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First Committee

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Official Records

Chairman: U Mya Than (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Beyendeza (Uganda): My delegation joins others who spoke before me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of our Committee. May I also congratulate other members of the Bureau. The Uganda delegation will fully cooperate with you as you guide the deliberations of the Committee.

My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretariat through the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the excellent work done in producing relevant and updated documents, thus ensuring that the issues of disarmament are kept in full view of our Committee. May I particularly thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, for his inspiring opening statement.

Our Committee is meeting at a very important moment, soon after the Millennium Summit at which the heads of State and Government pledged to

“spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war”

and resolved to

“eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction”. (*resolution 55/2, para. 8*)

It is against the backdrop of this universal commitment of the world leadership that my delegation wishes to focus on two issues of greatest concern to us, which are related to what the leaders are resolved to eliminate: the issues of small arms and light weapons and of anti-personnel landmines.

As we did last year, my delegation reminds the Committee that small arms and light weapons have singularly remained the major instruments of war in developing countries. For us in Africa in general, and in Uganda in particular, their threat is more real and fundamental than that presented by nuclear weapons; the destruction and loss of life and property resulting from small arms and light weapons are overwhelming. Small arms, light weapons and landmines may not be the main causes of conflicts in Africa or elsewhere, but the staggering statistics of deaths, maiming and so forth, as well as the total destruction, resulting from armed conflicts in which these deadly weapons are used, cannot be over-emphasized.

While my delegation will continue to urge the international community to address the root causes of conflicts, which we believe arise partially from the lack of social and economic development, we alert the Committee to the harmful situation arising out of the terrible misuse of small arms, light weapons and landmines. In most cases, this misuse has led to violent crimes, suicides and murders in our societies. The matter becomes more complicated when these small arms become the main weapons used by child soldiers, particularly in countries engaged in armed conflicts.

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Although the long-term impact of the use of these arms in our societies, especially the impact on children, is yet to be fully assessed, what is indisputably emerging is a culture of violence and intolerance among the youth who have been subjected and exposed to these arms. Education systems have been disrupted, and a suffering and traumatized generation is emerging. One wonders what the future holds for these children.

The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs in his opening statement illustrated how tremendous resources have been invested in armaments. My delegation regards resources invested in the acquisition of small arms, light weapons and landmines as wasted resources, wasted because they could be better invested in urgent social and economic development projects, which would be more beneficial to mankind than arms. We need, therefore, to readjust our priorities, reduce the levels of expenditure on armaments and reinvest these resources in programmes that promote peace, security and development.

In this regard, my delegation would in particular appeal to those 70 countries that manufacture and trade in small arms and light weapons to review their trading practices and ensure that these dangerous weapons are not sold to, or do not end up in the hands of, non-State actors. That is why Uganda welcomes and supports the preparatory process, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos of Mozambique, for the United Nations Conference on the subject. Uganda looks forward to the convening in 2001 of the Conference, which we hope will fully address the questions of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

I have devoted much of my statement to small arms, light weapons and landmines, and not to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This is not because such weapons are less important, but because the menace and the destruction around us have been the result of small weapons rather than of nuclear weapons.

For example, during the last 20 years more than 2 million have lost their lives because of small arms, light weapons or landmines. Ninety per cent were civilians, and 80 per cent of them were women and children. More than 12 million people have been disabled. There are more than 500,000 child soldiers armed, not with atom bombs, but with AK-47s.

Seventy per cent of the arms in the global market have been purchased by least developed countries, at the expense of their development. This point regarding the amount of money spent on armaments was also well made by the Under-Secretary-General in his opening statement. In 1997 the African continent spent more than \$760 million on such arms. It is no wonder, therefore, that we have more than 55 million AK-47s in circulation in Africa. That is why my delegation is concerned.

I must say a word about nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Although there has been progress with respect to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and START II, much remains to be done. We note, for instance, the failure once again of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a substantive programme of work and that lack of consensus with regard to multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, the arms race in outer space and a fissile material treaty. All these negotiations need to be concluded as soon as possible.

However, on a more positive point, my delegation welcomes the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and we are particularly happy that the nuclear-weapon States have now realized that the total elimination of nuclear arsenals is the only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons. Incidentally, this is exactly what non-nuclear States saw a long time ago and have been advocating. Our delegation will therefore support all draft resolutions that call for total elimination of all nuclear weapons and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We will also support treaties on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction.

My delegation looks forward to working with all delegations that are genuinely concerned with the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacterial and toxin weapons and their destruction.

Let me finally remind the Committee that it should be remembered that small arms, light weapons and landmines have already destroyed enough. We do not need to add nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction to this planet.

Mr. Akpalou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the delegation of Togo, I should like at the

outset to convey to you, Sir, our heartfelt congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your vast insight into matters of disarmament and international security as well as your experience in this arena, augur very well indeed for the success of our deliberations. My delegation assures you of its unreserved support in the exercise of your responsibilities.

We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation noted with great interest the various reports and notes of the Secretary-General dealing with issues falling within the purview of the Committee, and appreciated the opening remarks delivered by Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, to whom my delegation presents its warmest congratulations. In the context of the current debate we wish now to make the following comments.

First and foremost, my delegation would like to remind the Committee that one of the essential tasks incumbent upon the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. This responsibility, stemming as it does from the Charter, was reaffirmed at the Millennium Summit where the heads of State and Government renewed their commitment to spare no effort to deliver mankind from the scourge of war and to eliminate the potential dangers represented by arms of all kinds. Since the best way to attain these ends is, without question, general and complete disarmament, or at least to bring arms under control, all must be done to encourage States, individually and collectively, to work in concert towards turning that goal into reality.

The end of the cold war has created an environment propitious for nuclear disarmament and yet, notwithstanding the efforts aimed at reducing nuclear weapons, there are still stockpiles of such weapons constituting a constant source of danger to peace and security the world over. For my delegation, totally eliminating nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or the threat of their use. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in New York this year, made it possible for new commitments to be made to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Through the Final Document adopted at the Conference, the States Parties were called upon to do all they possibly could to ensure

implementation of the provisions of the Treaty, so as truly to make progress towards eliminating nuclear weapons, putting an end to the spread of such weapons throughout the world, and to strengthening the basic norms that govern the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

It is important that these measures be effectively implemented and that the States Parties to the NPT to strive towards that end.

As can be seen from the Secretary-General's report in document A/55/116, the matter of missiles and their proliferation continues to be a highly alarming security issue for the community of States. My delegation is sensitive to the views of certain States with regard to the establishment of a global missile monitoring system. We echo the recommendation issued at the Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in Cartagena, Colombia, in April 2000, affirming the need for a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory approach as a contribution to international peace and security.

Consistent with this approach, it is our view that the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) signed between the United States and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1972 continues to be one of the pillars for stability in the world inasmuch as it has direct consequences for international peace and security.

That, in turn, is why — afraid as we are that any unilateral approach aimed at winning absolute superiority in the arms arena might prove prejudicial to the future of that Treaty and thus to security the world over — my delegation deems it highly desirable for both parties to strive to keep that Treaty intact and to abide by its provisions.

It is in this context that we very much applaud the decision taken by the United States President to defer deployment of a United States anti-missile defence system.

Moreover, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in certain regions of the world would appear to us to be a critically important contribution on the part of the regions concerned to the maintenance of international peace and security. That is why my delegation exhorts the countries whose regions remain on the sidelines to do all they possibly can to create nuclear-weapon-free zones in their parts of the world.

Appreciating the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world, Togo, like other African countries, is committed to ensuring the establishment and consolidation of such a zone in Africa through the Pelindaba Treaty signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996. In this connection, I wish to inform the Committee that parliamentary proceedings aimed at ratification of this Treaty by our country are at a very advanced stage.

The proliferation of light arms and trafficking in such arms constitute yet another major source of alarm for the international community in general, and Africa in particular. That phenomenon has become particularly acute in Africa and has fuelled conflicts that afflict us. The belligerents, as well as former combatants, form groups and engage in acts that sow fear and desolation amongst our people, who wish to live in peace. We thus see, more or less everywhere, a chronic rise in trans-border crime, armed robbery and funeral processions choking our roads.

To fight this scourge, the subregions around our continent are organizing. As far as Western Africa is concerned, a number of steps have been taken in the context of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The representative of Mali, whose country holds the current chairmanship of ECOWAS, took stock in his statement of a number of different initiatives launched in the subregion to fight the proliferation of small arms, and my country supports that statement. My delegation nonetheless wishes to emphasize the declaration of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons among the ECOWAS member States, which took effect 1 November 1998.

The solemn and unified character of that declaration reflects the unanimous will of the heads of State and Government of the West African subregion to seek appropriate strategies to control the proliferation and trafficking of small arms and their illegal possession by civilians. In this context, they have established the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, whose main mission is to coordinate priority activities to be undertaken to achieve the moratorium's objectives. In the framework of these activities, we note that small arms have been collected or destroyed in Liberia, Mali and the Niger.

I also wish to recall decision 12/99, taken in December 1999 by the ECOWAS heads of States and Government, inviting all member States to create national commissions to fight the proliferation of light weapons. My country is in the process of adopting provisions required to establish its national commission. It already has, however, a technical commission responsible for collecting arms held illegally by civilians.

Just as West Africa has done, other subregions of our continent are striving to fight against the proliferation of small arms. We will cite the example of the States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which are currently negotiating, with the European Union's support, a protocol on small arms.

Togo hopes that the international United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in 2001, will afford the international community the opportunity to seek ways and means to fight this scourge. We are sure that in the preparatory process for the Conference, States will strive to issue recommendations to be submitted for consideration at that Conference. For its part, Africa, which intends to participate actively in that Conference, has envisaged holding, as a lead-up to that important meeting, a pan-African ministerial conference to examine all aspects of the issue.

My delegation cannot raise the issue of small arms without mentioning anti-personnel mines, which are a formidable category of weapons that constitute a threat to mankind. Anti-personnel mines kill and mangle indiscriminately and jeopardize the use of arable land. With the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Ottawa Convention, the international community committed itself to fighting the danger represented by these mines. My country, which has ratified this instrument, invites the countries that have not yet ratified it to do so. Accession to this Convention by countries producing anti-personnel mines is necessary for its universal implementation. It is also important that the countries with the appropriate means help in demining affected areas.

My country, which is host to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, would like to hail the Centre's actions carried out with

African subregional organizations in their struggle against the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small weapons. That is why we hope that appropriate financial, human and material resources will be made available to it to allow it to respond favourably to the various requests it receives. I take this opportunity to thank the donors for their multifaceted assistance to the Centre in its work.

The constantly growing number of international juridical instruments covering the globe in the area of disarmament mirrors the major concerns that States feel about the arms race. But it is one thing to conclude a treaty, and quite another to see to its implementation. That is why our States must become aware of the need for disarmament and display the political will to ratify the relevant international instruments and to abide by them scrupulously.

While recalling the inextricable links between development, peace and security, my delegation wishes to stress the pertinence of Mr. Dhanapala's remarks made in his opening statement, on 2 October 2000, to this Committee. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs noted that

“The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has recently reported that global military expenditure has, for the first time since the end of the cold war, started to rise. The figure for 1999 was roughly \$870 billion. Meanwhile, almost half of the world's population lives on less than \$2 per day. Let the tragic contrast between these numbers touch the conscience of us all as we embark on our work.” (A/C.1/55/PV.3)

Can anyone find a more heartrending and convincing plea to States to allocate the bulk of their resources to priority activities of development rather than to military purposes?

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to join those who preceded me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I am sure that you will lead the work of this Committee to a successful conclusion. I also wish to pay tribute to Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, for his efforts in disarmament and in promoting the Organization's role in this regard.

Since the start of the Committee's work, many statements have been made in the general debate, including Mr. Dhanapala's, and all expressed deep concern about the current climate of international relations and disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. The Sudan shares the international community's concern and reaffirms its belief that nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the major danger facing humanity, should be the cornerstone of disarmament, in accordance with the Final Document of the tenth special session, in 1978, the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Millennium Declaration, which stressed the importance of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. The Sudan believes that urgent steps must be taken to convene a session of the Conference on Disarmament on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Sudan reaffirms its intention to continue working with the rest of the international community in efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. The Sudan was among the first to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Indeed, we have established a national committee to coordinate all our activities related to the latter Convention.

We share international concerns about the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, and we support the convening in 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We reaffirm our view, which we have stated on a number of occasions, that the Conference agenda should be limited to the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. The Sudan has participated in regional efforts to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, including the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa Conference on the Proliferation of Small Arms, held at Nairobi, Kenya, in March 2000; indeed, the Sudan signed the Nairobi Declaration. Further, we participated in the First Continental Meeting of African Experts on Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, held at

Addis Ababa in May 2000. Khartoum was the site this year of a meeting of ministers of the interior from Eastern and Central Africa; the proliferation of small arms and light weapons was a main item on its agenda.

While underscoring the importance of controlling the proliferation of conventional weapons, we must also emphasize our right to use such weapons to defend our borders and our territorial integrity, a right enshrined in the Charter, in international law and in international conventions and covenants.

The delegation of the Sudan believes that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is not the underlying cause of conflicts. We believe that the solution lies in addressing the root causes: the economic and social situation and foreign interference in conflicts in a number of volatile areas.

The Sudan shares the rest of the international community's interest in transparency in armaments as a means of consolidating international peace and security. At the same time, we note that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is anything but transparent; it is high time that the Register were expanded to include data on weapons of mass destruction and on advanced technology used for military purposes. The Register does not take into account the situation in the Middle East, where Israel continues to occupy Arab territories and to possess the most advanced and destructive weaponry. Israel is now using such weapons against defenceless civilians in Palestine, including women and children. Israel is defying the will of the international community and continues to refuse to accede to the NPT, as called for by participants in the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Final Document of which stressed how important it was for Israel to accede to the Treaty and to place its installations under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Israel's continued defiance of the international community, the encouragement it receives from a super-Power and that super-Power's silence in the face of Israel's aggressive intentions and practices and its refusal to participate in disarmament efforts reflect the policies of hypocrisy and double standard practised by that Power, which pressures vulnerable States to accede even to conventions that are less important than the NPT while shamelessly placing all its nuclear and military expertise at Israel's disposal.

We are pleased to reaffirm our readiness to work with you, Mr. Chairman, towards a consensus with a view to promoting and pursuing the objectives of disarmament.

Mr. Osei (Ghana): As one of the last speakers in the general debate, Mr. Chairman, let me join others who spoke before me in congratulating you on your election and in commending you for the able manner in which you and the other members of the Bureau have steered the work of the Committee thus far.

We also appreciate the comprehensive statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, who in his customarily lucid manner updated the Committee on trends on the disarmament front over the year since the Committee's last session. It is indeed alarming and sobering to be reminded — as Mr. Dhanapala reminded us — that the world is still awash with arms: some 30,000 nuclear warheads and 500 million small arms. It is equally disconcerting that global military expenditure, currently standing at \$750 billion, is rising while almost one half of the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day.

We remain convinced that for developing non-nuclear-weapon countries, such as Ghana, there does indeed exist a symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development, a perception which dictates the need for civil society to persist in its resolve at the dawn of the new century to cut down on military spending and to redirect the peace dividend into economically sustainable development. In that expectation, disarmament, for us, must remain at the heart of the United Nations agenda to ensure and sustain international peace and security, conditions which we believe are necessary for all productive human activity. The United Nations must therefore continue its search for new ways and means to work towards the objective of nuclear disarmament and arms non-proliferation, and must identify confidence-building measures as part of that process.

Critical in that regard are the commitment and political will of Member States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, which have so far eluded us. It is therefore refreshing to note that our political leaders, in their Millennium Declaration, resolved

“To strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim,

including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers". (*resolution 55/2, para. 9*)

The question that we must answer as experts is how to build on this bold commitment on the part of our leaders and thus regain the confidence, trust and goodwill of civil society, which has grown cynical over the years as a result of the uneven progress in the field of disarmament.

The successful outcome of the Sixth Review Conference in May of this year has nurtured a propitious climate, and this momentum must be sustained in order to restore confidence. The Conference, as we all recall, agreed on a number of practical steps that constitute mutually reinforcing ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament. The Millennium Declaration, in my delegation's view, gives the nuclear-weapon States the opportunity to honour the unequivocal undertaking they gave to work towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Much disappointment and frustration has been expressed in this debate about the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, which, nonetheless, remains the only mechanism for negotiations on the issue. As Ambassador Petko Draganov, President of the Conference, noted in this Committee when he introduced the Report of the Conference on Disarmament (A/55/27),

"Despite the combined efforts of successive Presidents of the Conference throughout the session, consensus on a programme of work proved elusive due to the persisting divergence of views and priorities attributed to various items on the Conference's agenda". (*A/C.1/55/PV.6*)

As he reported further,

"The Conference did not re-establish or establish any mechanism on its specific agenda items". (*ibid*)

There is no need to apportion blame for this stalemate; indeed, it must be the shared responsibility of the nuclear weapon States. Suffice it to caution that the Conference on Disarmament, through its inertia or paralysis, risks degeneration into irrelevance, justifying calls for a new rather than a renewed agenda. It is, therefore, our hope that the member States of the Conference will be able to overcome the divergence of

views, reach mutually acceptable solutions at the next session and enable the Conference to begin to work on the critical issues in the disarmament field.

A fortiori, the Secretary-General's proposal to convene a major conference to help identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger deserves support, not only to sustain the momentum of the successful NPT Review Conference, but also to give a sense of realism to the commitment made by the leaders in their Declaration. Despite efforts to stifle its relevance and dynamism, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the deliberative arm of the General Assembly on disarmament, must also be recognized as a complimentary body that helps sensitize the international community to disarmament objectives and keep the vision of disarmament alive.

Ghana has joined in the overwhelming consensus in favour of the convening of an international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms to address the problem in all its aspects. West Africa, which has experienced the effects of the proliferation of such conventional weapons, owing to their easy accessibility to non-State actors, is gradually building up machinery at the subregional level to curb, manage and control the flow of these arms. Building on the Mali moratorium, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) convened a meeting of African experts on small arms and light weapons in May this year in preparation for the OAU Ministerial Conference on the same issue, which is scheduled to be held in Bamako from 27 November to 1 December of this year. Ghana will, therefore, continue to engage actively, not only in subregional and regional initiatives on the issue, but also in the preparatory sessions of the conference itself, in the hope of sharing experiences in order to develop a global regime to regulate and monitor the production, distribution, export and import of such arms, and thus help check this menace.

On the Conference itself, we wish to reiterate the importance of the choice of a venue that would enable the widest possible participation of all member States, particularly those with limited participation at the United Nations level. We also want to take this opportunity to commend the efforts made so far by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Carlos dos Santos of Mozambique, for the work he has done in steering the affairs of the Preparatory Committee sessions up to now.

Let me also take the opportunity to welcome the statement read by the United States delegation on behalf of the five permanent members of the Council on the agreement reached concerning security assurances to Mongolia as regards its nuclear-weapon-free status. It is our conviction that such arrangements freely negotiated convey the right signals to the international community, particularly civil society, concerning our readiness to address such critical concerns.

Finally, Ghana believes that the First Committee's role in reinvigorating the United Nations Disarmament machinery must remain undiminished if the spirit of the Millennium Declaration is to be kept alive through the kinds of resolutions we agree on in this session.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to apologize in advance for the length of my statement. It is a special pleasure for the Pakistan delegation, and for me personally, to extend our warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chairman of the First Committee. Your long and vast experience in dealing with the problems of disarmament and international security assures us of a significant outcome for this session. The Pakistan delegation also wishes to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election and to express its high appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador González of Chile, for the skilful manner in which he conducted our work last year.

A stable structure of international peace and security must be based on the principle of the sovereign equality and equal security of States. As proclaimed by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the militarily significant States have the primary responsibility for disarmament. The strong must lead the way in the process of disarmament. It is the armed who are to be disarmed — not the weak and vulnerable who are to be kept unarmed.

Unfortunately, over the past decade, these principles of equity and equal security, adopted by consensus at the first special session, have been almost turned on their head. Double standards in arms control are becoming more entrenched. So called non-proliferation norms and provisions have been selectively and unequally enforced, penalizing some, while overlooking, if not actually endorsing, proliferation by others.

While nuclear non-proliferation is assiduously pressed on the vast majority of States as an article of faith, for the privileged, nuclear deterrence is regarded as the "supreme guarantee of security". In violation of the basic obligation under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), nuclear weapons are stored with non-nuclear allies and are to be used jointly with them. Uncertain and unforeseen threats are offered as the rationale for maintaining huge arsenals of nuclear weapons. Military attacks, including the possible use of nuclear weapons, are envisaged even against non-nuclear-weapon States to deter or eliminate the threats and capabilities of so-called weapons of mass destruction. The use of force is contemplated without Security Council authorization and the military budgets of the most powerful States are rising. Weapons transfers to selected countries are expanding, even as embargoes are imposed arbitrarily on others.

Total security for some and total insecurity for the rest cannot be a durable basis for a new post-cold-war architecture of international peace and security. Injustice invites resistance and leads inevitably to conflict and instability.

The graph of hope for disarmament rose sharply at the end of the cold war. It declined with equal angularity over the past two years due to renewed acrimony between the major Powers and reversals suffered by the disarmament process. The graph of hope has risen again this year, mostly due to the consensus achieved at the NPT Review Conference and the deferred deployment of the national missile defence system.

The NPT parties seem to set great store by the unequivocal commitment given by the Treaty's five nuclear-weapon States to eliminating nuclear weapons. This is regarded as a new commitment delinked from the conditions of general and complete disarmament. We hope such assessments are correct. We hope to witness speedy implementation of steps towards nuclear disarmament. I must confess, however, that we are not holding our breath.

A senior official from one major nuclear Power, when asked about the unequivocal commitment to eliminating nuclear weapons, reportedly said that "nothing has changed". A confidential communication between the two leading nuclear Powers leaked to the press appears to confirm this.

The fact is that the recent setbacks to disarmament have not been reversed, as yet. The deployment of the national missile defence system has been wisely delayed, but development and testing are to be continued and the ultimate aim of the system's deployment has been affirmed. Moves are under way for the deployment of theatre missile defences in several regions of the world. The rejection of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not been reversed. Reports from civil society indicate that some of the laboratory tests being conducted may be in violation of the basic obligation under the CTBT not to conduct nuclear explosion tests.

Given these realities, it is hardly surprising that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to adopt a work programme this year. The commendable endeavours of successive Presidents of the Conference have succeeded in creating considerable common ground, textually. However, in our view, the Conference will be able to agree on a work programme early next year provided, first, that there is a real commitment to negotiations on nuclear disarmament; secondly, that the major Powers involved display flexibility on the mandate for the ad hoc committee on outer space; and thirdly, that the international political environment is propitious.

If a decision on deployment of the national missile defence system is taken or seems inevitable, it could have a cascading effect on international strategic stability. It could unravel several important disarmament agreements, especially the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty). Deployment of theatre missile defences in certain sensitive regions could also adversely affect stability and arms control there and accelerate the production and deployment of missiles. This issue has serious security implications for Pakistan.

We are unconvinced that there are credible threats to the major Powers of ballistic missile attacks, with or without weapons of mass destruction, from developing countries. The ballistic missile programmes of these countries are decades behind those of the leading nuclear-weapon and other industrialized States. However, the deployment of ballistic missile defence systems could in fact fulfil the fear which ostensibly impels such deployment. Equally, fears of missile attacks by so-called non-State actors are fanciful and

self-serving. Any missile attack would invite definite retaliation against the source of the attack, whereas unconventional or clandestine modes of attack do not have a return address. Therefore, non-State actors are unlikely to rely on missiles if they want to use violence against the major Powers.

Sadly, what happened yesterday in Yemen illustrates this point. The Pakistan delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its deep condolences to the United States Government and the American people, as well as to the families of those who lost their lives in this tragic incident.

The international community should urge the affirmation and further strengthening of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, including, perhaps, through its multilateralization. However, as the Sino-Russian joint statement of 18 July 2000 stated:

“Non-strategic missile defence and international cooperation in this field, though not prohibited under the ABM Treaty, should nevertheless not prejudice the security interests of other countries ... or undermine global or regional stability and security.”

We hope, therefore, that the draft resolution on this issue will also oppose the deployment of so-called theatre missile defences. Strategic stability should not be promoted at the cost of regional stability. Export of ABM systems to South Asia and other sensitive regions will inevitably intensify instability and accelerate the build-up of missile systems in those regions.

The central security threat today is not so-called missile proliferation in the third world; it is the threat arising from the thousands of missiles that are held on high alert by the major nuclear Powers. Acceptance of the concept of missile proliferation, which mirrors the NPT premise of inequality, will intensify the asymmetry in security between the industrialized and the developing countries. We cannot accept the premise that some States have the right to develop, possess and use ballistic missiles while others, including those targeted by such missiles, must be prevented by all possible means from acquiring missile capabilities. If missiles are essential to the security of major Powers, why should the developing countries forego this capability? If the major Powers and their alliance systems are unwilling to give up their missile capabilities, why should a developing country be expected to do so?

There is no internationally accepted legal norm against the acquisition of ballistic missiles by any country, just as there is no norm against the acquisition of military aircraft. Countries that do not have access to advanced and expensive aircraft may have no choice but to develop ballistic missiles as a means of self-defence in the conventional field. In practice, the arbitrary norms of the Missile Technology Control Regime, with their narrow focus, have eroded rather than enhanced regional security in certain regions, including South Asia.

The missile issue must be addressed comprehensively and equitably. The goal should be a global treaty for the regulation and progressive reduction of ballistic and cruise missiles as part of a comprehensive nuclear disarmament programme. Pakistan is, of course, prepared to address, as a matter of priority, those aspects of the problem which pose serious threats to global or regional peace and stability. To this end, an open and inclusive multilateral dialogue should be initiated aimed at negotiating interim measures to address the major missile-related threats to international and regional peace and security. These global measures could include: first, de-alerting nuclear weapons and missile systems; secondly, evolving multilaterally negotiated controls over the sensitive technologies involved; thirdly, ensuring alternative measures for maintaining military balance, especially in sensitive regions; and fourthly, expanding cooperation in technologies which can be utilized for peaceful purposes.

Pakistan welcomes the endorsement by the Millennium Summit of a conference to eliminate the nuclear danger. We look forward to further deliberations to identify possible action to this end.

We hope the Conference on Disarmament will soon commence, as part of its work programme, negotiations to conclude a legally binding international instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. Pakistan will table its traditional draft resolution on this issue. To be credible, such assurances will have to be unconditional and universal. All explicit and implicit threats of nuclear use against non-nuclear States should be expressly withdrawn.

Pakistan takes note of the statement in which the NPT's five nuclear-weapon States have extended security assurances to Mongolia. Pakistan also respects

Mongolia's declaration of its non-nuclear-weapon status, just as we respect nuclear-weapons-free zones in those parts of the world which are denuclearized.

After five years of work in the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Ad Hoc Group, it is legitimate to expect the negotiations to bear fruit. The rolling text, which reflect the positions of all delegations, must remain the sole basis for negotiations. External inputs, such as non-negotiated texts, could create unnecessary controversy and delay. To have universal appeal, the BWC protocol must: first, contain meaningful provisions on cooperation and exchange for peaceful activities; secondly, replace ad hoc export control regimes by multilateral measures for trade facilitation, including powers to redress unjustified export barriers; and thirdly, cover the extensive bio-defence activities and relevant commercial programmes in all countries.

Regional approaches to international security, disarmament and non-proliferation have assumed special importance in the current international environment. The success or failure of security and disarmament measures in North-East Asia, the Middle East, South-East Asia and South Asia will have an important regional and global impact. Pakistan will once again submit a draft resolution on regional disarmament this year.

Pakistan welcomes the positive trends, including in the disarmament sphere, which have been witnessed recently in North-East Asia. In the Middle East, although the prospects of peace and disarmament have been damaged by recent developments, hopefully these have not been defeated. Pakistan deplores the loss of innocent lives. Peace in the Middle East, as elsewhere, must be based on equal security for all States of the region and the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination.

South Asia has been described as "the most dangerous place in the world". For Pakistan, the danger is clear and present. Almost all of our eastern neighbour's military assets — an army of 1.2 million men; over 700 combat aircraft, a number that is continuing to rise; a large naval flotilla, also increasing, with the anticipated acquisition of a second aircraft carrier; Prithvi missiles, of which initially 300 are to be produced — all of these are deployed against Pakistan along the border and the Line of Control in Kashmir. These capabilities are to be augmented with

additional acquisitions, estimated at over \$10 billion, from three of the five permanent members of the Security Council and certain other States. Aggression and attacks are being threatened, with increasing frequency, by our neighbour's political and military leaders. Notwithstanding Pakistan's display of restraint, we face daily artillery barrages, small-arms fire and attacks on our posts along the Line of Control in Kashmir. The major Powers should restrain, not encourage, those who offer themselves as their "natural allies" from the path of confrontation and military build-up.

Although Pakistan's conventional capabilities have been severely eroded by unjust embargoes and sanctions, we possess the conventional means to defend ourselves against such aggression. However, we have no intention of mortgaging the future of our people by making huge investments in expensive weapons imports.

History will confirm that Pakistan was a reluctant nuclear power. We voted for the NPT in 1968. Since then, I must confess, our "graph of hope" has declined steadily. Even after our neighbour's 1974 nuclear explosions, Pakistan continued to pursue the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free South Asia. Once we acquired nuclear capability, we were content not to demonstrate it. Existential deterrence was good enough. When our neighbour conducted its nuclear explosions in May 1998, we received no credible indication that our security could be assured by other means. The five permanent members of the Security Council did not meet, nor was the Council convened. Our neighbour's leaders openly held out threats of the use of nuclear weapons to impose an unjust solution to the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan was compelled to act. We acted to re-establish the deterrence which had existed in South Asia for over a decade.

As Pakistan's chief executive, General Musharraf, has stated:

"We only want to maintain a minimum credible deterrence to deter any aggression against our homeland ... We fully support the creation of a strategic self-restraint regime in the subcontinent and expect a positive response from our neighbour."

Pakistan's proposal for a strategic restraint regime involves three interlocking elements: first, mutual nuclear and missile restraint; secondly,

conventional arms control and balance; and thirdly, peaceful resolution of the underlying sources of tension, especially the Kashmir dispute. Progress on all these elements is essential to build and sustain a stable structure of peace and security in South Asia. At the culmination of this process, it could be sanctified in a "no-war pact".

But the danger in South Asia cannot be defused, and a durable structure of security cannot be built, without open and sustained dialogue. Pakistan is prepared to engage in bilateral, plurilateral or multilateral talks to advance the cause of peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia.

Pakistan has demonstrated its desire for nuclear restraint in practice. We voted in favour of the CTBT and have declared a moratorium on nuclear testing. Our desire to sign the CTBT can be fulfilled as soon as we succeed in promoting a domestic consensus to do so.

We have agreed to open talks on a fissile material treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. A ban on fissile material production should be promoted through a universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable treaty. We will not accept arbitrary or advance obligations which do not meet these agreed criteria, nor will we agree to artificial deadlines. Pakistan will, as envisaged in the Shannon report, seek a solution to the problem of existing stockpiles in the course of the negotiations.

Pakistan has also taken steps to strengthen its controls on the export of sensitive materials and technology and is prepared to discuss further practical and equitable measures to prevent proliferation. Pakistan's strategic capabilities have always been under strict and secure military control and are safe from leakage, sabotage and surprise attack. We have now created a Nuclear Command Authority, chaired by the head of Government, to ensure, inter alia, robust accountability, safety, security and command and control in crisis situations.

While nuclear disarmament is rightly our highest priority, conventional arms control is assuming new significance for several reasons. Expenditures on conventional weapons are rising once again; massive transfers of weapons are taking place to selected countries, with serious implications for stability and peace in certain volatile regions; and the so-called revolution in military affairs, fuelled by the advance in military-related and information technologies, is adding to the complexity of preserving military balance

and stability and further accentuating the gross asymmetry in military power between the advanced and the developing countries.

It is essential to examine these developments and contain the destabilizing impact that they, and any possible responses to them, may have. We intend to pursue these ideas in multilateral disarmament forums, including the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Pakistan would also welcome a comprehensive study of recent developments in the field of conventional weapons with a view to ensuring well-considered decisions by the international community.

Pakistan welcomes the international attention given to small arms and light weapons in recent years. Action on this complex issue is required at the national, regional and global levels. As recognized by the Assembly, these endeavours must not compromise the right of States to self-defence or erode the legitimate struggle of peoples for the right to self-determination. The forthcoming international Conference on the illicit transfer of small arms should aim at a number of practical and pragmatic recommendations. The responsibility for past actions whose present consequences are left to be dealt with by certain countries, such as in Afghanistan, should be determined in order to arrange for redress and appropriate compensation.

Pakistan will seek to make a constructive contribution to the success of the Conference. We have taken several steps at the national level to prevent the illegal transfer or unauthorized use of small arms and light weapons. At the same time, our Government is making a heroic endeavour to reverse the consequences for Pakistan of the Afghan war through a campaign of de-weaponization within the country. We hope these endeavours will be reinforced through the decisions and cooperative actions to be adopted at the forthcoming Conference.

The issue of anti-personnel landmines has particular importance for Pakistan because we witnessed at first hand the plight and the suffering of innocent victims as a result of the massive saturation of Afghanistan with anti-personnel landmines. Millions of mines have still not been cleared in Afghanistan. It is ironic that while international publicity has been so focused on the issue of anti-personnel landmines, the resources required for demining are being reduced. We

deplore, in particular, the 50 per cent reduction in the demining budget for Afghanistan of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Pakistani experts and demining teams have participated extensively in demining operations in many parts of the world, including in several United Nations peacekeeping operations. We provided demining training in Pakistan and also imparted training to expatriate teams. We will continue to offer such in-kind contributions to global demining efforts.

Although our security environment does not permit us to accept a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel landmines, Pakistan will strictly abide by its commitments and obligations under the amended Protocol II on landmines, to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We will continue to work with other States parties to promote universal acceptance of Protocol II. We are also open to further work on the issue of anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament. Pakistan has an effective moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. We are therefore prepared to open negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament to explore ways and means of formalizing a global instrument prohibiting exports.

In this era, when there are no “natural enemies”, and thus no “natural allies”, some seek to advance their political and military ambitions by playing on racial and religious fears to give life to the dangerous doctrine of an impending clash of civilizations. Indeed, some people are spending a lot of money and energy in important capitals to create new threat scenarios — sometimes with religious labels — which they believe will appeal in particular to policy makers and public opinion in the West. One should not lift a rock that is likely to land on one’s own feet. Instead of scare scenarios and hate scenarios, intellectual and political energy should be directed towards evolving scenarios to promote durable peace and security in regions of tension and conflict. Economic growth, conflict resolution and arms control are essential elements of such an endeavour. As the Millennium Assembly has just affirmed, disarmament, development and conflict prevention and resolution are intimately interrelated — much more so in our globalizing yet unequal and insecure world.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your patience. I promise that that was the first and only statement on disarmament to be made by my delegation this year.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I should like to begin by sincerely congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of our Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. The delegation of Cameroon would like to assure you of our full cooperation and unreserved support as you carry out your important functions.

I should also like to express my profound thanks to your predecessor, our colleague Raimundo González, for the skill and wisdom with which he guided our deliberations at the fifty-fourth session.

Last year, in our statement in the general debate in the First Committee in this room, we spoke of our deep concern about peace and security in the world and the lack of significant progress in the field of disarmament. At the beginning of the Millennium Assembly, in the wake of the Millennium Summit, which provided a historic opportunity for the leaders of the world to reaffirm their unshakeable faith in our Organization, the feelings that we had at that time have not changed a great deal. Indeed, information to the effect that during 1999 there was an increase in military expenditure throughout the world is not a cause for optimism. There are, however, some hopeful new signs that are cause for rejoicing.

The sixth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which took place here in April 2000 under the chairmanship of our brother Ambassador Abdallah Baali of Algeria, raised hopes by concluding on an eminently positive note. The nuclear-weapon States explicitly agreed to work towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

My country welcomes this important progress, from which we hope to see some beneficial impact on the other sectors of the efforts being undertaken towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Cameroon exhorts the countries concerned to show sustained political will in implementing this commitment.

Cameroon also welcomes the ratification by the Russian Federation of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and of the Strategic Arms Reduction

Treaty II on 14 April 2000. My country welcomes the decision of the United States Government to postpone the implementation of their anti-missile defence project.

Despite the encouraging nature of these developments, we should not lose sight of how much still remains to be done in order to safeguard the world from a nuclear holocaust.

There are many serious reasons for concern in this area. I will refer to some of them now. Four years after its opening for signing, the CTBT has still not entered into force. The work of the Conference on Disarmament is at an impasse, not having been able for the fourth consecutive year to reach an agreement on a programme of work and, all the more so, to start negotiations on a multilateral treaty banning the production of fissile material. The Conference on Disarmament has not arrived at a consensus on bringing together a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

One should also deplore the fact that the Pelindaba Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa has still not entered into force, that nuclear weapon States have not acceded to the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia and that the negotiations on the creation of other zones are at a standstill.

The proliferation of production of missiles and other weapons of mass destruction in various parts of the world also strikes as a serious ground for concern.

We must point out that the reasons for satisfaction are very much fewer than the reasons for concern. My country appeals to the international community to show courage and determination in order to remove forever the horrible threat of weapons of mass destruction for the future of humankind.

It is fortunate that our heads of State have solemnly undertaken this determination in the important Declaration of the Millennium Summit. It is up to all of us to work with determination and perseverance in translating that will into fact. In this context, my country supports the proposal by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene an international conference on identifying ways to eliminate nuclear dangers.

The need for the international community to focus efforts in order to remove the threat of

annihilation for humankind that is presented by weapons of mass destruction should not let us lose sight of the importance of the struggle to control and limit conventional weapons.

These weapons are indeed the ones that day in and day out cause death through armed conflicts all over the world with innumerable victims, especially among the civilian populations, spreading misery and destruction and undermining development efforts. The scope and the importance of this scourge call for mobilization and support from the international community in dealing with it.

In this context, Cameroon welcomes the progress made in the struggle for the eradication of anti-personnel landmines. At the second meeting of the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction that was held in Geneva from 11 to 15 September 2000, the States welcomed the considerable decrease in the production of these woeful weapons, the decrease in the sales of mines and the increase in the destruction of the stocks of those mines.

Despite this commendable progress, anti-personnel landmines continue to kill and to maim innocent victims every day. Therefore, it is imperative that the impetus generated by the Ottawa process should not weaken, an impetus the result of which has been to mobilize the world community in the struggle against those weapons. The movement towards the universalization of the Ottawa Convention must be sped up.

I am glad to be able to assure the States parties that the procedure of ratification by Cameroon of the Convention in question will soon be concluded. My country calls on the generosity of donors to support the action against mines and assistance for the victims.

The scope of the destruction and the number of the victims caused by small arms and light weapons justify that the struggle against these phenomena should be in the forefront of the efforts of the international community.

The Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to be held in 2001 should, in the view of my delegation, make it possible to move forward and strengthen the efforts of the international community aimed at preventing,

fighting against and eradicating trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Cameroon welcomes the convening of the conference, about which we are very hopeful, especially if it leads to a programme of action that would contain binding international rules for the urgent and drastic reduction in the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons throughout the world and their tragic consequences.

My country intends to play an active role in the 2001 conference and the preparatory process for it.

In this context, I would like to welcome the praiseworthy efforts of Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, and to renew our expression of fraternal support to him.

My country supports Switzerland's offer to host this conference in Geneva and welcomes the proposals made by the Swiss Government with a view to promote the widest possible participation in this conference.

Located as it is in Central Africa — a region that is well-known for having been devastated for too many years by incessant armed conflicts — my country, Cameroon, attaches particular significance to the phenomenon of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. This proliferation is stimulated by the many kinds of trafficking that are inspired by the armed conflicts and the resultant instability, and it is facilitated by the porosity of the borders [lack of border controls]. This proliferation is one of the major threats to the peace, stability and development of the countries of the region.

Concerned to find ways and means of fighting this scourge, these countries, under the auspices of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held, from 25 to 27 at N'Djamena, a subregional conference on the proliferation and illicit flows of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. This conference brought together high-level military and civilian staff of the subregion, who were joined by high-level experts from many parts of the world. The causes and consequences of the proliferation of small arms were examined, and national and subregional measures to fight this scourge were proposed. Some of these measures have already begun to be implemented. International-community assistance in this regard would be welcome and would

certainly contribute to promoting peace, stability and economic recovery in the countries of the subregion.

In this context, the Cameroon would like to thank the Secretary-General for his significant support for the efforts to promote peace, disarmament and development in Africa through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in Lomé. We also thank him for the persistent efforts that have been made in Central Africa in particular under the auspices of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Established in 1992 by the Secretary-General in implementation of a General Assembly resolution, this Committee daily proves itself to be a valuable tool for promoting peace, security and development in the subregion and as one of the primary mechanisms for promoting joint action and confidence-building among the Central African countries. In addition to organizing the subregional conference on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the Committee, in Yaoundé in 1998, held a seminar on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on security in Africa. And, more recently, at Bujumbura the Committee held a subregional conference on the issues of refugees and displaced persons in Central Africa.

Furthermore, under the aegis of the Committee, the member States of the subregion have reached a non-aggression pact and a mutual assistance pact. They have created a mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts: the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). Also under discussion is the creation of a Central African multinational force that would set up to intervene in the disturbances and conflicts that are breaking out throughout the region.

In order to be fully and truly successful, the efforts of the Central African countries to escape the cycle of violence, insecurity and poverty in which they have been caught for many years must be provided resolute and consistent support by the international community.

The peoples of the subregion, like those of Africa as a whole, aspire to peace. They want peace. They are begging us for peace. It is up to all of us, therefore, to work tirelessly to build the future free from fear, violence and poverty which these peoples are calling for with all their hearts.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me at the outset congratulate you, Sir, and all the members of the Bureau on your election to these highly responsible posts. I would also like to express my firm conviction that given your rich diplomatic experience and under your able leadership our Committee will carry out fruitful work and will achieve the positive results sought by all.

The current session of the First Committee is taking place in the context of enhanced international-community attention to questions of how to ensure international peace and security. One of the fundamental elements of this effort involves sustaining the disarmament process and making further progress with it. The work of the First Committee is also taking place in the framework of the Millennium Assembly and in the light of the recent historic Millennium Summit, and thus this work is both important and promising.

At the Summit the heads of State and Government confirmed their support for advancing the process of disarmament and non-proliferation. They confirmed the need for close international cooperation in the efforts to attain this noble objective. We must not let this opportunity pass or lose the momentum created by the recent Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — which, despite the negative forecasts for it, ended on a very positive and hopeful note.

Thanks to the general desire and the constructive atmosphere of the Conference, which was nourished by the able leadership of the Chairman of the Conference, Mr. Abdallah Baali, it was possible to overcome the differences of opinion and bring the Conference to a successful conclusion. The final document of the Conference set the priorities for the continuation of disarmament process, and elaborated high standards for measuring progress towards the established objective: the complete elimination of nuclear weapons from our world.

Uzbekistan has always been and remains a firm proponent of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Our country was one of the first to sign and ratify one of the fundamental documents in this field: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, the fact that four years after this document was opened to signature, this Treaty still has not entered into force concerns us greatly.

Taking this into account, one of our principal tasks today must be to secure the universality of this important document. The international community must make a greater effort in order to attain this priority task.

Uzbekistan is today impatiently awaiting the conclusion of the report of the Ad Hoc Group on a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention, which will make it possible to strengthen even more the importance of the Convention and considerably to enhance its practical significance. The protocol will represent a major contribution to the preparation of the Review Conference of this Convention.

The international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects next year will be a significant event in the history of the process of disarmament. It can be stated without exaggeration that success in its work and whether we will be able to build a reliable ban on the illicit trafficking and dissemination of light weapons is something on which the lives of millions of peaceful people depends. The nefarious and daily consequences of the use and illicit trafficking in light weapons appear in many corners of the globe where the fire of military conflicts still burn.

This is borne out by the conflict in Afghanistan which has now lasted for more than twenty years and has led to hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded and millions of people left without roofs over their heads and forced to leave their homes. In emphasizing the importance of this problem it can be pointed out that one of the fundamental prerequisites for the attainment of a political settlement in Afghanistan is putting an end to outside support, including the illicit supplying of light and other weapons.

In this connection, Uzbekistan awaits positive results from the 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

It is quite obvious that in the existing circumstances of globalization when the world is indivisible and closely interrelated, there can be no comprehensive international security without the security of regions and individual States. We believe that the principle of globalism is, and will remain, one of the fundamental criteria in the process of disarmament and non-proliferation.

I wish to stress, once again, that Uzbekistan supports the stricter implementation by all States of the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and is convinced that, without this, strategic stability either at the global or at the regional level cannot be attained.

However, side by side with the principle of globalism in the disarmament process the importance of regional factors becomes evident — factors which can considerably contribute to, but also stand in the way of, strengthening the overall regime of nuclear non-proliferation disarmament.

In this context, it is necessary to stress that the initiative of countries in the nuclear-weapon-free zones is a major contribution to strengthening the regime of non-proliferation and disarmament. We welcome the progress achieved in the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones — Tlatelolco, Raratongo, Pelindaba and Bangkok Treaties; all States that are parties to those agreements and are thereby making an important contribution to the process of supporting international peace and security.

In this connection, we must point to the significance of implementing the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. All the States of Central Asia are working actively to ensure its realization. We highly appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Department for Disarmament Affairs headed by Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala and also the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific region in supporting the current process for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and, in particular, the work of the regional expert group, which is working on completing the draft agreement for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

May I also thank the Government of Japan for its assistance in the work to reach agreement on a draft treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Throughout its activity, the expert group has achieved major success in moving towards agreement on the text. This progress is reflected in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held last May.

May I also take this opportunity to thank, once again, all delegations whose statements contained

warm words of support for our initiative, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

The disarmament process today is going through a period that is not simple. While much has been done, much more remains to be done. The international community must show the political will and make all efforts for the attainment of the noble objectives of securing stable peace and security. Uzbekistan, for its part, is ready actively to participate in the realization of the efforts of the international community for the solution of this difficult, but vitally important task.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): Allow me to extend to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau warm congratulations on a well-deserved election. I am confident that the Committee will be able to successfully complete its task under your wise and able leadership. I assure you and the members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support.

I also wish to seize this opportunity to express sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Raimundo Gonzalez, for his able leadership and successful guidance of the Committee during the fifty-fourth session. Permit me also to thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his insightful remarks.

The Committee is deliberating disarmament and international security issues in the wake of the Millennium Summit and the various other important conferences sponsored by the United Nations to commemorate the Millennium. The Millennium Declaration and the Secretary-General's Millennium Report, as well as the documents issued by the "We the Peoples Millennium Forum", the "World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders" and the "Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments", had one basic message: this millennium must be a millennium of peace and progress and in order to ensure that peace and to spare this and future generations from the scourge of mass destruction, genocide, famine, deprivation, deportation and other acts of barbarism, there is a need to destroy weapons of mass destruction and to strengthen the rule of law.

The declarations of each of the Summit Conferences, as well as the insightful Millennium Report of Secretary-General Kofi Annan have come out with an unambiguous message regarding the urgent necessity to create the requisite conditions and legal norms that will guarantee humanity's march of peace

and progress in the new millennium free from war or the fear of war. This collective commitment also recognizes the abiding need for, and a demonstration of the benefits of, a meaningful and durable partnership between governments, civil society and multilateral organizations. This is very encouraging.

On the other hand, the calamities that have befallen States, even after the end of the cold war, remain etched on the collective conscience of the world. It is difficult to ignore the recent threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction; the escalation of nuclear competition and the lack of progress in negotiating issues at the Conference on Disarmament; the massive compiling of conventional weapons and the illicit trade in small arms; the proliferation of inter-State and intra-State, as well as regional, conflicts; the brutalities committed by Governments against their own populations, as well as those of neighbouring States, including genocide and mass murder, ethnic cleansing, incarceration, torture, rape and kidnapping; the deliberate targeting of civilian populations, including women, children and the elderly; and the terrorizing and brutalizing of populations in occupied territories. These have become sources of pain, despair, anxiety and sorrow for humanity and pose great challenges to the international community.

In this connection, it is to be noted that the destruction caused by small, medium and light weapons has posed an even more immediate threat to international peace and security and to the integrity and stability of nations than that posed by weapons of mass destruction.

While conflicts have caused much damage in other parts of the world, they have been truly devastating in Africa. Instead of the peace dividend expected after the end of the cold war, the security and stability of many African States has been undermined or gravely tested by an array of internal and external factors. These problems have led to the implosion or near implosion of States, the destruction of the socio-economic infrastructure, economic stagnation or even regression, famine and war. They have caused the loss of hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, of lives and the violation of human rights and humanitarian laws.

Among the most sordid of those violations is the use of civilians as human shields and/or mine sweepers. The natural resources of countries, including

precious minerals and cash crops, have been diverted to finance the purchase of weapons and to hire mercenaries for the destructive immoral actions of Governments against their own people or against the people of neighbouring countries. Improbable as it may seem, even assistance received from the international community for the victims of famine has been diverted to sustain these conflicts.

Having suffered from the devastating effects of the destruction caused by a 30-year liberation struggle, Eritrea appreciates the value of peace. Accordingly, it has been alive to its responsibilities to promote regional peace since it achieved independence in 1993. Thus, it had actively participated in the endeavour to change the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) from a small organization focused on the struggle against drought into a vibrant political organization with a mandate to deal with the peace and security issues of the region. Through IGAD, as well as on a bilateral basis, Eritrea has engaged itself in a noble mission to bring peace to the region, especially to Somalia and Sudan. Even before its independence, it engaged in peacemaking in Ethiopia not long after the overthrow of the Mengistu regime. Eritrea has also actively participated in peacemaking in the Great Lakes region.

Eritrea is still committed to the promotion and safeguarding of peace and security in our region and the rest of Africa if only because it fully realizes that its own security, stability and development are predicated on the peace, security and stability of the region and Africa.

Eritrea fully endorses, and is guided by, the recommendations on disarmament and international security embodied in the Durban Declaration for the New Millennium of the Twelfth Summit Conference of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement. We note with satisfaction that Secretary-General Kofi Annan identifies the twin problems of nuclear weapons and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as the urgent priorities of the United Nations. We join those delegations that have urged greater effort to eliminate those threats.

The Eritrean delegation shares the concern expressed by many regarding the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. These deadly weapons are nowadays technologically sophisticated, as recent experience has revealed, and their use often requires

the importation of foreign technicians. An additional concern must therefore be the hiring of mercenaries, usually through criminal organizations, in blatant violation of the numerous resolutions and decisions issued by regional and international organizations.

During the past decade, 90 per cent of all conflicts have been fought with small arms and light weapons. These weapons have been responsible for 90 per cent of the casualties in all conflicts. Of these, 80 per cent were women, children and the elderly. Additionally, the sophistication of the weapons has enabled mercenaries to criminally engage in the deliberate, wilful and indiscriminate slaughter of innocent civilians and the destruction of socio-economic infrastructure and livestock at the behest of their employers. In fact, reports have indicated that civilian casualties are now more numerous than military casualties.

It is thus obvious that urgent international action must be taken to eliminate the indiscriminate use of small arms and the barbarity of the mercenaries. To this end, the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects must ensure the adoption of a widely accepted agreement that will prohibit and/or restrict the use of such weapons.

Yet, this will not be enough. The Eritrean delegation is of the view that it is not only the importing State that bears responsibility. The country that is exporting, or allows the direct or indirect export of, such weapons and the recruitment of mercenaries in its territory must also be held accountable, both morally and legally. On the other hand, Eritrea recognizes that a Government is duty-bound to defend the territorial integrity of its State and the well-being of its population, as affirmed in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. To this end, Eritrea supports the ongoing effort to establish the rule of law relative to conventional arms and hopes that the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will consider the issue in earnest.

Having been the victims of anti-personnel mines planted by the forces of colonial Powers, Eritreans are aware of the grief and suffering caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of these evil

weapons. This being so, my delegation recognizes as a major success of the last century the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention. On the other hand, Eritrea has been constrained by its present security concerns. The Horn of Africa is a volatile region that has not experienced real peace for the past half century. Throughout the years, and long before Eritrean independence, mines have been used indiscriminately and irresponsibly. Even States that have signed the Convention have not ceased to violate it routinely. They have been endangering — and continue to endanger — the lives of Eritreans.

The international community must thus understand the predicament faced by Eritrea and other small but strategically located States in dangerous neighbourhoods. There must also be a legal mechanism that will ensure the compliance of rogue States or enable the United Nations to impose sanctions on them if they continue to contemptuously violate the Convention, threatening their smaller neighbours and endangering the lives and livelihood of their own citizens and the citizens of other States.

The Eritrean delegation has raised only some of the most urgent issues related to disarmament and international security. I seize this opportunity to inform you that we shall continue to participate in the deliberations of this Committee on this and other matters.

Mr. Issacharoff (Israel): I would like, on behalf of the Israeli delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on the assumption of your position as Chairman of this important international body. This Committee is indeed charged with issues that are critical to the security and welfare of nations. In our region of the world, these notions have great resonance and relevance at this time and we hope that this body, under your able and professional guidance, will enrich our deliberations and fortify potential areas of agreement. My delegation will be happy to cooperate with you fully in this endeavour. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Allow me at the outset to state in no uncertain terms that peace remains Israel's overriding strategic objective. While we cannot ignore the security risks and threats inherent in the consolidation of peace and other dangers that are beginning to cast an ever growing shadow over the area as a whole, Israel views

peace as the vital component of any regional stability in our area.

Successive Israeli Governments have sought to advance peace and contend with a wide array of threats to Israel's security emanating from various adversaries on different levels, some of which might remain even after the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The relationship between the quest for peace and the need for security has assumed a complexity in our region well beyond the straightforward assumption that in an era of greater peace, there should be fewer security concerns. We are now facing major challenges to the peace process itself and we must find a way to overcome these obstacles.

The Israeli-Palestinian track is now having to contend with the essence of the conflict and sensitive questions that have so far defied resolution. I hope that the Palestinians will not continue to turn their backs on the peace process. On the Syrian track, Prime Minister Barak put on the table far-reaching proposals, which unfortunately were rejected in Geneva earlier this year. In addition, the Government of Israel fulfilled in June its undertaking to remove troops of the Israel Defence Force from South Lebanon in complete accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Israel has always been a partner in any effort to forward genuine peace.

The relationship between peace and security is also critical in view of the existing and evolving threats to the Middle East, particularly from Iraq and, in a different fashion, from Iran. These countries are not engaged in, and in fact actively oppose, any compromise or resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. These two countries through their own acts and declarations, constitute a significant threat to Israel and to other countries in the area. In this context, with regard to Iran, I would like to state that Israel has no dispute with the Iranian people and seeks no conflict with the Iranian Government. We cannot, however, fail to be worried by the overt hostility Iran projects towards Israel and its recent long-range missile tests.

The threat of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles is not theoretical and these capabilities have actually been used in our area. Israel itself was targeted by Iraqi missiles in the Gulf War and this sobering experience remains fresh in our minds. The international community would also be well advised to consider current Libyan activities in the

missile area. Other examples regarding the use of chemical weapons in the Middle East are, sadly, a matter of historical record.

Israel is profoundly concerned about the present situation with regard to Iraq and the lack of any monitoring and inspection mechanism in that country for the last two years. Saddam Hussein has not changed and he continues to constitute a real threat to his neighbours and the region. The United Nations bears a critical responsibility to the countries of the Middle East to ensure that Iraq is disarmed of all its weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

During the next decade, certain countries in the area could significantly expand their existing weapons of mass destruction and long-range missile capabilities as they have done in recent years. They could also acquire capabilities that will threaten areas well beyond the Middle East, such as Europe and South Asia. These threats continue to expand in gravity, range and scope.

One of the essential challenges, therefore, remains in finding the right balance between the security implications inherent in a comprehensive peace and to maintain overall security in a wider regional context.

The Middle East is undergoing change in a more distinct way than the dramatic change in the European continent over the last decade.

In Europe the term "cold war" has been consigned to history, and the notion of a major conventional conflict or a nuclear exchange between East and West has receded significantly. Generally speaking, the lines in Europe are being fashioned more by cooperation than confrontation and Europeans can therefore feel that much safer and that much more secure.

I would note that even in times of tension, prior to the end of the cold war, the major Powers sought to lessen tensions through the creation of confidence-building measures. Subsequently, even when the tension subsided, both East and West maintained their strategic deterrent capabilities.

In the Middle East the picture is different. Notwithstanding much progress in the peace process over the last decade, the region has developed, instead of a cold war, the notion of a cold peace. What should be normalization between peoples, as a vital security

component and a dynamic vehicle for cooperation, has itself become a matter of contention. The multilateral working groups established after the Madrid Peace Conference have not continued their valuable work aimed at fostering and encouraging modest confidence-building measures and regional cooperation.

Unfortunately, the level of rhetoric against Israel in certain parts of the Middle Eastern media has not decreased, and this too directly impacts and reinforces Israeli threat perceptions. We believe the Middle East should learn from the valuable experience of Europe in using confidence-building measures as a vital instrument in lessening tensions between peoples in their quest for peace and security.

People in Israel on a personal level do not necessarily feel safer or more secure. In fact, over the last two decades we have witnessed the growing trend of directing the conflict to our population centres, away from the conventional battlefield.

Added to this, other countries in the area are no less conscious than Israel of the threats emanating from Iraq and Iran. Various countries in the region have also sought to improve their conventional capabilities to counter these threats. They have the means to acquire state-of-the-art equipment and here again the levels of sophisticated armaments have increased significantly over the last decade. Armies in the region have not become smaller or less threatening.

These factors, while not necessarily connected to Israel, have an impact on the nature of our security environment and increase the risk factors we will have to take into account in the future.

All this leads to the central and disturbing conclusion that over the next decade current trends indicate that countries in the Middle East could come to possess greater quantities of sophisticated conventional armaments, chemical, biological and nuclear capabilities and long-range missiles. It could well be the worst of all worlds and most definitely not the new Middle East we hoped for.

I would like to stress the following points:

First, Israel will remain committed to the peace process and will do its utmost to bring about a permanent, comprehensive and durable solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Naturally, we will seek adequate security safeguards to cope with risk factors and threats within the process itself and beyond the present circle of negotiations.

Secondly, the longer range threats to Israel and to other countries in the area, as a whole, could become more profound and existential.

Thirdly, preventing Iraq from reconstituting its weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities and from presenting a threat to the countries in the region will remain a critical factor in regional efforts to reduce arms levels in the area as a whole and, possibly, to moderate Iran's military aspirations.

Fourthly, we hope that Iran will modify its ongoing plans to develop and procure weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities that will continue to be dependent on external assistance.

It is with these basic considerations in mind that Israel has had to forge its policy on regional security and arms control. I will try now to outline our approach in the context of this broader regional perspective.

Israel attaches primary importance to regional arrangements that could provide an answer to questions regarding security and stability in the Middle East. At the same time, this approach has not prevented Israel from supporting the efforts of the international community in curbing the proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weapons and, where appropriate, from endorsing global arrangements that do not impair Israel's vital security margins and could complement those required at the regional level.

Over the years, Israel has consistently supported the principle of non-proliferation and has never adopted a policy against the NPT regime. Israel believes, however, that the Treaty cannot be a substitute for a regional arrangement in the Middle East, where wars, armed conflicts, political hostility and non-recognition are still prevalent. These political realities in our area mandate a practical step-by-step approach, bearing in mind the ultimate goal of achieving a comprehensive peace between all the States of the region.

Accordingly, Israel supports the eventual establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, through arrangements freely negotiated by the regional parties and emanating from, and encompassing all the

States in the region. Indeed, for the last 20 years, Israel has been part of the consensus in the First Committee regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and we hope that this consensus will be preserved.

In addition, we note that the agenda item entitled "The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East" is still on our agenda, reflecting a transparent political attempt to single out Israel in an amplified way. Resolutions on this item have diverted attention from the very real and pressing proliferation problems in our area. The item ignores the ongoing problem of Iraq and the continuing efforts of Iran in the nuclear and missile areas. In short, we believe that such an agenda item has no place in an objective and professional body, which should engage in more constructive confidence-building measures so deeply needed in our area.

We also believe that this body, before taking action on this item, should also bear in mind the other concrete steps Israel has taken in the arms control area in recent years. The Foreign Minister of Israel signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in New York on 25 September 1996. This was an important and significant expression of Israel's commitment to the principle of the Treaty. Currently, Israel is one of the most active States in the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT in Vienna, seeking to bring about conditions that will enable Israel to ratify the convention.

In addition, Israel signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1993 and is committed to its objectives. We note with concern that certain Arab countries have not signed or ratified this Convention, particularly bearing in mind that such weapons have been used more than once in our area.

I would like now to refer to conventional weapons. Israel believes that the spread of such weapons continues to be one of the acute primary day-to-day threats to security and stability in many areas of the world, and no less so in the Middle East. Accordingly, Israel has participated in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms over the last years. We believe that a significantly wider participation of our Arab neighbours in the United Nations Register would serve to enhance mutual confidence and underline the continued importance of focusing attention on the dangers of conventional weaponry.

Israel also shares the concern of the international community regarding the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, but, in view of its security situation, is unable to subscribe to a total ban on their use. Nevertheless, Israel ratified the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in 1995 and recently ratified that Convention's Amended Protocol II and Protocol IV. On the issue of landmines, Israel has maintained a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines since 1994, which it intends to continue indefinitely. We remain willing to contribute to an agreement banning the transfer of all anti-personnel landmines and have ceased the production of such mines. Israel continues to take an active part in humanitarian programmes designed to enhance mine awareness and the rehabilitation of landmine victims.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which impacts on the safety of civilians both in internal and international conflicts, is another issue that merits special attention. For its part, Israel supports the initiatives designed to curb the illicit circulation of such arms and will participate fully in those efforts. Israel hopes that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in 2001, will create the necessary basis for substantive progress in this area.

Finally, Israel has remained an adherent to the Missile Technology Control Regime and has supported efforts of the international community to prevent proliferation in conventional and non-conventional areas through the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement. We regard with concern efforts by certain countries to weaken these regimes.

These are the concrete steps Israel has taken. We are eager to see our neighbours take similar steps that would also reassure Israel and the international community as to their intentions.

Ultimately, as we consider the present and look to the future, we must as nations begin to forge a wider and more profound consensus as to how we can widen the circle of peace, enhance stability and foster greater regional and international cooperation. We have seen over the last century wars in which untold millions have lost their lives and during which humankind, at times, lost its humanity. This must not happen again. It

was said in another context and in another time that there can be no substitute for victory. In truth, there can be no substitute for peace, and peace will be the only victory.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): First of all, on behalf of the Haitian delegation, allow me to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I want to make it a point to assure you of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation in the exercise of your important responsibility.

In the arena of disarmament, some progress, slow though it may have been, has been achieved these last years through the adoption of practical measures, particularly in the area of transparency and verification, pertaining to the elimination of certain categories of arms. No one can deny that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Convention on Biological Weapons and Toxins (BWC) remain to date the best instruments available to us to ensure global stability.

It is clear that the nuclear States must bring their full weight to bear and commit themselves unequivocally to the process of the total elimination of arsenals, even if no precise date has been fixed to that end.

In order to illustrate the imminent danger of living in a world armed with so-called deterrent devices, I would quote the words spoken by Mr. Ichō Itoh, Mayor of Nagasaki, at the NPT Review Conference on 3 May 2000 regarding the fallout of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He said:

“More than 210,000 people were either killed instantly or died of injuries during the ensuing months. The vast majority of these people were not soldiers but non-combatant citizens. Dropped from an altitude of about 9,000 meters, the atomic bombs exploded 500 meters above the ground, causing a heat flash of several thousand degrees centigrade, showering the cities below with deadly radiation, and crushing and burning everything under the tremendous force of the blast. Even today, 55 years later, about 300,000 atomic bomb survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki continue to live in fear of death and to suffer delayed effects.”

Should not the horrendous effects of those catastrophes of 6 and 9 August 1945 have been enough in and of themselves to serve as a catalyst for raising the consciousness of the leaders of peoples to abandon these nuclear devices immediately after the disasters? And yet, far from proceeding to the destruction of these weapons, the nuclear Powers now have bombs that are 2,500 times more powerful than that which pulverized Hiroshima. In other words, the world is far more at risk today than it was 55 years ago, which should compel us in all good conscience to rid ourselves once and for all of these fearsome devices. Moreover, does not the survival of our planet, the common heritage of humanity, depend on it?

It is in this context that my delegation welcomed with satisfaction the remarkable outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The nuclear-weapon States finally agreed at that forum that the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals offered the sole absolute guarantee against resort to those weapons. My delegation welcomes the fact that the nuclear-weapon States have finally decided to abandon their doctrine of deterrence to move the process forward. That theory long served as the framework for these States' preserving their military superiority, even to the extent of turning their nuclear weapons into instruments of blackmail.

Whatever happens, we must guard against euphoria and see to it that the commitments undertaken by the States parties do not remain mere rhetoric. We must see to it that they lead to concrete action. All too often — and I say this with regret — we place more emphasis on spectacle than on substance, substantially neglecting the implementation of the programme of action set in train by that process.

The decisions taken at the NPT Review Conference, the entry into force on 29 April 1997 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction were encouraging signs in the context of efforts on behalf of disarmament. We share the view of Secretary-General Kofi Annan that the nuclear-weapon States should seek nuclear disarmament more assiduously. As to the 1972 Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-

Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), my delegation was delighted by the 1 September decision of United States President Bill Clinton to defer deployment of his country's national missile defence system.

We welcome the ongoing work to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, which contributes to international peace and security. We therefore encourage the five States of Central Asia to pursue their dialogue with the nuclear-weapon States on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region.

While welcoming with satisfaction the progress made in disarmament, the Haitian delegation is concerned at the number of victims of anti-personnel landmines. The Ottawa Convention on eliminating anti-personnel landmines, which entered into force in March 1999, has been ratified by 107 countries and signed by 139, representing three quarters of the countries of the world. However, among the 56 States that have not signed the Convention, several have large stockpiles of these weapons. Two hundred fifty million of these lethal devices remain in the arsenals of 105 countries and have claimed new victims in 71 countries since March 1999. Among the 101 States parties, no violation has been identified of the Convention's key interdictions against the use and production of and trade in these mines. Over 22 million anti-personnel landmines have been destroyed by 50 countries — 10 million since March 1999. Twenty-one States parties have destroyed their stocks entirely.

While it is noteworthy that a major decline has been registered in the use and production of and transfer in mines, much remains to be done towards the total elimination of these devices. That is why my delegation stresses the need to implement fully and rapidly the provisions of the Ottawa Convention defining obligations to provide information and to set timetables for the destruction of mines. We urge the States that have not yet acceded to the Ottawa Convention to do so, and we feel that the United Nations must play a key role in that process. We take this opportunity to welcome the European Union's work in demining and victim assistance.

The excessive proliferation of small arms and light weapons represents a danger to the world. There is no need to recall the ravages caused by the use of these weapons or their impact on sustainable development. The illicit traffic in these light weapons

destabilizes States and threatens the security of populations. This traffic knows no national or regional bounds. Various, mostly domestic conflicts are fuelled by light weapons, which are easy to transport and best suited to such conflicts. They can be acquired at laughable prices and are prized by terrorists and armed gangs in major urban centres. According to experts in this field, over 35 million people in some 20 countries are the victims in one way or another of domestic conflict. The devastating effects of these weapons have political, social and economic repercussions. It is therefore necessary and urgent to assess the scope of this phenomenon and to seek solutions to the scourge. In this respect, my delegation fully endorses the declaration issued on 9 October by Jamaica on behalf of the Caribbean Community, of which Haiti is a member.

My delegation remains convinced that this issue is best addressed through a coordinated and comprehensive approach at the world, regional and national levels. We welcome with satisfaction the decision of the General Assembly, embodied in its resolution 53/77 E, in which it decided to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects no later than 2001.

On this subject, my delegation congratulates the brotherly Republic of Niger, which, on 25 September, lit the "flame of peace" by destroying more than 1,000 destructive small weapons. We also take this opportunity to applaud steps undertaken by other countries in this domain in recent years.

As Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, stressed last May,

"Over a decade has passed since the end of the cold war. The opportunity of charting a new international order of collective and cooperative security has not been seized ... We are now at a critical stage in international affairs."

In the face of such a major challenge, we must strive to ensure that the ABM Treaty is preserved and that such treaties as Pelindaba, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and START II and its Protocol enter into force as soon as possible. We must also encourage the resumption of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Moreover, as to the three nuclear-weapon States whose installations have not been placed under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards

system, every effort must be made to make sure they also become parties to the NPT one day.

We have made progress, but a great deal remains for us to do. If we expect to build a world free from nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, we, the Member States, must show increased political determination.

My delegation thus urgently appeals to all countries to exhibit genuine multilateralism in which transparency and law prevail. Only then will the vision voiced by the heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration will become a reality and the exorbitant sums now invested in the possible destruction of our planet will instead be devoted to building a better world — a world in which our Governments will at last work together for real security. The world will then be focused on the socio-economic growth of nations and the development of a culture of peace, starting in childhood, among all peoples.

It is with this vision of peace in mind that I would like before I close to cry out in anguish against the escalation of violence that is currently raging in one of the most sensitive parts of our planet. And I would like to emphasize the need and the urgency of again taking the road of dialogue and of negotiation.

Mr. Amar (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly. Confident of your human and professional qualities and of your in-depth knowledge of disarmament and international-security issues, my delegation is certain that you will guide our work to the successful outcome we all await.

The Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in New York was able, though not without difficulty, to adopt by consensus a final document that encapsulated the views and objectives of the States parties to this Treaty. This Conference will likely prove to have been an event of major importance given that it was the first Review Conference after the 1995 Conference, which indefinitely extended the NPT. The minimalist approach would have it that the NPT has largely done what it has to do and is of unquestionable value to the maintenance of international peace and stability. The

maximalist approach continues to deny that the NPT has led to any progress in the fields of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Between these two, one could take an objective and realistic view that the Sixth NPT Review Conference, in spite of the lacunae and omissions of which it could be accused, has been able to take clearly positive positions as regards both practical disarmament measures to be undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States and the question of the Middle East.

In effect, the Conference agreed for the first time to cite Israel for being the only State in the region that was not a party to the NPT, and it appealed to Israel to accede to this Treaty and to submit all its nuclear installations to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system. If Israel hears it, the appeal could contribute to buttressing regional peace and security and to the implementation of the decision to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Morocco hopes the international community will bring to bear the necessary pressure so that this appeal is heard and responded to actively.

Morocco regrets that notwithstanding the positive results of the NPT Review Conference, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has not managed to reach agreement on a programme of work on nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, my delegation strongly supports the proposal made by Mr. Kofi Annan to convene an international conference to study the means of eliminating the nuclear threat, and we reiterate the need to hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

It has also been proposed to hold in 2001 a United Nations conference on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, the objective of which would be to bring about a partnership and cooperation among States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations so as to arrive at solutions to the problems posed by the proliferation of such weapons. In this regard Morocco firmly believes in the need to fight against this phenomenon of illicit trafficking in small arms. We are of the view that — above and beyond the official decisions that will be adopted at it — the conference's success in fighting the illicit trafficking in these types of weapons will be judged by the results of the implementation of those decisions.

Morocco is delighted to see in various States increasing manifestations of political will to fight against the proliferation of small arms. We remain particularly concerned about the excessive stockpiling of conventional weapons in certain parts of the world, especially in Africa. We are of the view that such a phenomenon is not only the root cause of the loss of hundreds of thousands of human lives, it also has a direct and major impact on socio-economic development in Africa. Morocco appeals to the international community, and in particular to the countries that are producing light weapons, to launch and sustain a joint international effort to better respond to the challenges posed by the illicit trafficking in these weapons.

In this regard, the 2001 conference should look into elaborating measures for strengthening the regulation of small-arms transfer and for increasing transparency in this arena. At the same time it should call for increased cooperation in the implementation of both national and regional plans and programmes to collect and destroy these weapons.

As regards transparency in armaments, Morocco is of the view that such a policy must apply to all types of weapons and related technologies — including weapons of mass destruction. Security is not indivisible and it is important that there be transparency in these latter weapons as well as in conventional weapons. The scope of the Register of Conventional Arms must be expanded so that it also covers military budgets, national weapons production, the existing stocks and weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm Morocco's abiding commitment to the principles and objectives of disarmament, a commitment that has often manifested itself in our signing various treaties and conventions involving disarmament and international security. Specifically, our country has always been dedicated to contributing to international and regional efforts to maintain peace and security, whenever we have been asked. At the international level, there are many examples of our commitment. At the regional level, we have always chosen the path of peace in settling disputes and have always defended and supported initiatives based on international law — as has been the case with the issue of the so-called Western Sahara.

One delegation raised this issue in its statement before our Committee, although this issue is an exclusive prerogative of the Security Council. However, this allows me to clarify the situation regarding this question. To wit, the question of the so-called Western Sahara involves the realization of the territorial integrity of Morocco. This question reached its conclusion in the wake of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and of the Madrid Accords. However, in response to an appeal from certain allies, committed to transparency and wishing to show good faith, Morocco proposed holding a fair and equitable referendum. And since then Morocco has not ceased to cooperate unreservedly with the United Nations to ensure the completion of the process, with respect for the right to vote of all the Saharan people — without any discrimination.

At the Berlin meeting, held just a few days ago under the aegis of Mr. Baker, Morocco — although its good faith and good will were the target of machinations that sought to distort both the spirit and the letter of the referendum and its implementation — voiced its readiness to engage with the other side in a sincere and frank dialogue about this dispute, which has raged for nearly 25 years now. This proposal was hailed as being likely to help overcome the numerous obstacles currently impeding the process for resolving this issue.

Thus the President of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union did not fail, at the beginning of this week, to support the Kingdom of Morocco's proposal, in the conviction that the current impasse can be surmounted only through open and frank dialogue, dealing with all aspects of the conflict, between the parties concerned.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with decision 34/401 of the General Assembly, statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to two interventions. The first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Yamaguchi (Japan): The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in his statement of 9 October, made some references to Japan's foreign and defence policies. With the Committee's indulgence, my delegation would like to

set the record straight by accepting the invitation extended by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In his statement, he noted that Japan should clarify its position on giving up its attempt at nuclear armament. My job today is easy, because it is evident to all that there simply is no truth to the allegation that Japan is trying to become a military power with nuclear armaments. It is true that Japan as a nation pays due attention to its ability to defend itself. Are there any countries that do not?

The important aspect of Japan's effort at self-defence is that it has consistently adhered to its fundamental policy orientation not to become a military power that could pose a military threat to others. This policy orientation has been implemented and maintained through the limitation of its military capability to one of an exclusively defensive nature, with the underpinning of its intrinsically peace-oriented Constitution.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea referred to Japan's attempt at nuclear armament. There is no such attempt on Japan's part, nor are there any reasons for such an attempt, which would only destabilize the international environment around Japan and be detrimental to its policy objective of maintaining peace and prosperity in Japan and beyond.

In view of the widely shared and fiercely uncompromising anti-nuclear-weapon sentiments of Japan's population, it would be the wildest fantasy to even hint at the possibility of our truly democratic country going nuclear.

If this reasoning is not enough to convince the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to point out the plain facts and let these facts tell the truth.

First, Japan has stated publicly that it would stick to the three non-nuclear-weapon principles of not having, not manufacturing and not introducing into its territory nuclear weapons. It has abided by, and will abide by, these principles.

Secondly, in the legal arena, Japan's domestic legislation strictly limits its nuclear-related activities to peaceful purposes.

Thirdly, Japan is a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and its obligations under the Treaty are being complied with and verified through the complete application of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) full-scope safeguards measures. Japan, by the way, was the first to ratify the additional protocol with the IAEA.

Fourthly, Japan is active in trying to promote realistic, step-by-step nuclear disarmament measures in the world, in the belief that the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki should not be repeated.

As our Prime Minister stated during the general debate last month, my delegation will submit a draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons". I would like to request all delegations, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to support it.

I must confess that my delegation owes the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this invaluable opportunity to explain Japan's position on nuclear weapons, which it would not have been able to take advantage of otherwise.

Mr. Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): The representative of Israel, a country which does not respect in any way the principles of peace, security and disarmament, as enshrined in the various documents of the international community in the form of treaties and guidelines, made baseless accusations in his statement today.

First, the nature of the statement by Israel is a reflection of the legitimacy problem that it faces in the region. Surprisingly, in his statement the Israeli representative on numerous occasions accused my country of striving to develop weapons of mass destruction. There is a famous proverb stating that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Let us look at the record. Israel is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and has not placed its facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, but operates secret nuclear programmes, especially in Demona, which is a matter of deep concern to the international community.

The 2000 NPT Conference, held some months ago, called on Israel by name to accede to the NPT, which is in itself a manifestation of the recognition of such a threat in the region. It also urged all States to

push this regime to accede to such an important Treaty. Nor has Israel joined and ratified the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) or the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which accordingly gives rise to serious questions as to the commitment of this regime to banning weapons of mass destruction.

Israel has also developed long-range missiles and fighters — up to 5,000 kilometres — which are able to carry weapons of mass destruction. I do not need to refer to the record of my country, which, as a party to the NPT, has placed all of its facilities under IAEA safeguards, is a party to the BWC and the CWC, and, beginning last year, has submitted a draft resolution on missiles, which makes clear our concern about the development of missiles in the region.

Delegations in this room today were waiting and expecting to hear the representative of Israel express his regrets concerning the criminal activities perpetrated and the measures taken by that regime in the occupied territories. Innocent Palestinians have been killed in the streets by the most brutal means, such as armed helicopters and tanks.

It is very surprising that the representatives of this regime, which has failed even to condemn the provocations or to express its regret at the killing of innocent people, is inviting the countries of the region to join in the promotion of confidence.

Let me reaffirm that the only lasting solution for the deep problem in the Middle East is to grant the people of Palestine their inherent rights, as stipulated by the many resolutions adopted by the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to exercise its right of reply to the claims that were put forward by the Israeli delegation.

At the outset, I would like to affirm that the Israeli delegation told everything except the truth. It is a well-known fact that peace is closely linked to truth, since truth is the basis on which bridges of peace and justice may be built. Indeed, what is most irritating in the Israeli statement is its insistence on distorting and reversing the facts. We believe that this is "the truth" of the Israeli strategy.

The Israeli delegation speaks of peace while the entire world is witnessing the Israeli mode of achieving

peace. The Israeli way is to kill innocent people and to dispatch its army to kill anything alive and moving. The Israeli delegation speaks of peace and disarmament, while Israeli missiles and tanks are killing everything in their way, including women, children and old people among the Palestinians and other Arabs in other regions of the world.

In the course of two weeks, approximately 115 martyrs have fallen. By all standards, this is a massacre perpetrated against an unarmed and defenceless people and against children who are suffering from Israeli oppression. They have nothing to defend themselves with except stones and their own bodies. Where is peace with the Palestinians when defenceless people are being killed and the headquarters of the leadership is being destroyed?

It is surprising that the Israeli delegation speaks of Israel's full endorsement of every international effort concerning small arms, landmines and missiles, while those very weapons are being used now for destruction and for the killing of innocent people. The level of untruth in the Israeli statement reached a point where the speaker said that Syria did not accept offers and proposals for peace at the Geneva meeting. The fact is that Israel did not make any offers or proposals at the Geneva meeting; the only proposal made was for Syria to give up its territory, its regional waters, its land, its sovereignty and its dignity. That was the Israeli proposal. Is there a single delegation in this room, apart from the Israeli delegation, willing to accept an offer of that kind?

As for the other lie, it is that the Israeli delegate said that there are other countries in the region that manufacture weapons of mass destruction and missiles and other weapons included in the list we are dealing with in this Committee. Everyone knows that Israel started the arms race in the region and that it is armed to the teeth with conventional, nuclear and chemical weapons and with mines. Israeli scientists have declared that Israel has more than 300 nuclear bombs that can be borne by missiles and aircraft and burn up the entire region.

Israeli logic in itself is aggressive. Their pretext of false security allows them to do whatever has been banned internationally. In fact, the ones who need security are the Arabs. Arab territories are occupied and Arab civilians are being murdered. The Arabs are

the ones who do not have the weapons to defend themselves.

Another untruth on the part of the Israeli delegation is their claim that they fully agree with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The entire world knows — as has been said at past NPT Review Conferences — that Israel is the only party that has refused to place its nuclear establishments under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

We can speak at length, but I will conclude by saying that peace in the Middle East will not be achieved through arsenals of weapons, or through the threat to use them against others, or through the imposition of Israeli conditions on Arabs. I wish to affirm that Syria has made a strategic choice for a just and lasting peace that can only be achieved by Israel's total withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories to the 4 June 1967 line, the implementation of the resolutions of international legality, resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference.

Mr. Issacharoff (Israel): I will attempt to reply to the statements made by the representatives of Iran and Syria, respectively. First of all, to the Iranian delegate, I would like to state in no uncertain terms that Israel has no problem with its legitimacy, either in the area or beyond it. Secondly, in my statement I recorded Israel's concerns regarding Iran's programmes in the weapons of mass destruction and missile areas, and with very good reason. Senior Iranian leaders, including President Khatami, have continued recently — even in the last few days — to call for the destruction of Israel, and President Khatami is supposed to be among the moderate leaders of that country. Various other officials in Iran have repeatedly stated that the Shehab-3 missile is designed to hit Israel. Therefore, I frankly cannot see why he has any problem with my being concerned about these facts.

Regarding the peace process, I would suggest very strongly that he try to let us and the Palestinians come to terms with the problems that we have. They are too serious to make rhetoric out of them. We have tried to move the peace process forward in a very serious and determined way. We have done so for more than 20 years. I would like to say, with regard to the Iranian record on the peace process, that trying to undermine and weaken the peace process and encourage terrorist attacks against those who seek

peace has not brought very much honour to that country. So if the Iranian representative thinks I should apologize for Israel's being concerned about Iran's activities, I am afraid that I might have to spoil his weekend.

The Syrian representative referred to the truth about the meeting in Geneva. I think I am pretty well up to date, and I know that my Prime Minister submitted very far-reaching proposals for peace with Syria — proposals that have gone very far in trying to relate to the Golan Heights problem and in seeking a wider peace with Syria. Whether these proposals were rejected in the meeting with President Clinton in five or seven minutes by the late President Assad is something I do not know, but they were rejected all the same. Regarding the truth, I wonder, when we have had such far-reaching proposals on peace, whether the rejection of such proposals does not, in fact, indicate that, in the Syrian mind, peace with Israel still remains unacceptable. While I am comforted that they have said, today and on other occasions, that they seek to make a strategic peace with Israel, I would very much like to see how this receives expression in everyday life.

Regarding the events in the territories over recent days, I think it is not appropriate for the Syrians to lecture us and dramatize these events. As I said earlier, I think they are too serious. They have to be addressed in a serious way. Israel did not start those riots; we do not seek them and we have no interest in their continuation. As for massacres, I will reserve my position on the Syrian record in that regard.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for using so much precious time — yours, Mr. Chairman, and that of the Committee. It is well known that the Syrian Arab Republic has, indeed, made peace a strategic option. That is a fact. Syria has endeavoured from the beginning of the peace process to the present to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region, and I just explained the basis on which such a peace can be established. I am surprised by what I heard from the Israeli representative, who spoke of the proposals made at the Geneva meeting. He says that he does not know everything about those proposals. The proposals did not mention the total withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories to the line of 4 June 1967. It seems that the Israeli representative is not aware of the policies and practices of his Government in this respect.

It is clear that Israel is not willing or ready to achieve that peace, and what is taking place at the moment bears witness to that. No world event justifies the perpetration of such massacres by Israel. The Israeli representative knows that his Government has to date killed more than 115 Palestinians. These are true massacres, perpetrated against a defenceless and unarmed people. The international community has condemned these massacres. The problem is that we hear much about peace, but we do not see any real measures to achieve such a peace in the territories, on either the Palestinian or Syrian tracks.

As I said, and I would like to affirm this once more before this Committee, the Syrian Arab Republic is totally committed to the internationally binding resolutions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which Israel is trying to disregard, to say nothing of Israel's attempt to humiliate and oppress the Arabs through its current acts in the Palestinian territories. When the Arabs reject such a peace — the Israeli peace — they are bombed, destroyed and killed. Is that peace?

The Chairman: Some delegations have asked to exercise their right of reply for a second time. Because of the lateness of the hour, we will hear them in the afternoon. We will then proceed with our thematic discussion.

We have concluded the first phase of our work, namely, the general debate. In accordance with the adopted programme of work, starting this afternoon, the Committee will begin its second phase of work, namely, the thematic discussion on item subjects as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 65 to 81. As an easy reference for delegations, document A/C.1/55/CRP.2, containing subjects for thematic discussion, was distributed yesterday. In order to organize these meetings in an orderly manner, delegations are requested to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers for the specific meetings, if they are ready.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform the members of the Committee that the informal consultations on small arms scheduled for this afternoon have been cancelled. Another consultative meeting on small arms, originally scheduled for 16 October, has also been postponed until a later date.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.