three-year cycle of the Commission in 2023. We hope that our productive work will further the adoption next year of substantive outcome documents in the Disarmament Commission and appropriate and relevant consensus-based recommendations on the items on our agenda. Moreover, the work we have done is a substantial contribution to efforts to strengthen United Nations disarmament mechanisms, including the key mechanism that is the Disarmament Commission.

That said, an alarming message was sent by the destructive attempts of several Member States to politicize the discussions in the Disarmament Commission, a clear example of which was in the statements made just now by the delegations of the Netherlands and Austria. We see in those attempts a

desire to divert the Commission's attention from the tasks before it to issues that have nothing to do with the remit of our forum. We hope that delegations will demonstrate the necessary political will and responsibility and refrain from undermining the effectiveness of the Commission's work, on whose results the maintenance of international peace and security depends, by sacrificing it to their own short-sighted political interests.

During the discussion on the issue of nuclear disarmament, States on the whole made an effort to find common ground, with the aim of building trust and allaying existing concerns, and we arrived at a number of potential areas for compromise, as the non-paper of the Chair of Working Group I showed. We believe that we can continue working on it next year, with a view to agreeing on consensus-based recommendations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We would like to reaffirm that Russia has consistently worked to make specific practical contributions to ridding the world of the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. We are fully committed to the noble goal of building a world free of nuclear weapons. That said, we believe firmly that genuine progress on the issue of nuclear disarmament can be achieved only through consensus decisions and by maintaining a balanced approach through gradual reduction based on the principle of indivisible security, equal and reciprocal consideration of the concerns of all and the importance of maintaining strategic stability.

During the discussion on outer-space issues, many delegations affirmed the urgent need to adopt a multilateral, legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, with guarantees preventing the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against outer-space objects or with their assistance. A strong foundation for those efforts is Russia and China's draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the use or threat of use of force against outer-space objects, which has been submitted to the Conference on Disarmament. We are ready to continue our work on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities next year in order to meet the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. We assume that Working Group II will work diligently to carry out its direct mandate in full by drafting specific recommendations aimed at incorporating transparency and confidence-building measures in

outer space activities in the context of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In that regard it will be key to integrate those measures into a multilateral legally binding instrument. In other words, their consideration should be conducted in tandem with the drafting of such an instrument but should not replace it.

As the Commission is aware, the central initiative in this area, now an international one, is the initiative to establish a political commitment to the no first placement of weapons in outer space. We urge all Member States, and the spacefaring Powers first and foremost, to join it.

In conclusion, I would like to express our belief that with the requisite political will, the members of the Disarmament Commission will be able to overcome their political disagreements and achieve mutually acceptable, effective results for the good of international peace and security. Russia is ready to undertake that work.

**Mr. Guerra** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to thank and commend you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership. I would also like to thank the Secretariat, the members of the Bureau and the interpreters for their hard work during this session of the Disarmament Commission in 2022. We also want to thank Mr. Kurt Davis and Mrs. Szilvia Balázs, the Chairs of Working Groups I and II, for the professionalism and efficiency they have both shown in our deliberations over the past few weeks, and all delegations for their continued and constructive participation.

I would like to speak briefly on a few issues. We are meeting in the wake of a pandemic and after several years during which the Commission was unable to convene, so this session is a very positive and encouraging development. Dialogue and diplomacy on issues that are so sensitive for our countries and for international security cannot be interrupted and should be constantly strengthened. The Disarmament Commission has been an important exercise in diplomacy in the light of the considerable challenge that will be posed by the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in August.

In the Working Group on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, we agreed on a good document, the result of discussions on items on which we all agree as well as those on which we differ. However, as we saw in our debates, some issues still require greater reflection,

but we have a good basis on which to continue our work next year.

In the Working Group on outer space, we heard various positions expressed by delegations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space that enriched our work, as well as interesting briefings on the challenges involved. While we do have various international instruments relevant to that area, it is an arena with very few rules and regulations and that therefore demands serious thought on the part of all of us. The Commission may perhaps provide a good opportunity to further those discussions and lay a foundation for new regulations on the subject. Similarly, the Chair's non-paper is a good one and reflects the status of our deliberations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I have no doubt that next year we will be well placed to advance our work on recommendations.

The Disarmament Commission last issued recommendations in 2017, on conventional weapons. After a drought of 17 years, we hope to see a reversal of the trend. There is no question that we all want to see a world free of the scourge of nuclear weapons and our responses to the issue to be immediate. Nonetheless, the international context and the need to seek concrete results for a safer world compel us to seek creative and pragmatic solutions geared to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is our ultimate aim.

**Ms. McIntyre** (Australia): I would like to sincerely thank you, Mr. Chair, and the Chairs of Working Groups I and II for all your efforts in stewarding our three weeks of work in the Disarmament Commission. I would also like to thank the Secretariat and the interpreters for their highly professional support. We were very pleased that the Commission was able to resume its deliberations this year and build on the good work that we undertook in 2018. I would like to offer some very brief reflections from my delegation.

In Working Group I, we were pleased that the Commission was able to advance discussions on the issue of nuclear risk reduction this year. While risk reduction is no substitute for nuclear disarmament, it entails meaningful and practical steps that the international community, and particularly nuclear-possessor States, can take towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. We therefore see it as an important element of disarmament and entirely within the Commission's mandate. We hope that next year, when

the Commission enters the final year of its cycle, the Working Group can further develop its work on risk reduction in fulfilment of its mandate as a body that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations on those issues.

Australia is a strong supporter of the responsible-behaviours approach to ensuring space security and sustainability, including in order to prevent an arms race in outer space. Transparency and confidence-building measures are a key component in that approach. We would like to thank the Chair of Working Group II and the Secretariat for their efforts to engage an excellent series of expert presenters from the representatives of international organizations and non-governmental entities. Hearing from those experts considerably enriched our discussions and our capacity to tackle the Working Group's agenda.

Australia was disappointed that the procedural report for the Working Group did not fully reflect the contribution that the representatives of non-governmental entities made to our work. Non-governmental actors play an increasing role in outer-space activities, with considerable investment in the growth of the commercial space sector. Equally, international organizations have considerable valuable expertise that can substantively support States' deliberations on space security issues and has done so this week. We were grateful for the contributions of those representatives and feel that the Working Group's procedural report should have accurately reflected the fact that they took place. Efforts to remove references to those presentations from the procedural report themselves amount to a politicization of the Commission's work.

Allow me to thank you once again, Mr. Chair, and to say that Australia looks forward to continuing the discussions in the Disarmament Commission next year.

**Mr. Brady** (Ireland): We, too, would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairs of the two Working Groups, Mr. Davis and Ms. Balázs, for their extraordinary work, patience and good humour in guiding our deliberations over the past few weeks. I also want to thank the Secretariat, and in particular you, Mr. Chair, for the exemplary manner in which you successfully conducted this session of the Disarmament Commission. It is very important to my country that the Commission resume its work in a productive and

positive manner after its enforced break. Your efforts in achieving that leave us in a very good position to continue and complete our work next year.

I would like to associate myself fully with the comments made by the representatives of Austria and the Netherlands. Given that they have spoken much more eloquently and effectively than I can, I would just like to add our own deep concern about the attempts to use procedural methods to seek to excise the valuable input of non-governmental entities in the work of Working Group II. We greatly valued their presentations for the Working Group's deliberations. Their input and expertise should form a key part of our work to ensure that we can reach the best and most practical and effective decisions for the benefit of all of us.

**Mr. Ishida (Japan):** Japan appreciates the fact that the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission has been held this year after a three-year hiatus, and I would like to thank everyone who worked to organize this year's session.

Japan hopes that the Disarmament Commission will issue concrete recommendations at next year's session. The situation with regard to nuclear disarmament is bad, but even in these circumstances we must make every effort to take realistic and pragmatic measures to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. It will be important to ensure that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in August, achieves a meaningful outcome, and Japan will spare no effort to that end.

Japan is also strongly committed to maintaining outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable environment, and we look forward to advancing discussions on reducing threats in space through norms, rules and principles, especially through the forthcoming work of the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats Through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours.

Japan considers transparency and confidence-building measures to be programmatic, short-term ways to prevent an arms race in outer space. In our view, the following measures are key elements for reinforcing transparency and trust among States on the issue of outer space. First, timely and appropriate communication is essential. That includes States' timely and appropriate responses to inquiries from relevant actors. Secondly, the establishment of

national points of contact is important. Thirdly, we must enhance cooperation on strengthening space situational awareness. Fourthly, we must promote information-sharing on space doctrines, policies and strategies. Japan considers that such measures will contribute to generating predictability and trust, as well as to reducing risks of misunderstanding and miscalculation with regard to outer space, and that they require further consideration and implementation.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the observer of the State of Palestine.

**Ms. Sayej (Palestine):** I thank you, Mr. Chair, for your support and that of your team throughout this session. My delegation would like to thank Mr. Kurt Davis, Chair of the Working Group on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, for his guidance and leadership over the past two weeks. We are truly honoured to have had him as Chair of Working Group I.

My delegation would also like to thank our colleagues in this room for their constructive engagement. Despite disappointing delays and frustrations, they conducted deliberations in honesty and in good faith and demonstrated a sense of responsibility, not only to the subject matter at hand but also to the multilateral system, which we are all trying to uphold and preserve in these challenging times. Although there were significantly divergent views, this session unquestionably renewed the momentum of the international community with regard to the multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regime, which underpins global peace, security and stability.

The only security threat we have is the very existence of nuclear weapons. We cannot ignore that fact, which is at the core of the disarmament machinery. In that regard, the State of Palestine remains committed to a world free of nuclear weapons. We reaffirm that nuclear weapons will always remain illegal. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and is reinforced by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which complements the existing international instruments.

Finally, we are also equally committed to a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and to holding a successful third session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. We look forward to

working with everyone to ensure that that is reflected in the Disarmament Commission's report next year.

**Ms. Fisher** (United States of America): We thank you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership during the 2022 session of the Disarmament Commission. The delegation of the United States would also like to thank Mr. Kurt Davis and Ms. Szilvia Balázs, the Chairs of Working Groups I and II, for their guidance and leadership throughout the Working Group meetings. We also would like to thank the Secretariat and our colleagues for their engagement on those issues. We commend the Working Groups' focus on recommendations for achieving nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and space transparency and confidence-building measures, and are pleased to have played a role in working for those objectives. If there is one thing on which we can all agree, it is the importance of the work of those two Working Groups.

The work here in the Disarmament Commission is difficult, especially as consensus can be hard to achieve in the best of circumstances. Instead of focusing on what we cannot achieve or how difficult it will be, we have concrete opportunities coming up. To echo what some of our colleagues have said, we have opportunities to move beyond words and to take action. Let us do exactly that where we can.

As we noted in our opening remarks, we will work to defend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its special place in the hierarchy of non-proliferation instruments. This session of the Commission convenes a few short months ahead of the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. After two years of pandemic-related delays, we look forward to using the Review Conference to identify ways to strengthen the Treaty for the next 50 years and beyond.

With regard to transparency and confidence-building measures in space, the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats Through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours, established by resolution 76/231, on reducing space threats, meets in Geneva next month. The United States believes its process will enable the international community to begin building the shared understanding necessary for developing norms around behaviours that would be observable and therefore enable us to confirm whether a behaviour is responsible. We hope that all Member States will participate fully in the work of the Open-ended Working Group, especially since it represents the

next opportunity for us to come together and attempt to establish much-needed norms. While States that voted against the Open-ended Working Group should speak up and have their voices heard, my delegation is certainly not afraid of hearing dissenting views, because otherwise we will never get anywhere on establishing norms. The United States looks forward to continuing work with the international community on those issues wherever we can.

I also regret feeling obliged to take the floor to respond to Russia's allegations regarding visas. The United States has a proven track record of adhering to its obligations under the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations. In accordance with the Agreement, we will continue to review and process in a timely manner all visa applications for individuals covered by the Agreement, including those who are coming to New York for the NPT Review Conference in August. Consistent with standing practice, we urge delegations to submit visa applications as early as possible and preferably at least eight weeks prior to the opening of all conferences and with all the requested application information. We formally relayed that information to Russia in early March. Russia and all NPT parties will have sufficient notice to submit their visa applications in time for the Review Conference.

I would also add that in the past three decades, Russia has invaded two neighbouring countries and has increasingly demonstrated obstructionist behaviour in multilateral forums. It is now attempting to violently seize the territory of a sovereign State. The United States again calls on Russia to immediately halt its attacks on Ukraine, return its troops and equipment to Russia and cease all further aggression against Ukraine.

**Ms. Romero López** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate and thank you, Mr. Chair, and the Vice-Chair, the Chairs of the two Working Groups and the Secretariat for your commendable efforts in guiding our deliberations in the Disarmament Commission over the past three weeks.

The resumption of the substantive work of the Commission, a body that is very important to us, has been very encouraging. We urge that the debate be continued next year based on this session's deliberations. We hope to adopt specific, consensus-based recommendations to present to the General Assembly on the items under consideration before concluding the current cycle of

work, in accordance with the Commission's mandate, and our delegation will be working actively to that end.

We will remain steadfast in our defence of a world free of nuclear weapons as long as the threat that the very existence of such weapons poses to human life continues. We will continue to advocate for the negotiation and timely adoption of treaties on the no first placement of weapons in outer space and on the prevention of an arms race that complement the current legal framework. We also reaffirm Cuba's commitment to the United Nations disarmament machinery.

**Mr. Al-Taie** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all who contributed to the completion of the work of the Disarmament Commission during the 2022 session, which has been convened at a time when the security situation is very complicated. That has demanded that we all cooperate and make a concerted effort to enable the Commission to reach consensus at its next session on recommendations related to nuclear disarmament and outer-space issues, which would have a positive impact on international efforts aimed at enhancing international and regional peace and security. My delegation welcomes the work of Working Groups I and II and the results they have achieved through the open and transparent approach they have adopted during this session, enabling us to draft documents that we believe will constitute a good start for next year's session.

At the same time, the delegation of Iraq is disappointed with some countries' reservations and refusals with regard to the proposals and initiatives introduced in relation to the 1995 resolution on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction contained in document NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), notably in the context of convening the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, Iraq emphasizes once again the importance of showing greater flexibility and political will, as well as of negotiating in good faith to complete the Commission's work. The fact is that without that, we will not be able to overcome the impediments and challenges that prevented the Commission over the past two years from convening and resuming its work as one of the important United Nations disarmament bodies.

In conclusion, I wish you every success, Mr. Chair, and a safe return to our countries for all of us here.

**Mr. Alhakam** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. Chair, for your efforts in organizing our work. We also thank the Vice-Chair and the Chairs of Working Groups I and II for their able stewardship, as well as the Secretariat and the interpreters for their work.

We are pleased that the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission was able to be convened after a three-year hiatus, and we want to be able to collaborate with other delegations during the Commission's session next year, in hopes that the political will will be there to enable us to achieve our goals of maintaining and promoting international peace and security. In that context, the Syrian Arab Republic looks forward to the convening of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in August. We hope that the Conference will be a genuine opportunity to reach consensus on a comprehensive outcome document to ensure the implementation of the obligations and commitments in the final documents and resolutions of the NPT Review Conferences, particularly the 1995 resolution on the Middle East contained in document NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I). That resolution was adopted as part of the indefinite extension of the NPT and will remain applicable until it is implemented.

Turning now to the issue of outer space, my country stresses that space remains a common heritage and interest of all humankind. In that regard, we underscore the sovereign legitimate right of all States to explore and use outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes. It is essential that we prevent any arms race in outer space or its transformation into an arena for war or military confrontation. In that regard, my delegation supports establishing a legally binding and verifiable instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

**Mrs. Narayanan Nair** (India): Please accept our appreciation, Mr. Chair, of your leadership and efforts in guiding our work at the 2022 session of the Disarmament Commission. We thank Mr. Syrymbet of Kazakhstan for his work as Vice-Chair. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Davis of Jamaica and Mrs. Balázs of Hungary, the Chairs of Working Groups I and II, for their stellar work, sense of humour and resilience in leading the Working Groups. Thanks and appreciation are also due to all members of the Secretariat and the interpreters for all of their hard work.

India is pleased that the Disarmament Commission, as part of the disarmament triad, was able to resume its work this year and that we were able to conduct substantive discussions on topics on our agenda. We look forward to making tangible progress at the Commission's session next year and reaching a consensus on outcomes that will have a positive impact on global peace and security.

As I leave to return to Geneva, I wish all my colleagues here in New York a peaceful year ahead.

**Mr. Elhomosany** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express my sincere appreciation to you, Mr. Chair, for your wise leadership of the work of the Disarmament Commission. I also thank the Chairs of Working Groups I and II for their efforts in leading our meetings.

This year's discussions, particularly those on nuclear disarmament in Working Group I, represent a good opportunity for preparing for the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in August. The establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a goal that Egypt has always worked for, in accordance with the 1995 resolution on the Middle East contained in document NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), which is an integral part of the indefinite extension of the NPT. We want to see that goal implemented in the light of the progress made by the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which has already held two sessions under the auspices of the United Nations, presided over by Jordan during the first session and Kuwait during the second. We also look forward to making progress on the issue of responsible behaviour in outer space.

In conclusion, it is our hope that the disarmament machineries will regain their effectiveness amid the tensions that the international community is witnessing, and which are currently putting the goal of nuclear disarmament out of reach.

**Ms. Quintero Correa** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership and work, as well as that of the Vice-Chair, Mr. Syrymbet. We are also grateful for the leadership and efforts of Mr. Davis and Mrs. Balázs as the Chairs of Working Groups I and II. Considering the fact that the Commission's sessions were interrupted

for four years, their task was not easy. We also thank the Secretariat and the interpreters for their work.

We welcome the fact that the Commission was able to hold substantive sessions this year. We hope that despite the continuing differences among us in our deliberations, at the end of the cycle we will be able to reach consensus on concrete and positive recommendations and thereby achieve the objectives of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and avoid an arms race in outer space, which are fundamental issues for international peace and security.

**The Chair**: There being no further statements, I shall now give the floor to delegations wishing to exercise their right of reply. I would like to remind delegations that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation feels compelled to exercise its right of reply in connection with the baseless and unfounded accusations that have been made against it in connection with the conduct of the special military operation in Ukraine.

A number of delegations' statements included attempts to posit reasons for the launch of the special operation, which are well-known and which we have repeatedly explained in the relevant international forums, including at the United Nations. One fundamental reason is the fact that since 2014, the Kyiv regime has benefited from the financial, advisory, military and technical assistance of Western countries in consistently conducting large-scale aggressions against civilians in Donbas who refused to accept the state of affairs resulting from the coup d'état.

I do not want to take up too much of the Commission's time, as it is not an appropriate forum for discussing the issue. I simply want to speak to all States Members of the United Nations to ask them to refrain from politicizing the work of the Disarmament Commission and discussing issues that are not within the scope of our work and have no bearing on our agenda. They should rather be focusing on the matters that we are required to discuss here in order to develop consensus-based recommendations for making further progress on the path to disarmament, as set forth in the final document of the first General Assembly special session devoted to disarmament in 1978 (resolution S-10/2). Such disruptive actions by a number of delegations

do nothing whatever to help us achieve effective, productive results in the Commission's work, serving only to throw up new obstacles and divisions among States and delegations in the context of the work of this authoritative forum. Destructive acts such as those we have seen from various delegations merely take us further away from finding mutually acceptable solutions aimed at strengthening international peace and security and the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole, including the Disarmament Commission.

We are well aware that the United Nations disarmament machinery is not at its strongest at the moment, which is why we once again appeal to all delegations to refrain from any actions that could further obstruct the work of the Commission.

**Mr. Leschenko** (Ukraine): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Chair, and your Bureau — as well as the representatives of Jamaica and Hungary, as the Chairs of Working Groups I and II — for your excellent work and leadership.

I have no choice but to respond to the remarks expressed by the representative of the Russian Federation. There is no special operation, but there is a war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The war was not Ukraine's choice. Ukraine is simply protecting its territory, on its own territory. Ukraine is not about to invade any other country. What we are hearing is propaganda, and in fact it seems that Russian politicians have become victims of their own propaganda, because the behaviour of the Russian Federation's military forces on Ukraine's territory and the mass atrocities that have been committed there are brutal. As I have said before, they long ago surpassed the brutality of the Nazis in the 1940s. Once again, it was not Ukraine that chose to go to war.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Frankly, we did not want to do this, but we feel compelled to respond to the statement by the representative of Ukraine and take the floor again in exercise of the right of reply.

We heard a very strong word — “war” — in the representative of Ukraine's statement. That is a very serious and weighty accusation against any country, including the Russian Federation. However, we would like to understand — and perhaps there is something we do not know — who has declared war. Perhaps it was Ukraine that declared war against the Russian

Federation. Let the Ukrainian delegation confirm that. For our part, however, we can say, responsibly and unambiguously, that the Russian Federation has not declared war on anyone. We are not in a state of war with any State. The Russian Federation is conducting a special military operation in order to demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine. If the delegation of Ukraine can provide a relevant explanation, let it do so. Perhaps we have not been fully informed with regard to the current situation and should respond in some way.

In conclusion, I would once again like to make a constructive appeal to all States Members of the United Nations, especially in the relevant specialist forums of our Organization, to focus on productive, expert-led work aimed at discussing how to find common ground and arrive at specific results, particularly at forums dealing with issues related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The fate of international peace and security depends on our work here. Let us therefore focus on the tasks facing the Commission and try not to create any obstacles to our work but rather strive to achieve essential and mutually acceptable results.

#### Agenda item 7

##### Other business

**The Chair:** Before I bring this meeting and the session to an end, I would like to express my gratitude to all delegations for their constructive spirit and the support extended to me and other members of the Bureau in helping to shoulder the responsibility of running the Commission smoothly. I am particularly grateful to them.

I also want to thank the Secretariat of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, as well as the staff members of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the interpreters, conference room officers, document officers and sound engineers.

Finally, I would like to thank my own delegation of South Africa, without whose help I would not have been able to undertake this responsibility.

##### Closure of the session

**The Chair:** I declare closed the 2022 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

*The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.*