



General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

First Committee

2nd meeting

Tuesday, 7 October 2014, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Rattray (Jamaica)

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

an equal amount of time effectively to express their positions.

Introductory statements

The Chair: In accordance with our programme of work and timetable, the Committee will begin its general debate today on all disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to it, that is, items 87 through 104. Before we proceed, however, allow me to make a brief statement in my capacity as Chair of the First Committee for this session.

I reiterate the pledge I made during the several rounds of informal consultations in which I engaged prior to the commencement of this session, which is to remain accessible to all delegations and to conduct the business of the Committee in an open and transparent fashion. I have not the slightest doubt that we all — each delegation here assembled — will approach the agenda of the Committee with a sincere desire to create conditions within which global peace can reign and our collective security can be assured. We each bring our unique perspectives, national interests and different approaches to bear on deliberations on what is a unitary agenda. That is understandable and reflects the nature of multilateralism, for the issues with which we grapple are complex and pierce the heart of the fundamental concerns we harbour about our core security interests.

It is my wish, however, that even as we assert the primacy of our respective interests, we will continue our fine tradition of engaging with each other in an atmosphere of respect, mindful of the need to conduct our debates in a manner that affords each delegation

We stand at an important juncture in history, which I believe will be remembered as much for the dramatic technological advances that are emblematic of this information and communication age as for the fact that we are facing what is the most diverse range of international security threats we have witnessed since the end of the Second World War. Even as we derive great benefits in our personal and commercial relations from the wide array of technological advances, we are simultaneously confronted by significant threats from emerging weapon technologies that pose risks to international peace and security.

If the voices that were raised at our recent general debate in the General Assembly are a barometer of global sentiment, then there is widespread concern among our political leaders about the number and broad spectrum of the threats we currently face, which represent significant risk to millions of people throughout the world. We must come to grips with the dangerous intersection between the activities of transnational criminal organizations, terrorist groups, State and non-State informal actors and violent extremists. The instability they foment is fuelled by their access to the instruments of war, which consist primarily of the small arms and light weapons that are the tools of choice in most of the world's conflicts and where innocent civilians, particularly women and children, suffer greatest harm.

I am therefore pleased to note that the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

14-55817 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



Programme of Action on Small Arms acknowledged the importance of promoting the participation of women in the Programme of Action. Moreover, the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which recently had its fiftieth ratification, includes a provision for arms-exporting States to take into account the risk of conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence against women and children.

On a broader scale, we will also be engaged in considering the more widespread risks posed to humankind as a whole by weapons of mass destruction. That includes the possibility of the theft, trafficking or sabotage of those weapons, to say nothing of the catastrophic dangers that would result from a nuclear accident or miscalculation.

As we prepare to undertake our work, it is virtually impossible for us to do so without contemplating the humanitarian impact and utter havoc that the proliferation of weapons of all types has had on people the world over — such as in Africa, where more than 100 million small arms exist, or in Japan and the countries that have been used for atomic testing, where the actual, real-life effects of radioactive fallout are a stark reality.

As we commence our work, I am mindful of the degree of responsibility that each of us bears in helping to create an international framework within which those deadly weapons of war, some of which are used with indiscriminate force, can either be totally eliminated or placed within regulatory constraints that ensure they are not misused. We have much work to do in the time allocated. The Chair and the Bureau look forward to steering and managing this work. For my part, I pledge to do my utmost to ensure that the conduct of our deliberations does justice to the importance of the issues with which we are engaged.

As we stand at the cusp of the significant milestone that will be attained next year when we commemorate the seventieth year of our Organization, I am reminded of the words of that great American industrialist, Henry Ford, who said, “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success”. I look forward to working together with members, and am confident that with your help we will enjoy a successful sixty-ninth session.

I now have the pleasure of inviting the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, to make a statement.

Ms. Kane (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): I welcome this opportunity to address the First Committee and to greet its members, both new and returning. I am also happy to be back in Conference Room 4, which is the traditional home of the First Committee, and I know that we are seeing it just as unchanged as it was before the Security Council took it over for a limited period of time during the renovations.

It is my honour today to congratulate the Chair on his election to guide our work. Ambassador Rattray’s long diplomatic experience will serve the Committee well. I also wish to recognize the members of the Bureau and to assure them and all delegations of the fullest cooperation of the Office for Disarmament Affairs during the Committee’s work.

Today, 7 October, marks the seventieth anniversary of the conclusion of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, which drafted what would later become the Charter of the United Nations. It is fitting to mention this as the Committee begins its 2014 session because included in that draft was language addressing both disarmament and the regulation of armaments. Those goals have since become part of the identity of the United Nations as an institution.

As we look at the Committee’s agenda, we can see that virtually all our work is still focused on these primary aims: the elimination of weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, biological and chemical — and the limitation, reduction and regulation of conventional arms. Considered together, they form the integrated concept of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, which has long been the world community’s ultimate objective and a goal found in a dozen multilateral treaties.

The United Nations certainly cannot be blamed for being fickle about its primary disarmament goals. Yet there is a secondary theme that has characterized the Organization’s work, namely, the frequency of disagreements over the means to achieve those goals, disagreements that have often immobilized the disarmament machinery, and not just this Committee. In the face of such disagreements, Member States have proposed various ways of revitalizing the machinery — a term found even in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly

(resolution S-10/2), the first special session devoted to disarmament, back in 1978.

Many delegations are also aware that this year marks the tenth anniversary of resolution 59/95, on improving the effectiveness of the Committee's methods of work — a familiar theme indeed. It is ironic that the need to revitalize the machinery has become, along with disarmament itself, a hardy perennial in the General Assembly, and remains so today.

Of course, there have been exceptions when the machinery was able to produce concrete, substantive results. That was apparent in the overwhelming support for the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Arms Trade Treaty, which already has 118 signatories just a year after the Assembly adopted it. Those who believe that progress in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament is impossible in times of ongoing disputes, especially between the great Powers, need only recall the number of treaties in those fields that were concluded precisely during such unsettled times.

It is conceivable that this might be the year when the impasse in the disarmament machinery will finally show some signs of yielding. Even if that possibility might be modest, we must not fail to pursue any option that could move that machinery forward. One such opportunity has been presented by advocates of a step-by-step approach to disarmament, and it might well be time to consider some possible variations of that goal. The starting point must be a recognition that our collective mission here is not to achieve progress towards disarmament; our mission instead is progress in disarmament.

The former approach consists of an open-ended list of conditions that must be met before actual disarmament activities can be undertaken — an approach often applied to nuclear disarmament. Advocacy of that approach has served neither to build consensus nor to revitalize the work of the Committee. Quite the opposite, in fact; it has contributed to the chronic impasse, and will likely continue to do so unless an alternative path is taken.

A more auspicious course would be to pursue a different kind of step-by-step approach, one focused on implementing disarmament commitments. The draft resolutions adopted by the Committee offer a superb means to identify clearly the interim or proximate goals

to guide the disarmament process. I am speaking here of a new metrics of disarmament consisting of specific indicators for measuring progress in implementing commitments. In short, the draft resolutions would place greater emphasis on operationalizing the goals of disarmament by identifying observable measures such as reductions in stockpiles, delivery systems, weapons materials, volumes of arms produced or exported and military expenditures. This might be called “results-based” disarmament.

The value of that approach is closely connected to the disarmament mandate of the Committee. Our purpose here should not be just to reaffirm annually long-term goals or to stipulate conditions for the fulfilment of disarmament commitments, but to maintain a process for ensuring the implementation of those commitments through concrete actions. Too often we witness here draft resolutions that elaborate detailed means with little attention to whether those means are actually achieving the agreed ends. That is especially true with respect to resolutions dealing with nuclear disarmament, which year after year say surprisingly little about the concrete reductions needed in nuclear arsenals, their delivery systems and relevant fissile materials and production capabilities. The lack of specific benchmarks in those areas complicates the process of ensuring accountability. The absence of such a results-based approach is further hindering the effectiveness of the machinery.

The solution is clear: the more that draft resolutions focus on concrete results, both in disarmament and the regulation of armaments, the more meaningful the Committee's substantive deliberations will become. That approach will enable a genuinely constructive deliberative process. The stakes involved could scarcely be higher.

It is no exaggeration to say that disarmament and the regulation of armaments have profound significance for the wider goals of the United Nations. Upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1959, Philip Noel-Baker described that relationship as follows:

“Disarmament is not a policy by itself; it is part of the general policy of the UN. But it is a vital part of that policy; without it, the UN institutions can never function as they should.”

Progress in disarmament reduces threat perceptions among States and is the most effective antidote to arms races. By contributing to the reduction of military

expenditures, it enables the rational allocation of scarce resources to meet basic human needs. By eliminating or regulating weapons that slaughter civilians on a large scale, progress in disarmament serves to advance humanitarian goals. And through agreements limiting the tools for conducting aggression and armed conflict, disarmament advances the larger cause of the rule of law.

The most alarming headlines today, however, do not deal with the fearsome prospects of nuclear war. They deal instead with the persistence of armed conflicts raging inside States, conflicts that in many cases involve non-State actors armed to the teeth with some of the most lethal conventional arms ever developed. I am not speaking just of the horrific consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons or of the use of improvised explosive devices. We are now seeing non-State actors armed with battle tanks, multiple rocket launchers and heavy artillery and mortars.

Rest assured, those non-State actors did not manufacture that weaponry. They were able to acquire it from outside suppliers, black-market brokers, State suppliers or poorly protected armouries. The problem is all the worse since it has been married to asymmetric terrorism, which has obviously been flagrantly contrary to the most revered norms of international humanitarian and human rights law.

That is the context in which the Committee will commence its substantive work in 2014. If delegations adopt the course of compromise and bridge-building, if they search for common ground rather than stake claims, if they recognize that flexibility in the selection of means to achieve great common ends is no weakness, if they adopt standards for use in achieving those goals and if they build mutual trust and confidence, then the Committee does have an opportunity to move forward on its great agenda items relating to disarmament and the regulation of armaments. As the Ambassador of Nigeria, Her Excellency Mrs. Joy Ogwu, once put it,

“Let us consider what binds us together as one people and as one human family. The common ground is too often ignored”.

For its part, the First Committee has many roles to play in the United Nations disarmament machinery. The norms, goals, recommendations and priorities agreed in the Committee have the potential to mature into a larger consensus in field after field, yielding new multilateral norms as the machinery continues its work. At stake is

a lot more than the future of disarmament; at stake is the future of what the United Nations can accomplish across the full gamut of its most important mandates. I can scarcely imagine a more important responsibility or a greater opportunity to make a positive contribution at a time when such progress is most needed in the world community. For that reason, please accept my best wishes for success as the Committee commences this important work.

The Chair: Before opening the floor for statements, I should like to remind delegations of the time limit of 10 minutes when speaking in a national capacity, and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. To assist speakers in that regard, and with members' understanding, we will use a timing mechanism by which the red ring around the speaker's microphone will begin to blink when they reach the time limit. As necessary, I will gently remind speakers to conclude their statements.

As mentioned at last week's organizational meeting (see A/C.1/69/PV.1), I encourage representatives who have longer statements to deliver an abbreviated version and to provide their full statements to be posted on the First Committee web portal QuickFirst. I also encourage speakers to speak at a reasonable speed to allow for adequate interpretation.

I would further remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will be closed by tomorrow, Wednesday, 8 October, at 6 p.m. Therefore, all delegations intending to take the floor that have not yet inscribed their names on the list are encouraged to do so before that deadline.

Let me also use this opportunity to urge delegations to submit to the Secretariat as soon as possible the names of their respective members for inclusion in the official list of participants, which should be issued shortly. The deadline for submitting that information is Friday, 10 October, at 6 p.m. The names of participants submitted after that deadline will be included in an addendum to be issued after the conclusion of the Committee's work.

Delegations are also reminded that the Department of Public Information will issue press releases with daily coverage of our proceedings in both English and French, which will be posted on the United Nations website a few hours after the conclusion of each meeting.

Agenda items 87 to 104

General debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): On behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), I congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you of the Non-Aligned Movement's full cooperation. I should like to highlight the Movement's views on some important issues.

The disarmament and international security environment, especially in the realm of nuclear disarmament, continues to be characterized by impasse. Notwithstanding the long-standing calls for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, reiterated at the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament last year (see A/68/PV.11), concrete steps towards that path remain elusive. The Movement is deeply concerned by that dismal state of affairs.

In that context, the Movement reaffirms its principled positions on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority, and on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. NAM member States stress the importance of efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation running parallel to simultaneous efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament. They express concern at the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or the threat of their use.

The international community has waited too long for the realization of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The continued espousal of doctrines by some nuclear-weapon States justifying the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States cannot be justified on any grounds.

Compliance by the nuclear-weapon States with their nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is imperative and must not be delayed any further. Forward movement on nuclear disarmament cannot be held hostage to progress on non-proliferation or perceived notions of strategic stability.

The Movement underscores the importance of resolution 68/32, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", which provides a concrete pathway for realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament. The Movement is confident that the full implementation of

that resolution, in particular through the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, will ensure tangible progress on nuclear disarmament. The Movement will introduce an updated version of the resolution during this session.

The Movement welcomes the first General Assembly ministerial commemorative meeting on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, held on 26 September 2014. NAM, as the initiator of this important initiative, furthermore welcomes the reaffirmation of the ministers participating in the meeting that nuclear disarmament continues to be the priority of the international community.

NAM reiterates its deep concern about the greatest threats to peace, which are the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the military doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States and NATO that set out rationales for the use or threat of use of such weapons. The Movement also expresses its concern at the lack of progress by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. NAM once again renews its call on the nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons without further delay, in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner.

The Movement also calls on the nuclear-weapon States immediately to cease their plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities. NAM reaffirms that all non-nuclear-weapon States should receive effective, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

NAM affirms the importance of humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons and in promoting the goal of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, NAM welcomes the expanding focus on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including at the two Conferences in Oslo and Nayarit. In that regard, the Movement looks forward to a successful forthcoming third Conference, to be held in Austria in December. That said, NAM reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons

and the assurance that they will never be produced again are the only absolute guarantees against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from their use. Furthermore, NAM calls on the nuclear-weapon States to reduce immediately the operational status of nuclear weapons, including through complete de-targeting and de-alerting, in order to avoid the risks of unintentional and accidental use of such weapons.

NAM believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and are essential for strengthening international peace and security. Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament. Pursuing non-proliferation alone, while ignoring nuclear disarmament obligations, is both counter-productive and unsustainable. NAM emphasizes that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

NAM States parties to the NPT call for the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Treaty and the final documents of its Review Conferences. In that context, they express their determination to continue pursuing the realization of their priorities, particularly nuclear disarmament, during the 2015 review process.

NAM is of the firm belief that non-proliferation policies must not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire, have access to, import or export nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of each State to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes without discrimination. The Movement once again reaffirms the sovereign right of each State to define its national energy policies. NAM stresses that any decision on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle must be made by consensus and without prejudice to the inalienable right of each State to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle.

NAM strongly rejects, and calls for the immediate removal of, any limitations and restrictions on exports to developing countries of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes, consistent with the provisions of the relevant multilateral treaties. In that regard, NAM stresses that the technical cooperation and assistance provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in meeting the needs of its

member States for material, equipment and technology for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy shall not be subject to any conditions incompatible with the IAEA Statute.

NAM once again reaffirms the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities. Any attack or threat of attack against peaceful nuclear facilities — operational or under construction — poses a great danger to human beings and the environment and constitutes a grave violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and the resolutions of the IAEA General Conference.

NAM recognizes that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety rests with individual States. The Movement further recognizes that the responsibility for nuclear security within a State rests entirely with that State. The crafting of any multilateral norms, guidelines or rules pertaining to nuclear security should be pursued within the framework of the IAEA. The Movement emphasizes that measures and initiatives aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and nuclear security must not be used as a pretext or leverage to violate, deny or restrict the inalienable right of developing countries to develop, without discrimination, research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

NAM calls on all nuclear-weapon States to ratify related protocols to all treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, to withdraw any reservations or interpretative declarations incompatible with their object and purpose and to respect the denuclearization status of those zones.

NAM strongly supports the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Pending its establishment, NAM demands that Israel, the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT or declared its intention to do so, renounce any possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without preconditions or further delay and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards. The Movement also calls for a total and complete prohibition on the transfer to Israel of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material and facilities, resources or devices and of the extension of assistance in nuclear-related scientific or technological fields.

NAM States parties to the NPT reiterate their serious concern about the delay of almost two decades in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the

Middle East and urge the sponsors to take all the necessary measures to implement it fully and promptly. NAM States parties to the NPT express their profound disappointment at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which was due to have been held in 2012, has not yet been convened, despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The continuing delay in implementing the 2010 action plan is contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution. It also violates the collective agreement reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

NAM States parties stress that the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East and the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan are the basis for establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. They strongly reject the impediments allegedly preventing the implementation of the 2010 action plan on the Middle East and the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and call for the speedy and full implementation of those collective commitments without any further delay, in order to avoid any possible additional negative repercussions on the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole, including the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT and its 2015 review process.

NAM also stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, inter alia, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Movement reiterates that the fulfilment of the objectives of the Treaty requires the continued commitment of all State signatories — especially the nuclear-weapon States — to nuclear disarmament. In that context, NAM welcomes the recent ratification of the CTBT by Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq and Niue.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) note with satisfaction the effective operation of the CWC as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, while providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. They call on all concerned possessor States parties to ensure the complete destruction of their

remaining chemical weapons by the final extended deadline. They call for the promotion of international cooperation, without discrimination or restriction, in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. In that regard, they attach great importance to the adoption by the NAM States parties to the CWC of a plan of action on article XI, relating to the economic and technological development of States parties, with a view to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of article XI.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction consider that the Convention represents an important component of the international legal architecture related to weapons of mass destruction. They recognize that the lack of a verification system continues to pose a challenge to the effectiveness of the Convention. They call for the resumption of the multilateral negotiations to conclude a non-discriminatory, legally binding protocol dealing with all articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner, to sustain and strengthen the Convention, including through verification measures. They urge the party rejecting negotiations to reconsider its policy. They furthermore emphasize the need to enhance, without restrictions, international cooperation and assistance and exchanges in toxins, biological agents and equipment and technology for peaceful purposes without any discrimination, in conformity with the Convention.

In the context of resolutions adopted by the Security Council in the areas covered by multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction, NAM underlines the need to ensure that no action by the Security Council undermines the United Nations Charter, existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction, international organizations established in that regard or the role of the General Assembly. NAM cautions against the continuing practice of the Security Council to utilize its authority to define the legislative requirements for Member States in implementing its decisions. To that end, NAM stresses that the issue of the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors should be addressed in an inclusive manner by the General Assembly, which should take into account the views of all Member States.

NAM continues to affirm the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs. NAM expresses its concern about unilateral coercive measures and emphasizes that no undue restriction should be placed on the transfer of such weapons.

NAM remains deeply concerned about a wide range of security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. In that connection, the Movement notes with satisfaction the successful convening of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. NAM calls on all States, in particular the major producing States, to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited only to Governments or to entities duly authorized by them. NAM also underlines the need for a balanced, full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. NAM underlines the key importance of international cooperation and assistance in that regard.

NAM stresses the importance of the reduction of military expenditures by major arms-producing countries, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and urges those countries to devote those resources to global economic and social development, in particular the fight against poverty.

In the context of the thematic debate, NAM will further elaborate on other issues related to conventional weapons, including the Arms Trade Treaty, which the General Assembly adopted by vote on 2 April 2013, as well as the issues of cluster munitions, anti-personnel landmines, certain conventional weapons and explosive remnants of war.

NAM remains concerned about the developments related to anti-ballistic missile systems and the threat of the weaponization and militarization of outer space, and it reiterates its call for the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a universal, legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. A universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach towards the issue of

missiles should be adopted within the United Nations. Any initiative on the subject should take into account the security concerns of all States and their right to the peaceful uses of space technologies.

Since the use of information and communication technologies has the potential to endanger international peace and security, countering such emerging security challenges and reducing their risk is essential. The development of a legal framework to address those issues should be pursued within the United Nations with the active and equal participation of all States.

The Movement notes with concern cases of the illegal use of new information and communication technologies, including social networks, to the detriment of member States of the Movement, and it expresses the strongest rejection of such violations. The Movement stresses the importance of ensuring that the use of such technologies be fully in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, especially the principles of sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs and internationally known rules of peaceful coexistence among States.

NAM is of the view that the possession of lethal autonomous weapons systems raises a number of ethical, legal, moral and technical considerations, as well as concerns related to international peace and security, which should be thoroughly considered and examined in the context of conformity with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Accordingly, NAM States parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) welcomed the informal meeting of CCW experts on lethal autonomous weapon systems held in Geneva from 13 to 16 May, and support continued deliberations on the issue in the context of the CCW on the basis of an agreed mandate. NAM States parties to the CCW welcome the accession of Iraq to the Convention and its annexed protocols.

NAM remains concerned about the continuing erosion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The Movement is determined to continue promoting multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations on issues in those areas and as the only valid approach to those issues under the United Nations Charter.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the world's sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, and reiterates its call to the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. To impart a fresh impetus to global nuclear disarmament efforts, NAM calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the CD with a view to the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons that would prohibit the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of such weapons and would provide for their destruction, as called for in Movement-sponsored resolution 68/32.

Enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations disarmament machinery is a shared objective. The machinery's existing rules of procedure and methods of work have enabled it to produce landmark treaties and guidelines. NAM believes that the main obstacle to making further progress lies in the lack of political will on the part of some States, particularly with regard to nuclear disarmament.

While welcoming the efforts made during the 2014 session of the Conference on Disarmament with respect to its programme of work and the re-establishment, pursuant to decision CD/1974, of an informal working group of the CD, NAM takes note of the deliberations of the informal working group at its meetings during that session. NAM also takes note of the structured informal discussions held during the session on all the items on the CD agenda, in accordance with the schedule of activities set out in document CD/1978. The Movement encourages all States to demonstrate the necessary political will to enable the CD to fulfil its negotiating mandate.

For its part, NAM stands ready to engage constructively in order to advance the issues on the United Nations disarmament agenda and to identify ways and means of strengthening the disarmament machinery. NAM reiterates its view that a special session of the General Assembly should be convened to address those issues.

The Movement underlines that the exercise of political will by all States is necessary in order to achieve concrete results. It is confident that the First Committee can contribute tangibly to building a more secure world if members exhibit political courage and work together cooperatively.

Mr. Tonda (Mexico): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition, namely, Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Mexico.

We warmly welcome your election, Sir, as Chair of the First Committee at the current session and assure you of the full support and cooperation of the New Agenda Coalition over the coming weeks. As it has done for several years, the New Agenda Coalition will present a draft resolution in the Committee that will be introduced during the thematic debate on nuclear weapons.

A cross-regional grouping, the New Agenda Coalition works actively for concrete progress on nuclear disarmament and has as its primary goal the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament has been on the international agenda since nuclear weapons were first used. Sixty-eight years after the General Assembly sought to initiate a process to achieve the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction, much remains to be done to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Given the scale of the devastation that nuclear weapons are designed to inflict and the fact that their consequences cannot be constrained within borders, the continued reliance upon them in security doctrines and concepts is indefensible and an unintended invitation to their proliferation. It is all too obvious that national security reasons are foremost among the motivations cited by those who continue to maintain such weapons and those who aspire to acquire them. The New Agenda Coalition cannot but agree, however, with the remark that the Secretary-General made at the beginning of 2013, that there are no right hands for wrong weapons, simply because the now-proven risks associated with them are too great. It is very evident to the New Agenda Coalition — and, we believe, to the overwhelming majority of States — that as long as those weapons exist, the possibility of a detonation will remain. The only guarantee that this will not happen is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

In February, Mexico hosted the second International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which aimed at further developing awareness and understanding of the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. The Conference

built on the Conference hosted by Norway in 2013, which demonstrated that no State, group of States or international agency could adequately respond to a nuclear-weapon detonation, and deepened our understanding of the long-term and global effects of nuclear weapons. It is becoming clearer from an ever-growing body of research that the risk of a detonation occurring is far greater than had previously been thought. We welcome the announcement by Austria to convene the third conference later this year.

Last year saw the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations and the convening of the General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), both mandated by overwhelming majorities in the Assembly. The views expressed at those meetings and the resolutions that ensued, besides demonstrating a desire for progress on nuclear disarmament, reinforced the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) process and made positive contributions to our collective aim—a world free of nuclear weapons. Those initiatives, together with the crucial role that civil society plays, have succeeded in raising awareness in public opinion throughout the world of the threat that even a single nuclear weapon poses to our civilization. It is high time for the international community to translate words into concrete actions backed by clear timelines.

The gap is growing between an increased understanding of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons, on the one hand, and the slow pace of progress—if any—in achieving nuclear disarmament, on the other. Rather than merely lamenting the fact, the New Agenda Coalition, many other States and civil society have chosen to direct much energy towards initiatives that hold the promise of progress on nuclear disarmament. That is entirely consistent with the obligation of all States to advance nuclear disarmament, although the nuclear-weapon States have a special and differentiated responsibility in that regard.

Throughout the past 16 years the New Agenda Coalition has advocated the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures and the fulfilment of obligations and commitments within the framework of the NPT. While there has been some reason for optimism along the way, we have been disappointed by the slow pace of nuclear disarmament, at both the regional and global levels, despite successive

undertakings from the nuclear-weapon States. Although undertakings are not lacking in this field, concrete progress is.

The absence of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East continues to be of serious concern. The New Agenda Coalition emphasizes the need to fully implement the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and recognizes the endorsement by the 2010 Review Conference of practical steps in a process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 resolution. While noting efforts undertaken to date, the New Agenda Coalition expresses its serious concern regarding the lack of implementation of those steps.

Nuclear disarmament is not only a moral imperative but also an international legal obligation. In spite of the growing international consensus regarding the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons, an estimated 16,000 nuclear devices still exist, and nuclear weapons remain at the heart of the security doctrines of some. Far from strengthening international peace and security, that state of affairs serves to weaken it, aggravating international tensions and conflict and jeopardizing the collective well-being of all States and peoples.

In a world where the basic human needs of billions are not being met, the growing spending on nuclear weapons is both unacceptable and unsustainable. The allocation of vast resources to retain and modernize nuclear weapons is at odds with international aspirations to development, as expressed by world leaders at the turn of the century. Rather than squandering resources on nuclear weapons, Governments should direct much-needed resources towards socioeconomic development.

The action plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference provides an important opportunity to put the process towards a nuclear-weapon-free world back on track. The nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament and committed to accelerating progress in that regard. The 2010 action plan reaffirmed the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000, including the 13 practical steps, to advance the implementation of article VI of the NPT.

The action plan also includes a requirement for the nuclear-weapon States to report in 2014 on the actions they have taken to accelerate concrete progress on the

steps leading to nuclear disarmament, in accordance with action 5. We carefully took note of the reports presented by the nuclear-weapon States to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. We read those reports in the hope that they would reveal that some progress had been made since 2010 on the seven clear elements of action 5 — the only yardstick by which they could be measured. But what they revealed was a continuing reliance by those States on nuclear weapons — no further reductions in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, no further reductions in operational status and no significant doctrinal changes that would provide evidence of the concrete progress towards nuclear disarmament, to which the nuclear-weapon States recommitted themselves in 2010. We welcome the increased transparency demonstrated by some nuclear-weapon States through those reports, but that was not the primary goal of the exercise. It was about measuring progress.

The New Agenda Coalition still looks forward to the implementation by the nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear disarmament commitments, both qualitative and quantitative, in a manner that enables States parties to regularly monitor progress, including through a standard detailed reporting format. That will enhance confidence and trust not only among the nuclear-weapon States, but also among the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, thus contributing to sustainable nuclear disarmament.

In the words of action 5, the reports of the nuclear-weapon States will allow the Review Conference to “take stock and consider the next steps for the full implementation of article VI”. The New Agenda Coalition will contribute fully to that process. We presented a working paper to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference that was designed to kick-start the debate. The Review Conference must continue that debate, and it must inform the next steps we collectively decide to take. What is clear now is that a successful outcome next year will require more than a simple rollover of the 2010 action plan.

Over the years significant progress has been made on nuclear non-proliferation objectives, limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, concerns about vertical proliferation keep growing. Nuclear disarmament has yet to be realized.

Given that more than four decades have passed since the entry into force of the NPT, the status quo on nuclear disarmament continues to be unacceptable. The New Agenda Coalition believes that it is time for States to deliver on their commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons in line with the NPT obligations so as to safeguard future generations from the danger arising from the use of nuclear weapons. There is therefore an urgent need for serious discussion on all aspects of the requirements of article VI of the NPT as a framework for nuclear disarmament. All available forums should be used to that end. Unless and until all options for the elaboration of the effective measures envisaged by article VI are explored, the present slow pace of disarmament will continue. We therefore urge States parties to the NPT to establish, during the 2015 Review Conference, a subsidiary body to explore options for the elaboration of those effective measures.

We firmly believe that a legally binding and multilateral commitment to nuclear disarmament, backed by clearly defined timelines and benchmarks, is long overdue. Such a commitment is the only way to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. That aim must guide all our future efforts.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Bylica (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, on taking up your important duties. We pledge our full support. We also thank you for the transparent way in which you have conducted the preparations for this meeting.

At this juncture, I should like to highlight a couple of topics of key importance for the European Union. We will further elaborate on them, as well as on other issues, in our thematic statements.

The EU remains committed to treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control and promotes universal adherence to, and the full implementation of, all non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions. The European Union has consistently supported international efforts addressing the humanitarian, socioeconomic and security impact of conventional weapons and halting their indiscriminate use. Respect for relevant international law is crucial to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

The EU warmly welcomes the official entry into force, this December, of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). That achievement represents a major success for effective multilateralism. The ATT will significantly contribute to international peace and security by establishing robust and effective common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, helping to making that trade more responsible and transparent and reducing the illicit trade in arms. Once in force, the Treaty's effective implementation and universalization will be essential for its success and relevance. Recognizing that, the EU will provide tangible support for third countries.

We warmly welcome the signings and ratifications deposited from all regions so far and call on all States that have not yet done so to become signatories and States parties to the ATT. All EU member States are signatories of the Treaty, and so far 23 have ratified it. The remaining ratifications are expected shortly. Thus EU member States have contributed significantly to reaching the threshold of the 50 ratifications needed for entry into force. We express our gratitude to the Government of Mexico for holding the first round of informal consultations, and we look forward to the second round, to be held in Berlin next month.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and its entry into force and universalization remain top priorities for the EU. We will continue to promote that objective through our diplomatic and financial engagement. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the EU calls on all States, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to abide by a moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion and to refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty. We reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, to sign and ratify it.

The EU strongly condemns the violation of several commitments by the Russian Federation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Ukraine under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, in connection with Ukraine's accession to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State. We express our concern about the possible consequences of further deterioration of the international context on disarmament efforts.

The EU continues to strongly support the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference with regard to the Middle East and remains fully committed to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. We regret that it has not been possible so far to convene a conference on the establishment of such a zone to be attended by all States of the region. We continue to fully support the ongoing preparations and commend the facilitator, Ambassador Laajava of Finland, and his team for their tireless efforts in that regard. We find the series of informal meetings in Switzerland encouraging. The EU calls on all States in the region to engage urgently and proactively with the facilitator, the co-convenors and each other, with the aim of convening the conference as soon as possible, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region.

The EU has condemned in the strongest possible terms the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear test of February 2013, as well as that country's threat of another nuclear test, and has urged it to refrain from further provocative actions. The February 2013 nuclear test was another blatant challenge to the global non-proliferation regime and an outright violation of the international obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in particular under Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2087 (2013).

The EU will continue to work with key partners and the wider international community to demonstrate to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that there are consequences for its continued violations of Security Council resolutions. We once again urge the Democratic People's Republic to abandon its nuclear weapons programme, including its uranium enrichment programme and the ongoing activities at the Yongbyon site, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to full compliance with the NPT and to comply with all its international obligations fully, unconditionally and without delay.

The EU fully supports the ongoing diplomatic efforts led by the EU High Representative, together with China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, to seek a diplomatic solution with Iran to the Iranian nuclear issue. The EU welcomes the joint plan of action between Iran and the E3/EU+3 and the framework for cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA), and that Iran continues to implement the measures under the joint plan of action. It is essential and urgent that Iran cooperate fully with the Agency regarding possible military dimensions.

The EU underlines that resolving all outstanding issues will be essential to achieve a comprehensive, negotiated long-term settlement, which is the EU's objective. It is vital that Iran engage fully with the IAEA to resolve all outstanding issues in order to build international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. The EU is deeply concerned that the Agency is unable to provide credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and therefore is not able to conclude that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities.

The EU fully supported the adoption of the resolution of the IAEA Board of Governors of 9 June 2011, which reported Syria's non-compliance with its safeguards agreement to the Security Council and the General Assembly. The EU deeply regrets that Syria has still to remedy its non-compliance by cooperating with the Agency as a matter of priority and transparency to resolve all outstanding issues and by signing, bringing into force and implementing in full an additional protocol as soon as possible.

The European Union remains committed to ensuring the responsible development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by countries wishing to develop their capacities in that field. We stress the key role played by the IAEA in that regard and reaffirm that the Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreement, together with the additional protocol, should be accepted universally as the international verification standard. The EU is convinced that the consistent and universal implementation of the State-level concept will further strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the IAEA safeguards system and will thus contribute to global non-proliferation efforts.

The EU and its member States attach great importance to increasing transparency and trust among countries that are developing nuclear construction projects, whether or not in the vicinity of other countries, and those affected by such projects. In that regard, all nuclear power plants planned or under construction should meet the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation, in full compliance with all the relevant international agreements.

The European Union stands united in condemning in the strongest terms all use of chemical weapons in Syria, which constitutes a violation of international law, a war crime and a crime against humanity. There can be no impunity, and perpetrators of the attacks must be held accountable.

Over the past year, the international community cooperated effectively and acted promptly in carrying out the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpile, in line with Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the decisions by the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The removal and subsequent destruction of the declared Syrian chemicals constitute a significant step towards the necessary complete and irreversible dismantling of the Syrian chemical weapons programmes. The EU contributed €17 million to the joint United Nations/OPCW plan for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. In addition, several EU member States made important financial and other contributions to support the plan and accepted on their territories the destruction of such materials.

However, there is still work to be done. In particular, the European Union is gravely concerned about the systematic and repeated use of toxic chemicals as weapons since last April, as confirmed in the second report of the OPCW fact-finding mission set up to establish the facts around those allegations. New, similar allegations are continuing to be made. The EU shares the view that the evidence presented by the fact-finding mission is substantial. It included reports of the use of helicopters, a capability that only the Syrian regime possesses. We support the OPCW Director General's decision that the fact-finding mission should continue its work, and we remain determined to sanction those responsible for those horrific acts. Syria must also ensure that its chemical weapons programme is completely and irreversibly dismantled, including the remaining production facilities.

The EU and its member States have a long-standing position favouring the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and the peaceful uses of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. The consensus report by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities finalized in July 2013 (see A/68/189) noted the EU's proposal and endorsed efforts to pursue political commitments, including a multilateral code

of conduct. In resolution 68/50, adopted without a vote in December 2013, the General Assembly endorses the report of the Group of Governmental Experts. The resolution, submitted by China, Russia and the United States and sponsored by all EU member States, calls on States members of the United Nations to review and implement the proposed transparency and confidence-building measures set out in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts.

One of the measures proposed is a voluntary international code of conduct. We are convinced that such a code would be a valuable step on the way to increasing understanding and creating a sustainable outer space. It is in that context that we are consulting Member States in the First Committee on a code of conduct on the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities and the commencement of negotiations on an international code of conduct for outer space activities.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the African Group, but my first words must be to congratulate you, Ambassador Rattray, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. As you steer the course of these meetings, we believe that your experience will guide our debates and negotiations. May I also take this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections. I also wish to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Dabbashi of Libya, for his leadership and laudable efforts. The Group expresses appreciation to Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her remarks. The African Group remains committed to the work of this Committee and wishes to assure you, Mr. Chair, of our full cooperation in the course of the deliberations on disarmament and international security issues.

The African Group wishes to align itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered earlier in this meeting by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, and wishes to highlight the following.

The sixty-eighth session of the Assembly witnessed renewed efforts to address a wide spectrum of disarmament and international security issues. Among them were a series of regional and multilateral events, workshops and high-level meetings to train, develop capacity and to multilaterally negotiate disarmament and arms control measures. In spite of those efforts, we are constantly reminded that our world still contends

with growing challenges and threats to global security. We need to demilitarize our world by addressing the threat of further weaponization of our globe and the militarization of outer space. We must seek an appropriate multilateral approach by which to address those issues through constructive debates, deliberations and negotiations as acceptable norms established by this body.

On 26 September 2014, we commemorated the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, in line with resolution 68/32. The Group fully supports the implementation of that resolution, on follow-up to the 2013 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11), including its call for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. The Group expresses appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly, for convening the commemorative ministerial meeting, and indeed looks forward to the implementation of all measures to actualize the objectives of the declaration of the date as a day set aside to ensure the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Group underscores the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security and restates that there are no substitutes for a multilateral approach to addressing global disarmament issues, in accordance with the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, the African Group welcomes the opportunity to express its views regarding some of the issues affecting global security and the elimination of global weapons.

The Group continues to acknowledge the useful purposes served by the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in consolidating the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world. Africa supports the principle of complete nuclear disarmament as the utmost prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security. The Group recalls the entry into force, on 15 July 2009, of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which reaffirms the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and provides a shield for the African territory, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of those destructive weapons.

In the same vein, the African Group strongly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Group expresses deep concern at the fact that the commitments and obligations in the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East have not been implemented. The Group reiterates that the continuing delay in establishing the Middle East zone runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In that context, the Group urges Israel's unconditional accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party and that it bring all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards.

In a world at present saddled with the burden of more than 17,000 nuclear warheads, the Group wishes to restate that the continued existence and possession of those weapons do not necessarily guarantee safety and security; indeed, they are an affirmation of the probability and risk of their future use. Our world, including outer space, must be free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as their presence constitutes an existential threat to our planet, to global peace and to the future survival of humankind.

This year marks the eighteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in September 1996, as well as the fifth observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, designated by the General Assembly in resolution 64/35. The African Group stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT, bearing in mind the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States in that regard. The Group believes that, upon its entry into force, the CTBT will provide further hope of halting the future development or proliferation of nuclear weapons. We encourage the remaining annex 2 States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, and those yet to accede to the NPT to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay. The African Group welcomes the recent ratification of the CTBT by Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq and Niue.

The Group stresses the need to de-emphasize dependence on nuclear weapons for security and considers any doctrine justifying their use as unacceptable. The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. The Group further supports, as a high priority, the

call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances by nuclear-weapon States to all non-nuclear-weapon States, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The African Group reaffirms that the NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. States parties to the NPT will convene in April next year for a review of the implementation of the Treaty. Africa will serve as President of the ninth NPT Review Conference. The Group wishes to take this opportunity to seek the commitment and cooperation of all towards the realization of the overall goal of the NPT and the objective of the Review Conference. Without prejudice to the various concerns expressed during the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference about the lack of progress towards the implementation of the 2010 action plan, we reiterate the need for all States to abide by the spirit and letter of the NPT and to work towards fulfilling its three pillars of nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Group further reaffirms that the peaceful use of nuclear energy is an inalienable right of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT and calls on the International Atomic Energy Agency to continue to strengthen the technical cooperation programmes and the provision of assistance to developing States. The Group underscores that technical cooperation and assistance provided by the IAEA towards meeting the needs of its member States should not be subjected to conditions beyond the provisions of its Statute.

The African Group reiterates its grave concern about the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and calls on all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of those weapons and to take measures aimed at the voluntary renunciation and dismantling of those inhumane weapons. In that context, the Group welcomes the first two international Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, convened in Norway in 2013 and in Mexico early this year, and looks forward to the third Conference, to be hosted by Austria in December 2014. The Group further welcomes the call made at the second Conference for the development of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

The African Group reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament not only as the world's sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, but as one that should work to unlock the impasse in nuclear disarmament negotiations. The Group reiterates the urgent need for the CD to agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. It welcomes the efforts made by the CD in 2014, as highlighted in its annual report to the General Assembly (A/69/27). The Group calls on the CD to work, in its negotiations, towards the realization of the objectives for which it was established.

The Group expresses frustration over the inability of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to reach consensus on the recommendations regarding its agenda items, but looks forward to the beginning of a new cycle at the 2015 substantive session of the Commission. The Group stresses the importance of the United Nations disarmament machinery and emphasizes the significance not only of preserving the Commission, but of realizing its deliberative objectives in the Organization's disarmament machinery.

The Group wishes to highlight the efforts of the international community to address any use of chemical weapons and commends all endeavours geared towards the complete and total universal abolition of chemical and biological weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and promises its engagement and continued support in that regard.

At the sixty-eighth session, the African Group welcomed the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), "a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the international transfer of conventional arms" (*resolution 64/48, para. 4*). The Group wishes to underscore that the Treaty's implementation, upon its entry into force on 24 December 2014, should be done in a balanced and objective manner, to ensure protection of the interests of all States, not just the major international producing and exporting States.

The full and balanced implementation of the ATT is achievable in practice, with the cooperation of all. The Group reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Group acknowledges that an unregulated conventional arms transfer system fuels the illicit trade and, in some cases,

leads to unfettered access and unauthorized use by non-State actors. The Group urges major arms suppliers to ratify the Treaty and uphold such ratification upon its entry into force.

The African Group seeks to raise the persistent question of autonomous weapons. The manufacture of lethal autonomous-weapon systems raises ethical, legal, moral and technical issues in relation to international humanitarian and international human rights law. We commend the efforts of States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to address that issue broadly, and we urge Member States to remain seized of the matter.

The African Group remains deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly in Africa. The Group continues to emphasize the importance of a balanced, full and effective implementation of the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Group also welcomes the successful convening of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, in 2014, and congratulates the Chair of the meeting, Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan. The Group continues to stress that international cooperation and assistance are essential to the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

The African Group wishes to restate the critical importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. We believe our deliberations in the coming days should be guided by the need to advance the work of the First Committee, and thereby enhance the cause of international peace.

The African Group will submit two draft resolutions at the current session. They deal with the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. We seek the full support and cooperation of all delegations for both draft resolutions.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my honour to address you, Sir, on behalf of the Group of Arab States. On behalf of the Group, I sincerely

congratulate you on your election to chair the work of the First Committee. We are confident that, with your extensive and distinguished experience, you will be able to steer our work to a successful conclusion. I also take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the efforts of the Permanent Representative of Libya, who wisely and competently led the work of the Committee during the sixty-eighth session.

On behalf of the Arab League, I should like, at the outset, to align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier at this meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The Arab Group reiterates its principled position relative to disarmament and international security and emphasizes that peace, security and stability can never be achieved while nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction threaten the entire world. That makes it incumbent upon humankind to rid itself of those weapons and to redirect its enormous resources to development. The Arab Group emphasizes that the solutions agreed on in the multilateral context, in consonance with the Charter of the United Nations, are the only sustainable way to deal with issues of disarmament and international peace.

Accordingly, the Group supported resolution 68/32, entitled “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament”. It also supports the updated draft resolution that will be submitted by NAM during the current session, and it hopes that it will be a tangible step towards achieving the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. We call on its members to implement all the provisions of the resolution.

Ms. González Román (Spain), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The Arab countries will continue to contribute to the global move towards nuclear disarmament. They have effectively participated in all the forums that discuss multilateral nuclear disarmament. All Arab States adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and subject all their nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) — something that Israel has never done despite all the resolutions and appeals of the international community.

The Group is concerned about the continued failure of the nuclear-weapon States to make tangible progress

on nuclear disarmament or to implement the resolutions of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the 13 practical steps determined during the 2000 Review Conference, or the action plan on nuclear weapons adopted by the 2010 Review Conference. They seem to be evading any specific timelines for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Group rejects the continued adoption by nuclear-weapon States of military doctrines that allow the use of nuclear weapons, including their use against non-nuclear States. The Group therefore calls for achieving the universality of the NPT, because it is the main basis of an international regime that includes the realization of balance in all aspects of the nuclear issue — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy — so as to redress the imbalance created because some States emphasize non-proliferation at the expense of nuclear disarmament, and to strengthen cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear power. That right must be fully consonant with the international legal obligations and agreements concluded with the IAEA.

The Arab Group points out that the activities of the United Nations disarmament machinery have been determined at special sessions and can be modified only at a new special session convened for that purpose. The Group supports the position of NAM, which is calling for a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The member States of the Arab League call for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world, including the Middle East, consonant with the provisions of the resolution entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”, which the Egyptian delegation has submitted annually on behalf of the Arab Group. This year the Iraqi delegation will submit the draft resolution on behalf of the Group.

The Arab Group is concerned about the continued threat, at the security and environmental levels, posed by Israel’s refusal to adhere to the NPT. Israel is the only State in the Middle East that has not adhered to the NPT, and it still refuses to subject its nuclear facilities to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system, thereby threatening the peace and security of the Middle East. The Group emphasizes that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is one

of the pillars of the NPT and is no less important than the other pillars of the Treaty.

The Arab Group notes that the action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference regarding the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East will, by May 2015, have been in existence for 20 years. However, to date no concrete progress has been made towards implementing it. We note that the adoption of the 1995 resolution was part of a deal in which the indefinite extension of the NPT was agreed to. Yet we have seen the 2012 conference delayed under pretexts and justifications that the Arab Group considers to be flimsy and unrealistic and a violation of the review process. The Arab countries feel constrained to reconsider their principled positions regarding the indefinite extension of the NPT and the basis on which it was decided. The Group reiterates its concern at the delay in the 2012 conference and Israel's refusal to submit to the international community's will by maintaining its position of non-adherence to the NPT as a non-nuclear State.

The failure to abide by the internationally legitimate 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the 2010 action plan, and the introduction of irrelevancies and distractions that have little to do with the issue of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, will not lead to the desired objective. Instead, that will complicate the negotiating process as we approach the 2015 NPT Review Conference. No progress has been made during the past four years, not even through the informal consultations, which have led only to talk by the international community about progress on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

However, we regret that there are references dealing with objectives and principles that should not be tackled. The Group believes that there must be the political will to implement the 2010 action plan and that the situation in the Middle East must not be used as a new pretext for delay. It urges parties calling for the conference to exercise political will, and for other States to do so as well. The Group feels that any delay in the implementation of the commitments of the 2010 action plan would be a reversal of the efforts made towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, especially in the Middle East.

The Chair returned to the Chair.

The Arab Group reiterates the importance of the Conference on Disarmament and the nuclear disarmament mechanism of the First Committee as multilateral forums for discussions on nuclear disarmament. The Group is concerned at the impasse facing efforts at nuclear disarmament, especially as the Conference on Disarmament is the world's single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. In that respect, the Group reiterates that it is important to enable the Conference on Disarmament to accomplish its mission and that the present impasse is a result not of shortcomings in the Conference itself but of the absence of political will. We therefore do not see any need to establish mechanisms other than the Conference on Disarmament.

We believe that the four issues introduced in the Conference on Disarmament — nuclear disarmament, the NPT, non-proliferation and preventing an arms race in outer space — are interrelated. That also applies to issues of the production and stockpiling of fissionable materials, as was made clear in the General Assembly during its sixty-seventh session.

The Group firmly believes that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes, as international instruments have played a positive role in strengthening the peaceful uses of outer space and in restricting any weapons of mass destruction and any militarization activities in outer space. Nonetheless, it is widely recognized that the international legal instruments that deal with the militarization of outer space are not enough. Therefore, the Group calls for the establishment of a committee within the ambit of the Conference on Disarmament to deal with the issue in a comprehensive and balanced manner. That would provide an opportunity to discuss a multilateral agreement that would prohibit all aspects of an arms race in outer space.

At the level of conventional weapons, the Group emphasizes the need to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It must strengthen the capacity of Member States to combat the threats and to face the spread of that dangerous phenomenon. The Group calls for global solidarity at the Review Conferences and the Biennial Meetings held to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The Group emphasizes that in the field of information and communication technologies, Member

States should strengthen their capacities and cooperate in order to face any attempts to attack the facilities of Member States directly or through the Internet.

The Arab Group has made clear its important priorities regarding issues before the First Committee at this sixty-ninth session. It believes that our agenda imposes difficult tasks on us. Yet we should not slacken in our ambition and make every effort to abide by the principles of equality and non-selectivity. Those are important principles for generating the necessary political will to secure success in the Committee's work. The Group is committed to work in line with those principles with you, Sir, and with other members in order to make progress on all the issues relative to disarmament and international security.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): On behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — composed of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam — I have the honour to deliver the Group's statement in the general debate of the First Committee.

ASEAN associates itself with the statement delivered earlier at this meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

ASEAN member States congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and express our deep appreciation to you for your efforts to reach out to Member States in advance of the session. We are confident that, under your able leadership, the Committee's deliberations will be relevant and productive, in contrast to situation with regard to the numerous crises currently faced by the international community.

ASEAN member States are unwavering in their commitment to achieve the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Forty-four years into our collective efforts towards realizing that goal, the global stockpile of nuclear weapons remains at an alarmingly high level. We therefore welcome recent efforts by Member States to focus the spotlight once again on nuclear disarmament.

ASEAN member States welcome the General Assembly's informal ministerial meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, held on 26 September, which further raised awareness of the crucial and

urgent task of nuclear disarmament. ASEAN member States express continued support for two annual resolutions: entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons", sponsored by Malaysia, and "Nuclear disarmament", sponsored by Myanmar. Both resolutions underscore the priority and importance attached to nuclear disarmament by ASEAN member States. Although there are different views on the approaches to our common goal, ASEAN sincerely hopes that Member States will continue to lend their support to those resolutions.

ASEAN member States also strongly support substantive and robust discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, discussions that are intended to provide a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons on both human beings and the environment. We welcome the International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons that were held in Oslo and in Nayarit, Mexico, and we look forward to reaching a more substantive outcome at the forthcoming meeting in Vienna in December. The discussions, while academic and fact-based, may eventually lead to the establishment of a legal framework for the effective abolition of those deadly weapons. ASEAN member States call on the nuclear-weapon States to be engaged in them.

To support the realization of the objective of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter, we envisage the significance of the full adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the region. We also call on the remaining annex 2 States, whose signatures and ratifications are crucial for the CTBT to enter into force, to take the necessary steps as soon as possible.

While convinced that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has the central role in negotiating disarmament agreements, ASEAN member States are deeply disappointed about the continued lack of progress in its work. We reiterate our call for an expansion of the membership of the CD in order to make the body more representative.

ASEAN member States reaffirm their commitment to preserve South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. We further reaffirm our commitment to uphold the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and underline the

importance of its full and effective implementation and of the plan of action to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty.

We reiterate our commitment to work closely with the nuclear-weapon States on the early signing and ratification of the Protocol to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty without reservations. We also acknowledge the need to work closely with the nuclear-weapon States to address our concerns with regard to their proposed reservations on the Protocol. We therefore look forward to the working-level meeting between ASEAN member States and the nuclear-weapon States on the margins of the First Committee session in the coming weeks.

ASEAN member States underline the importance of peace, security and stability on the Korean peninsula. We reaffirm our support for all efforts to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner, including creating an environment conducive to the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

ASEAN member States are perturbed by the recent increase in violence committed by terrorist and extremist organizations, as well as radical groups. With the persistent threats of terrorism worldwide, it is more crucial than ever to ensure that extremist movements gain no access to weapons of mass destruction.

ASEAN member States reiterate their support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We hope to see substantial progress with regard to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, through the convening of the conference on the Middle East before the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. With only six months left before the next Review Conference, we fear that we have fallen way behind the commitments we agreed on at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, starting with the failure to convene the 2012 conference on the Middle East.

ASEAN member States call for the full implementation of the 64-point action plan adopted in 2010 on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

ASEAN member States support negotiations between the E3/EU+3 and Iran to conclude a comprehensive nuclear agreement at an early date. In that regard, we welcome the extension of nuclear talks

until 24 November 2014 under the framework of the joint plan of action agreed on 24 November last year.

Recognizing the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we agree to explore ways to formalize relations between ASEAN and the IAEA.

ASEAN member States support the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to curb the proliferation of those deadly weapons, which claim millions of lives worldwide.

ASEAN member States also note the fiftieth ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty, and its eventual entry into force, on 24 December 2014. We wish to underscore, however, the right and authority of every sovereign State to the use of conventional weapons proportionate to the need to protect its internal security and territorial integrity.

ASEAN member States welcome the efforts towards the operationalization of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre, which serves as a regional centre of excellence in addressing the humanitarian aspects of the explosive remnants of war for interested ASEAN member States.

Cognizant of the global challenges of information and communications technology (ICT) space, ASEAN recognizes that increased international efforts are required to improve the security of ICT space and to develop a common understanding about the norms that apply to a State's ICT behaviour in space. We therefore highlight the need for development measures to address misperception and miscalculation, including a framework to manage and respond to ICT incidents or events of potential regional security significance.

It has often been said that disarmament efforts are extremely difficult in normal times, but much more so in time of crisis. Let us not allow the multiple global crises we are facing to shift our attention and focus away from the immediate task at hand, which is the total and complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. Our job remains as relevant today as it was more than four decades ago.

Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) during this

general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items.

We congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee. CARICOM is pleased that one of our member States, through you, Sir, has received the confidence of the members of the Committee to become its Chair for the sixty-ninth session. We also support and recognize the election of the other members of the Bureau. You can rest assured of the support of CARICOM for a successful outcome to the deliberations of the First Committee at this session. We also extend our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Libya, Chair of the First Committee during the sixty-eighth session.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier at this meeting by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The international community has been forced to acknowledge in recent months that the constantly changing global security environment has rendered every State or group of States, big or small, vulnerable to the effects of international terrorism, the increasing influence of non-State actors, new proliferation threats and the escalation of strife and conflict between States. You, Sir, will recognize that in this atmosphere CARICOM wishes to underscore that the paramount responsibility of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. Consequently, for small States such as those in CARICOM, that particular role of the United Nations is of significance, since the sustainable development of our subregion is inextricably linked to the safety and security of our people. Accordingly, CARICOM strongly encourages all States to demonstrate the political will to continue to pursue disarmament and non-proliferation efforts within the context of both the United Nations and the relevant multilateral treaties concluded by Member States.

The enhanced political will of the United Nations family was demonstrated not long ago when we witnessed the attainment of the required threshold of the 50 ratifications necessary for the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). CARICOM is extremely satisfied that we are in the period of the 90-day countdown for the entry into force of that historic and monumental instrument. We in CARICOM once more reaffirm our conviction that, once the Arms Trade Treaty enters into force, it can contribute significantly to reducing the suffering of many of our citizens and

countless people throughout the world, especially the women and children who are living daily under the deadly and devastating impact of the unregulated trade in conventional arms. CARICOM is pleased to state that two of our members, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and Saint Lucia, have brought the number of ratifications in our region to eight, which makes us the second regional grouping, after the European Union, with the largest number of ratifications. It should also be noted that all CARICOM member States have signed the ATT.

The entry into force of the ATT will, in our view, require States parties to make important decisions to implement the provisions of the Treaty at the first Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty, which, it appears, is likely to be convened by the middle of 2015. One of the decisions to be made is that of the location of the ATT secretariat. More than a year ago, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, The Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, announced Trinidad and Tobago's candidature, which was endorsed by CARICOM, to have the headquarters of the secretariat located in Port of Spain. That bid has been endorsed by all CARICOM States and has so far received the support of a number of States from diverse regions. It is our view that the location of the secretariat in Trinidad and Tobago, in the CARICOM region, would give true meaning to the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the location of major global and treaty bodies.

Small arms and light weapons have been described as weapons of mass destruction in my region. Approximately 70 per cent of the murders in our subregion are committed as a result of the use of hand guns. Those weapons are also the arms of choice in, and a key tool and driver of, armed violence, including gang violence and organized crime. As a region that is severely affected by small arms trafficking — as you, Sir, will appreciate — CARICOM considers the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to be an important instrument in mobilizing international cooperation to curb, among other things, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

For that reason, CARICOM actively participated in the last Biennial Meeting of States Parties to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action. Our subregion's common position regarding all aspects of the implementation of the Programme

of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons was encapsulated in a CARICOM working paper that guided our deliberations during the most recent Biennial Meeting of States. Our position was framed within the context of the 2013 CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy, which was adopted by the Heads of Government of our region, a document that provides a clear directive for coordinated action on crime and security within our subregion.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, CARICOM wishes to recall the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which was observed on 26 September:

“Nuclear disarmament is therefore not an idealistic dream, but an urgent necessity to meet the genuine security interests of all humanity”.

CARICOM member States subscribe fully to that statement. We regret the fact that, although it is 40 years since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force, the international community is still not in a position to undertake negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament. CARICOM is of the view that the global community should seize the opportunity, mere months away from the 2015 NPT Review Conference, to make critical decisions about the place of nuclear weapons in our world. It is vital that the line between permitted and prohibited nuclear activities be drawn clearly and irrevocably.

As States that subscribe fully to the rule of law in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, CARICOM holds firmly to the view that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. CARICOM is proud to be part of the first densely populated region in the world to declare itself a nuclear-weapon-free zone, pursuant to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Our States are therefore advocates for multilateral cooperation in the areas of non-proliferation and of promoting international cooperation for peaceful purposes, as contemplated in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We also

encourage the States that mandated the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) to honour their legally binding obligations under the NPT.

CARICOM believes that any discourse on nuclear weapons is incomplete without an acknowledgement of the humanitarian impact of those weapons, which was embodied in the 2010 NPT Review Conference outcome document. CARICOM welcomes the growing global attention to the matter, including through the meetings that took place in Norway in 2013 and Mexico in February this year. We look forward to the meeting to be held in December in Austria, as it will provide another opportunity for Governments and civil society to begin deliberations on measures geared towards the banning of nuclear weapons.

CARICOM reiterates its strong opposition to the shipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea. That activity continues to pose a threat to the security, viability and sustainable development of the region and is in contradiction with the status of the Caribbean Sea as a zone of peace, which it has often been declared to be. In that regard, we in CARICOM remain concerned about the deleterious and long-term impacts of any accident that may occur in relation to shipments of nuclear waste in our seas. We therefore call on all those concerned to continue to have direct dialogue with CARICOM, not only at the International Atomic Energy Agency but also within mechanisms established by the United Nations.

CARICOM's long-standing commitment to working in a multilateral environment to address threats posed by weapons of mass destruction has been underscored by our ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and other treaties that address the question of weapons of mass destruction.

CARICOM benefited from the support of the IAEA in strengthening our capacity through the sharing of best practices and the transfer of technology. We have also benefited from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in the implementation of our binding legal obligations that flow from those treaties.

Trinidad and Tobago, with the support of CARICOM members and a number of other countries, has over the past few years sponsored a draft resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

We intend to do so again during this session of the Committee. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's report on Member States' implementation of resolution 68/33, on this important initiative, and especially note the actions being taken at the national and regional levels, as well as within the United Nations system, to promote the participation of women in all decision-making processes with regard to matters related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, in particular with regard to the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict.

In conclusion, we wish to remind members that the First Committee has another opportunity to engage in progressive dialogue and to begin meaningful negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation and the other items on the international security agenda, which we should do if we are to assist the General Assembly in making the world a peaceful place for current and future generations.

The Chair: Before opening the floor for statements delivered in national capacities, I should like to remind delegations of the 10-minute time limit that has been established.

Mr. Tonda (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I take the floor in my national capacity, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the work of the First Committee. It is a pleasure for Mexico to see a country from the region of Latin America and the Caribbean at the helm of the First Committee. My delegation is at your disposal to help in the discharge of your duties.

I should like to begin by acknowledging some positive developments in the area of disarmament that have occurred since the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The productive work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the arduous and difficult process of ensuring compliance with the programme to destroy chemical weapons and production facilities for such weapons in Syria has demonstrated the historic value of a legal prohibition of a weapon of mass destruction and of its use. In the achievement of the full removal and destruction of the Syrian chemical arsenal, even a few days before the deadline set by the Security Council, we see a great collective effort to move forward in building a world of peace that is underpinned by international law and international institutions, and not by weapons of mass

destruction. The regime under the Chemical Weapons Convention is the highest standard for verification with regard to disarmament that we have built collectively.

With regard to conventional weapons, Mexico was very pleased by the Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which was held in June in Maputo. There the States parties agreed to include in the political declaration a reference to the year 2025 as the deadline for achieving a world free of anti-personnel landmines. That date should be seen as a goal to be met and an aspiration towards which we should continue working. It also represents a call to continue efforts to make an even greater impact on the ground. For Mexico, the inclusion of that deadline represents the convergence of positions in the international community towards the same goal, and that should be our point of reference and the example to follow in other issues on the disarmament agenda.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was crucial for ensuring that the new 2014-2018 review cycle will achieve tangible results, particularly in the area of eliminating armed violence and against the availability of weapons, among other issues.

In that connection, the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) represents a historic milestone. The pace of ratification, and therefore the very early entry into force of the Treaty, on 24 December this year, is unprecedented and is a demonstration of collective will to constitute the first global effort to regulate the legitimate trade in conventional weapons and to establish a legal framework of responsibility and transparency for international transfers of such weapons. The implementation of the ATT will help in confronting the problem of illicit trafficking, dealing with one of its basic elements, in such a way as to recognize the legality of transfers of a wide spectrum of conventional weapons. That will help to reduce diversions of those weapons to the illegal market.

We have before us an opportunity in the United Nations to make concrete progress in conventional weapons control, and with that a more secure world. In 2015 Mexico will host the first Conference of States Parties to the ATT, and on that occasion we will have

an opportunity to make decisions for building an institutional framework and procedures for the regime established by the Treaty. That will allow States parties to promote responsible trade in conventional weapons and to avoid their inappropriate use or diversion to the illegal market.

Despite those encouraging examples of progress, we continue to hear voices trying to justify the existence of weapons of mass destruction as guarantors of security. Although nuclear arsenals have undergone ostensible reductions in comparison to the number that existed during the Cold War period, it is unacceptable and unjustifiable that there are still approximately 16,000 nuclear weapons, many of them detonation-ready, held by a handful of countries that argue that the security of some States is more important than that of the rest of the planet.

We are very concerned that, more than four decades after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the obligations and commitments stemming from the Treaty, particularly those regarding nuclear disarmament, are still not implemented. It is also worrisome to see the complacency of certain sectors of the international community over the fact that the disarmament machinery is not fulfilling the mandate given it by the General Assembly. The fact is that a biased interpretation of consensus rule allows some half dozen members of the Conference on Disarmament to exercise a de facto veto. That has plunged the Conference into a disgraceful state of paralysis for more than 18 years.

We must continue to address the issue of nuclear weapons from a present-day perspective and must measure the effects of those weapons in the interconnected global society of the twenty-first century society, not by the yardstick of Cold War paradigms. With the greater availability of scientific studies and research today, modern thinking is necessary — on the part of States, international organizations, scientists and civil society — about the implications of a nuclear detonation, be it intentional or accidental, for the environment, for human, animal and plant health worldwide, for climate change, food security, the development of the economy, human displacements and other dimensions of development.

The Second International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons was held in Nayarit, Mexico, on 13 and 14 February, following up the process that began in Oslo in 2013. That meeting met in

agreement on a format that, unfortunately, has not been possible in the United Nations multilateral disarmament forums. That format provided an opportunity for Governments, international organizations, academics and civil society to make their opinions heard on an equal footing.

The growing awareness of the devastating humanitarian impact and consequences of nuclear weapons has led to an increased understanding of the need to eliminate the risk of accidental or intentional detonations and of nuclear war. Mexico applauds and supports the decision of the Government of Austria to convene the Third Conference, which will be held on 8 and 9 December in Vienna. Mexico will participate, and we encourage the membership to attend and to continue that necessary process of reflection on the terrible effects of nuclear arms. That is crucial, given that nuclear weapons must not be used ever again by any actor under any circumstance. Their use would be a violation of international law, international humanitarian law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It would also be a war crime.

Mexico wishes to draw the attention of the international community to the fact that nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction that are not the object of an express prohibition under international law. The 116 countries that are parties to treaties that establish zones free of nuclear weapons in the world have taken steps in that regard, prohibiting nuclear weapons at the regional level and putting in place the foundations of a world free of nuclear arms, as it was before 1945.

This session of the General Assembly, one year ahead of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, should serve as a setting for the international community to engage in a collective exercise of reflection as to whether the present juncture favours inaction or, on the contrary, is a propitious occasion for recalling the *raison d'être* of the multilateral forums and of international law. Mexico believes that the Organization has the potential to facilitate and promote agreements in times of crisis and conflict. We urge the membership to use the work of the First Committee to recall that these forums should lead to points of convergence, and not antagonism with regard to disarmament, peace and security — for that, it is necessary to recall that disarmament is necessary, is indispensable, to guarantee peace and security for all.

Ms. Gottemoeller (United States of America): Congratulations, Ambassador Rattray, on your election as Chair of the First Committee during the sixty-ninth session. The United States pledges to support your leadership and the work of this Committee. We are sure that together we can make this a session that puts us on the right path for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

As we begin our work, it is important to remember why we are here. We are, as I have said many times, travelling a long and difficult road. We are facing obstacles — today more clearly than in the past — that slow the pace of progress. We press ahead because we know that only by continuing our committed, serious work on reducing the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction can we achieve safety and security for generations to come. That is what motivates and guides our policy. That is the sentiment behind President Obama's 2009 speech in Prague. That is what we sincerely hope guides the path of every nation represented here.

While we have accomplished much over the past five years, we have no intention of deviating from our efforts to reduce the role and numbers of nuclear weapons, increase confidence and transparency, strengthen non-proliferation and address compliance challenges.

On that last point, let me stress that compliance is an essential element of international peace and security. That is why the United States is once again sponsoring its triennial draft resolution on compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements and commitments. Our compliance draft resolution seeks to reflect and strengthen the global consensus on that important topic. We welcome maximum sponsorship and support and hope that it will be adopted without a vote.

We should view the challenges that face us today as potent reminders that our work is more important than ever. First and foremost, we must all provide unyielding support for the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Achieving a successful Review Conference in 2015 is a priority for the United States. We encourage all parties to join with the United States to advance realistic and achievable objectives. The NPT binds nations to a common interest in preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapons use. The

challenges to the NPT are real, but the Treaty is far too important to fail or to be held hostage to impractical demands or political agendas that will not command consensus.

Some question United States support for nuclear disarmament. That is a mistake. We remain firmly committed to article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to achieving peace and security in a world without nuclear weapons. The United States has made clear its readiness to discuss further nuclear reductions with the Russian Federation, but progress requires a willing partner and a good environment.

The United States will continue to make it clear that arms control regimes and their corresponding nuclear reductions have served the world well for more than 40 years. The United States and Russia of course have special responsibilities to protect and preserve those regimes, as our countries still possess more than 90 per cent of the global nuclear stockpile.

A critical part of that regime is the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The United States is deeply concerned about Russia's violation of its obligations under that landmark treaty. We believe that the Treaty benefits the security of the United States, our allies and Russia. For that reason we urge Russia to resolve our concerns, return to compliance and ensure the continued viability of that important treaty. Now is the time to move forward, not back to postures reminiscent of the Cold War.

Despite those challenges, the United States and Russia continue to implement successfully the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. When we complete its implementation, deployed nuclear weapons will be at their lowest levels since the 1950s. That translates to an 85 per cent reduction in the United States nuclear-weapon stockpile from its Cold War peak. That is indisputable progress in nuclear disarmament.

As we consider future reductions, our focus must be on responsible measures that can be trusted and verified. We will learn from our past experience — successes and disappointments — and continue to move ahead, each step building on the last. Actually, perhaps we do ourselves a disservice when we think about disarmament as a metaphorical ladder, one that must be climbed in a linear fashion. Perhaps we are better off thinking in terms of how creeks and streams connect to

form rivers. Those mighty rivers are irreversible; they cut through massive and seemingly impenetrable stone on the way to their final destination. In those terms, one can see how the myriad tasks in front of us will connect to each other and steadily but surely form an irreversible path towards disarmament.

There is no way to skip to the end and forgo the hard work of preparing for the technical and political disarmament challenges that lie ahead. For example, we can all acknowledge that verification will become increasingly complex at lower numbers of nuclear weapons, while requirements for effectiveness will increase. All of us, every nation here, should be devoting ample time and energy to address that challenge right now. As a start, I recommend reviewing the Nuclear Threat Initiative's recent research on future verification mechanisms, and I encourage everyone to attend our 14 October side event on the topic.

The United States is continuing its engagement in the group of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) on the issue of disarmament. Collectively we have created a consensus framework for NPT reporting, first demonstrated at this year's session of the NPT Preparatory Committee. We continue to work on a P-5 glossary that will increase mutual understanding. Ongoing P-5 work on critical inspection techniques under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will help enhance that Treaty's verification regime.

The United States is pleased that the United Kingdom will host the sixth annual P-5 conference early next year. I want to stress that speed is less important than results in that process. The regular interactions and cooperation among the P-5 that are happening now are the foundation on which future P-5 multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament will stand. Patience and persistence are needed from all parties, both among and beyond the P-5. That is why the United States is interested in engaging non-nuclear-weapon States in order to increase transparency and engagement in the disarmament process. Such collaboration can help us ensure that the nearly 70-year record of the non-use of nuclear weapons continues forever.

As we continue the agenda for the 2015 Review Conference, it is important to focus on all three pillars of the NPT. The United States will seek a balanced review that addresses each. Ensuring that NPT safeguards are upheld and that nuclear energy remains in peaceful use is no less important to disarmament than future nuclear reductions. Treaty violations should

never be tolerated. They demand our attention. That is because the NPT pillars are mutually reinforcing, and the implementation of each is a shared responsibility.

As we approach the 2015 Review Conference, the United States will be focusing its efforts on a number of other issues. We will be supporting legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in the context of protocols to nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties. We were pleased to sign the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia in May. We will continue to work with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations towards the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty. Bringing into force the protocols of all five regional zones is a top priority.

Together with its P-5+1 partners, the United States will continue to seek concrete, verifiable steps to ensure that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful.

The United States is eager to launch negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), an agreement recognized to be a vital and necessary step in multilateral nuclear disarmament. Nations that continue to block those negotiations should consider how their actions increase nuclear dangers and impede nuclear disarmament. This year, through the adoption of resolution 67/53, initiated in this body under Canada's leadership, a Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT was convened. It is our hope that the Group of Experts will indicate in its final report that it has finally broken the impasse so that we may proceed with the negotiation of this important treaty.

The United States will continue to create the conditions that will help us ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Secretary of State John Kerr and Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz both recently emphasized the need for the Treaty to finally enter into force. While we are focused on CTBT ratification in the United States, we call on the seven other annex 2 States to complete their ratification processes without delay. The time for action is now. The United States asks that all CTBT signatories continue their commitment to supporting an effective, operational and sustainable verification system for the Treaty. We also look forward to participating in the upcoming CTBT integrated field exercise in Jordan.

I see that my time is up, so I will close my remarks at this point by summing up as follows. It is not enough to have the will to pursue non-proliferation

and disarmament. We have to have a way to pursue non-proliferation and disarmament. We will require all the tools we have available — diplomacy, law, science, technology and economic cooperation — and more. We will have to eschew needless arguments, vanity and political games. We will need courage and the tenacity to keep chipping away at this problem day after day, month after month, year after year.

I commend my full remarks, which have been submitted, to colleagues, and I hope that everyone will enjoy reading the rest of them.

Mr. Varma (India): The Indian delegation is pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assures you of its full support and cooperation.

We associate ourselves with the statement made earlier at this meeting by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In addressing the General Assembly on 27 September (see A/69/PV.15), Prime Minister Narendra Modi underlined India's unwavering belief in multilateralism and urged the redoubling of efforts to pursue global disarmament and non-proliferation.

India's support for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is consistent with the highest priority, the goal of nuclear disarmament agreed by consensus in the Final Document (A/S-10/2) of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. As a nuclear-weapon State, our commitment to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament remains undiminished. That goal can be achieved by a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. All States possessing nuclear weapons can make a contribution by engaging in a meaningful dialogue to build trust and confidence, by reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines and by supporting multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament and on non-proliferation in all its aspects. In the current circumstances, the role of such steps in enhancing strategic trust globally cannot be overestimated.

Pending the global elimination of nuclear weapons, India put forward in a 2006 working paper on nuclear disarmament, a number of proposals for reducing, in all their aspects, nuclear risks and dangers. India considers the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to

be the appropriate forum for the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We supported resolution 68/32 and working paper CD/1999, submitted by member States belonging to the Group of 21, which sought the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention.

Without prejudice to our position on nuclear disarmament, India supports the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) in the CD on the basis of the Shannon mandate, and it shares the widely felt disappointment that such negotiations continue to be blocked. We hope that the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts pursuant to resolution 67/53 will enable the commencement at an early date of FMCT negotiations in the CD on the basis of the agreed mandate set out in CD/1299.

As a responsible nuclear Power, India, in its nuclear doctrine, continues to stress a policy of credible minimum deterrence with a posture of no first use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States. We remain committed to maintaining a unilateral and voluntary moratorium on nuclear-explosive testing. In July, India ratified the Additional Protocol we signed in 2009. India has contributed to international efforts to advance global non-proliferation goals and objectives, including through effective export controls. India's membership of multilateral export control regimes is the next logical step.

We also joined in efforts at the International Atomic Energy Agency to enhance nuclear safety and security standards, and we contributed to the success of the Nuclear Security Summit held in The Hague in March. Given the rapid increase in recent months in the number of armed non-State actors and terrorist groups, the international community should exercise the utmost vigilance to prevent these groups from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction and related materials and technologies.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) are worthy examples of global non-discriminatory treaties for the complete elimination of the respective categories of weapons of mass destruction. While India has completed

its obligations on stockpile destruction, the timely destruction by other States of the remaining stockpiles is critical for upholding the credibility and integrity of the Convention.

India contributed to international efforts led by the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to destroy Syria's declared chemical weapon stockpiles. India has been an active participant in the intersessional work under the BWC. We share the widespread interest among BWC State parties in strengthening the effectiveness and improving the implementation of the Convention through a protocol negotiated for that purpose.

As a major space-faring nation, India has vital development and security interests in space. India supports strengthening the international legal regime to protect and preserve access to space for all and to prevent, without exception, the weaponization of outer space. We support the substantive consideration of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the CD. While not a substitute for legally binding instruments, transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities can play a useful and complementary role. Discussions on a draft international code of conduct for outer space activities should be inclusive, in both process and substance, to ensure a product capable of receiving universal acceptance.

Various events this year have sharpened the focus on some deficiencies in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that India highlighted during the negotiations, namely, the imbalance in obligations between exporting and importing States, and whether the Treaty could make any meaningful impact on the illicit trafficking in conventional arms and their illicit use by terrorists and unlawful non-State actors, which is now a major source of international instability. India is undertaking a thorough review of the ATT from the standpoint of our defence, security and foreign policy interests. India attaches importance to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects process and the continued consideration, in the light of the objectives and perspectives of the Convention, of issues relating to lethal autonomous weapon systems. We welcome the consensus outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting on the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms

and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York in June.

As in previous years, India will introduce three draft resolutions, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", "Reducing nuclear danger" and "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction", as well as a draft decision on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament. We look forward to an opportunity to elaborate on some of those issues during the thematic debate, including the issue of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

The Chair: There has been a request for the floor in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind delegations that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic): Year after year and session after session in the First Committee, we hear the observer of the European Union repeat the same baseless claims about Syria's alleged non-compliance with safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and claims about an alleged nuclear programme in Syria. In making those claims, the European Union has adopted a one-standard principle that seeks to protect and turn a blind eye to the very obvious military nuclear-weapons programme of Israel, the only one in the Middle East.

As for the baseless allegations about the use of chemical weapons in my country, Syria reiterates its strong condemnation of such horrific use against Syrian citizens. It is obvious that somebody is totally ignoring the use of such weapons and materials by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) itself against soldiers in Iraq lately and before that against Syrian civilians and soldiers. That proves that ISIS and other terrorist groups possess such horrendous materials and have the capacity to use them as weapons. That is something my country has repeatedly stated and warned against since 2012, and about which it has informed the Secretariat and the Security Council.

It seems that those accusing Syria do not realize that my country has fulfilled its obligations resulting from its accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use

of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and has completed its commitments, despite the prevailing difficult situation. Were it not for Syria's cooperation with the joint mission of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), it would not have been possible to complete the tasks of the mission. Many United Nations officials have spoken of the fruitful and constructive cooperation of the Syrian Government that led to the completion of that unprecedented work.

Finally, Syria has committed itself to the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention as a State party and within the framework of the OPCW.

The Chair: Before adjourning, I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to the indicative timetable for the thematic discussions (A/C.1/69/CRP.2/Rev.1), which has been circulated in the room. As a result of consultations, that revision contains a footnote that reads as follows:

“The Committee confirmed that its established practice is to begin the thematic discussions with cluster 1 on ‘nuclear weapons’. It is the understanding of the Committee that any change appearing in the indicative timetable of this session as contained in document A/C.1/69/CRP.2/Rev.1 shall not constitute, in any way, a precedent for next sessions, which are expected to revert to the aforementioned established practice.”

The rest of the document remains the same as in the original version.

I should like to clarify that the traditional numbering of the seven clusters remains unchanged. Cluster 1 is always “Nuclear weapons”; cluster 2 is always “Other weapons of mass destruction”, and so on, ending with cluster 7 on “Disarmament machinery”. As has been the case in past sessions, action on all draft resolutions and decisions will be taken in that order. Indeed, the thematic discussions are typically scheduled in the sequential order of the relevant clusters. However, that has varied at previous sessions as a result of informal consultations among members of the Bureau in order to accommodate the schedules of invited speakers.

I have been informed by the Committee secretariat that the order of consideration at the sixty-eighth session was cluster 1, followed by clusters 7, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 5. At the sixty-seventh and sixty-sixth sessions it was 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 5 and 7. Finally, at the sixty-fifth session the order was 1, 7, 4, 6, 5, 2 and 3.

The programme and format of the thematic discussions for this session were worked out, as in the past, through informal consultations between the Bureau and Member States in advance of the session, in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 59/95, of 3 December 2004, and taking into consideration experience in past sessions, in particular the increasing number of speakers under cluster 1, “Nuclear weapons”; cluster 4, “Conventional weapons”; and cluster 7, “Disarmament machinery”. Furthermore, that also allowed half a session to be allocated to cluster 7, which has seen a significant increase in the number of speakers over the past few years. That was the basis for placing the panel on disarmament machinery immediately following the high-level exchange, which consequently provides additional time for intervention by Member States on that issue.

That resulted in the proposed order of consideration of the clusters beginning with 7, followed by 1, 4, 2, 5, 3 and 6. Scheduling two panels at the first meeting of the thematic discussion and following the agreed order of clusters were seen to ensure better flows of work in the Committee and to take into account logistical elements, such as the availability of guest speakers. The Chair has taken note of the concerns raised at the organizational meeting, and they will be fully reflected in the official records of the Committee.

With respect to the high-level exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament, after further consultations I should like to propose that that panel focus on “Increasing capacities to address weapons of mass destruction”. A concept paper on that sub-theme will be circulated this week.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/69/CRP.2/Rev.1, with the understanding described in its footnote?

I call on the representative of Morocco.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco): I am sorry to take the floor at this late stage of the meeting. We will support the way you suggest to proceed, Sir, but I should like to say the following.

We did not expect the footnote to include the last portion: “for next sessions, which are expected to revert to the aforementioned established practice.” In our view, a footnote saying that the change did not set a

precedent was sufficient. We should not close the door to any future change. Whether or not they wish to make any changes, following consultations, should remain in the hands of Member States. We did not expect the footnote to close that door, which seems to be the way it is formulated now. We are in your hands, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I take full note of the comments of the representative of Morocco.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the indicative timetable set out in document A/C.1/69/CRP.2/Rev.1, with the understanding described in its footnote.

It was so decided.

The Chair: We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. Before we adjourn, let me remind

delegations once more that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close tomorrow, Wednesday, 8 October at 6 p.m. All delegations interested in taking the floor should make every effort to inscribe their names on the list before that deadline.

I now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Nakano (Secretary of the Committee): Through you, Sir, I should like to inform representatives of the following side event during lunchtime today. At 1.15 p.m. in Conference Room 6, there will be an event hosted by the New Zealand Mission entitled "The high-level discussion to mark the launch of UNODA Occasional Paper No. 26, the New Zealand Lectures on Disarmament".

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.