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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Rattray (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 87 to 104 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus): International security, disarmament and non-proliferation have always been at the top of the international agenda, because finding adequate and long-lasting solutions to those issues is key to everything we can imagine — peace, stability, development, well-being, and, finally, to the very existence of humankind. That might be one of the reasons why the international community allocated those issues to the First Committee of the General Assembly, first in importance and first in responsibility. In speaking today on those issues, Belarus would like to focus on one of the most sensitive and difficult-to-tackle, namely, the elimination of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction. Let us take stock of what we have achieved and what we have yet to do.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force 44 years ago. Given the complexity of all the interests involved, the NPT remains, in today's world, the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation. At the same time, we must be honest. That arms regime faces a number of challenges, making the overall efforts of the international community ineffective.

First, we wish to draw attention to the need for universal adherence to the NPT. Without those

States that are not yet parties to the Treaty, the NPT is far from reaching its goal of providing universal nuclear non-proliferation. Secondly, up to now, NPT implementation has shown little progress. On the eve of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, we have to admit, regretfully, that there is a lack of real implementation of the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan recommendations. Getting ourselves ready for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, we must be clear that its outcome agreement should not be a vague compromise in the form of a mere reprint of the 2010 document. We must be courageous in our expectations. A decision to launch negotiations on a comprehensive convention dealing with nuclear weapons aimed at prohibiting their possession, development, acquisition, use, or threat of use and providing for their destruction within a specified framework of time would be a real step forward.

The international community recently observed the International Day against Nuclear Tests. A moratorium is undoubtedly a step forward. But it has a voluntarily de facto nature, making a moratorium mechanism extremely fragile. Such voluntary undertakings are, for no good reason, taking the place of the legally binding prohibition that could be achieved through the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). To make the world once and forever legally free from nuclear tests, the CTBT needs to be joined by those States whose current non-participation in the Treaty means that its effectiveness can be significantly questioned.

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Non-proliferation and refraining from nuclear tests are unequivocally steps in the right direction, but we must realize that they are not an end in themselves. The only ultimate goal is total, irreversible elimination of nuclear as well as other weapons of mass destruction. Belarus strongly believes that, when it comes to matters associated with nuclear weapons, we must demand nothing less than the path to a comprehensive and irreversible zero, which includes zero nuclear-weapons research, zero nuclear arms race, zero nuclear tests and, finally, zero tolerance of the very existence of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

By joining the NPT in July 1993 as a non-nuclear-weapon State, Belarus became the first State in the post-Soviet area to renounce voluntarily, and without any preconditions, the possession of the operational nuclear weapons deployed on its territory. In November 1996, ahead of schedule, the last intercontinental ballistic missile out of the 81 that had been based on the territory of Belarus was finally withdrawn. In the mid-1990s Belarus was the first to launch the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe. Belarus is the country that has for decades been advocating in the United Nations for the prohibition of the development and manufacturing of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons.

At the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Belarus will introduce the traditional draft resolution entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament".

The current level of technological development makes it feasible not only to further develop existing weapons but also to develop totally new types of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. The draft resolution to be introduced by Belarus will contain an element of political commitment on the part of Member States, requiring them to confirm their determination to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction, and will suggest a ready-to-react mechanism by asking the Conference on Disarmament to monitor the situation with a view to making recommendations on specific negotiations on new types of weapons of mass destruction whenever and wherever they are identified. Belarus invites all States Members of the United Nations to join on the path to zero and support the draft resolution.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba would like to say how pleased it is to see you, Sir, chairing the work of this Committee, and we extend our congratulations to you and the members of the Bureau on your respective elections. We fully support the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

On 26 September, we had the opportunity to celebrate for the first time in the history of the United Nations the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, an important opportunity for us to raise awareness of the need to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. In addition, the holding of that special event and the marking of the International Day afforded an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and move forward towards the objective of nuclear disarmament, and to promote the coordination of international efforts to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear stockpiles. Taking into account the contribution that was made by the holding of the International Day on 26 September and the most recent high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, we support the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement to present, in the framework of this First Committee, a draft resolution on a follow-up to that High-level Meeting.

In that regard, Cuba reiterates its support for the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement to begin negotiations urgently aimed at concluding a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and at stipulating their destruction. We also wish to reiterate our commitment to work on the convening of an international high-level conference to be held no later than 2018 to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons within the shortest time frame possible. The objective here would be to agree on a phased programme to completely eliminate nuclear weapons within a specific time frame.

Today, Cuba would like to reiterate its pride at belonging to the first densely populated area in the world that has declared itself a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We are also very proud of the fact that we belong to a region that, in an unprecedented act, has formally proclaimed itself to be a zone of peace. That was decided at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean

States, which was held on 29 January this year in Havana. We took that decision in order to forever prohibit the use or threat of use of force in our region.

In that regard, we have reiterated on numerous occasions within this forum that the only guarantee of the non-use of nuclear weapons by States is the complete elimination and prohibition of such weapons under strict international control. That is why it is unacceptable that nuclear deterrence continues to be the bedrock of military doctrines that authorize the possession and use of nuclear stockpiles.

Unfortunately, more than 40 years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the nuclear Powers continue to fail to comply with their obligations under article VI of the Treaty. That article established the need to negotiate an international treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons. Instead, those Powers continue to improve and develop their nuclear arsenals. That is an example of vertical proliferation, one about which few comments have been made.

With regard to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we believe that it is unfortunate that specific recommendations have not been made and that the mandate of the Treaty has, therefore, not been fully complied with. Once again, we have seen an example of the continued great distance between the rhetoric and good intentions that have been reiterated many times over by some nuclear-weapon States and the compromises, commitments and steps that those States are ready to take.

It is also a priority to begin international negotiations aimed at concluding, without delay, a treaty that would provide universal and unconditional security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of such weapons. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world is a necessary and important contribution to disarmament efforts and to nuclear non-proliferation.

In that regard, we feel that it is deeply unfortunate that there has been a lack of compliance with the agreement on the holding of an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We are convinced that the establishment of such a nuclear-weapon-free zone would be a monumental step forward

in the peace process in the Middle East. We encourage the Committee to convene such a conference as soon as possible in accordance with the agreement reached by the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

We believe that manipulation with regard to non-proliferation must be ended. It is based on double standards and on political interests that endeavour to limit the inalienable right of developing countries to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Concrete steps should be promoted and should be agreed upon that would lead to the full elimination of and prohibition on nuclear weapons. That ban should have a binding, non-discriminatory, transparent, verifiable and irreversible character. We reiterate that multilateralism is the only way to achieve relevant and lasting results with respect to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Cuba supports efforts to optimize the disarmament machinery of the United Nations, but at the same time we are convinced that the paralysis that is affecting a significant portion of that machinery is mainly the result of a lack of political will on the part of some States to make real progress, particularly in the area of nuclear disarmament. If we are to revitalize the disarmament machinery of the United Nations, then let us hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It would be beneficial for all of the parties concerned to have a specialized body with universal membership, such as the Disarmament Commission, that would enable us to deliberate such very highly relevant issues in detail.

Within the disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) plays an essential role as the sole multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament treaties. We believe that it is unfortunate that the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to carry out substantive work for more than a decade now. Some believe that that is due only to the methods of work of the body and its rules of procedure. Cuba does not share that view, and we believe that it is not a phenomenon that is confined only to this particular body.

We reiterate that it continues to be the responsibility of all to preserve and strengthen the CD. Cuba believes that the Conference on Disarmament is prepared simultaneously to negotiate a treaty that eliminates and prohibits nuclear weapons, a treaty that prohibits the arms race, particularly in outer space, a treaty that provides effective security assurances for States that, like Cuba, do not possess nuclear weapons, and also a

treaty that prohibits the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

My country highlights the fact that it favours negotiations to deal with stockpiles. Cuba reaffirms the importance and validity 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. We believe that more specific progress needs to be made to promote and reinforce assistance and international cooperation in that area.

The use of new information and telecommunication technologies needs to be fully compatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. That is why we express our deep concern and rejection of the covert and illegal use by individuals, organizations and States of the information systems of other States in order to wage an attack on third countries, given the potential of such situations to provoke international conflict. Cuba reiterates its firm demand that all such attacks and attempts against the sovereignty and right to self-determination of any State should be ended.

That is why we reiterate our very firm rejection of the ZunZuneo programme, which was a United States Government plan to promote subversion in Cuba through the use of new technologies. That runs counter to all the norms of international law. Cuba demands the cessation of all subversive actions and actions that constitute interference, are illegal, are covert, and are carried out by the United States and threaten the stability and constitutional order of Cuba. Such actions violate our sovereignty

I should like to shorten my statement at this point and say that, despite the economic crisis, the increasing poverty at the global level, and crises such as Ebola and others that have caused increasing instability, global military spending continues to be unacceptable and unjustifiable, and in 2013 that spending amounted to more than \$1.75 trillion. That is why Cuba reiterates its proposal to allocate at least half of its current military expenditure to meet economic and social development needs through a fund managed by the United Nations. I will leave it at that and give the rest of my statement to the Committee secretariat.

Mr. Propper (Israel): At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support in the

fulfilment of your duties. We are confident that your able leadership will steer our work to a successful conclusion.

It is widely recognized that the Middle East is a region fraught with instability, conflict and hostilities, a region that faces unique security challenges, which, if left unchecked, have the potential to destabilize not only the region but well beyond. It has become a region in turmoil, where States disintegrate and are overtaken by extremists bent on disseminating their convictions and beliefs by violent coercion directed primarily against innocent civilians. It is an area where certain States and terror organizations cooperate in the acquisition of strategic weapons and where those State supporters of terror continue to procure weapons of mass destruction in the nuclear and chemical fields.

Additionally, there are terror organizations that have come to possess arsenals of rockets and longer-range missiles with increasing accuracy that far exceed the arsenals possessed by regional States. Those missiles and rockets are manufactured, smuggled and proliferated by the tens of thousands, in many cases in clear contravention of Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, such as resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1747 (2007). Such short- to medium-range missiles and rockets have the ability to threaten and disrupt major civilian population centres and can assume strategic significance in military terms. The terrorist groups have also acquired weapons such as unmanned aerial vehicles, advanced air-defence systems and cutting-edge anti-ship missiles. Put together, they cast a dark shadow over the ability of countries to conduct daily existence.

The Middle East also sorely lacks mechanisms that could foster dialogue and greater understanding among regional players. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the refusal to recognize Israel, there are no processes that could contribute to the building of confidence, the de-escalation of tensions, and conflict resolution as a whole. There is no forum in which direct communication between regional States can address core security issues and encourage the attainment of solutions in a cooperative and forthcoming manner.

Unfortunately, the Middle East has also distinguished itself over the years by the blatant violation of and lack of respect for formal treaty obligations. Respect for treaty obligations has always been considered one of the pillars of any international

discourse and underlies the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, which is an essential tenet in relations between States. Legally binding obligations, undertaken in accordance with international law, have been easily put aside by several regional States determined to pursue clandestine military programmes or greater regional hegemony. Within the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), four out of five gross violations of the Treaty have occurred in the Middle East, namely in Iran, Syria, Libya and Iraq, while the fifth case, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has been deeply involved in proliferation to the region.

Against that daunting backdrop, some continue to argue that a regional security discussion is not an essential component in the alleviation of regional tensions and the building of greater understanding and cooperation among regional partners. However, such a discussion would be the basis that could contribute to the achievement of peace and security in the Middle East, a Middle East free from wars, conflict and all weapons that cause mass destruction or disruption.

Israel unequivocally states that only a pragmatic and realistic approach to regional security challenges can bring about the desired outcome of greater peace and stability. The security concerns of all regional States must be taken into account and addressed within the context of our present regional reality and challenges. That can start only with modest arrangements of confidence- and security-building measures, and only once such measures are in place, have taken root and have shown to be durable and conducive, can more ambitious undertakings be considered.

Israel participated at a senior and authoritative level last year in five rounds of consultations convened by Finnish Under-Secretary of State Mr. Laajava to discuss regional security and the conditions necessary for establishing a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Israel has already stated its willingness to participate in a sixth round of consultations and has communicated that willingness to Under-Secretary Laajava. Regrettably, a significant conceptual gap exists between the States of the region on fundamental strategic security concepts. While Israel has based its position on the elementary, and even self-evident, concept that discussions between regional partners must be direct and based on consensus, our neighbours have yet to adopt such a pragmatic and necessary approach.

They stipulate their demand to establish a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction in forums where not all regional partners participate and without that status being based on arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region. The Arab States try to impose such a mechanism on the region instead of reaching out to Israel in order to build greater understanding. Furthermore, the Arab countries have not made the slightest attempt to engage Israel directly and establish a mutually acceptable basis to convene a conference in Helsinki. Some have refrained from participating altogether, namely Iran and Syria. If indeed the issue is so important for the Group of Arab States, why not even try to engage Israel in a way that could facilitate progress and even a breakthrough towards greater regional peace and security?

Unfortunately, it is clear that the Arab Group has chosen not the path of conciliation but rather that of confrontation. They claim to be forthcoming, while at the same time they pursue anti-Israeli resolutions aimed at singling Israel out. Such was the case at the fifty-eighth General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with the Group of Arab States' draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, which was clearly rejected, and that is also the case at this year's session of the First Committee, where the draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" has once again been brought up in a useless attempt to deflect attention from the real security threats facing the region. Israel, for its part, remains committed to a process aimed at the establishment of a more secure and peaceful Middle East, free from conflicts, wars and all weapons of mass destruction.

Iran remains the cardinal threat to the security of the region and beyond. Iran continues its unrelenting pursuit of a nuclear-weapons capability and its support for terror organizations by providing weapons, financial support and training and by advancing its regional ambitions. The election of the so-called moderates in Iran should not lead one to underestimate the threat that Iran still poses, even with the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. Iran's negotiations with the EU3+3 regarding the nuclear issue, as well as the protracted negotiations with the IAEA, are, at the end of the day, designed to assist Iran's long-term strategic goal of acquiring a nuclear-weapons capability. Iran participates in those processes in order to alleviate pressures and buy more time for its military programme. There is still no clear indication of any Iranian intention

to roll back those capabilities, as demanded by several binding Security Council resolutions. If anything, the opposite is true.

The removal and destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons is indeed an important achievement with significant regional security ramifications. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the work has still not been concluded, and the threats emanating from Syria, including those pertaining to residual chemical capabilities, are still valid in many respects. Taken together with the attempts by terrorist groups like Hizbullah and other jihadist groups to acquire advanced conventional weapons, as well as chemical-weapons capabilities, it is clear that many security challenges remain ahead of us with regard to Syria.

Mr. Ulyanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to your important position and to wish you success in the upcoming work. Out of the extensive agenda of the First Committee we have decided to touch upon a few topics that seem most relevant, beginning with the issues of nuclear disarmament, which are at the centre of our attention in this forum.

The elimination of the threat to the world posed by weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, remains one of the key priorities of the international community. Russia is actively working to that end, taking concrete steps for the limitation and reduction of its nuclear arsenal. Over the past 25 years they have been reduced significantly. Under the 2010 Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START treaty), we set a goal of reaching the agreed aggregate levels of warheads, means of delivery and launchers by early 2018. We believe that that goal can be achieved.

The New START treaty is not the only agreement existing between Russia and the United States in the field of nuclear missiles. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) of 1987, which is of unlimited duration, remains in force. Sadly, our American partners have been taking great liberties with their INF Treaty obligations by committing gross and massive violations that have already become a recurrent practice. They include

the use of target missiles during tests of their missile defence system and the commissioning of tactical unmanned aerial vehicles, which are covered by the Treaty and are considered to fall within the category of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. There are also grounds to believe that the planned deployment of Mark 41 launchers in Europe would constitute another serious violation of the INF Treaty. We hope that, as a result of the dialogue that has started on those issues, the United States will return to fully complying with its commitments under that important agreement.

It is clear that for further advancement towards a nuclear-free world it is necessary to establish appropriate international conditions. The most essential of them is to ensure equal security and strategic stability, as provided for in the decisions adopted within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nevertheless, very serious problems have appeared and continue to grow, which, unfortunately, for some reason almost completely fall outside the scope of the First Committee. That is not right, given the fact that disarmament does not happen in a vacuum and its future depends to a great extent on the general environment.

We have repeatedly drawn attention to factors that negatively impact strategic stability. Without addressing them, any hopes for further advancement towards nuclear zero remain just wishful thinking. One of those destructive factors continues to be the unilateral development of a global missile defence system without taking into account — and moreover to the detriment of — the security of other States. It gravely complicates international relations, not only in the Euro-Atlantic but also in the Asia-Pacific region.

A reckless policy of missile defence system development could be a serious impediment to further nuclear disarmament and could even create dangerous conditions that could lead to the resumption of a nuclear arms race. That vital issue can be addressed only if the States engaged in the development of missile defence capabilities begin to follow, not in words but in practice, the principle agreed in the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is, in essence, a universal principle, namely, that any attempt to strengthen one's own security at the expense of the security of others is unacceptable. The faithful application of that rule should become the starting point in the search for mutually acceptable solutions.

We also have growing concerns about the concept of Prompt Global Strike, a system that is getting closer to the practical implementation phase. Our understanding of its goal is to establish a capability that would make it possible to neutralize almost immediately the defence capabilities of any country that is “out of favour”, leaving it without any time or opportunity for an armed response. Such efforts are even more risky when they are undertaken as part of a policy aimed at establishing one’s exclusive and overwhelming military supremacy, which forms part of efforts to develop a global missile defence shield. The negative impact of the Prompt Global Strike concept on the prospects of nuclear disarmament still remain clearly underestimated by the international community.

A third negative factor of a strategic nature is the threat of the placement of weapons in outer space. Over several decades the General Assembly has been adopting resolutions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, but no practical solutions in that respect have yet been agreed. Under those circumstances, we believe that it is high time to take preemptive measures to prevent the transformation of outer space into an arena of military confrontation.

We remind the Committee that 10 years ago Russia submitted an initiative representing a political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space. To date, 10 powerful States have joined that initiative, which has made it possible for work to start towards its universalization. We trust that a draft resolution on the subject that we, together with like-minded States, plan to introduce during informal consultations on 10 October will be adopted at this session. We call on everyone who shares the goal of keeping outer space free of weapons to join the sponsors of that draft resolution and vote in its favour. Naturally the adoption of such a resolution will not solve all problems. We view it as an extremely important but intermediate step towards a legally binding prohibition on the placement of weapons in outer space. The updated draft of such an international treaty was submitted jointly by Russia and China at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in June.

We are entering the concluding phase of the current NPT review cycle. Next April, the ninth NPT Review Conference will start its work. It is important that we come to that event with tangible results. A major achievement in recent times was the agreement on the Geneva package regarding the situation of Iran’s

nuclear programme. Now, together with our partners in the Group of Six and our Iranian colleagues, we are continuing our work on a comprehensive settlement. We are pleased to note the firm intention of all parties to achieve positive results as soon as possible. It seems that the negotiators have managed to come much closer to finding solutions to all outstanding issues of the arrangement that is currently being worked out. The time has come to take difficult political decisions. We should not miss the existing opportunities to reach such a settlement.

One major achievement was the signing on 6 May of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. We trust that very soon a similar protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone will also be signed.

The results of the regular NPT Review Conference will depend greatly on whether it will be possible to implement in the near future the decisions taken in 2010 on holding a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We believe that, as a result of a number of informal consultations held within the past few years we have managed to get things moving.

The countries in the Middle East have demonstrated their readiness to reach reasonable compromises on a number of issues. How substantive the progress achieved has been can be argued, but there is no doubt that there has been progress. It gives us reason to believe that, with the necessary political will, the countries of the region will manage to agree on a draft agenda and a final document for the conference. That is why it is important not just to continue but to intensify the preparatory process. For its part, Russia, as one of the co-convenors of the conference, will do its utmost to ensure that it is held before the end of this year. Obviously, that goal is very ambitious, but we think it is achievable.

In the context of nuclear non-proliferation, we would like to emphasize the following point of concern for us. It is the matter of the so-called nuclear sharing in NATO member countries. As part of those nuclear-sharing arrangements non-nuclear members of the alliance receive nuclear weapons on their territory and participate in the planning of their use, while their military and air forces participate in nuclear-strike training. We fully share the view of the Non-Aligned Movement member States that that practice is incompatible with either the letter or the spirit of the

NPT. We remind members that, under article I of the Treaty, the States parties that possess nuclear weapons undertake

“not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly”.

In their turn, the non-nuclear States under article II undertake not to receive the transfer from anyone of such control directly or indirectly. We call on NATO member States to bring their policy into compliance with their obligations.

A major achievement in the field of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disarmament was the chemical demilitarization of Syria. Under unprecedentedly difficult conditions, the Syrian authorities eliminated chemical arsenals within a very short time, in full compliance with their obligations, by ensuring — as was several times confirmed by officials of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) — a high level of cooperation with those international organizations. As a result, the issue of the so-called Syrian chemical file is no longer of an urgent nature. Now it should be considered under the regular procedure of a specialized international entity, in this case the OPCW.

In conclusion, let me say a few words on a subject that matters to everyone; I am talking about the current state of affairs in the disarmament mechanisms of the United Nations system. While the First Committee is functioning more or less productively, such renowned and prestigious entities as the Disarmament Commission and the Geneva CD have been suffering stagnation for many years. It is clear that the existing situation cannot be considered normal. However, it is also obvious that the reasons for the deadlock do not have to do with any inherent defects in the United Nations disarmament triad, but have mainly to do with the differences in the set of priorities of participating States and the lack of political will to search for mutually acceptable compromises.

In such circumstances, some of our partners are tempted to shift negotiations to new forums, as if they could achieve meaningful international agreements there with the participation of all States with the relevant military capabilities. Such an illusion threatens to seriously damage the existing institutions, before new,

full-fledged and effective mechanisms are established. We believe that the best way out would be to focus efforts and attention on the search for constructive solutions to the problem of the programme of work of the Geneva Conference. That is the goal of the draft statement in support of the CD that we intend to introduce, with other like-minded States, at the current session of the First Committee. We call on all countries that share our approach to join that statement as co-sponsors.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at its sixty-ninth session. I assure you of the full support of the Republic of Korea for the work of the Committee, and look forward to a productive session under your leadership.

This year, the First Committee meets at an important juncture where our renewed political will and united efforts will be vital to take us further forward on our disarmament agenda. As the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) approaches its forty-fifth anniversary, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain at the centre of our efforts to realize a world free of nuclear weapons.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference was an encouraging breakthrough, as the States parties overcame their differences to agree on a concrete action plan. Based on a balanced approach among the three pillars of the NPT, the action plan provided a sound road map for further steps to be taken in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, as the discussions at this year's Preparatory Committee session have revealed, significant challenges remain with regard to the action plan's implementation. With the 2015 Review process coming to its final stage, we should step up our efforts to translate the action plan into tangible accomplishments, looking forward to a successful Review Conference next year.

In the meantime, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) remain two urgent, long-overdue tasks that we all need to tackle together. The Republic of Korea urges the remaining eight States whose ratification is required for the CTBT's entry into force to do so at the earliest possible time. We also reiterate our long-standing position calling for the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT at the Conference on Disarmament without further delay. We hope that the ongoing work

of the Group of Governmental Experts on the FMCT negotiations will help pave the way.

In today's new security environment, nuclear security, together with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, constitutes an essential element in our pursuit of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Despite our efforts in recent years, the possibility of nuclear terrorism remains a grave threat to international peace and security. Building upon the landmark Washington, D.C., and Seoul Summits, the 2014 Hague Nuclear Security Summit was a crucial step forward in the international community's joint efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism. The Republic of Korea, as the host of the 2012 Summit, will continue to work with other countries and organizations for the establishment of an enduring and robust nuclear security architecture.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed in his address to the Hague Summit, the United Nations also has an important role to play in enhancing nuclear security. In particular, having just commemorated the tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is designed to prevent the transfer of weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups, member States should step up their efforts to achieve its full and universal implementation.

In the regional context, the horror of the atrocities perpetrated in Ghouta, Syria, on 21 August last year led to an unprecedented international coalition to rid Syria of chemical weapons. Despite many difficulties, our joint efforts have successfully accomplished the removal of the declared chemical-weapon stockpile from Syria. We need to complete our work by addressing all the remaining issues and ensuring that Syria complies with all its obligations under Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC).

Regarding Iran, the Republic of Korea reaffirms its firm support for the ongoing negotiations between the P-5+1 and Iran. We hope that an agreement can be reached soon on a joint comprehensive plan of action that will address all outstanding issues and ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

One of the gravest threats to international peace and security today is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued development of nuclear-weapon and ballistic missile programmes. The Democratic

People's Republic of Korea is the only country in the world that has conducted nuclear tests in the twenty-first century. Notwithstanding the efforts of the international community to stop it, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has continued to develop nuclear weapons over the past two decades. It is also working on further developing its nuclear capabilities, including by restarting its 5MW graphite-moderated reactor, expanding the uranium enrichment facilities and building a light water reactor in Yongbyon. It is now threatening what it calls a new form of nuclear test. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has also continued ballistic-missile launches this year, which were condemned by the Security Council as clear violations of its resolutions.

We must send a clear and united message to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State under any circumstance, and that another nuclear test will have the most serious consequences. The Republic of Korea urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and to abandon all nuclear weapons and programmes, including its uranium enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

I should like lastly to touch upon some of the new developments in disarmament and non-proliferation. Following the historic adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) last year, the Republic of Korea is pleased to note that the fiftieth instrument of ratification of the Treaty was deposited on 25 September, triggering its entry into force just one and a half years after it was opened for signature. The Government of the Republic of Korea reaffirms its firm commitment to the ATT.

In the area of space security, the importance of the peaceful uses of outer space, as well as the mitigation of risks posed by space debris, has been increasingly highlighted over the years. The Republic of Korea welcomes and supports recent initiatives to enhance transparency- and confidence-building measures in outer space, initiatives such as the adoption of the final report of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189) last year and the ongoing work to establish an international code of conduct on outer space activities. We hope that those efforts will effectively complement the existing regime

on outer space and contribute to a further strengthening of space security and safety.

During this year's session, Australia and the Republic of Korea will jointly introduce a draft resolution on preventing and combating illicit brokering activities. That biennial resolution, which has been introduced since 2010, is the sole international document that comprehensively addresses the threat posed by the illicit brokering of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. The Republic of Korea hopes that through this year's resolution we can renew our collective commitment and move further forward in our efforts to combat the illegal arms trade. My delegation would like to request the sponsorship and full support of all delegations.

The Republic of Korea once again pledges its full cooperation in working for the success of this year's First Committee and beyond.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation and I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee.

Two weeks ago, we surpassed the threshold of the 50 ratifications required for the Arms Trade Treaty to enter into force by the end of the year. Many of us in this room, myself included, took part in those negotiations. That is an immense source of satisfaction for all of us. It is also the best illustration of the effective multilateralism for which France has been calling.

It must be stated that the number of crises throughout the world has grown in a worrisome fashion over the past year. Current crises persist and, in some cases, are even breaking out anew, for example in the Middle East. New crises have emerged in the Central African Republic, in Libya and in Iraq. Their effects are being felt, even in Europe. In many theatres, for example in Mali last year, and this year in the Central African Republic and Iraq, France has shouldered its responsibilities. Those crises serve as a reminder that we live in the real world and that our approach to disarmament and arms control needs to be realistic. The approach needs to ensure the security of all States under the terms of the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

The latest development in the Syrian crisis, as reported by the fact-finding mission, unfortunately shows that toxic chemicals have been used systematically and repeatedly as weapons in 2014.

The use of helicopters leaves no doubt whatsoever about the responsibility of the regime in Damascus for that use. That naturally raises the question of Syria's sincerity in fulfilling its obligations under the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Nuclear-proliferation crises naturally remain a central concern for France. They are a clear impediment to the continuation of our nuclear-disarmament efforts. We have observed no progress in the case of North Korea, which has given priority to the continued development of its ballistic and nuclear programmes in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions.

With regard to the Iran nuclear proliferation crisis, the negotiating session in New York in September afforded us an opportunity to hold useful and very detailed discussions. Nonetheless, the Iranian negotiators did not come back with the gestures and actions that we had hoped to see for achieving decisive progress, and that was two months before the expiration of the Geneva agreement. Time is now running short. We can still reach an agreement, and France, as a member of the EU3+3 Group, has made a determined commitment to negotiation. But for that to occur, Iran needs to take the necessary decisions to prove the exclusively peaceful purposes of its nuclear programme.

Turning to Europe, our continent, which we thought to be permanently at peace, is once again beset by tensions. The Ukrainian crisis and the violation of the 1994 Budapest memorandum, which was adopted within the framework of Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), has naturally had a very negative impact on international security.

Despite the deterioration in the international strategic context, disarmament and arms control have made progress in 2014. I see evidence of that in the demonstration of our commitment and the goodwill of the vast majority of us.

A few moments ago, I recalled the upcoming entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, which will constitute an historic step forward. But there are other examples of significant progress worthy of mention. In the framework of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional

Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), we undertook a very forward-looking discussion on the issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems. That demonstrates the vitality and relevance of the CCW and its ability to tackle emerging issues. I am very proud to have chaired last May the meeting of experts dedicated to that issue. Those discussions are making good progress, and we believe that agreements are possible. France wishes that work to continue, and I will state as much and advocate for the continuation of that work in November during the meeting of the high contracting parties. France also welcomes Iraq's accession to the CCW and all its Protocols. We hope that recent progress towards the universalization of the Convention will continue.

There are also emergency situations for which pragmatic solutions have been proposed. Debris in space is an immediate threat to all States, and in today's world the security of space activities is of vital importance to all of us. The European Union is proposing a code of conduct that could be adopted very rapidly. In the biological area, the rapid development of technology requires innovative solutions.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. It is also the basis for our disarmament efforts. The action plan adopted by consensus in 2010 serves as our road map. Naturally, the nuclear-weapon States need to live up to their commitments, and France is aware of its responsibilities in that respect. Considerable progress was made in several areas this year, including the submission of national reports based on a common framework by the five nuclear-weapon States under actions 15, 20 and 21 of the action plan. The signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia is also an example of such progress. France expects to ratify the Protocol by the end of the year — in the next few weeks, in fact.

The work of the five permanent members of the Security Council on drawing up a glossary of nuclear terms is continuing. Lastly, we are prepared to sign the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The road map that was decided upon in the 2010 NPT action plan is a common approach. It commits all States parties to a step-by-step approach. It is a sequence for multilateral action involving, first, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-

Ban Treaty, and then, the launching of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). That is a logical sequence. It is very clearly based on the action plan and particularly on action 15, which calls for the immediate launch of negotiations on an FMCT at the Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with document CD/1299 and the mandate it provides.

From that standpoint as well, we feel that we have made progress. The first two sessions of the group of governmental experts that was created by resolution 67/53 were held in March and August, respectively, of this year. They will continue early next year. Very detailed work has already begun in that regard. At the Conference on Disarmament, substantive debates, unprecedented over many years, have taken place on many agenda items, particularly concerning the FMCT. Never have we made so much progress.

To make progress, we must better understand each other's positions, minimize divergences and identify possible avenues for compromise. Of course, that is not sufficient. Our goal remains, more than ever, to move on to the next stage and begin negotiations, in accordance with the priorities set out for us in action 15 of the NPT action plan. The debates held this year at the Conference on Disarmament are helping us to move in that direction, and it is important to recognize that progress.

The NPT road map adopted by consensus in 2010 is based, as I have said, on a very pragmatic step-by-step approach. It is important for us to implement that road map and to adhere to it and not deviate from the chosen path. Certain parties would like to push us into taking another path, an ideological approach that seeks to stigmatize and not to seek solutions. That is not how we will advance the cause of disarmament and international security. The step-by-step approach is the only realistic approach and therefore the only one that will allow us to move forward. It is an effective approach, and we need only look back some two decades to see the progress that has been made. That is the path that we must pursue with determination in order to move towards a safer world.

Mr. Och (Mongolia): It is a great pleasure to see you, Mr. Chair, presiding over this important Committee. I congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. We are confident that your skilful leadership will guide this Committee towards success. I also wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the High Representative for

Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, and her Office for their commendable efforts and work.

Within its broad commitment to the multilateral system, Mongolia has always placed disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all aspects at the top of our agenda, for the simple reason that it is fundamental to global peace and security. As a member of the international disarmament machinery and as a party to international instruments on disarmament, my delegation wishes to reiterate Mongolia's firm commitment and aspiration to contribute to strengthening international peace and security.

As we all witness today, the global security environment has been increasingly deteriorating, and those developments have had a negative impact on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Regardless of the professed goal for a world without nuclear weapons, disarmament efforts remain stagnant. Therefore, my delegation firmly believes that, at this time of turmoil, we need to do our utmost to build a consensus and to promote greater global security through arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mongolia attaches importance to the implementation of resolution 68/32, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", and welcomes the first General Assembly ministerial plenary meeting, held on 26 September, to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. My delegation still believes in a bold vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and will continue to contribute to global efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

The Government of Mongolia supports non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives and developments that seek to address the security challenges of our times, including the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held last February in Mexico, as well as the Nuclear Security Summit, held in The Hague. We consider that all those efforts would promote the vigorous implementation of the 2010 action plan, which has strengthened the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are hopeful that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will take a major step towards the fulfilment of the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the overarching goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime, and an essential part of the global security regime. Mongolia therefore joins the call on all States parties to spare no effort to achieve the universality of the NPT. We believe that full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Treaty and bona fide follow-up of the decisions, resolutions, final documents and plans of action of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences are required in order to preserve its relevance, credibility and effectiveness.

My delegation shares the concern over the lack of universality in the acceptance of the International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreements and the additional protocols, and the lack of progress in the implementation of the 1995 Middle East resolution, adopted almost 20 years ago. As a strong advocate of nuclear-weapon-free zones, Mongolia hopes that international efforts will yield progress in the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons.

Mongolia recognizes the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament and looks forward to a serious solution to the ongoing stalemate in the CD. Mongolia and Mexico will be co-chairing the first part of the 2015 meeting of the CD, and we are hopeful that all members of the CD will demonstrate the necessary political will in order to ensure the commencement of its substantive work. Moreover, we also believe that, given the present situation, innovative approaches need to be explored to make the resumption of meaningful disarmament negotiations possible. We need to end the stalemate and avoid any further erosion of the CD's capability to fulfil its mandate.

Almost 20 years have passed since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was opened for signature. Mongolia wishes to stress the importance that all States maintain the moratorium on all types of nuclear-weapons tests. However, without the legally binding effect of the entry into force of the CTBT, the de facto norm remains fragile. Therefore, Mongolia joined the joint ministerial statement on the CTBT adopted by the Seventh Ministerial Meeting, held on 26 September 2014, and therefore calls on all the remaining annex 2 States to speedily ratify the Treaty so as to give effect to the CTBT.

The potential spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery remains a threat to international peace and security. Mongolia reaffirms its strong commitment to contribute to international efforts on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In that regard, my delegation welcomes the Security Council's high-level open debate held last May under the presidency of the Republic of Korea to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of that historic resolution.

Mongolia has been undertaking efforts to promote the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by joining all major international frameworks, and it continues fully to implement its obligations under the relevant multilateral agreements. At the national level, Mongolia has also been taking measures to establish a relevant domestic monitoring mechanism, and it strengthened a series of legislative acts that prohibit any non-State actor from manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, developing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, in particular for terrorist purposes.

Mongolia has always been a firm advocate of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and is making efforts to contribute to international peace and security by promoting its nuclear-weapon-free status. Our status enjoys broad international recognition, as attested to in a wide range of international instruments, such as the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the outcome documents of the Conferences of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, the biennial resolutions of the General Assembly on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as the final documents of the Summit and ministerial meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In that light, on 17 September 2012, Mongolia signed a Declaration parallel with the joint declaration of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. By their joint declaration, the P-5 recognized Mongolia's unique status and declared that they would respect that status and would not contribute to any act that would violate it. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has proven to be an effective regional measure for non-proliferation and disarmament. Mongolia is pursuing its efforts and contributions to that cause through the advancement of its nuclear-weapon-free

status and support for nuclear-weapon-free zones. The existing zones need to be strengthened and measures taken to promote the establishment of new zones, including in the Middle East and North-East Asia.

Last September, during the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, the President of Mongolia proposed that a second comprehensive study on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects should be undertaken with a view to taking stock of the progress made since the first such study in 1975 and to charting the future course of action of effective support of nuclear-weapon-free zones as practical regional measures to promote the goals of a world without nuclear weapons.

As with similar resolutions in previous years, my delegation will present to the Committee at this session a draft resolution entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". In addition, Mongolia has also decided to introduce a draft resolution on the second comprehensive study of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects. I take this opportunity to express our sincere hope that the draft proposals presented by Mongolia will be supported by the members of the Committee and will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Laggner (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): First and foremost, may I congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of this Committee. You may rest assured of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in discharging your duties.

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and achieving a world free of such weapons must continue to be goals that are steadfastly pursued by the international community. States Members of the United Nations have sought to eliminate those inhumane weapons since the establishment of the Organization. It is the responsibility of all of us — nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States alike — to maintain that commitment with the greatest determination in order to achieve tangible results as soon as possible.

In that context, we are deeply concerned by the slow progress in the field of nuclear disarmament, the lack of any decisive change in nuclear doctrines, and the qualitative development of nuclear weapons. Similarly, the risks to peace and to international security posed by any further proliferation of nuclear weapons are a source of constant concern to us. Building on the progress made in the fields of disarmament and nuclear

non-proliferation is a necessity. All avenues must be explored and every effort made in that regard.

The use of nuclear rhetoric amid the present international tensions and the inclusion of nuclear capability as part of military exercises, as well as issues regarding the future of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, are all worrying recent developments that remind us that, although no nuclear weapon has been used since 1945, we cannot rely on luck indefinitely. In that context, the International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Oslo in 2013 and in Nayarit, Mexico, in 2014, clearly demonstrated that the explosion of a single nuclear weapon would have catastrophic consequences. The next conference on this subject in Vienna should enable us to gain greater understanding of that important issue. We encourage all States to take part, because the effects of nuclear weapons concern us all.

It is vital that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) yield positive results so that we can preserve the integrity and credibility of what is the cornerstone of the international security system. To achieve such a result will mean rising to certain challenges. It will become extremely important to see greater efforts towards making progress, both in the implementation of the action plan adopted in 2010 and in areas as essential as the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. A productive Review Conference will also need to assess the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken with regard to the NPT and to define clear and time-bound measures to promote and speed up their implementation.

Weapons of mass destruction other than nuclear weapons also pose major challenges. With regard to the conflict in Syria, we welcome the efforts made to guarantee the neutralization of all chemical-weapon stockpiles declared by the Syrian authorities. At the same time, we must express our grave concern at the interim conclusions of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons fact-finding mission suggesting that toxic chemicals have again been used this year in Syria on repeated occasions. That constitutes a completely unacceptable violation of

international humanitarian law, and those responsible for such acts must be brought to account.

Switzerland has the honour of chairing the meetings in 2014 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. With the next Review Conference of this instrument gradually approaching, the importance of making progress within the framework of the intersessional process is increasing. With that in mind, the Swiss Chair of the Review Conference invites States parties to start placing greater emphasis on developing effective action. The Chair hopes that the meeting of States parties this December will be able to take up that challenge given the various subjects on its agenda.

While weapons of mass destruction call for our attention owing to their destructive potential, conventional weapons continue to claim numerous victims year after year. In that regard, we are pleased by the vigour characterizing the ratification process of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). That underlines the importance that States attach to the rapid entry into force of that instrument so that it can exert its impact and promote responsibility in the arms trade. We welcome the fact that the fiftieth ratification was submitted on 25 September and that the Treaty will enter into force before the end of the year.

The first conference of States parties to the ATT now constitutes the next important step. We would like to thank Mexico for offering to host that event. The conference will need to take a certain number of decisions, be it in regard to the rules of procedure, financial arrangements or the Treaty's secretariat. It is vital that those decisions be made with a view to giving the ATT a solid base and to enabling the Treaty to be implemented as efficiently, effectively and inclusively as possible. With that in mind, Switzerland has offered to host the ATT secretariat in Geneva, a location that fully meets the criteria to which I have just alluded.

In addition to the security challenges that have been clearly identified, there are today a host of other emerging challenges. Outer space has become a critical infrastructure for all States of the world, while several developments are potentially calling into question the security and stability of that environment. A similar conclusion can be drawn when it comes to cyberspace and information technology. In both cases, the development of new standards would appear to us

to be essential, and we can no longer keep putting these issues on the back burner.

Finally, the development of lethal autonomous weapons systems raises fundamental questions in many respects. We welcome the fact that discussions on that subject were started last May within the framework of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, as well as the inclusive and interactive nature of those discussions. They highlighted, in particular, the complexity of the subject, and we are convinced that it is important to continue and intensify discussions.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): On behalf of the delegation of Malaysia, I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, as well as to the other members of the Bureau. My delegation is confident that with your vast experience and leadership, you will be able to guide these proceedings to a successful conclusion.

Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

Despite the noblest intentions of the international community, we have yet to see quantitative improvement in the field of disarmament and international security. The lack of political will continues to plague efforts towards reaching consensual and productive outcomes in the various mechanisms dedicated to disarmament. Obligations and arrangements that had been agreed upon in the past, remain unfulfilled.

We do acknowledge that in certain fields, such as chemical weapons and conventional arms, there has been some noteworthy progress. But it is still a sad reality that nuclear disarmament — the highest priority of the international community — is still a long way from being achieved. As such, we in the First Committee have much work ahead of us, if we are to ensure a secure and safe future for coming generations.

Malaysia supported wholeheartedly the decision to dedicate 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Following the landmark High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, held in 2013, we were pleased

that that important cause was given due recognition. My delegation also hopes that the annual commemoration of the International Day will continue to increase public awareness and knowledge of the threat posed by nuclear weapons to humankind.

Indeed, there is need for greater public awareness and knowledge about that issue. At the rate that the disarmament policy-makers are progressing, or not progressing as is the case, perhaps it is time that we pay more attention to the calls of civil society and consider fresh perspectives and innovative approaches. By enlarging the number of stakeholders in our disarmament discourse, there may be more opportunities for us to achieve the desired conceptual and attitudinal changes.

Notwithstanding new and innovative approaches by civil society, we, as governmental representatives, must live up to our commitments. For its part, Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to pursue a world free of nuclear weapons. Underlying that pursuit is the basic bargain embodied in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The discussions in the recent 2014 NPT Preparatory Committee meeting in New York have shown us that much work is still required, given the diverging views and approaches with regard to the three pillars of the Treaty. The coming NPT Review Conference in 2015 must show substantive developments, otherwise the Treaty regime will, as has often been said, not be sustainable.

On that note, Malaysia wishes to emphasize the urgent need to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the efforts made by the Facilitator of the conference, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, in particular the series of informal consultations with the concerned States on the agenda and modalities of the conference. We hope that that will lead to the expeditious implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

Malaysia's commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world also underpins our participation in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The CD, as the international community's single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, must regain its relevance. For too long we have seen other disarmament treaties and agreements being drafted and concluded outside the CD's ambit. In order to overcome the long-standing stalemate in the CD, my delegation would like briefly to highlight two points.

First, we must rationalize our priorities among the issues on the CD's agenda and not make one issue a precondition of another. Secondly, we should not be fixated on the consensus rule, and we should instead focus our efforts on constructive proposals on how to improve the CD's working methods. As the final President of the CD for 2014, Malaysia will present the report and the draft resolution on the CD to the First Committee during the cluster on disarmament machinery. We look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus as in previous years.

While the CD continues to work to overcome its impasse, Malaysia remains convinced that a convention on nuclear weapons is long overdue. I wish to recall that in 2007 Malaysia and Costa Rica submitted to the General Assembly a model nuclear weapons convention in document A/62/650. That model convention proposed legal, technical and political elements for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. My delegation stands ready to work with other member States on the model convention or on any other proposals, with the ultimate aim of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In addition, Malaysia will be submitting its traditional draft resolution, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons". We will be introducing this year's draft resolution, which will incorporate technical updates, during the cluster on nuclear disarmament. While we will discuss the draft resolution in greater detail at a later stage, at this point I should like to invite all member States to support the draft resolution and to consider joining the growing number of States as sponsors.

Aside from the issue of legality, my delegation believes that it is essential that nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. As such and together with our ASEAN neighbours, Malaysia looks forward to the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone at the earliest possible date.

Our call for a nuclear-ban treaty is also related to the ongoing narrative on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Malaysia firmly subscribes to that approach, and we are encouraged by the momentum seen in the increasing recognition of that cause. In that regard, we also welcome the convening of the third International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact

of Nuclear Weapons, to be held on 8 and 9 December 2014 in Vienna.

My delegation continues to support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a significant element to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Malaysia, as the current Chair of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organization, was honoured to associate itself with the joint ministerial statement adopted at the seventh CTBT Ministerial Meeting on 26 September 2014. We urge countries, especially those listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the Treaty at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure the Treaty's entry into force. Nuclear testing must remain in the annals of history, and Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to that goal.

The need to address, through the multilateral framework, the threat posed by other weapons of mass destruction is just as important as that posed by nuclear weapons. Malaysia strongly supports the universal implementation of and adherence to both the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). My delegation believes that effective verification measures should be put in place to strengthen the implementation of the BWC. At the national level, Malaysia is also currently finalizing a national biological weapons bill, which will be part of our legislative framework in line with article IV of the Convention.

As part of our commitment as a State party to the CWC, this year Malaysia collaborated with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to organize technical assistance programmes with Myanmar and the Sudan. Those programmes allowed us to share our experiences in implementing our CWC obligations, including the activities required of CWC national authorities. In that connection Malaysia also welcomes the total removal of Syria's chemical-weapons stockpile, which was done in an unprecedented time frame and under uniquely challenging conditions. We also welcome the decision on the destruction and verification of the remaining chemical-weapons production facilities.

Turning to conventional arms, Malaysia is encouraged that the momentum generated by the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will lead to an eventual entry into force in December this year. As a signatory State, we hope the upcoming conference of States parties will lead to a balanced and effective implementation of the ATT. Malaysia also welcomes the successful outcome

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, held in June this year. We reaffirm our belief in the Programme of Action mechanism as an important forum where confidence-building measures on small arms and light weapons can be consensually agreed upon.

In conclusion, Malaysia underlines its readiness to work with you, Mr. Chair, with a view to achieving a positive and successful outcome of the First Committee in the hope that ultimately our work here will contribute towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and assure you of my full support and cooperation. We are confident that you will ensure, through your capabilities and experience, the success of this Committee's work. I extend also my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. I should also like to commend your predecessor, Mr. Ibrahim Dabbashi of Libya, for his leadership and laudable efforts as Chair of the First Committee at the last session.

Obviously, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States, as well as the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

I should like first to reiterate the commitment of my country to multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. In previous years, we have seen renewed efforts, proposals and initiatives aimed at addressing a wide range of issues in the field of disarmament and international security. Nevertheless, effective steps and substantive progress in this area are still far away. We reiterate the need for all Member States to pursue multilateral negotiations in good faith, as agreed by consensus in the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

As a State party to the main treaties related to weapons of mass destruction, Algeria reaffirms that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority and expresses its serious concern over the danger to humankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. Algeria welcomes the commemoration for the first time last month, on 26 September, of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons devoted to furthering the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Algeria reaffirms its full confidence in and commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the unique international instrument and cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and I should like to stress once again the need to universalize the Treaty and to ensure compliance with each of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Pursuant to the NPT, nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility to achieve nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, nuclear-weapon States should respect and fully implement their Treaty obligations, as well as their commitments contained in the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference chaired by Algeria, and in the action plan adopted by consensus at the eighth NPT Review Conference held in 2010.

In this context, we reiterate our concern at the lack of progress in implementing the 2010 action plan and call on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitments, in stronger terms, for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We consider that it will be necessary to initiate momentum in 2015 to make real progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. The Algerian delegation calls, therefore, for an effective implementation of resolution 68/32, including the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

With a view to strengthening the global architecture for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, my delegation reiterates the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in order to allow its entry into force. In this context, Algeria reiterates the need for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on negative

security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States. My country welcomes the convening of international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Such meetings offer the opportunity to highlight the irreversible devastating effects of nuclear weapons and the immeasurable suffering caused to human beings. Algerian territory was a nuclear testing ground in the early 1960s, and Algeria understands and fully shares the trials and consequences of those tests up to this very day.

A majority of Member States have chosen to use atomic energy for exclusively civilian applications, in accordance with article IV of the NPT. Nuclear energy represents for many developing countries a strategic choice for their economic development and energy security needs. Accordingly, Algeria reaffirms the legitimate right to develop, research, produce, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the non-proliferation regime.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes not only a confidence measure but a concrete step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this context, we affirm that the entry into force on 15 July 2009 of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, represents an important contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security, and shows the commitment of Algeria to that goal. Algeria, which was among the first countries to have drafted, signed and ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba, calls in particular on States with nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant annexes to that Treaty.

Obviously, the Pelindaba Treaty is an example for other nuclear-weapon-free zones and should, in particular, be followed in the volatile region of the Middle East. Algeria deeply regrets that that region remains without such a status years after the adoption by the NPT Review and Extension Conference, in 1995, of the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Algeria, rejecting this status quo, stresses its strong commitment to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the 2010 action plan. My delegation expressed its strong disappointment at the postponement of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Lack of political will is clearly the reason why there is a continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, and obviously another source of frustration and disappointment. In this regard, Algeria reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the world's sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. At the same time, while recalling decision CD/1864, adopted by consensus on 29 May 2009 under the Algerian presidency, Algeria calls on the CD to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. With such cases of persistent deadlock in some parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery, we are of the view that it will be relevant to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to thoroughly review all disarmament issues.

Regarding the other instruments related to mass destruction, Algeria calls for balanced, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of 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.

Concerning the issue of conventional arms, my delegation wishes to stress that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and stability in many countries and regions, particularly in North Africa and the Sahel regions. The illicit trade is a source of supply to terrorist groups and organized crime, and is therefore an ongoing concern to my country. On the basis of its national experience, Algeria reaffirms that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons are more than ever of the utmost relevance. We continue to emphasize the importance of their full, balanced and effective implementation. We wish also to stress that international cooperation and assistance is essential in the implementation of those two instruments.

My delegation welcomes the adoption by consensus in June of the outcome document of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in

All Its Aspects. On that occasion, Algeria submitted its 2014 national report on the implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.

Algeria views the First Committee as an essential component of the United Nations disarmament machinery and remains committed to working actively and constructively with all member States. The opening of the sixty-ninth session is the opportunity to work for its strengthening.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We firmly believe that, thanks to your unique experience and wisdom, you will guide the work of this session to success.

Libya aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

Once again, Libya reiterates its respect for its commitments arising from international disarmament treaties. We cooperate in earnest with the efforts of the international community to support regional and international endeavours to guarantee the implementation of the provisions of the conventions, treaties and protocols concluded at the international level. We also seek to establish favourable conditions for the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

What is more, Libya is committed to re-examining certain international instruments on conventional weapons that we have not yet signed. We will take a decision on those instruments in due course. There is no question that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only reliable guarantee to prevent their use or the threat of their use. That goal is still far off, and we have not yet been able to achieve it. In the meantime, Libya reiterates the importance of voluntary initiatives to eliminate nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapon programmes. To that end, I recall that Libya renounced its programmes on nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in 2003. Furthermore, we have pledged to destroy our chemical weapons in 2015. We trust that other States will follow in our footsteps

and those of South Africa, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus.

Libya takes this opportunity to urge nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitments arising from article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the conclusions of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the 13 steps enshrined by the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the action plan and outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and the Millennium Declaration (resolution 60/1), which emphasized the unshakeable resolve of the international community to work seriously towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction, and above all, nuclear weapons. In that regard, Libya welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 68/32, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament". We also hope that that resolution will be an effective step towards reaching the complete elimination of nuclear weapons through the implementation of all its provisions.

The NPT, 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 are key instruments for combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Non-adherence to these instruments poses a significant threat to international peace and security. Once again, we call on all States to sign on to those instruments and work to implement them in an effective manner.

Syria has signed the Convention on Chemical Weapons and announced its willingness to renounce its chemical weapons. This could pave the way to the creation of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. It is time that the international community exert pressure on Israel to accede to the NPT, since Israel is the only party in the region that has still to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. What is more, Israel's nuclear facilities are not subject to the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Diplomatic efforts and cooperation among all countries also need to be stepped up in order to dissipate all doubts concerning the peaceful Iranian nuclear programme.

I also want to reiterate the vital importance of the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is our ultimate belief that the entry into force of the CTBT can contribute to attaining our noble goal of reaching a safe world, free of nuclear weapons.

Libya reiterates the inalienable right of States parties to the NPT to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, in line with articles I and II of the NPT, but it is critical that we strike a balance between the rights and commitments under the Treaty. Libya recognizes the important role played by the IAEA and its safeguards system and therefore supports the establishment of the system. Moreover, Libya reaffirms its full support for international efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in all four corners of the world. This is a very important stage on the path towards ridding the world of the danger of these weapons. We call on the Secretary-General and other parties who will be preparing the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which should be held within the next year, to do all it takes and redouble their efforts in order to implement the 1995 resolution and the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference in order to guarantee the convening as soon as possible of that conference with the participation of all States of the region.

There is a vital need to reinvigorate the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which has been paralysed by a lack of will on the part of certain parties. Libya calls for immediate steps to be taken to allow the CD to play its role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. A decision must be taken on a draft nuclear-weapons convention and negotiations must also be resumed in order to achieve a fissile material cut-off treaty, eliminate fissile-material stockpiles, reach an unconditional binding agreement to guarantee security for all States, and ban the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons pursuant to the 1996 ruling of the International Court of Justice.

As to conventional weapons, Libya has signed the Arms Trade Treaty, since we believe that there is a need to establish international common standards preventing the illicit infiltration of weapons into conflict zones throughout the world, especially in Africa.

Libya reiterates the importance of respecting the principle of international law, including the right of

countries to self-defence, to safeguarding territorial integrity and self-determination. Furthermore, there should be no double standards or preconditions that could be reinterpreted at the whim of any particular country, as that could be used as an instrument of political blackmail and pressure. We reaffirm the importance of reinvigorating the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In conclusion, we reiterate that international multipartite cooperation requires political will. These elements are required to achieve the goals of nuclear disarmament above all: the establishment of pillars of stability and calm in all four corners of the world so as to achieve prosperity, development and well-being for all peoples.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): It is a pleasure to see you, Ambassador Rattray, a representative from a part of the world with which New Zealand and our region of the Pacific have so much in common, leading the work of the First Committee. My delegation particularly welcomes your determination to encourage engagement and interactivity within the Committee and to use the Committee's meetings to advance our disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation agenda.

I am confident that you, Mr. Chair, would agree that, just like the curate's egg, some parts of our First Committee agenda are in good shape and progressing well. I note most especially that two weeks ago, on 25 September, we witnessed here at the United Nations a real success story, the surpassing of the 50-State threshold that triggers the timeline for the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). That this has happened so very quickly — not much more than a year after the ATT was first opened for signature — says a lot about our United Nations membership's collective determination to regulate the international trade in conventional arms and about the significance of the prohibitions and risk assessment process that this Treaty establishes. For its own part, New Zealand is proud now to have joined the community of ATT members. We deposited our instrument of ratification early last month and are provisionally applying articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty pending its entry into force on 24 December.

Implementation of the Treaty will be the key to reaping the human security and development outcomes that we and so many others expect to flow from this Treaty. For some considerable time now, in partnership

with the Small Arms Survey and as our own contribution towards promoting the ATT's implementation in our region, New Zealand has been working closely with Pacific countries on the drafting of model legislation to assist with the translation of the Treaty's commitments into domestic frameworks. The development of an ATT model law has proved to be quite a challenging task, and we have been working on it for well over a year now. However, I am delighted to be able to announce today that our model has been completed, and is now available both in hard and electronic format, and some hard copies are indeed available at the back of the room here today.

I should also note that New Zealand is keen to contribute to the important efforts currently under way, under the leadership of Mexico, to frame the institutional arrangements and procedural rules that will guide the Treaty going forward. We congratulate Mexico on its successful hosting last month of the first round of consultations in the ATT's preparatory process, and we look forward to the second round to be convened next month by Germany. We can all be heartened by the success story which is the Arms Trade Treaty. It was mandated and negotiated here at the United Nations, watched over by the First Committee and adopted by the General Assembly. Thanks to the ongoing support and attentive eye of civil society, we know it will continue to go from strength to strength.

New Zealand takes much less heart from progress with regard to another key item on our First Committee agenda — nuclear disarmament. That remains an issue of prime importance to my country, and indeed to the vast majority of United Nations Members, yet, as we look out to next year's review of the operation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it remains difficult for us to see meaningful movement forward. It is true that not all States Members of the United Nations base their approaches to nuclear weapons issues on the NPT, but for the overwhelming majority of us who do so, and who steadfastly support the Treaty as the cornerstone of our disarmament and non-proliferation policies, there remains unfinished business.

The NPT was never about creating a permanent right for some to retain nuclear weapons. Article VI of the Treaty promised that at some point beyond the Treaty's adoption in 1968, effective measures would be put in place leading to nuclear disarmament. The actual point at which those measures would be put in

place — or indeed the point at which the multilateral process for putting those measures in place would begin — was not specified in the Treaty. But after considerably more than four decades since the Treaty entered into force, non-nuclear-weapon States certainly have a right to ask, if not now, when?

The New Agenda Coalition, which together with New Zealand comprises Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico and South Africa, put forward a working paper to this year's NPT Preparatory Committee meeting, outlining a set of options for the Treaty's effective measures. New Zealand has since sought to move the discussion forward by canvassing some of the international legal issues connected with effective measures. The discussion paper exploring these legal issues will be available at the back of the room tomorrow, and will be the subject of a panel side event with its author here this Friday.

Not only would article VI's effective measures on nuclear disarmament serve to rectify the sense of imbalance in implementation of the NPT but, as our discussion paper makes apparent, they can give the Treaty's existing prohibitions additional normative support. The renewed focus on implementation of article VI offers, we believe, the foundation for success at next year's NPT Review Conference and the revivification of the Treaty's full credibility. We welcome the range of laudable initiatives that currently assist this outcome, including of course the Oslo and Nayarit International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. We congratulate Austria on its hosting of a further conference on this issue in December this year.

The statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons that New Zealand will deliver in the Committee later this month similarly reinforces the need for human security, rather than States' war strategies, to be at the core of our deliberations on nuclear-weapon issues.

I would not wish to end this statement on the pessimistic note that discussions about nuclear issues often seem to generate. I should therefore like to draw from the optimism of our High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane, whom we were honoured to have visit New Zealand earlier this year. She said, in the first of a series of speeches that she delivered in New Zealand, and that have since been published in United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs occasional paper No. 26, that

“Despite all that is wrong in this world — all the armed conflicts, the arms races, the orgy of military spending, the weapons improvements, the non-implementation of disarmament commitments — despite all of these, I believe that disarmament does have a future... Disarmament will survive for two reasons: it works, and it is the right thing to do. It fuses together... the two forces that make the world go round: self-interest and idealism.”

I am confident that under your guidance this year, Mr. Chair, self-interest and idealism will be able to play their full part in advancing all the items on our Committee’s agenda.

Ms. Stone (Australia): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee during its sixty-ninth session. You can be assured of my delegation’s full support.

During this session of the General Assembly we have already reached a milestone in the field of conventional weapons. On 25 September, we crossed the threshold of the 50 ratifications required to trigger the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). On 24 December, that historic Treaty will enter into force and from that time our real work will begin. We want the ATT to make a difference where it matters most. We want it effectively to regulate international transfers of conventional arms and prevent illegal diversions to terrorist or criminal groups. To achieve that, the Treaty must be effectively implemented. That is something to which the Australian Government is firmly committed. We look forward to the first conference of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in 2015 and will work closely with Mexico, the other ATT co-authors, and other supporters to ensure it is successful.

The past year has also seen important progress in the universalization and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Recognizing the tragic impact on civilians of cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines, Australia urges adherence to the international norms established by these Conventions. Australia welcomes the recent announcement by the United States of further changes to more closely align United States activities outside the Korean peninsula with the key requirements of the anti-personnel-mine-ban Convention.

This year’s session of the First Committee is taking place at a delicate time in geopolitical relations with simmering tensions over Ukraine, the deteriorating humanitarian and military situation in Syria and Iraq, and ongoing Middle East tensions. These events remind us that we should work together to ensure that the United Nations does not falter in realizing its ambition for a more peaceful, stable and secure world.

Australia wishes to acknowledge the significant contribution over the past year made by the Joint Mission of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which completed its operations on 30 September. The Joint Mission deserves special recognition for completing the task of removing all of Syria’s declared chemical weapons under the most extraordinary and dangerous of circumstances. The OPCW finding of continued chemical-weapons use in Syria in the form of chlorine attacks is deeply troubling. The international community must come together and respond to these attacks. Upholding the established norm against chemical-weapon use must be our collective priority. Australia will continue working with others to ensure the total elimination of Syria’s chemical weapons capabilities and all associated facilities in full compliance with Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

To remove the threat of nuclear war, we must create a world where the utility of nuclear weapons is greatly diminished. Our starting point has to be the inclusion of nuclear-armed States in the process of disarmament. We acknowledge that some of the nuclear-weapon States, especially the United States and Russia, have made considerable reductions in their nuclear arsenals, but two decades after the end of the Cold War, there are still some 16,000 nuclear weapons held by nine States. Much more needs to be done. There can be no shortcuts to create the conditions necessary for a world without nuclear weapons.

To this end, Australia and fellow members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative have proposed practical steps that can contribute to greater nuclear transparency, further reductions in arsenals, and greater security of nuclear weapons and material. We welcome as a first step the nuclear-weapon States report to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Preparatory Committee meeting this year. But again, more detail and transparency in these reports are essential.

The 2015 NPT Review Conference is fast approaching. We want that Review Conference to provide us with a solid outcome showing real and effective progress in disarmament. Australia strongly supports the establishment of a Middle East zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and ongoing efforts to convene a conference at the earliest opportunity. We call upon all States in the Middle East to engage in a spirit of genuine and constructive cooperation to make that happen.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains a priority. Last month, Australia joined with other CTBT friends States in co-hosting a ministerial meeting at which we committed to a strong statement of support for the CTBT's prompt entry into force. We urge all countries yet to do so to sign and ratify the CTBT without conditions. In the First Committee, Australia, along with Mexico and New Zealand, will present our annual CTBT draft resolution. We invite all member States to support and sponsor this year's draft resolution, which reinforces the need, pending entry into force, to maintain a testing moratorium. That gives renewed expression to the Treaty's central obligation and proposition that nuclear-weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions should never occur again.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only exception to the nuclear-test moratorium in the twenty-first century. That underscores the urgent need for the earliest entry into force of the Treaty. In the meantime, we must bring to a halt any additions to nuclear weapons arsenals and indeed reverse the quantity of them.

The need for a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices has long been recognized by the General Assembly. However, for too long the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to agree on a programme of work and, more importantly, to fulfil its mandate to undertake disarmament negotiations. The issues surrounding nuclear disarmament are too important to be frustrated by a failure to even begin the negotiating process. Australia has consistently urged the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Australia is an active participant in the Group of Governmental Experts, working with others to explore in a multilateral context the broad range of ingredients that would go into a fissile

material cut-off treaty. We are keen now to explore new ideas for moving forward with these negotiations.

The challenges to international security are increasingly complex. We welcome the commencement of work by the Group of Governmental Experts on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, as mandated under resolution 68/243. The elaboration of how international law applies to the conduct of States in cyberspace and the development of norms in relation to armed conflict, situations involving less than armed conflict, and in peacetime are critically important tasks that go to the heart of international peace and security.

Australia welcomes the considerable attention paid to the issue of space security over the past year. The safety, security and sustainability of the space environment should remain a key priority for all nations, given our increasing reliance on space for our prosperity and development. The recommendations of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts and the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on long-term sustainability guidelines have provided fresh impetus and guidance for the development of space transparency and confidence-building measures. As before, Australia places a premium on practical and near-term steps to protect every nation's access to the space environment. We see the proposed international code of conduct for outer space activities as an appropriate means to realize the substantial work undertaken by the international community on space security in recent years.

Australia looks forward to setting out in greater detail its views and ideas on a range of disarmament issues, including the importance of the equal, full and effective participation of women in disarmament processes. The thematic discussions will also provide an opportunity for us all to engage substantively to take the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda forward.

With your leadership, Sir, I hope that our collective focus will be on practical, realistic outcomes to benefit the international community and advance our common objectives of peace and stability.

Ms. González-Román (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, on behalf of my delegation, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, and I take this opportunity to convey to you our best wishes. Rest assured that you can count

on Spain's support to achieve satisfactory results at this sixty-ninth session. My delegation also wishes to fully align itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

Disarmament and collective efforts against proliferation are different dimensions of the same process — the quest for peace, stability and security at the international level. Spain is committed to sharing with other States the efforts it makes to achieve those goals. As an active and committed member of the international community, Spain has made peacebuilding a defining characteristic of its foreign policy. Our security policy accords special importance to multilateralism and to international cooperation. We therefore have no doubt that the United Nations plays a crucial and irreplaceable role in addressing the challenges of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Over the past few years, several achievements have been recorded in two important areas. First, in nuclear disarmament, the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was a success, encouraging us to make preparations for the 2015 Conference, while bearing in mind our responsibility to keep to the same path. The second important achievement occurred just a few days ago in the area of conventional arms. The process that will culminate with the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty has come to an end, so progress is being made on that count.

However, allow me to recall that progress is still needed in other areas. The enduring deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, which is one of the main pillars of the United Nations disarmament machinery, and the international community's inability to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, are both still causes for concern. The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty was a milestone in international relations. Control of arms exports is now linked to human rights and international humanitarian law as well as to the need to maintain peace, stability and international security. Spain has actively contributed to that process being one of the first signatory States and one of the first States to ratify that instrument. It has also established the provisional application of the Treaty since the date of its signature.

The Nuclear-Non-Proliferation Treaty is the core component of the global non-proliferation regime. It is worth reiterating the need for the comprehensive

development of the three pillars of the Treaty. We must continue to work towards its universalization and to decisively implement the action plan adopted in 2010 in preparation for the 2015 Review Conference. The comprehensive development of the NPT entails making progress in compliance with article VI, by which States parties commit to holding negotiations in good faith on effective measures for nuclear disarmament. The bilateral agreements reached between the United States and the Russian Federation to reduce their strategic nuclear weapons is an example of significant progress, which Spain welcomes. We hope that both States will pursue that process and that other nuclear-weapon States will also follow that path.

Spain strongly urges the implementation of the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, we welcome with great optimism the conversations that have occurred over the past few months under the leadership of Ambassador Laajava, and we trust that that conference will establish this nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region and will be held as soon as possible. We should also like to recall that the 2010 NPT Review Conference expressed its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and its reaffirmation of the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will surely be another key component of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture once it enters into force. We call upon the States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, in particular those included in annex 2, to do so as soon as possible. The international community must also address a series of challenges in nuclear proliferation, in particular the nuclear programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the need to negotiate in good faith an agreement that would banish the nuclear threat from the Korean peninsula. In the case of Iran, Spain supports the efforts under way to reach a diplomatic solution. We also recognize the efforts of the High Representative of the European Union, together with Germany, China, the United States, France, Russia and the United Kingdom. This process of collaboration has characterized the

negotiating process that began in November, and we hope that it will end in a positive manner.

Spain would like to express its support to those countries wishing to develop their nuclear capabilities with responsibility and transparency and in strict compliance with their international commitments. We would like to emphasize the commendable work carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in that regard. We intend to actively collaborate with the IAEA in all of its areas of work, including in international cooperation, by taking advantage of our membership on its Board of Governors, which has been the case since last September.

Maximum precautions must be taken to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorist groups. In that regard, we wish to highlight the importance of fulfilling the obligations and commitments contained in Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1887 (2009).

With regard to other weapons of mass destruction, significant progress has been made over the past 12 months in the process of eliminating chemical weapons in Syria. The efforts of the international community, and especially of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations, should be a source of satisfaction and motivate us to continue this work to finalize the process in a satisfactory manner.

Finally, we wish to underscore the importance of strengthening security in the face of possible biological threats, be they natural, accidental or criminal. We welcome the various initiatives in a number of areas that are focused on fighting this threat, and specifically against the Ebola epidemic, as reflected in Security Council resolution 2177 (2014).

Spain welcomes the consensus reached during the recent Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The proliferation of these weapons contributes to fostering conflict, promotes organized crime and terrorism and is one of the main risks for development and stability in many countries. We must move forward by taking new measures to address the illicit arms trade from other perspectives and thereby achieve real results in the short term.

In conclusion, a number of issues will be debated during this session of the First Committee. My delegation trusts that it will serve as a forum for ambitious debates

and will allow us to make progress towards establishing a more secure and stable world.

Ms. Haekkerup (Denmark): I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on the efficient work done by you and the Bureau, which we wholly support.

In aligning ourselves with the statement made by observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/69/PV.2), I should like to draw attention to some points of specific interest to Denmark. But before turning to them, let me pose challenging questions to all in this room, because as the First Committee is gathering again we must ask: Have we moved the agenda forward? Have we done enough to decrease human suffering? Is the world a safer place due to our collective efforts? The answers are not simple, but sometimes we can see a pattern if we look for it at a distance. If we look at the work of the international community for the past years, struggling to make progress in disarmament, we can see a clear pattern. When we unite and truly seek compromises, we all succeed. When we are divided, we all fail.

Others have highlighted the tremendous and very positive support for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and, in our view, that is a very clear indication of this. We work together and the Treaty will enter into force by 24 December. That is not the end, it is the beginning. We need to work on the implementation of the Treaty, on how to regulate transport between third countries, and how to not only increase the number of States parties but also convince major arms sellers to sign, ratify and implement the Treaty. The tragic developments in East Ukraine, Syria and Iraq have increased the threat of a further spread of small arms and light weapons and underline the need for control.

Even a fully implemented ATT will not solve all problems or regulate all aspects of the global supply chain of the arms trade. The issue of arms transport between third countries remains largely unregulated at the international level. With almost 10 per cent of all maritime shipping worldwide, Denmark is one of the leading shipping nations. That entails a special responsibility. We need to figure out how to create incentives, guidelines, norms and standards that will induce companies to do the right thing. It is critical to ensure a level playing field in doing so. We keenly look forward to the conference of States parties to the ATT to be held next year, and thank all involved in the preparations for their diligent work to ensure that the ATT will evolve into a model for effective, pragmatic and close international cooperation.

In my part of the world, more people die from multi-drug-resistant bacteria than from, say, traffic accidents. Infectious diseases, whether naturally occurring in the form of accidents, or caused by an intentional release, are some of the greatest threats that the world faces today. The recent events in relation to Ebola serve only to increase our awareness that diseases continue to be a global challenge requiring close cooperation among all nations.

Denmark is strongly engaged in the field of biosecurity and has been so for a number of years. We have implemented a stringent system for issuing licences to biotechnology companies and research institutions in order to minimize the risk of biological agents falling into the wrong hands, or dual-use technology being abused for sinister purposes. Our aim is to balance this focus on security with the needs of the biotechnology community, because while biotechnology has the potential to do great harm if used by terrorist organizations, it also has a decisively important potential to improve the world. Therefore biosecurity and biosafety measures must never stand in the way of legitimate research and development in life sciences. We enjoy close cooperation with Kenya and we aim to use our experiences to reach out to other countries in order to identify possible biosecurity and biosafety gaps and provide efficient solutions that strengthen international security and international health.

It is widely recognized that sexual and gender-based violence carries responsibility for an unacceptably high share of human suffering, not least caused by the illicit and unregulated arms trade. We will gain by fully realizing the importance of women's political, social and economic empowerment and of gender equality, while emphasizing the important role that women can play in civil society and as formal and informal community leaders in the prevention and reduction of armed violence and armed conflict, and in promoting disarmament. Women's rights and empowerment, as well as gender awareness, form an integral part of our assistance programmes related to disarmament and arms control, and we think that these affirmative and perceptive norms already established by the international community should in our view be better reflected in future General Assembly resolutions on women, disarmament and non-proliferation. Mainstreaming gender awareness should also form part of all the endeavours of the First Committee because none of us is from Mars or from any other planet. We

share this one and are obliged to use every powerful resource to improve it.

This year has also seen important progress in some areas of non-proliferation and reduction of the global threat from weapons of mass destruction. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations played a crucial role in the international community's efforts to identify and destroy the declared stockpile of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. Thanks to an unprecedented coordinated effort on the part of a number of countries, we were able to take a decisive step towards fully eliminating the Syrian chemical-weapons arsenal and production facilities, providing an essential contribution to global security and global disarmament.

Denmark played a key role in these efforts by coordinating and providing vessels for the maritime operation in charge of transporting the most dangerous chemical weapons from Syria, and we obviously expect the Syrian Arab Republic and all other parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to fully comply with international obligations. In this context, we are deeply disturbed by recent reports about the continuing use of chemical agents such as chlorine as weapons to target civilians in Syria. We fully support the efforts of the OPCW and others to shed light on the factual circumstances surrounding these reports. There are strong indications of who is behind these events, and they must be held responsible.

The importance for international peace and security of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the safe and secure peaceful uses of nuclear energy cannot be overestimated. We should never lose sight of the catastrophic and unacceptable humanitarian consequences should nuclear weapons ever be used. This issue will be discussed at the Conference organized in Vienna by Austria in two months' time.

Unfortunately, we are short of progress in nuclear disarmament, although positive steps are also seen. Denmark acknowledges the considerable progress achieved in reducing deployed warheads and stockpiles, and we particularly welcome the 2010 Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. But we share this planet with more than 16,000 nuclear warheads, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force. I am sure the Committee will agree that this is not enhancing global security.

Instead we must build confidence and trust. By pursuing a building-block approach with parallel and simultaneous steps we can and must move forward, with confidence in ourselves and in our national security, with trust in our partners and in our goals. That will gradually shape and bond the building blocks for a mutual multilateral framework ensuring general and complete nuclear disarmament, as expressly desired in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That vision is one that none of us should ever lose sight of. Trust and confidence may have further regressed this past year but that should only induce us to work harder. Denmark looks forward to contributing to the NPT Review Conference next year.

We are encouraged by the reporting from the International Atomic Energy Agency that Tehran is complying with aspects of the Joint Plan of Action and the framework for cooperation between Iran and the Agency. But it is premature to rejoice before we have achieved a comprehensive, long-term settlement, restoring international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and the absence of any military dimension.

We are deeply concerned that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues down its dangerous and irrational path of ballistic-missile launches, nuclear tests, uranium enrichment and construction of a light water reactor, in flagrant violation of its international obligations, and we urge all involved to work harder for a peaceful solution, now.

Let me revert to the questions I posed at the beginning of my intervention and sum up some elements to answer them. Yes, we have moved the agenda forward, and yes, we have addressed some of the root causes leading to human suffering. But the answer is, unfortunately, also no. The world is not necessarily a safer place. New developments have created new and increased challenges. That is exactly why we need to seek compromises. We need to unite and if not, we will all fail.

Mr. Ismail (Brunei Darussalam): At the outset, Sir, let me begin by extending my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee for this session and to the other members of the Bureau on their election. You have our full support and best wishes in your efforts to promote the interests of the members of this Committee.

Brunei Darussalam aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/69/PV.2).

We reaffirm that disarmament and non-proliferation play an important role in safeguarding world peace and stability. With today's unpredictable world security environment, there is a clear need to further intensify and improve disarmament efforts to address proliferation concerns. That is more so now as we are faced with old and new threats. This, we believe, demands systemic change to handle old and new threats before they become uncontrollable.

Brunei Darussalam continues to stress the importance of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons at the regional and global levels. Thus our challenges here are how to improve the effectiveness of non-proliferation. At the regional level we are a State party to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). It would contribute more effectively and significantly to the maintenance of peace, security and prosperity in the region should all nuclear-weapon States accede without reservations to the SEANWFZ Protocol at the earliest opportunity.

At the global level, Brunei Darussalam ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on 10 January 2013. We hope that the Treaty will soon enter into force and become fully operational so as to achieve its objectives. Furthermore, on 18 February Brunei Darussalam became the 162nd member of the International Atomic Energy Agency. For us, this membership signifies our continuous commitment to support nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as well as the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and energy.

On another issue, we are also deeply concerned at the advancement of other weapons of mass destruction, particularly with regard to chemical and biological weapons, which are readily available to many countries. More alarming is that these weapons of mass destruction are now possible alternatives for terrorists to use, and thus pose a greater threat to all. It is therefore imperative for the international community to ensure that countermeasures are keeping pace with the increasingly sophisticated methods for procuring weapons of mass destruction.

On this note, Brunei Darussalam supports the efforts of the international community and relevant United Nations resolutions aimed at addressing potentially devastating consequences. We uphold the objectives and principles of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Furthermore, we join the international community in condemning the use of chemical weapons in wars and conflicts that violate human rights and international law as well as cause great loss of life.

Our concerns also include conventional weapons, in particular the illicit international transfer of small arms and light weapons. Hence, we encourage information-sharing and capacity-building, as we believe such activities must be curbed and properly monitored, not only for the countries that procure these weapons, but also to those manufacturing them.

Brunei Darussalam therefore believes that supporting the process of disarmament and non-proliferation at the regional and international levels can help to achieve lasting global peace and security. We reiterate our full commitment to the non-proliferation of all types of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, through our established policy not to develop, acquire or proliferate any kind of weapon of mass destruction or their delivery systems. In this regard, Brunei Darussalam will continue to support international cooperation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, dialogue and confidence-building measures.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I align Senegal with the statements made, respectively, by the representatives of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States and of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/69/PV.2). I also extend to you, Sir, my heartfelt congratulations on your accession to the chairmanship of the First Committee and assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. Our congratulations also go to all the members of the Bureau.

At a time when challenges and threats continue to grow throughout the world, creating new hotbeds of tension, especially in Africa and in the Middle East, and in spite of the many meetings that have been held in 2013 and 2014, negotiations initiated in the field of disarmament, generally speaking, and nuclear

disarmament in particular, continue to be mired in unprecedented paralysis. Lest we forget, when it comes to nuclear disarmament, the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), scheduled for 2015, ended on 9 May in New York without States even reaching a consensus on the Chair's working paper for this session. Many differences persist regarding the trajectory for the NPT.

Similarly, when it comes to nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-weapon States have been more or less hostile to the implementation of resolution 68/32 regarding the follow-up to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament of 26 September 2013. In that regard, we welcome the success of the first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, held on 26 September, which enjoyed the participation of a number of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, including our own, who were at pains to stress that nuclear disarmament remains a priority for the international community.

Another stumbling block is the implementation of the recommendations arising from the 2010 NPT Review Conference, especially the holding of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, initially scheduled for 2012. We reiterate Senegal's call for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. My country is in favour of the total eradication of nuclear activities for military purposes, which is the only guarantee for the advent of a safer and more peaceful world. We also welcome the holding of the first two International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, in Oslo in 2013 and in Nayarit, Mexico, in February 2014, as well as the meeting scheduled for Vienna for 8 and 9 December. Those meetings reflect our common willingness to find appropriate solutions for eradicating these weapons, which pose an ongoing threat to humanity.

We are aware of the many efforts undertaken to encourage nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear warhead stockpiles. In a similar vein, we commend those States that have renounced the acquisition and production of nuclear weapons, and call on those that have still to sign the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so. Furthermore, we welcome the call of the Non-Aligned Movement for maintaining the Conference on Disarmament (CD) with

a view to concluding a legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament, ensuring the full implementation of negative security assurances and preventing an arms race in outer space. We also reiterate the exclusive role of the CD as the world's single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament.

Negotiations on another key pillar of disarmament and non-proliferation — the draft agreement on a fissile material cut-off treaty — have also been blocked, although some headway has been made. As to the United Nations Disarmament Commission, it has reached the end of its triennial cycle without reaching a consensus on the formulation of recommendations to the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament and confidence-building measures with respect to conventional weapons. We hope that the new cycle to begin in 2015 will achieve the hoped-for success.

Turning to chemical weapons, we call on States that have not yet ratified or signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction to do so as soon as possible. Furthermore, let us not forget the inalienable right of countries to engage in the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the oversight of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which we need to bolster.

Turning to conventional weapons, my country strongly welcomes the forthcoming entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December, now that it has received the necessary 50 ratifications, including that of Senegal. Nonetheless, when it comes to implementation, we insist on the need for a balanced and objective approach to ensure that the interests of all States — and not just those of producer countries — are respected and protected. The ravages wreaked by these weapons, especially in non-producer developing countries, in Africa in particular, have had untold socioeconomic repercussions. Similarly, we feel it equally important to work towards reducing the illicit transfer, circulation and production of small arms and light weapons, whose uncontrolled spread remains troubling in several regions of the world, especially in Africa.

The adoption by consensus of the final document of the 2012 Review Conference reiterates the commitment of member States to implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in

All Its Aspects, which will strengthen the cooperation and assistance among States and establish a follow-up mechanism for the next six-year cycle leading up to the next review conference. We also welcome the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which was held in June 2014 and led to the adoption by consensus of an outcome document that included a set of recommendations for promoting application of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels, including stockpile management and physical security measures for firearms.

Turning to cluster munitions, we call for the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and encourage other States to implement the Convention on Cluster Munitions before the holding of the Review Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in September 2015.

As to mines, Senegal is tirelessly pursuing its efforts to demine the mined sectors in the south of the country, with the support of international cooperation, including the National Anti-Mine Action Centre of Senegal, which is a fine example of such work.

Despite all these shortcomings, the ongoing efforts of our Organization in disarmament and international security give us hope that a peaceful world free of conflict and free of nuclear weapons is not just a Utopia. In order to achieve this noble goal, we believe it necessary that a multilateral approach be adopted to address disarmament questions in a constructive, open frame of mind allowing us to reach mutually acceptable standards.

The Chair: I wish to thank all delegations for keeping their statements within the stipulated time limits.

I shall now call on those representatives who have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five minutes.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic): Regrettably, the representative of the French regime has made baseless allegations against Syria even though his country was the one that introduced nuclear weapons into the Middle East and that tested such weapons on human beings. It is his regime that is ignoring and not exerting genuine efforts to stop his citizens from joining the flow of terrorist fighters to Syria. It is French terrorists who are committing the most

horrendous crimes against civilians in my country and beyond. His regime also hardly pays lip service to achieving a political peaceful solution to the situation in my country — a Syrian-based solution that my country genuinely seeks and aspires to reach soon.

Ms. Vlădulescu (Romania), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

It seems that the French regime does not recognize the factual use of such horrific chemical weapons recently by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other terrorist groups against Syrians and Iraqis, which shows that such terrorist groups possess such chemical materials and have the capacity to use them as a weapon, thereby posing a grave threat not only to my country and the region but also to the whole world.

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. We have completed its commitments despite the prevailing difficult situation, and offered all constructive support

and cooperation to the Joint Mission of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons that led to the success of the mission.

Finally, we cannot understand the flagrant audacity of the Israeli representative making baseless allegations against other States in the Middle East, including my country, while Israel is the only possessor of a military nuclear programme in the region.

Mr. Propper (Israel): I just want to reply to the Syrian comment. To say that the Syrian Government has not been fully open about its chemical weapons programme would be the understatement of the century. As discussed yesterday in the Security Council, the international community recently discovered four chemical weapons facilities that the Al-Assad regime failed to declare. I join with other nations in calling for the international community to continue putting pressure on the Syrian regime to fully reveal the details of its chemical weapons programme.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.