



General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

First Committee

7th meeting

Friday, 6 October 2000, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

Chairman: U Mya Than (Myanmar)

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

Agenda items 65 to 81 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: This morning we are pleased to have with us Under-Secretary-General Petrovsky of the United Nations Office in Geneva.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): Mr. Chairman, allow me at the outset to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. I am confident that under your able stewardship, the Committee will be successfully guided through its challenging agenda.

Turkey perceives the arms control and disarmament process as a significant dimension of its national security policy. As a corollary, we attach great importance to fulfilling the obligations emanating from international agreements and other arrangements.

We are committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. This goal should be pursued with realism through a balanced approach encompassing steps relating to both nuclear and conventional arms.

In the field of conventional arms, Turkey continues to regard the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) as the cornerstone of security and stability in Europe. We have actively participated in the negotiations on the adaptation of the CFE to the

new security environment. The adapted CFE Treaty, which was signed in Istanbul in November last year, brought legally binding limitations to the armed forces of the States parties. We believe that the Treaty in its new form, which will come into force following the ratification of 30 States parties, will enhance peace, security and stability in Europe.

We attach importance to the timely entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty, signed in Istanbul on 19 November last. To this end, we expect all the States parties to work to create the conditions necessary for the ratification of this Agreement. Pending the entry into force of the Adaptation Agreement, full compliance with the existing CFE and its associated documents is of vital importance.

Turkey considers confidence and security-building measures as elements complementing the disarmament efforts made at the bilateral and multilateral levels. In this context, the Vienna Document on confidence- and security-building measures constitutes an important instrument, contributing effectively to security and stability in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) area.

Mindful of the serious threat posed to international peace and security by the illicit trade in small arms and of the destabilizing impact caused by the illegal transfer of such weapons at the regional level, we attach importance to, and participate actively in, the efforts to control small arms and light weapons,

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which are not yet covered by multilateral disarmament arrangements. Illicit flows of such weapons to criminals, terrorist groups and drug-traffickers are of particular concern to Turkey, and the prevention of such transfers is among its security policy priorities. Because more than 90 per cent of the victims of small arms and light weapons are civilians, the use of such weapons remains a growing humanitarian concern.

Turkey believes that the problem of proliferation is truly global and, as such, requires concerted multilateral action. Therefore, there is an urgent need for better cooperation, including in areas such as border control, intelligence gathering, international monitoring and increased transparency — hence Turkey's active participation in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and in other United Nations bodies dealing with the prevention of the proliferation and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons and small arms.

For more effective international control, Turkey encourages transparency in transfers of conventional weapons. In this context, it advocates the expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include small arms and light weapons categories. Turkey also supports similar initiatives under the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement and the OSCE.

Notwithstanding the fresh hopes for a safer environment brought about by the end of the cold war, the world has experienced a proliferation of regional conflicts and armed hostilities and witnessed a trend leading to the spread and destabilizing accumulation of sophisticated weapons systems, including weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The proliferation of these weapons and of their means of delivery is a tangible and growing threat to our nations. Despite efforts by the international community to devise comprehensive and effective arms control and disarmament measures, some countries, albeit only a few, still continue to improve, or seek to acquire, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and related technology. The proliferation of these weapons and their means of delivery is a tangible and growing threat facing our nations. Despite efforts by the international community to devise comprehensive and effective arms control and disarmament measures, some — albeit few — countries still continue to improve or seek to acquire nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their related technology. On the other hand, the

progressive improvements in the range and accuracy of ballistic missiles render the threat of proliferation all the more worrying, since they make weapons of mass destruction readily usable.

The Middle East and North Africa are home to a higher concentration of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and missile programmes, than any other region in the world. In order to understand the rationale behind this high-level proliferation in the Middle East, it is necessary to look at the root causes of the problem from a wider perspective. We observe that in response to the perceived weapons capabilities of other parties or their neighbours, countries in the region intensify their armament efforts, thus perpetuating a vicious circle of security destabilization. Therefore, we are of the opinion that any credible effort aimed at finding a lasting solution to the problem of proliferation in the Middle East must, first and foremost, address the issue of eradicating all weapons of mass destruction in the region.

We believe that arms control agreements and non-proliferation regimes will continue to restrain the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. We consider it extremely important that all countries in that region should sign, ratify and fully implement all the international treaties and agreements which are aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles.

We are all aware that many of the technologies associated with weapons of mass destruction programmes also have legitimate civilian or military applications. As dual-use technology and expertise continue to spread internationally, the prospects for nuclear, biological and chemical terrorism are also growing.

The relative ease with which such weapons are produced, coupled with the willingness of some States to cooperate with terrorist, extremist or organized crime groups, increase our concern that chemical and biological weapons, in particular, will end up in unwanted hands.

We observe with concern the ongoing transfers of weapons of mass destruction and missile material and technology. If this trend continues, over the next decade, the primary customers of this material might themselves become the suppliers for other possible proliferators.

We also believe, therefore, in the necessity of extreme vigilance in the transfer of sensitive material and technology to regions of particular concern, such as the Middle East. While the main responsibility for effective international cooperation for the prevention of proliferation lies with supplier countries, countries located on transfer routes should also shoulder their responsibility and cooperate with the suppliers to prevent unauthorized access to these goods and technologies.

It is Turkey's desire to see, in our region and beyond, all countries sharing the goals of non-proliferation and working collectively towards their achievement. After establishing, at the national level, the necessary export control regulations, Turkey joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group and became a member of the Australian Group. Turkey has also assumed its responsibilities in the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Missile Technology Control Regime and joined the Zangger Committee. These complement the commitments that we have undertaken by virtue of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). As a further manifestation of our non-proliferation policies, we became one of the initial signatories to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Turkey is among the 44 countries whose ratification is required for the entry into force of the CTBT.

Being fully aware of this special responsibility conferred on us in the service of international non-proliferation efforts, we have done our best to ensure the early ratification of the Treaty. The ratification process was complete as of 26 December last year, and the instrument of ratification was deposited with the Secretary-General on 16 February this year. The backing given to the CTBT by the Turkish Parliament, and its rapid ratification, is a clear testimony to the consensus prevailing in both the legislative and executive branches of our State in support of national and international efforts designed to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that the entry into force of the CTBT will be significantly eased through its ratification by those countries that have signed the Treaty and, especially, by those countries that have tested nuclear weapons in the past.

The effective implementation of the CTBT will certainly be beneficial to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and to its pillar, the NPT. We attach importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a landmark of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The NPT, which, with its 187 States parties establishes a global norm of nuclear non-proliferation, is one of the most remarkable treaties of all time. Indeed, considerable progress has been achieved in the field of nuclear disarmament since the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. The indefinite extension of the Treaty has made it a permanent feature of the global security edifice.

Turkey has always been an ardent supporter of the NPT and its lofty goals. We strictly abide by the provisions of the Treaty. The recent 2000 NPT Review Conference, held in New York, offered the first opportunity to consider in detail the operation of the Treaty since its indefinite extension. We welcome the adoption of the Final Document by consensus after intense negotiations. We note with satisfaction that 187 countries once again confirmed the continuing validity and importance of the nuclear non-proliferation regime as established by the Treaty. We also welcome the reaffirmation by the nuclear-weapon States of their unequivocal commitment to eliminate, albeit without a time frame, their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty. The provisions in the Final Document regarding the further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, increased transparency and the reduction of the operational status of nuclear weapons are all considered positive steps by Turkey.

In view of our proximity to the Middle East, we attach importance to the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East, adopted by the 1995 NPT Review Conference, calling for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, which was reconfirmed in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, under the heading, "regional issues".

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements concluded freely between States in their respective regions will strengthen global, as well as regional, peace and security. Turkey will continue to support the establishment of such zones wherever possible and feasible. In this context, we

welcome the steps taken by States to conclude further nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, especially the initiative launched by Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in Bishkek in 1998 to establish such a zone in Central Asia. We pledge our full support to this commendable initiative and encourage all the nuclear-weapon States to work constructively towards its realization. We also welcome the statement made by the representative of the United States on behalf of the five permanent members of the Security Council regarding Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status.

The primary role that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays within the framework of the non-proliferation regime is emphasized once more in the Final Document of the most recent NPT Review Conference. Indeed, this consensus document is a confirmation of the confidence in the IAEA's performance of the work assigned to it by various articles of the NPT. Turkey has repeatedly announced the importance that it attaches to the speedy entry into force of the strengthened safeguard measures of the IAEA. Accordingly, we have signed the Additional Protocol to our Safeguards Agreement and are taking steps for its early ratification.

Turkey believes that the Conference on Disarmament must retain its role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament. It is our opinion that the gains obtained through a long and difficult process should be maintained. The loss of the achievements already accumulated would be to the benefit of neither the Conference on Disarmament nor the international community.

We strongly support the establishment of an ad hoc group in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We are of the opinion that the early commencement of these negotiations would give further impetus to the endeavours undertaken by the NPT community aimed at nuclear disarmament.

The CWC is unique among its kind with its provisions aimed at prohibiting and eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international verification and control. Since its entry into force, the growth in the number of the States party to the Convention is encouraging.

Turkey has been party to the CWC since 1997 and is firmly committed to its objectives. We have made the necessary adaptation in our national legislation to meet the requirements of the Convention. Our full compliance with the provisions of the CWC has been reconfirmed during an inspection visit to the facilities of the Aliaga Petrochemical Industries last summer.

We also try to encourage other countries, especially those in our neighbourhood who have not yet signed or ratified the CWC, to become party to it. Turkey is determined to continue in the future her efforts towards ensuring the non-proliferation of such weapons.

Turkey is fully conscious of the human suffering and the casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of mines. We attach importance to the Treaty banning mines and consider that this Treaty is one of the major achievements of the international community aimed at the total elimination of anti-personnel mines. However, the security situation around Turkey is distinctly different from that which the proponents of the Ottawa process face. This has prevented us from signing the Treaty. However, our commitment to the Treaty's goals was manifested by our participation in the first and second meetings of the States Parties held in Maputo, from 3 to 7 May 1999 and in Geneva, from 11 to 15 September this year.

Turkey has also put into effect a national moratorium banning the sale and transfer of anti-personnel mines in January 1996 and this moratorium was extended in 1998 to 2002. Furthermore, Turkey has initiated a number of contacts with some neighbouring countries with a view to seeking the establishment of special regimes in order to keep our common borders free of anti-personnel mines. In this regard, an agreement was concluded in March 1999 between Turkey and Bulgaria. This agreement, which includes a verification regime, has already been ratified by the Turkish Parliament. De-mining activities are due to start very soon. We have proposed similar projects to Georgia, Greece and Azerbaijan. The negotiations that we have been conducting with the Georgian authorities are expected to lead to the desired result very soon. We hope that the Greek and Azerbaijani authorities will also constructively consider and positively respond to our proposal.

Turkey, within the framework of the Stability Pact summit meeting held last February in Sarajevo, also proposed a project for the conclusion of a regional agreement among the Governments of the countries in South- Eastern Europe for keeping their common borders free of anti-personnel mines and preventing their use in common border areas. In this context, I should also mention that training courses for de-mining activities are being organized in Turkey and that we are providing financial, material and personnel assistance for de-mining activities in various countries within the framework of bilateral agreements.

Mr. Shervani (India): Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation extends to you its sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. It is indeed a pleasure to see you, a representative of a country that has played a prominent role in the field of nuclear disarmament, chairing the First Committee of the Millennium Assembly. We are confident that you will be able to steer the work of this Committee to a fruitful outcome. My delegation pledges its full cooperation to you in your endeavours.

At the dawn of a new century, the First Committee this year has the responsibility to chart a course on the basis of a collective reappraisal of the past, a realistic assessment of where we stand at present, and a practical and meaningful look at the future. Our deliberations must also be underpinned by the understanding that in the emerging multi-polar world only a plural security order can deal with the challenges to international peace and security.

For over half a century, the international community has failed to effectively address the threat posed by nuclear weapons. The nuclear-weapon States, parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Arms (NPT) and their allies, attribute salience to the role of nuclear weapons in their security calculus; new doctrines and justifications for the continued retention of nuclear weapons have been developed and nuclear sharing arrangements maintained. Such an approach is contrary to the principle of equal and legitimate security for all necessary for enhancing international peace and security and to recall the historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1996, which unanimously concluded that:

“There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations

leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”

In the post-cold war period, there cannot be any justification for thousands of nuclear weapons being maintained in a state of hair-trigger alert creating unacceptable risks of unintentional or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons that could have disastrous consequences for humankind. The international community is fully entitled to clear commitments from all nuclear-weapon States to reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. A number of specific proposals and measures for achieving global nuclear disarmament have been put forward by States, groups of States, individuals and non-governmental organizations attributing the highest priority for steps to reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. India's initiative two years ago in the shape of a resolution entitled “Reducing Nuclear Danger” received wide-ranging support in the General Assembly. India proposes to reintroduce its resolution this year also with the expectation that steps will be urgently taken to reduce the risks posed by hair-trigger alert postures and related doctrines of use. In this context, India fully supports the Secretary General's proposal, noted in the Millennium Declaration, for an international conference to seriously address and effectively eliminate nuclear dangers.

India has traditionally attached, and continues to attach, the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. Even today, India remains the only nuclear-weapon State ready to commence multilateral negotiations aimed at creating a nuclear weapon-free world, thus responding positively to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. In fact, for five decades, India has raised its voice for universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament. In pursuit of this policy objective, India has been in the forefront of initiatives and proposals concerning nuclear disarmament that are well-known to all. Regrettably, these proposals have been disregarded and instead there has emerged a discriminatory non-proliferation regime underpinned by a Treaty that has frozen the status quo of 1967 while turning a Nelson's eye to reality.

India was forced to develop its nuclear options because the NPT nuclear-weapon States refused to accept the almost universal demand for nuclear disarmament, while the proliferation of nuclear

weapons and delivery systems continued unabated in our neighbourhood.

However, our policy is based on responsibility and restraint, with the minimum nuclear deterrence and no first use defining the deployment posture, along with a civilian command-and-control structure. India stands ready to strengthen its undertaking on no first use by entering into bilateral agreements on no first use or a multilateral instrument on a global no first use of nuclear weapons, which would meet the demand for unqualified negative security assurances raised by a large majority of non-nuclear-weapon States.

After the limited series of tests in May 1998, India declared a voluntary moratorium on further underground nuclear-test explosions. This meets the basic obligation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Developments in other countries indicate that the CTBT is not a simple issue and requires a consensual approach. India is committed to building a consensus nationally for creating an environment conducive to signing the Treaty. India also expects that other countries will adhere to the Treaty without condition. We have made it clear that India will not stand in the way of the Treaty's entry into force.

India joined the consensus on the fissile material cut-off treaty in General Assembly resolution 53/77 I of 1998. This procedural resolution, adopted without a vote, reaffirmed the substance of resolution 48/75 L, adopted by the General Assembly in 1993. India is ready to participate constructively and in good faith in these negotiations in order to develop a treaty to prohibit the future production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices that is non-discriminatory and verifiable.

The Conference on Disarmament must respond to the priorities of the global disarmament agenda. The international community's highest priority remains the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. There are several proposals for consideration in the Conference, including those put forward by the Group of 21, most recently in September 2000, reiterating and reaffirming the Group's statement of January 2000, and documents CD/1570 and CD/1571 on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, including a nuclear-weapons convention. The Conference on Disarmament, as the

single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, should fully utilize the mechanisms provided in its rules of procedure for building the consensus necessary to future negotiations within the framework of a programme of work that reflects the priorities and interests of all delegations.

India has viewed the progress of the delegitimization of nuclear weapons as essential to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world, just as the 1925 Geneva Protocol led to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) that eliminated an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, as in previous years, India, along with other sponsors, proposes to submit a draft resolution on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.

India has consistently maintained that nuclear-weapon-free zones cannot do justice to the wide variety of concerns emanating from the global nature of the threat posed by nuclear weapons. At the same time, we respect the sovereign choice exercised by non-nuclear-weapon States in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. In this connection, we note with satisfaction that the Disarmament Commission was able to reach agreement in 1999 on this subject and has provided useful consensus guidelines to be borne in mind while considering further measures to reduce the global threat posed by nuclear weapons.

At the Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, India has reiterated that it fully respects the status of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia and is ready to convert this commitment into a legal obligation. India remains responsive to the express need for such commitments to other nuclear-weapon-free zones as well. India is prepared to extend all necessary commitments for the early realization of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and for interaction with the States of Central Asia, including in the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia.

India remains fully committed to maintaining and further strengthening its already effective and transparent system of export control of technologies, in line with the objectives of non-proliferation in all its aspects, without affecting the peaceful applications of these dual-use technologies. As a developing country,

India has had to pay a high development cost due to the existence of discriminatory export-control mechanisms, some of which are contrary to existing treaty provisions. India supports multilaterally negotiated, universally accepted non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers concerning dual-use technologies and high technologies with military applications.

With a view to carrying forward the consideration of the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, India, along with other sponsors, proposes to submit again this year a draft resolution entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament".

As an original State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, India has discharged its obligation fully and met all its commitments faithfully. It is the continuing responsibility of all States parties to the CWC to ensure that all the provisions of the Convention are fully and effectively implemented.

As a State party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), India has been an active and constructive participant in the ongoing negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group in Geneva for a protocol that not only strengthens the implementation of the BWC from the security angle, but also gives full expression to development needs. Such a balanced approach will contribute to the conclusion of a universally acceptable, legally binding instrument to strengthen the Convention. We hope that these negotiations, undertaken according to the agreed mandate, will yield results as soon as possible before the Fifth Review Conference.

Arms limitation and disarmament treaties need to be implemented fully and in good faith in order to contribute to stability. Unilateral actions perceived to be inconsistent with treaties reduce prospects for progress in nuclear disarmament, a goal to which we are fully committed. To date, the missile proliferation challenge has been tackled through selective approaches based on alliances and on informal approaches relating to technology-denial regimes. In recent years, missile defence systems have been put forward as a possible answer. These are unlikely to provide a satisfactory solution and concerns relating to missile proliferation need to be addressed through genuine multilateralism and efforts to diminish the

salience of weapons of mass destruction, particular nuclear weapons.

India has consistently opposed the weaponization of outer space, described in international treaty law as the common heritage of humankind. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva was unable at its 2000 session to address issues relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. India was one of the sponsors of resolution 54/53, which reiterated that the Conference on Disarmament has the primary responsibility for negotiations of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects, as existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter imminent attempts at the further militarization of outer space and to preserve its non-weaponization. Technological development, including ballistic missile defences, could result in opening new areas of competition and a new arms race. India supports the early commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on an appropriate instrument that would, as a first step, ensure the non-weaponization of space while preserving the use of space for the full range of cooperative, peaceful and developmental activities.

The question of small arms transfer can basically be divided into two categories: licit State-to-State transfers to meet the legitimate needs of States for self-defence, for maintenance of international peace and security and for participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations; and illicit arms transfers, often in pernicious nexus with cross-border terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons involving diversion to non-State entities has implications not only for the security of States, but also for their economic and social development.

The international community has recognized this as one of the priority problems, and accordingly is convening an international conference in 2001. India supports the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Conference, while reiterating the principle of the legitimacy of legal trade, needs to also cover transfers that have a risk of becoming a source of illicit diversion and circulation. The Conference should adopt an integrated approach to ammunition and explosives.

India believes that priority for international action lies in breaking the nexus between small arms proliferation, international terrorism, drug smuggling, organized crime and money laundering, and the “grey markets” that feed this link. India participated actively in the first session of the Preparatory Committee earlier this year, and will continue to engage constructively in the preparatory process for the conference. India also intends to contribute actively to the study by the Secretary-General, requested by General Assembly resolution 54/54 V on the feasibility of restricting the manufacture and trade of small arms and light weapons to the manufacturers and dealers authorized by States.

India remains committed to the objective of a non-discriminatory, universal and global ban on anti-personnel landmines through a phased process that addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States, while ameliorating the critical humanitarian crises that have resulted from an irresponsible transfer and indiscriminate use of landmines. We believe that a phased approach commends itself as a confidence-building process, enabling States, particularly those, such as India, with long borders to move ahead while remaining sensitive to safeguarding their legitimate security requirements.

The process of the complete elimination of anti-personnel landmines will be facilitated by addressing the legitimate defensive role of anti-personnel landmines for operational requirements under the defence doctrines of the countries concerned, through the availability of appropriate militarily effective, non-lethal and cost-effective alternative technologies. In this context, India attaches importance to the full and unhampered transfer of technology related to mine detection and clearance as well as international assistance. India would support negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a ban on transfers of anti-personnel landmines on the basis of a mandate that reflects the interests of all delegations. India has been an active participant in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons process, having ratified all its protocols, including the Amended Protocol II on landmines.

The Disarmament Commission has, with the 2000 substantive session, started a new three-year cycle of focused deliberations on the agreed topics: “Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament” and “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms”. The Disarmament Commission has

a special responsibility for promoting and enhancing the international disarmament agenda by providing the deliberative inputs through formulation of consensus recommendations, keeping in mind the overall objective of the disarmament agenda. India has been, and will remain, an active participant in the in-depth and substantive discussions on these two important topics.

As we enter the new millennium, let us resolve to intensify efforts to strengthen international peace and security. The cold war compartmentalization of security complexes is no longer valid. Therefore, the test for measures to be discussed and negotiated successfully will be their global and non-discriminatory nature, which enhances security for all. The quest for a unilateral security advantage for a few or the assertion of the right to an exclusive standard of national security is contrary to the spirit of a durable and sustainable system of international security in today’s world. The First Committee should be resolute in resisting such trends, in order that the international community can begin to successfully address the challenges of the new millennium.

The Chairman: I now call on the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See): May I begin by congratulating you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. With your guidance, I am sure that the First Committee will bring its work to a successful conclusion.

At this first meeting of the disarmament Committee in the new century, let us resolve at the outset to develop the concept of a culture of peace as an integral approach to preventing violence and armed conflicts. That is indeed the goal of the International Year for the Culture of Peace.

At the basis of a culture of peace is respect for life and for all human rights. Constructing such a culture requires comprehensive educational, social and civic action. This will lead to a “civilization of love,” as described by Pope John Paul II, and it is this, at the dawn of the third millennium, that the peoples of the world so ardently long for.

Since the first duty of the United Nations is to preserve and promote peace throughout the world, this Committee has a vital role to play in establishing

political norms for peace. The nations of the world pledged at the recent Millennium Summit to

“spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether within or between States, which has claimed more than 5 million lives in the past decade”. (*A/RES/55/2, para. 8*)

To carry out this pledge, nations must build respect for the rule of law and ensure compliance with the United Nations Charter and the decisions of the International Court of Justice. How easy it is to say these words, yet how difficult to practise them! After three years of steady decline, the number of wars fought worldwide increased significantly in 1999, when there were no fewer than 40 armed conflicts being fought on the territories of 36 countries. Sixteen of these conflicts took place in Africa, 14 in Asia, six in the Middle East, two in Europe and two in the Americas. These conflicts, fed by arms dealers with a rapacious appetite for money, are a scandal of modern civilization.

The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons contributes towards intensifying conflicts by increasing the lethality and duration of violence; they generate a vicious circle of a greater sense of insecurity which in turn leads to a greater demand for the use of these weapons. It is an even greater shame that many small arms are readily obtainable by children, who are enslaved by warring factions and forced to become combatants and porters.

It is no accident that the vast majority of States experiencing war are among the most poverty-stricken. These conflicts, which consume large amounts of the resources needed for economic and social development, are responsible for the displacement of people, the vast majority of whom are civilians, mostly women and children. The easy availability of small arms and light weapons has led to the targeting of United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian field staff. The development projects of the United Nations and of donor countries are often destroyed when groups carrying such weapons ransack towns and villages.

All of this has been an object of study by a number of expert groups, preparing the way for the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects. The Holy See gives its full support to that conference in the hope that it will develop and strengthen international efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

While norms and international measures need to be advanced, it is political will throughout the world that, most of all, must be developed to stop the trafficking in weapons, licit and illicit. States must exercise their responsibility with regard to the export, import, transit and re-transfer of small arms and light weapons. Let the international community at least implement the Millennium Declaration pledge to take concerted action to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, especially by making arms transfers more transparent and supporting regional disarmament measures.

Despite the immense suffering still caused by wars, we should not lose sight of the gains that are being made in reducing weaponry. Since the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction came into effect in 1999, 10 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines have been destroyed, bringing the total of weapons destroyed so far to 22 million. It is true that an estimated 250 million mines remain stockpiled in 105 nations, but at least the trade in these evil instruments has almost completely halted. The treaty that brought this about has been signed by 139 Governments and ratified by 105. Some major countries are still outside the treaty, and the Holy See appeals to them to join this important movement in the world community to avert even more human suffering by so many innocent victims of warfare.

This past year also saw the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in which 187 States made an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The Conference also agreed on 13 practical steps in a systematic and progressive effort to implement article VI of the Treaty.

In his intervention at that Conference, Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States, noted that:

“The actual stage of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament indicates that at the dawn of a new century many still believe in the use of force and count on nuclear weapons. This means that the rule of law, confidence in others and the will to dialogue are not yet priorities. It also indicates the relative value of a

concept like ‘nuclear deterrence’, a distressing solution for a world overwhelmed with weapons, which should be turning instead towards progressive and effective disarmament.”

Why should it be so difficult for the nuclear-weapon States to take leadership in implementing these progressive steps to nuclear disarmament? That question brings us face to face with a searing question for modern humanity: Do we really want peace? If we reply that we do, then we are bound to verify it: there will be no peace in a world which continues to produce more and more sophisticated arms, which prepares itself for their use or in which peace is maintained only by a balance of terror. The time has come to get rid of the inherited mind-sets of the cold war and to resolve the problems connected with the establishment of mutual security.

The Holy See welcomes the Millennium Declaration, in which States resolved to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. The Secretary-General’s proposal for a global conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers should be taken into consideration. The United Nations must play a leading role in advancing measures for nuclear disarmament, because the Organization has the ability to gather together the world community and to express its collective will for peace and human security.

My delegation would like to recall here the words of a text prepared by Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State, and circulated at the Millennium Summit:

“The United Nations needs to develop its capacities in the area of preventive diplomacy. For its part, the Holy See will always support initiatives in favour of peace, including those aimed at strengthening respect for international law and at controlling arms proliferation.”

Moreover, at the Millennium Summit the leaders of the world solemnly renewed their commitment to promote the building of a new century based on a culture of peace. We really believe the peoples of the world want a culture of peace. To achieve that lofty goal, States must work to develop and extend policies that promote human security, new coalitions and negotiations, the rule of law, peacemaking initiatives, democratic decision-making and humanitarian intervention mandated by the Security Council. In such

a culture, there would be a reversal of present policies in which billions of dollars are spent on arms and militarization while worthwhile development initiatives and programmes for peace and human security are starved for lack of funds. A culture of peace is possible, but first we must develop the necessary moral and political will.

Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee, and to congratulate all the members of the Bureau. I also wish to express our appreciation for the excellent work done last year by our Latin American colleague, Ambassador Raimundo González.

While we negotiate resolutions and deliver speeches asserting that the cold war no longer exists, in the real world military expenditures grow and sophisticated weapons continue to be produced that are increasingly efficient in their role of annihilating human beings.

If the cold war is allegedly over, how can it be that in 1999 military spending rose again to reach the nearly unbelievable sum of \$780 billion? We have become so accustomed to these realities that they sometimes go unnoticed by some, despite the fact that the needs of over 1.3 billion people living today in the most dreadful poverty could be addressed with only part of that money.

Three decades have passed since the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The nuclear States just recently decided to assume, not without difficulties, their clear commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. In other words, they have decided to recognize the existence of article 6 of the Treaty.

Some countries — fortunately not too many — have been almost delighted with the results of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We cannot feel pleased when we fail to have practical agreements which within a specific time frame ensure the elimination of the 35,000 nuclear weapons that jeopardize mankind’s very existence.

Thus far we have not seen any concrete action that shows even the will to turn the formal commitment to move towards nuclear disarmament into reality. Worse yet, we have already witnessed actions moving

in the opposite direction. To mention just one example, only a few months after the NPT Review Conference, some nuclear States did everything possible, up to the very last minute, to try to prevent the Millennium Summit's Declaration from including even a modest call for holding an international conference to determine the appropriate means of eliminating nuclear dangers. That position is fully inconsistent with the commitments undertaken by the nuclear States to eliminate these weapons.

We hope that this year the First Committee will consider the adoption of a resolution convening that international conference, at which a phased programme should be approved for the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a determined time frame.

We are also concerned about the fact that NATO's new strategic concept, adopted in Washington in April last year, remains intact. This concept, *inter alia*, expands, rather than reduces, the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. It is unacceptable to Cuba that certain countries continue defending military doctrines based, among other things, on the possession of nuclear weapons.

Cuba's decision to participate as an Observer in the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — the results of which we have taken due note of — was fresh evidence of the interest and the seriousness with which our country follows up on all issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly those related to nuclear weapons.

The provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are discriminatory and selective in their very essence, legitimizing the possession of nuclear weapons by a select club of countries. This is why Cuba thus far has neither signed nor ratified this Treaty.

Despite the fact that Cuba is not a party to the NPT, and therefore has no obligation whatsoever to negotiate the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguard agreements, our country has decided on its own initiative to have all its nuclear facilities subject to safeguard agreements with the IAEA, with which we strictly comply.

Moreover, in October last year Cuba signed an Additional Protocol to its IAEA safeguard agreements, thus becoming the first country with INFICIRC/66 type

safeguard agreements to take that step. Cuba will continue to develop its peaceful nuclear programme transparently with specific goals and to work tirelessly for nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Despite international rejection, the United States Government's decision to establish a powerful national anti-missile defence programme has not been discarded; it has only been postponed. At the same time, the research and development plans for that system are still in progress.

Cuba is opposed to the establishment of a national anti-missiles system, which would constitute a flagrant violation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and would reopen the door to the arms race, even in outer space. We will strongly support the draft resolution that will be submitted to the First Committee on this issue, as we did last year.

We are concerned about the situation of virtual stagnation in the Conference on Disarmament. We are even more concerned about the insinuations made by some countries that, in light of this situation, the negotiations on disarmament and arms control will have to begin to be carried out without the involvement of the Conference. The Conference must be preserved since it is the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament.

In its capacity as a member of this body, Cuba has worked and will continue to work in a spirit of broad flexibility so that it can help the Conference reach agreement on a programme of work and start substantive negotiations. However, the legitimate desire to put an end to the stagnation should not be satisfied at any cost or on the basis of an agreement that is responsive only to the interests of a few countries.

The disarmament priorities adopted by the General Assembly must be respected. The immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament will continue to be our highest priority in the Conference on Disarmament.

This year the Disarmament Commission session was restricted to two weeks. That situation only allowed for an initial, although useful, exchange on two new items on that body's agenda. The General Assembly's decision for the Disarmament Commission to hold three-week sessions must be respected in the

future. This in itself is a short period of time, bearing in mind that body's responsibilities.

Cuba is actively participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts, which is negotiating a verification Protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. We have submitted concrete proposals on important issues that remain to be resolved.

Regarding the Chemical Weapons Convention, Cuba considers that, despite the difficulties, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has been doing successful work. We are concerned at the fact that an agreement on the relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has not been adopted yet, despite the length of time that has elapsed since the Convention's entry into force. We hope such an agreement can be adopted soon.

Undoubtedly, one of the most important events we have planned for next year's disarmament agenda is the international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The success of that Conference will depend largely on the quality of the preparatory effort made by all of our States through the Preparatory Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Santos of Mozambique for the excellent work he is doing as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee.

As determined by the General Assembly, the scope of the Conference should be limited to the illicit aspects of the arms trade. If discussions move away from that mandate, it will be more difficult to reach broadly accepted results. Both the venue and the date of the Conference should ensure the broadest possible participation by all States. We hope these matters will be duly resolved in the framework of the Preparatory Committee before the General Assembly formally takes final decisions. The General Assembly should not find itself compelled to take action on those issues without consensus first being reached among all Member States.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Cuba will continue to work together with the other delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement in order once again this year to submit a set of draft resolutions on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, disarmament and the environment, disarmament and development, the 1925

Geneva Protocol, and regional centres for peace and disarmament. We hope those draft resolutions will receive the broadest support from all Member States.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by extending my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I would like to assure you and the other members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation in dealing with the important issues that lie ahead.

Since the creation of the United Nations, disarmament and non-proliferation have been items of central importance on the Organization's agenda, as the very first resolution of the General Assembly dealt with the issue of atomic energy and atomic weapons. Half a century later, nuclear weapons continue to concern the international community. However, the task of the United Nations has expanded to encompass a broad range of disarmament issues. For that reason, I am confident that under your able guidance, Mr. Chairman, the current session of the First Committee — the first of the new millennium — will serve as a forum for revitalizing the role of the United Nations in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation in order to ensure the security of nations and their peoples.

Over the past year, we have seen both gains and setbacks in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. The successful conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the consolidation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the strengthening of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system are all welcome developments. Yet we have also witnessed a series of negative developments: limited progress in nuclear disarmament, the continued failure to adopt a programme of work at the Conference on Disarmament, the delay of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and differences among major Powers over national missile defence systems — all of which prevent us from moving ahead with disarmament.

One of the most significant events this year was the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Its outcome represents the renewed collective commitment of the 187 States parties to the Treaty as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The

comprehensive Final Document of the Conference, adopted by consensus, squarely addressed important issues such as nuclear disarmament, Treaty compliance and universality, and a strengthened review process. Most importantly, nuclear-weapon States agreed to the unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, through a number of practical steps in the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty. The future task will be to translate that undertaking into concrete action.

We all know that nuclear disarmament is a highly political issue. That was evident from the voting patterns on relevant General Assembly resolutions, where there was a failure to reach consensus on all those resolutions and where conflicting resolutions have been adopted simultaneously. Due to the complexity and delicacy of the nuclear disarmament process, which is closely linked to global strategic relations, my delegation believes that the main responsibility for nuclear disarmament rests with nuclear-weapon States themselves.

My delegation welcomes the recent ratification of the START II Treaty by the Russian Federation and looks forward to the early implementation of the Treaty. Furthermore, we hope that the United States and Russia will commence and conclude negotiations on START III as soon as possible. At the same time, we believe that further efforts could be made by all nuclear-weapon States to increase transparency with regard to nuclear-weapon capabilities, and to engage with one another in the process of eliminating nuclear weapons. Moreover, we share the view that the time has come for us to intensify a multilateral exchange of information and views on nuclear disarmament.

The Final Document of the NPT Review Conference underlined the importance of the universality and strict observance of the Treaty, which are central to preserving its vitality. In that regard, we urge the four States that are not parties to the NPT — India, Pakistan, Israel and Cuba — to accede to the Treaty. Any additional nuclear-weapon State, or any new category of such State, will reverse the international efforts towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

As was also addressed in the Final Document, we look forward to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's fulfilment of its stated intention to fully

comply with its Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA as a State party to the NPT, which remains binding and in force. We also hope for the implementation of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Moreover, we stress the importance of Iraq's full continuous cooperation with the IAEA and its compliance with its obligations.

The NPT Review Conference underscored the urgency of taking necessary measures for the early entry into force of the CTBT, and of prompt negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. In that regard, we call upon all States that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty — especially those among the 44 States whose adherence is required for its entry into force — to do so without further delay. The nuclear-weapon States should provide the leadership to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT. Meanwhile, all States concerned should place moratoriums on nuclear tests while that process is pending.

In the same vein, negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty should commence immediately on the basis of the Shannon mandate, and all States concerned are called upon to place moratoriums on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, even before negotiations are completed.

My delegation welcomes the statement made by the five permanent members of the Security Council concerning security assurances for Mongolia and reiterates its support for the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia.

No less important is the complete elimination of biological and chemical weapons. Advances in biotechnology are increasing the potential threat posed by biological weapons. Hence the international community should tackle the important task of creating a verification regime for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in a more serious and constructive manner, to ensure that the verification protocol is adopted before the fifth Review Conference of the Parties to the BWC next year. On a related note, we hope that the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which has already been successfully implemented, will be further enhanced.

The proliferation of missiles as a means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction is yet another factor that seriously undermines international peace and security. In view of the current absence of

international norms regulating the proliferation of missiles, we share the view that the international community should explore multilateral norms in this regard. Given the complexities inherent in this issue, we believe that a step-by-step approach would be most practical.

In addition to the efforts towards disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, much work has yet to be done in tackling the issue of conventional weapons, which exacerbate regional disputes and pose a formidable threat to human security. The international community should, as called for by the Millennium Declaration, urgently tackle the excessive proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

In this regard, the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects should serve as a forum for mobilizing political will and establishing a plan of action to combat that phenomenon. The plan should incorporate politically or legally binding international norms, as well as an effective international cooperative mechanism that can handle practical measures in this regard. We also believe that the scope of the Conference should be comprehensive, covering both reduction and prevention measures. It is important to ensure that the preparatory process for the Conference and the ongoing negotiations on the Firearms Protocol in Vienna are mutually complementary.

Another related issue deserving close attention is that of anti-personnel landmines. This year, my Government plans to accede to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its amended Protocol II. We also support the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the treaty banning the transfer of anti-personnel landmines. My Government has joined the international efforts to minimize the inhumane consequences of anti-personnel landmines by taking a series of measures, such as extending indefinitely its export moratorium on mines and continuing its financial contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action.

We welcome the fact that the 2000 session of the Disarmament Commission has held deliberations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons as one agenda item. We believe

that, in the elaboration of its guidelines, basic measures such as advance notification and observation of military exercises, mutual visits by military personnel, the establishment of hotlines and the exchange of military information can be established as key confidence-building elements.

The Republic of Korea is a staunch supporter of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It has acceded to, and faithfully complied with, all major instruments, such as the NPT, the CWC, the BWC and the CTBT. In this vein, my Government commits itself to continuing its efforts towards this cause.

At the dawn of the new millennium, we must renew our collective commitment to forge a consensus on dealing with the arduous tasks of further enhancing disarmament and non-proliferation and instilling a culture of peace.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, may I extend to you my warmest congratulations on your well-deserved election and pledge my delegation's full support and cooperation. My delegation, like many others, is confident that your diplomatic skill and experience in the field of disarmament and your dedication will bring the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

At the turn of the century, the world is still burdened with excessive arms — some 30,000 nuclear warheads and 500 million small arms. The latter, used in conflicts during the last decade, caused about 90 per cent of the deaths and injuries among innocent civilians, 80 per cent of which were women and children. Military expenditures have gone up again since the end of the cold war, reaching \$780 billion in 1999. This should be borne in mind by the international community in its pursuit of global peace, security, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to focus on some issues that, in its view, should be given priority in action in the field of disarmament and international security.

In the Millennium Declaration, the heads of State or Government of the States Members of the United Nations underlined their determination to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear

weapons. This commitment should be vigorously pursued.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to stress that the nuclear-weapon States, for the first time last May, at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), made a commitment to

“An unequivocal undertaking ... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI.”
(*NPT/CONF.2000/28, part I, p. 14, para. 15(6)*)

They were also called upon by the Conference to make further efforts to reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally and to further reduce their non-strategic nuclear arsenals. A call was also made for the engagement, as soon as appropriate, of all the nuclear-weapon States in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons. These important statements, if translated into practice, could open the way for practical nuclear disarmament.

Mongolia welcomed, in previous international disarmament forums, the ratification by the Russian Federation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the START II treaty. The international community expects the United States to reciprocate at the earliest possible date. My delegation calls upon these two States to follow up on their earlier announcement regarding discussions on START III. Mongolia fully subscribes to the international appeal to bring the CTBT into force as soon as possible. My delegation therefore urges the key States to ratify the Treaty, which is a vitally important international instrument for strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) Treaty — the cornerstone of strategic stability — could, if undermined, trigger an uncontrollable nuclear arms race, with unpredictable consequences. Bearing this in mind, Mongolia welcomes the decision taken by the United States to postpone the development of a national missile defence system.

My delegation also believes that it is important for the Conference on Disarmament, which for several years has been unable to agree on a programme of work, to end its stalemate and to engage in earnest

negotiations on the early conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile materials cut-off treaty.

Pending the negotiation of that treaty, we would welcome a moratorium by the nuclear-weapon States on the production of weapons-grade fissile materials, and greater transparency through disclosure of their present stocks. In this context, I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to the suggestion made by the Foreign Minister of Mongolia — a former Chairman of this Committee — in his address during the Millennium Assembly, to look into the possibility of establishing a United Nations register for all stocks of weapons-grade fissile material. It is my delegation's belief that this would help establish an important balance with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Turning to the increasing concern about the emphasis placed on nuclear weapons in military doctrines, Mongolia favours the adoption of such steps as the de-alerting of nuclear weapons and the removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles, as well as joint undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. These are essential safety measures that would reduce the risk of the unauthorized or miscalculated use of nuclear weapons. In addition, provision should be made for legally-binding negative security assurances to be provided to all non-nuclear States parties to the NPT. Mongolia welcomes and supports the proposal by the Secretary-General to convene a major international conference aimed at identifying ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

With regard to chemical weapons — another category of weapon of mass destruction — we reiterate our call for all States that have not yet done so to join the Convention. We also expect the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Convention on Biological Weapons to conclude, as soon as possible, its negotiation of a protocol on compliance verification.

Mongolia shares the legitimate concern of the world community over the global proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are the principal instruments of death wherever conflicts and wars occur. During the last decade alone, 5 million people have been killed in the regions affected by armed conflicts in which small arms were used. We hope that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,

scheduled to take place in 2001, will adopt an action programme that will tighten controls, curb the spread of arms and destroy surplus weapons.

Mongolia strongly advocates the consolidation of existing, and the establishment of new, nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are a positive factor in the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime, regional stability and security. In this context, Mongolia welcomes the 1999 Disarmament Commission principles and guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We would like to underline the importance of these principles and guidelines for the establishment of new zones in the future in various regions, especially in regions of tension, as well as in other regions, including Central Asia.

As is known, eight years ago Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Since then, it has been pursuing policies to make the declaration effective. Thanks to the wide support that the initiative has enjoyed within the international community, of late we have been able to register some progress. In 1998, the General Assembly adopted resolution 53/77 D, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", which welcomed the declaration by Mongolia of its status and invited Member States, including the five nuclear-weapon States, to cooperate with it in strengthening its international security and nuclear-weapon-free status. As a result of serious consultations with the States concerned, it was recognized that, owing to its geopolitical location, Mongolia could not establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the traditional sense. It was also agreed that Mongolia's case was a unique one that required an equally unique and creative approach. It was agreed that in Mongolia's case, the status would be more effective and credible if its overall external security environment were strengthened. This understanding formed the basis of the resolution.

The measures taken in implementation of the resolution have found due reflection in the Secretary-General's report A/55/166) on this item, for which my delegation would like to express its appreciation and support. We would also like to thank the United Nations Secretariat, especially the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, for their support to implement the resolution. As can be seen from the report, a number of regional

disarmament meetings have considered this question as part of their agenda. This has provided an opportunity to discuss such questions as the nature of its relation to nuclear non-proliferation and international security, as well as to exchange views on the best ways and means to implement the resolution. For its part, the Mongolian parliament has adopted special legislation on its status. Mongolia is now prepared to work with others in institutionalizing the status at the international level.

It is in this context that Mongolia welcomes the joint statement on security assurances in connection with Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, which was made yesterday by Ambassador John Holum of the United States on behalf of the five nuclear-weapon States. In connection with the joint statement, the Government of Mongolia has issued the following statement:

"In 1992, in the emerging post-cold war international environment, Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The aim of the initiative was not only to strengthen Mongolia's security in the new geopolitical setting by political and diplomatic means, but also to promote nuclear non-proliferation, stability and mutual trust in the region. The initiative of Mongolia was broadly supported by the international community. Thus, the United Nations General Assembly, in support of the initiative, adopted, in December 1998, a resolution entitled 'Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status'.

"In implementation of the resolution, the Mongolian Government has taken a number of concrete measures, including the adoption of legislation on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. It has also undertaken a series of consultations with the relevant States, especially with the five nuclear-weapon States, and the appropriate United Nations bodies, in a search for ways and means of strengthening the country's nuclear-weapon-free status and the credibility and effectiveness of that status, as well as the country's overall external security.

"As a result of the consultations undertaken by Mongolia with the nuclear-weapon States, the latter have issued a joint statement providing nuclear security assurances to Mongolia in

connection with its nuclear-weapon-free status. Thus, they reaffirmed their commitment to

‘seek immediate United Nations Security Council action to provide assistance to Mongolia, as a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in accordance with the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 984 (1995) of 11 April 1995, if Mongolia should become a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used’.

“They also reaffirmed, in the case of Mongolia, their respective unilateral negative security assurances, as stated in their declarations issued on 5 and 6 April 1995 and referred to in United Nations Security Council resolution 984 (1995) of 11 April 1995. Moreover, Mongolia’s immediate neighbours — the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation — also reaffirmed their legally-binding commitments with respect to Mongolia, assumed on the basis of the bilateral treaties concluded with the latter.

“Under the statement, the nuclear-weapon States have also pledged their continued cooperation with Mongolia in the implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/77 D with respect to the latter’s nuclear-weapon-free status. The Government of Mongolia expresses its resolve to cooperate with the above States to implement the provisions of the resolution as well as to consolidate its nuclear-weapon-free status.

“The Government of Mongolia expresses its appreciation to the international community for the support of its initiative. It believes that the statement by the nuclear-weapon States represents an important step towards institutionalizing Mongolia’s nuclear-weapon-free status at the international level. The Mongolian Government reaffirms its readiness to cooperate with all the Member States of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations bodies in enhancing the effectiveness and strengthening the credibility of the status.

Ulaanbaatar, 6 October 2000”

Mongolia enjoys good relations with its two immediate nuclear neighbours, which have supported our initiative from the very beginning. Therefore the statement of the five permanent members of the Security Council is for us, first and foremost, of high symbolic importance: it is a manifestation of the goodwill and support for our policy by the five permanent members. The scope and content of the statement, which is limited to positive and negative security assurances of a political nature, make it clear that still much needs to be done to properly institutionalize the status and make it an effective instrument of promoting nuclear non-proliferation and Mongolia’s national security. This first positive step should be followed up by other concrete steps to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/77 D, including its non-nuclear aspects. Though Mongolia is recognized as a unique case, the unique approach is yet to be manifested, which is needed to make the status credible and effective, to make it a positive factor in enhancing stability and predictability in the region.

In this connection, we would like to share the hope of the Secretary-General, expressed in his report on this item, that the consultations with the relevant United Nations bodies would produce “concrete and action-oriented approaches to addressing the non-nuclear aspects of security”. (*A/55/166, para. 11*)

Mongolia will present for the Committee’s consideration a draft resolution on this item. This draft will be based on consensus General Assembly resolution 53/77 D and will be circulated in the near future. It is our hope that the draft resolution, like the one two years ago, will be adopted by consensus.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for its contribution to promoting dialogue and mutual understanding among regional countries on peace and security. During the last decade the Centre has organized a series of regional events in this regard. Mongolia hosted one of those regional meetings, which focused on security concepts in the changing world. My delegation believes that the Centre’s activities should be supported both politically and financially. Therefore, we believe that the ongoing consultations with the Government of Nepal should be expedited, and this should be reflected in the draft resolution on this question.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): On behalf of my delegation, may I begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. At the same time, may I extend our felicitations to the members of the Bureau. I assure you and the other members of the Bureau of our support and cooperation.

Our thanks also go to your predecessor, Ambassador Raimundo González of Chile, for his excellent leadership of the Committee during the last session of the General Assembly.

Before proceeding, I also wish to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his comprehensive statement. His ideas, we believe, will facilitate our work in the Committee in the coming days and weeks.

All the issues of disarmament before our Committee have a direct bearing on the peace and security of our countries and the world at large. The just-ended Millennium Summit stressed that the quest for global peace and security, as well as development, should be at the top of the United Nations agenda. The Summit Declaration, therefore, provides a clear opportunity for the international community to pursue matters of disarmament with renewed vigour.

The primary disarmament objective should be nuclear disarmament. Regrettably, at the dawn of the new millennium, nuclear weapons remain a serious threat to human civilization. Total elimination of nuclear weapons thus remains a high priority on the disarmament agenda. My delegation has always stressed that the world will never be safe unless and until nuclear weapons are completely eliminated. It is for this reason that Tanzania fully supports the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other measures aimed at comprehensive nuclear disarmament. My delegation also welcomes the proposal by the Secretary-General to convene an international conference aimed at looking into ways of eliminating nuclear weapons once and for all.

The successful conclusion of the sixth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was a landmark development this year. It is gratifying that for the first time the Conference achieved consensus on the Final Document, thus giving new momentum to the campaign for nuclear disarmament.

Equally important, the five nuclear-weapon-States made an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament. Although no time frame was pledged, my delegation takes the nuclear Powers at their word.

My delegation recognizes bilateral efforts between the Russian Federation and the United States of America for the reduction of their nuclear arsenals. In the same vein, we recognize unilateral steps taken by other nuclear-weapon States towards this goal. In this connection, we welcome the ratification of START II by the Russian Federation. This was one of the significant steps forward towards nuclear disarmament. We look forward to the commencement of negotiations on START III. It is our view, however, that these bilateral measures could be incorporated into a more inclusive multilateral framework.

In an effort to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, Tanzania supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely arrived at by the regions concerned. We strongly believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones will contribute in no small measure to the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. The Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok serve as instruments for enhancing peace and security in their respective regions.

In this context, my delegation will support the draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas to be submitted to this Committee. Likewise, my delegation supports the efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. We further call for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

We are pleased with the measures being taken towards the prohibition of chemical weapons. We call on those countries that are not parties to the Convention to accede to it on an urgent basis. We are also looking forward to a successful conclusion of the negotiations on the protocol aimed at strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention.

Negotiations on disarmament issues would have been very much facilitated by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Regrettably, for the third year, the Conference on Disarmament failed to agree on its programme of work. My delegation believes that the Conference remains an important forum for negotiating

disarmament questions. We therefore call upon its members to gather the political will necessary to move forward with its work as soon as possible.

The scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has reached alarming proportions. It is estimated that there are 500 million small arms and light weapons in circulation around the world. These weapons are used mostly in intra-State conflicts. In addition, they play a big role in terrorism, drug trafficking, common and organized crime, as well as other criminal activities. Hence, these weapons are taking a tremendous toll on human life and threaten regional and international peace and security. 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 hope that the Conference will come out with a concrete plan of action against the scourge of these arms.

Conflicts cause the large-scale displacement of civilians and massive transboundary refugee flows. These flows in turn have a severe social, economic and environmental impact on receiving countries. Tanzania, which hosts almost 1 million refugees from countries in conflict in the Great Lakes region, is particularly affected.

While there is neither a single remedy nor a quick fix to this problem, we commend all initiatives at the regional and subregional levels aimed at conflict resolution, particularly in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We call upon the international community to support the regional initiatives aimed at resolving these conflicts, including sending a peacekeeping force to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, let me once again stress the need to increase the pace towards nuclear disarmament and to address the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. This is a formidable challenge to the international community and to the United Nations. We reaffirm our commitment to working together with other delegations with a view to achieving the goal of comprehensive disarmament in all categories of weapons.

Mr. Al-Sindi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to join earlier speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I also wish to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. We are

confident that your special abilities and broad experience will be conducive to the success that we all look forward to.

My delegation also wishes to pay tribute to the efforts of your predecessor.

At this time last month, the world's leaders attended the Millennium Summit, which adopted a Declaration calling for the elimination of the scourge of war and weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. In looking forward to the achievement of these shared goals, Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, expressed in his useful statement his concern about the 1999 \$780-billion rise in military expenditures, the first such rise in the post-cold-war era, while half the world's population still lives on less than \$2 a day. Even more dreadful is the proliferation of more than 30,000 nuclear warheads and 500 million light weapons, not to mention other weapons threatening the hopes and aspirations of peoples seeking to live in peace and tranquillity.

My delegation shares the concern of States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations over the proliferation of weapons. It commends their efforts to establish a more effective United Nations. The bilateral efforts of the nuclear-weapon States, especially the United States of America and the Russian Federation, are of paramount importance. The ratification by the Russian Duma of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and START II and the declaration by President Clinton on the delay in the deployment of his country's national missile defence system have positive implications. We look forward to the work to be done on the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and to the resumption of START III negotiations, the two cornerstones of international stability.

I take this opportunity also to welcome the statement issued by the five nuclear-weapon States, delivered on their behalf by the representative of the United States of America, concerning international security assurances to Mongolia in respect of its nuclear-weapon-free status.

The Republic of Yemen was among the first States to accede to a number of disarmament conventions and treaties. It has acceded to the Treaty

on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the CTBT and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Yemen has established a national committee in coordination with the United Nations and its offices for that purpose.

It is relevant here to pay tribute to the friendly countries that have contributed to the success of the demining programme and to the training of the Yemeni cadres. My delegation also wishes to declare Yemen's endorsement of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Our instrument of ratification has been deposited with the United Nations Secretary-General.

My delegation follows with keen interest measures being taken at present to eliminate the illicit trafficking in small and light arms. While supporting the call to hold the forthcoming Conference, we wish to underline the importance of promoting both regional and international cooperation to grapple with this phenomenon, taking into account the circumstances and particularities of each country. We also maintain that the wide participation of Member States will lead to the achievement of the desired results.

As regards transparency in armaments, my delegation supports the Arab position that the success of any transparency mechanism must be guided by specific principles that are balanced, comprehensive and non-discriminatory. Such principles would enhance national, regional and international security for all countries. Since the Middle East constitutes a special situation characterized by a qualitative imbalance in the field of armaments, because transparency is applied to seven types of conventional weapons while other, more sophisticated and lethal weapons, such as nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, are ignored, undesirable and unbalanced results emerge. The present deteriorating situation in the Middle East and the acts of aggression by Israel against unarmed Palestinian people in Jerusalem and the occupied territories, the toll of which has reached the hundreds in deaths and injuries, provides crystal-clear testimony to that. Israel is thus a risk factor that jeopardizes the region since it possesses the most lethal weapons of mass destruction and has not acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; nor has it heeded the repeated call of the international community to accede to the Treaty and to place its nuclear installations under

International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. This has impeded all efforts aimed at establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Proceeding from its commitment to international efforts and consonant with its foreign policy, Yemen reaffirms that eliminating all types of weapons of mass destruction is a step towards the consolidation of peace, development and cooperation in the region and the entire world.

Mr. Palihakkara (Sri Lanka): It is my delegation's great pleasure to felicitate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your election. You have deep knowledge and long experience in disarmament diplomacy. We are confident of a productive session under your leadership.

We also wish to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General and his Department for their initiative and cooperation with delegations, in keeping with the central role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

The Millennium Summit underscored the axiom of peace and security, with less armament and more cooperation. To this end, the Summit consensus also highlighted the need to place collective reliance on a rule-based, rather than a force-based, system for good governance, whether at the national or international level. We hope that the sentiments articulated and agreements reached at the highest level of the membership of our Organization will permeate the mandate of this Committee and the negotiating mechanisms of the United Nations, including the Conference on Disarmament. Only then will these bodies be able to give operational meaning to these sentiments.

In this context, one cannot but be concerned over the disappointing and, at times, even disturbing developments and trends that continue to afflict the current global security and disarmament scene. The optimism that was justifiably expressed at the outset of this decade about greater security through more disarmament and more treaties seems to have given way to anxieties and frustrations concerning the endurance of the rule-based security system.

In contrast, the international community has witnessed a resurgence of the primacy of weapons-based security. Conflicts and weapons have proliferated. Military financial outlays have grown

significantly. In some areas weapons technologies seem to lead policy developments. While negotiations have been intermittent or stalled, on the bilateral and multilateral planes, concerns have arisen regarding the prevailing security treaty regime being weakened or, in certain cases, undermined by State action or inaction.

Existing treaty regimes have been brought into question in various ways. Concluded treaties have remained unratified. Treaties in force are sometimes put in jeopardy by new perceptions of threats as well as by the promise of new technologies yet untested. Other multilateral treaties are being weakened by continued nuclear tests and new nuclear explosions or by second thoughts on the part of national lawmakers.

Treaty-making bodies remain locked in stalemate as some major Powers engage in strategic bargains and, at times, tactical recriminations. This situation has eroded confidence in the utility of those negotiating mechanisms. While this state of inaction on disarmament continues, doctrines and weapons development have not remained static. They have evolved, upholding the idea of continued utility of nuclear weapons. Regional tensions and conflicts have been accentuated as new nuclear-weapon countries sought to employ the old nuclear doctrines to deter the emergence of new war situations. The other nuclear States, on their part, have continued to refine the old doctrines, as well as their arsenals, to suit new perceptions of threats, real or hypothesized. They also maintain that nuclear weapons will remain fundamental to their security.

In that light, the outcome of the 2000 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference became significant, as the nuclear-weapon States undertook to eliminate nuclear arsenals. The international community took this to be a clear statement in favour of systematic and progressive steps towards a world free of nuclear weapons. However, there was no corresponding political will to take the first step in that direction in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. It remained in a state of doing no substantive work for the third year running.

In this context, the recent announcement by the President of the United States to defer a decision on the deployment of a national missile defence system has been welcomed. As pointed out by many, the rationale for a new missile defence system is debatable at best, whereas the testing and deployment of such a system

could certainly provoke yet another round of the arms race. These developments could also bring into question the political framework of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty regime, which the nuclear countries have accepted as a basis for reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons.

There are already disturbing signs that the new century will bring forth new and additional security challenges. My delegation has in the past highlighted the growing problem of the illicit arms trade as a clear and present threat to global peace and human security. We are pleased to note the growing recognition of that problem. Many intra-State conflicts and terrorist campaigns are driven by the seemingly unlimited supplies of illicit arms available to a range of armed terror groups. Those groups have no compulsion to accept democratic means of conflict resolution or to cease their violence so long as illicit procurements are readily available to them. Over time, these illicit activities generate their own momentum and networking arrangements. They have now assumed transnational criminal dimensions. Very often, at the receiving end of these illicit smuggling activities are militarily insignificant developing countries that do not have the technical capacity or the outreach to counter these far-flung networks. The Secretary-General's report on this issue (A/55/323), based on his consultations, sets forth clearly the disturbing magnitude of this threat and the urgent need perceived by Member States to take national, regional and international action to prevent and counter this menace.

The nexus between the illicit arms trade and international smuggling networks clearly points to the need to address this problem as a matter requiring specific international cooperative measures. The forces and technologies that drive the globalization process may be unwittingly supporting the activities of criminal groups that indulge in these activities. This can no longer be treated as a law and order problem relegated to the limited capabilities of national law enforcement authorities.

The ongoing activities of the Department for Disarmament Affairs on illicit arms are good and deserve to be further encouraged. Greater focus and specificity should be accorded to research and to technical back-stopping for intergovernmental discussions on this question. We encourage the Department to further develop its database geared towards identifying concrete measures for

consideration by national and intergovernmental bodies. The ongoing negotiations under the auspices of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna on a protocol against illicit firearms and explosives should continue to be supported and supplemented. The Department could also make full use of the experience of the Organization of American States and could look to the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and similar instruments in Africa in order to develop models for such action in other regions and on a global scale.

My delegation worked with several other like-minded delegations to develop a broad-based agreement on the convening in 2001 of an international conference on illicit arms. The conference, we hope, will break new ground and will take the first practical steps towards combating this threat. The large majority of developing countries, which are gravely affected by this international criminal activity, will look to the conference to develop a framework for meaningful international cooperation to prevent, counter and eliminate illicit arms smuggling. We urge that the conference and the preparatory process should keep that objective in focus. We share the view that the conference should not be weakened or diffused in its focus by attempts to convert it into a forum addressing the more complex and larger issue of legitimate arms transactions between Governments. Naturally, the conference will have to address Government procurement, insofar as it relates to transparency measures and other aspects relevant to the illicit arms trade. This is necessary in order to ensure that legitimate State defence procurement is not confused with illicit trade or, conversely, that the illicit trade is not somehow misconstrued or labelled as providing arms for any legitimate activity.

Beyond that, however, extended conceptualization and contrived integration of licit and illicit trade could render the substantive discussion at the conference an extremely difficult exercise involving issues touching upon the fundamentals of the United Nations Charter, including self-defence by States. The real issue is illicit arms trafficking by terrorist groups and other non-State actors, which drive conflicts in many parts of the world. The Secretary-General's report pursuant to resolution 54/54 R contains a useful synopsis of measures to combat illicit trafficking, drawn from a

range of governmental and civil society discussions in various parts of the world. While it is certainly not an exhaustive list, it provides useful elements for practical measures for consideration at the forthcoming conference.

Turning now to another item on the agenda, the concept and the principles underlying proposals on zones of peace have straddled the security issues of both the cold war and the era of globalization. Although the context in which the proposal on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace was made has changed, a basic goal of the initiative — promoting international cooperation for ensuring the peace, security and stability of the Indian Ocean area — remains a widely shared objective. Consultations to be undertaken by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean are thus designed to ascertain the best modalities for achieving those objectives in the context of the evolving global security scene.

My delegation shares the concerns of a number of other delegations here regarding the possibility of new weapons developments undermining the peaceful uses of outer space. The objective of the prevention of an arms race in outer space has enjoyed broad support in the General Assembly and in the Conference on Disarmament. Outer space has been an environment vital to the preservation of stability and security on Earth. Any developments that could lead to the weaponization of outer space would certainly undermine the security regime on Earth and the peaceful uses of space. Launch capability has shown tremendous geographic mobility. If we do not foreclose opportunities for the weaponization of space now, the international community may have to grapple with cries for non-proliferation in outer space later. That would be costly and unnecessary. The overwhelming majority of Member States, here in the General Assembly as well as in the Conference on Disarmament, have thus called for multilateral work, perhaps exploratory at the beginning, to address this complex issue in order to prevent the weaponization of this newest frontier of humankind. Given the increasing number of rocket-wielding Powers, it is natural that this question should need multilateral attention. As in the past, Egypt and Sri Lanka will submit a draft resolution on this subject. We intend to consult widely and to mould the draft resolution in such a manner as to facilitate meaningful work in a subsidiary body of the Conference of Disarmament

next year. We hope the draft resolution will receive broad-based support, as a similar text did last year.

The strong message that came from the Millennium Summit deliberations was that, in this era of globalization and interdependence, the multilateral process should be revitalized and that the force of rule rather than the rule of force should be the principle of governance within and between States. That is equally true of the issues that fall within the purview of the First Committee. Our deliberations should be geared towards that larger goal of depreciating weapon-based security and promoting rule-based security. To that end, existing treaties should be preserved, strengthened and supplemented where desirable. Existing arsenals of mass destruction should be reduced and eventually eliminated through progressive arms control and disarmament. Preventive measures are decidedly more cost-effective than late non-proliferation measures; this is all the more true when it comes to preventing an arms race outer space. To that end, we hope that the crop of draft resolutions that emanate from this Committee will provide the necessary elements for an effective and practical organization of work for the Conference on Disarmament next year.

It is not enough for delegations merely to say that a body like the Conference on Disarmament with consensual working methods should base its decisions on the interests and priorities of all delegations; it is equally necessary to put that principle into practice. The range of issues ripe for discussion and negotiation can and should be set out in a programme of work that will serve the priorities and interests of all delegations. The recent decision by one of the parties to the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems will, we hope, facilitate such a compromise next year.

Mr. Guani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have been talking about disarmament for more than a century, since the Hague Conference of 1899. As we enter the new millennium, we must not carry with us anything that is incompatible with human evolution. Underdeveloped countries that are not arms producers are now the arenas of today's conflicts. Resources that should be used to build schools are instead used in conflict zones, while 1.2 billion people live on less than one dollar a day as world military expenditures rise to \$145 per person.

It is obvious that we are maintaining structures designed for a world that no longer exists. We speak of

nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and anti-personnel mines, and we classify them as weapons of mass destruction. Meanwhile, 5 million people have died in the last 10 years, the victims of the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons. These have now become weapons of mass destruction. Today it is not just the classification that counts, but the fact that warlords act as mass criminals.

What is most surprising is that in the midst of the first true age of mass communication we still have arsenals and threats that we should have eliminated a long time ago. Disarmament, in all its aspects, is in motion. We should, here and now, set deadlines to eradicate nuclear weapons, as we have endeavoured to do with chemical and biological weapons and even landmines. We must look to an optimistic, yet not impossible, time frame; for example, by the United Nations sixtieth anniversary.

The task that lies ahead is not an easy one. In spite of the grim scenario of recent years, with some regrettable remnants of an outdated policy based on containment, but at the same time promoted deterrence, the hope remains that States that still have nuclear arsenals will make progress in all areas to fulfil their legal and moral obligation of eliminating and discontinuing the production of these weapons. We cannot be satisfied with strategic reductions, which, while welcome, could be greater. The conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty offered hopes, but until it is ratified, there will be no signals as clear as those given during the development of this international agreement.

It is no longer a just question of illegality; it means fulfilling an aspiration that permits no further delay. No one can support restarting an arms race that distorts the spirit of the restructuring now occurring in the armies of the world. All the Member States of this Organization must make disarmament our unequivocal commitment in order to achieve the objectives of the Charter.

In Latin America we are proud of having achieved tangible progress. The Southern Cone Common Market area (MERCOSUR) has been consolidated as a zone of peace. The member States of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, through the Lima Appeal, have called for the denuclearization of the world. We are close to the full implementation of the

Tlatelolco Treaty for all its countries, and that will crystallize a long-held aspiration of those States committed to the prohibition of nuclear weapons in our region.

It seems to us that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean has great potential, and we will seek to assign to it as many activities and projects as possible that can make use of cooperation initiatives in the framework of disarmament, even in areas such as peace-building. It is still necessary to provide it with the resources it needs to fulfil its tasks.

At the same time, we continue to support enthusiastically efforts aimed at making the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas free of nuclear weapons because that will strengthen regional peace and security, while awaiting the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

This is why Uruguay has repeatedly made reference to the point made by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, Ambassador Dhanapala, that the twentieth century witnessed the birth of nuclear arms and the twenty-first century will witness their destruction. We cannot, nor should we, allow this assertion to remain rhetoric, allowing it to dissolve in the whirlpool of an unfulfilled aspiration as an unattainable goal.

We also see the need to strengthen the proposals of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons (NPT) to support the concern of coastal States. Uruguay has been calling for this emphatically, particularly so that the transport of plutonium and radioactive wastes on the high seas will be regulated. It also notes that nuclear fuel waste must not be recycled in reactors so that this danger of nuclear maritime transport will be stopped, which continues to be an unacceptable activity

that is completely incompatible with article 4 of the NPT.

In this respect, we commend the recent resolution of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which Uruguay supported, to establish measures regarding nuclear and radiological safety, particularly as regards nuclear waste and the safe transport of radioactive materials.

But the international community is faced with the proliferation of small arms. The Organization of American States, after having created the first legally binding instrument on the subject, is launching efforts to limit the production and transfer of such arms. Of course, additional efforts are still necessary to develop a plan of action to curb proliferation and illicit use. We trust this challenge will be duly addressed at various levels at the international conference to be held next year. We are certain that the inter-sessional meetings, to which this Committee will need to devote part of its time, beginning this afternoon, will lead to progress that can be further developed in the Preparatory Committee session to be held in January.

Lastly, Uruguay expresses its fervent hope that during this year's session we will be able to give priority to and strengthen disarmament at all levels. We have a lot to do. Disarmament in the year 2000 must be dynamic and effective and, above all, it must yield results whereby instruments and efforts, such as the New Agenda Coalition, will provide the right and brave course to address disarmament issues.

It can easily be said that throughout a century of disarmament efforts we have not been able to stop those who are truly responsible for putting arms to use. If we achieve this, we will have fulfilled the spirit of the Millennium Declaration, forged by of our heads of State and Government.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.