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Seventy-first session

First Committee

12th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

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

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items

The Chair: Today we will hear from the remaining speakers on the rolling list for the nuclear weapons cluster. Before we proceed, I would like to remind delegations that we are scheduled to conclude our consideration of that cluster this morning. For that to be possible, it is important that all speakers adhere to the stipulated time limit of five minutes when speaking in their national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

The Committee will continue to use the buzzer to remind delegations when the time limit is reached. We have a long list of speakers for the nuclear weapons cluster. I therefore appeal for the full cooperation of all delegations in respecting the time limit in order to enable the Committee to avoid falling behind on its schedule.

Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland): I take the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Iceland.

The thematic debate at this session of the First Committee is taking place in the shadow of international tension. We are witnessing the use of weapons of mass destruction. We have seen one State Member of the

United Nations defy the norm against testing nuclear weapons. It is more important than ever to find ways to build confidence among nations. We must facilitate progress in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and enhance our collective security.

We are at a critical juncture where nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are concerned. There is broad agreement on the overall objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, but views on how to achieve and maintain a world without those deadly weapons clearly diverge. That was clearly demonstrated in the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which regrettably could not reach consensus on its report (see A/71/371) to the General Assembly. Despite that lack of agreement, the Working Group's deliberations demonstrated a strong commitment to moving nuclear disarmament forward.

The commitment to nuclear disarmament has been further strengthened through a fact-based approach to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear detonations, intentional or not. The whole purpose of the humanitarian initiative is to ensure that humankind will never again experience another Hiroshima or Nagasaki. To achieve that, a wide range of mutually reinforcing measures should be taken, including the following.

First, we should do everything possible to reduce the risk of any kind of use of nuclear weapons. That implies reducing the role of all types of nuclear weapons in security policies, as well as reducing the operational readiness of weapons that are already deployed. The Nordic countries therefore recommend draft resolution

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A/C.1/71/L.33, on decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems, and we hope that all Member States can support it. Secondly, we must do everything possible to ensure that no sensitive nuclear material falls into the wrong hands. Thirdly, and most important, we must mobilize all our collective political will in order to reduce existing stocks of nuclear weapons, with a view to achieving their complete elimination.

The fact is that only their full elimination will enable us to completely eliminate any risk of their use, and that process will necessarily take time. We must engage the nuclear-weapon States in negotiating new generations of disarmament agreements. The Nordic countries are committed to that endeavour. We will work actively to achieve a world free of nuclear arms and promote the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a driving force for non-proliferation and disarmament, with a view to achieving the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. On that basis, we take a long-term perspective in working for a legally binding framework to reach that goal. We firmly believe that the upcoming NPT review cycle will provide an opportunity to reaffirm the obligations under article VI of the Treaty and the outcome documents of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including nuclear-weapon States' unequivocal undertaking to eliminate their nuclear weapons. The review cycle should identify additional steps on how to speed up the process towards complete elimination.

While the nuclear-weapon States have a particular responsibility for moving the disarmament agenda forward, non-nuclear-weapon States must contribute as well. The verification of nuclear disarmament is one area in which we see a constructive partnership emerging between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States that will help to foster trust and confidence in the possibility that disarmament commitments will actually be met. The Nordic States therefore recommend draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.57/Rev.1, on nuclear-disarmament verification, and we hope that all Member States will support it.

In a number of other areas, there are clear opportunities for developing and consolidating common ground, such as non-proliferation, the promotion of a culture of nuclear security, the advancement of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the

sustaining of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones and the advancement of a fissile material cut-off treaty. In the lead-up to the 2020 NPT Review Conference, we should seize every opportunity to make progress towards our common goal. Today, with proposals before us on which we may have different perspectives, it is also important to focus on the things that unite us.

This week marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Reykjavik summit between Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, then General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and President Ronald Reagan of the United States, which triggered a series of events putting us on a path to a safer and more secure world. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in Reykjavik last week,

“[L]et us muster the tenacity ... to look over the horizon and create a world free of nuclear weapons.”

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.36.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): South Africa associates itself with the statements delivered, respectively, by the representatives of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.11), Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.10), and Egypt, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

As long as nuclear weapons exist, humankind will continue to face the threat of nuclear annihilation. Since the impact of any use of nuclear weapons, including their longer-term humanitarian, environmental and socioeconomic consequences, cannot be constrained in space and time, nuclear weapons cannot be treated simply as a matter of national security concern for the few States that possess them. By their very nature, nuclear weapons threaten the security of us all. All States therefore have a legitimate stake in nuclear disarmament and a responsibility for it. With tensions and insecurity increasing around the globe, coupled with the threat of non-State actors' access to such capabilities, we are recognizing the ever-increasing risk of the use of nuclear weapons, whether by accident, miscalculation or design.

The lack of progress towards achieving our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons has become a source of growing frustration. While the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is constantly reaffirmed and various measures are implemented to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation, the other side of the NPT bargain — nuclear disarmament — continues to be subjected to reinterpretation and the imposition of further conditions for progress, which has caused serious divisions and created a credibility crisis for the regime.

The continued development and modernization of nuclear arsenals and their delivery systems, and the fact that nuclear weapons remain entrenched in security doctrines, suggests that some may harbour aspirations for their indefinite retention, contrary to their obligations and commitments, including the unequivocal undertaking by nuclear-weapon States to work towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The failure of the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to produce an agreed outcome has added to tensions resulting from some countries' lack of commitment to fulfilling their disarmament obligations. Beyond the obligation to engage in negotiations in good faith on effective nuclear-disarmament measures, they also include, among others, commitments to deeper reductions in the number of nuclear weapons, reducing reliance on nuclear weapons in military doctrines, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, all of which remain unfulfilled. In addition, the vast resources that continue to be devoted to the production and maintenance of nuclear weapons stand in sharp contrast to the limited resources directed towards socioeconomic development, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Given their potentially catastrophic consequences and associated risks, we must make every effort to eliminate the threat posed by nuclear weapons. We have long recognized that the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances is through their total elimination and the legally binding assurance that they will never be produced again. South Africa welcomes the commitment to nuclear disarmament displayed by the vast majority of States during the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations held in Geneva earlier this year. Not only does the report (see A/71/371) of the Working Group reinforce our understanding of

the work that still needs to be done to fulfil existing obligations and commitments, it also accurately reflects the proposals that have been made with the goal of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons, including steps to reduce risks and the establishment of interim measures and a range of partial and more comprehensive legally binding measures.

Beyond the systematic and progressive steps already agreed to by the nuclear-weapon States, there was widespread support for the recommendation to the General Assembly to convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. While such a treaty may not yield immediate results, it would constitute a significant step towards filling a glaring gap in the international legal architecture pertaining to the legality of nuclear weapons. Our support for such a step towards fulfilling our obligations under article VI of the NPT is without prejudice to the realization of existing nuclear-disarmament commitments, as well as future negotiations on additional legally binding instruments that will be required to achieve and maintain a more secure world without nuclear weapons.

The upcoming NPT review cycle provides an opportunity for States parties to the Treaty to reverse the confidence gap created through the non-implementation of obligations and commitments. Only through faithful implementation will we be able to ensure the continuing vitality of the NPT as the foundation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Let me reiterate that nuclear weapons have no place in today's security environment. Instead of deterring war and conflict, as some argue they do, such weapons remain a constant source of national, regional and global insecurity and a driver of proliferation.

In conclusion, nuclear disarmament is not just a legal obligation, it is also a moral and ethical imperative. In that regard, South Africa again has the honour, on behalf of its sponsors, to submit draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.36, entitled "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world", which contains only technical updates to last year's resolution and which we hope will receive wide support.

Mr. Sabarullah Khan (Sri Lanka): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered previously by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

The threat to humankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and the catastrophic consequences of the detonation of any nuclear weapons are a grim reality that we face today. The risk of those catastrophic consequences will remain as long as nuclear weapons exist. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use, and yet some States seem unwilling to let go of them, although they know very well that the transboundary and global impact of the existence of nuclear weapons leaves their populations less well protected and less secure. As Albert Einstein very wisely put it,

“The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe”.

While States' elimination of their nuclear-weapon stockpiles remains slow, nuclear-weapon threats carried out by Member States compromise world peace and stability. The danger of nuclear material falling into terrorists' hands, and its unthinkable consequences, has added a further dangerous dimension to the threat posed by nuclear weapons in a world where established States are increasingly being destabilized.

The bottom line is that the situation is grave and bleak. I often wonder whether we as a global community have done enough where negotiating in good faith and reaching a solution to our situation are concerned. The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, has not been able to conduct negotiations or begin an agreed programme of work in two decades. The United Nations Disarmament Commission, the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament apparatus that considers specific disarmament issues and submits concrete recommendations to the General Assembly, has not produced a substantive outcome since 1999. At the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the parties failed to reach agreement on a substantive final document. Although the multilateral nuclear-disarmament machinery has shown slow progress, the solution to countering the challenge of nuclear weapons lies within multilateralism itself.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as the central instrument in this area, has always provided the normative framework for nuclear disarmament. The 2010 NPT Action Plan

and the 13 practical steps to disarmament agreed on at the 2003 NPT Review Conference, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, among others, have served to alleviate the threat of nuclear weapons. Building on those normative frameworks, a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons and lead to their total elimination would be a giant step forward in the nuclear-disarmament process.

Sri Lanka supports the convening of a conference in 2017 open to all States, as recommended by the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, designed to enable us to negotiate and conclude such an instrument. However, if we are to achieve a legally binding instrument creating a world free of nuclear weapons, it is vital to ensure that all Member States negotiate in good faith. Indeed, all States have a responsibility to negotiate in good faith. Additionally, the nuclear-weapon States have a clear responsibility to take effective measures aimed at the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the NPT.

Sri Lanka is committed to the elimination of the threat caused by nuclear weapons. That commitment is enshrined in our obligations under international treaties. Sri Lanka will make every possible effort to realize nuclear disarmament and bring the peaceful use of nuclear technology within reach.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): Progress in the area of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is essential for peace and security for all of us. We should remind ourselves time and again of our joint goal, a safer and more secure world with fewer and, ultimately, no nuclear weapons. How do we get there? By way of nuclear non-proliferation. A prime example of what diplomacy can achieve if all the parties concerned demonstrate the necessary political will is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed between Iran and the E3+3. Implementation day was 16 January, and we are now in the middle of a long confidence-building period. Three reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have confirmed Iran's compliance with the agreement so far. That is an encouraging development.

With respect to nuclear disarmament, this year's agenda revolves around one question that is central to an overwhelming majority of States. What is the right path to achieving a world without nuclear weapons? Many of

us share that goal, but there is considerable disagreement on how to get there. The Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in Geneva voted, by a majority, for a report (see A/71/371) that includes a recommendation that negotiations start in 2017 on creating a legal instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons. But although we share the frustration over the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament in recent years, Germany does not agree with that recommendation. In our analysis, a ban treaty is not a quick fix for achieving nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, it could damage the established regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Let me explain our view.

Nuclear weapons will disappear only when the nuclear-weapon States engage in the process. Negotiating a ban treaty without involving possessor States will not lead to a reduction in worldwide nuclear arsenals. An immediate ban on nuclear weapons without a verification mechanism or restrictions on the production of fissile material runs the risk of weakening the NPT, contrary to its proponents' intentions. There is an inherent risk that countries could elect to participate in such a ban while possibly leaving or abandoning the NPT, which could lead to new doubts and insecurities about their potential decisions. Nuclear disarmament does not take place in a security vacuum, and the overall security situation must be taken into consideration for nuclear disarmament to be effective. That is why Germany, together with its partners, continues advocating for a pragmatic, step-by-step approach.

In that regard, let me turn to the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty, which is one important element of the step-by-step approach. Building on last year's valuable work by the Group of Governmental Experts, we are seeking to add elements to that process. We are convinced that this approach will enable the necessary intermediate step after the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, and will lay the necessary foundation for future negotiations on a treaty within the Conference on Disarmament.

Another element is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which belongs to the categories of both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. This year's Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT, held on 21 September in New York, provided another opportunity to call on annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty. With the exception of North Korea, no country has conducted a nuclear test in the twenty-first century,

with all other nuclear-weapon possessors complying with their moratorium.

Another important issue is nuclear security. Besides our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, we must keep our focus on the evolving threats emanating from terrorism, including nuclear terrorism. They are real and they should be addressed. We therefore need to strengthen the international nuclear security architecture, with the IAEA playing a central coordinating role, something that was reaffirmed at the recent IAEA General Conference. The forthcoming IAEA Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna will provide a timely and suitable opportunity for giving further impetus to international efforts to mitigate radiological and nuclear security risks.

Another element is the comprehensive review of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). Germany welcomes multilateral efforts such as the review process for Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is the key part of the international legal architecture designed to enable States to prevent and combat nuclear terrorism. However, the risk of non-State actors acquiring, developing, trafficking in or using weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons, remains high. While striving for universal implementation of the obligations deriving from resolution 1540 (2004), we are especially committed to enhancing the security of nuclear materials worldwide. We also need to involve all the relevant stakeholders. In that context, the role of industry and the private sector remains an important concern of the German Government. That is why we initiated the Wiesbaden process, which focuses on private-sector engagement in the context of resolution 1540 (2004). As we explained during this year's review process, Germany stands ready to broaden the scope of that cooperation by addressing chemical and nuclear security, among other things.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have already heard numerous scathing opinions in this room about the insufficient progress — or, indeed, the total lack of it — that has been made on nuclear disarmament. However, in general, those who expressed those views could not be bothered to provide facts or figures to back them up.

From our perspective, we believe it is essential to fill that gap and reassert the historical truth, based on the facts, regarding Russia's contribution to the process of the gradual reduction of nuclear weapons. A mere

two years after the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) came into force, in May 1972, the Interim Agreement between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on Certain Measures with Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT I) was concluded, representing the first decisive step in fulfilling the first part of article VI of the NPT — ending the nuclear arms race. Presumably there is no need to explain to anyone that at the time, the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the subject of the NPT, was still in its early stages.

We should also recall here that the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) was signed at the same time as SALT I, showing the recognition that existed even then of the unbreakable link between strategic offensive and defensive weapons, which only grew as nuclear arsenals were reduced. At a time when the potential of the United States global anti-ballistic-missile system is increasing along the Russian Federation's borders, in the wake of the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the ABM Treaty in 2002, any rush to an agreement on reducing our strategic nuclear forces would be short-sighted on our part, to say the least.

The SALT I Treaty laid the foundation for a number of other agreements. An important turning point was the signing in 1987 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, which is still in force. A period of several years after its entry into force saw the irreversible and verifiable destruction of two entire classes of nuclear weapons, including the deactivation of more than 3,000 nuclear warheads, equal in power to 500,000 kilotons, not to mention the destruction of related infrastructure and development and production facilities. But what really mattered was that the peoples of an entire continent were spared the genuine threat of large-scale nuclear war. If that is not an effective measure, as our critics insist, of nuclear disarmament, then what is?

Our progress towards genuine nuclear disarmament has not always been smooth, but it has been consistent. Rather than complicating matters with more numbers, however, we will focus on the main thing. As a result of a series of Soviet-American and Russian-American agreements, Russia's strategic nuclear forces have been reduced more than fivefold. Over the five-year period

from 2010 to 2015 alone, the number of operationally deployed nuclear warheads decreased from 3,900 units to less than 1,600, that is, by two and a half times. Furthermore, Russia has unilaterally reduced its tactical nuclear weapons by three quarters and the remainder have been transferred to a non-deployed category, meaning that they are unavailable for use. Practical nuclear disarmament is continuing even as we speak. As part of the New START treaty of 2010, by 2018 Russia and the United States of America should reach new minimum ceilings of 1,550 warheads on each side, and we have been consistently fulfilling those obligations.

In that regard, we would like to ask those delegations that have been insisting the opposite to come up with a more reasoned argument, based on facts. If, of course, they are hoping to have a genuinely serious, substantive dialogue on a subject as important as nuclear disarmament. The Russian Federation is prepared to have an open and substantive discussion on further steps towards a nuclear-free world. However, we must act so as to ensure that each step of our work together will help to strengthen — not undermine — peace and security for all States without exception. It is simply unrealistic to think that we can achieve that without taking into account the totality of the factors influencing global strategic stability. We will not enumerate all of the issues, but we should note that besides anti-ballistic missile systems, one of them is achieving the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible. We agree that voluntary moratoriums should not be considered as an exchange for treaty obligations. We are prepared to work on a fissile material cut-off treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament on a basis of a balanced programme of work agreed to by consensus.

We would like to particularly emphasize that we have a clear, consensus-based road map for our future nuclear-disarmament efforts set out in the Action Plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The document outlines specific objectives, and making progress towards them is the essence of a true multilateral disarmament process. We consider attempts to oppose it by taking unilateral steps, not to mention going outside the existing international formats, to be extremely destructive. The ban on nuclear weapons proposed by one group of States would run directly counter to the

foundations of the NPT, with all the negative effects that would result from that, something we talked about in detail during the general political discussion. In that regard, the Russian delegation considers the introduction of a draft resolution (A/C.1/71/L.41) on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, aimed at convening a conference as early as 2017 on drafting a legally binding ban on nuclear weapons, to be inopportune and a serious mistake. Like our other partners in the group of five nuclear countries, we will vote against it.

I apologize for exceeding the time limit.

Ms. Sisoulith (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.11). However, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, remains a matter of serious concern to all people and countries. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has consistently held the view that only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons can the international community ensure an absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. We therefore welcomed the General Assembly meeting on 26 September commemorating the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and aimed at enhancing public awareness and promoting education about the threat that nuclear weapons pose to humankind.

Since the use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, it is imperative that we prohibit their use. We therefore reaffirm that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In order to achieve those objectives and preserve its integrity, it is of paramount importance that all three pillars of the Treaty be implemented in a balanced manner and in good faith.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic stresses the importance of achieving the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which aims to promote nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, 20 years after it was

opened for signature, the CTBT is still not in effect. It is therefore the duty of the international community to ensure its entry into force as soon as possible. The Lao People's Democratic Republic commends the States that have signed and ratified the Treaty and urges those that have not done so, particularly the annex 2 States, to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones has significantly helped to strengthen the global nuclear-disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regimes and to enhance regional and global peace and security. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates that it is essential to ensure that the nuclear-weapon States recognize these zones and give all States in them unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We also wish to re-emphasize the importance of ensuring that the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone is fully operational, and we encourage the nuclear-weapon States to accede to its Protocol.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic strongly believes that it is essential for Member States to show political will and flexibility if we are to make progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and to overcome the challenges that nuclear weapons pose to the international community. Greater effort on the part of each and every country will be needed for us to work together to achieve the common goal that is a world free from nuclear weapons.

Ms. Nolan (Ireland): I would like to associate myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt (see A/C.1/71/PV.10) on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), of which Ireland is proud to be a member. Ireland is a sponsor of the NAC draft resolution (A/C.1/71/L.35) and looks forward to its adoption by consensus in the First Committee.

I will add the following remarks in my national capacity, and in the interests of brevity I will read a shortened text. But I would first like to reiterate my delegation's thanks for the exemplary, professional and respectful manner in which the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi of Thailand, undertook his role as Chair of the Group, including in his introduction of its final report (see A/71/371) on Friday. As the Chair made clear, the agenda for the Open-ended Working Group was broad and covered all aspects of the mandate

approved by the General Assembly last year. Those who were absent from its proceedings were absent by choice and not by omission or exclusion. All issues relating to effective measures, which Ireland, together with its NAC partners, has now been presenting for many years, were open to discussion. In the course of our discussions in Geneva, which, as we have already noted, benefited from a welcome diversity and gender balance, many issues emerged in common, especially regarding the part of the mandate that addresses the important issues of risk, transparency, verification, awareness-raising and other measures, where the Chair noted a great deal of convergence.

The Open-ended Working Group is one of those rare entities that is greater than the sum of its parts, and greater even than the material it has produced. Because something very significant happened in Geneva this year. As the Ambassador of New Zealand already noted (see A/C.1/71/PV.5), the Open-ended Working Group has led to the creation of a new mainstream. We believe that all delegations that were present, and certainly my own delegation, engaged in the process in good faith and with no preconceived outcome in mind. However, as the discussions progressed, and as we listened respectfully to one another and to the compelling expert presentations, a momentum developed and a sense of possibility emerged and grew. By May, a majority opinion was coalescing around the potential for a new legal instrument, complementary to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), giving effect to the commitments on nuclear disarmament enshrined in article VI of the Treaty, and on which negotiations could be opened in 2017.

For Ireland, the foundation and driving force has always been and continues to be the NPT, represented by the imperative of seeing article VI fully implemented and by our obligation, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, to contribute to multilateral nuclear disarmament. The humanitarian consequences initiative and the more recent expert presentations to the Open-ended Working Group, including by those with a military and security background, have served only to reinforce what has always been our view since the NPT itself was conceived — that the world will be a safe place only when it is free of nuclear weapons. We all live in the same world, and the existence of nuclear weapons is a security concern for us all. Indeed, it would seem that the very existence of nuclear weapons rather serves to heighten the stakes and exacerbate tensions. In that

regard, we concur with the statement made last week by Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, when he noted that we need to come to our senses, since it makes no logical sense to destroy entire societies.

We all know that a nuclear detonation respects no boundaries and that the effects of a nuclear weapon take no sides. As we have heard from many experts, they are indiscriminate, catastrophic and unanswerable in terms of a humanitarian response. I think we in this room have all shared our outrage at the devastating humanitarian consequences of the ongoing use of explosive weapons on men, women, children, families and whole societies. But what, then, of a bomb with the power to destroy millions and threaten the very future of our planet? We do not need to imagine it. We know the lessons of history, and science can provide us with the far more terrible data of a detonation today. So the risks and reality of nuclear weapons are all too clear. Those arguments have been made and should not need to be repeated. The challenge to us all now is to face the facts and do something about them before it is too late. Those of us who focus on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons have at times been accused of living in a fairy tale. But it is the idea of a limited nuclear exchange, or of more usable, targeted, nuclear weapons that is the real fantasy. The devastating consequences are the reality. And here we endorse the powerful and compelling statement, including about responsibility on States, made here last week by the Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (see A/C.1/71/PV.9).

There comes a time when choices have to be made, and this is one of those times. Risk is composed of possibility multiplied by impact. Given the clear risks associated with the continued existence of nuclear weapons, this is now a choice between responsibility and irresponsibility. Governance requires accountability and leadership. The United Nations exists because at a crucial point in our history we decided to stop warring and start talking. At that time, our predecessors knew and understood what was at stake. The very first resolution they crafted related to nuclear weapons. But somehow, in all that has happened since, we have forgotten that and neglected the most crucial of all our high-level goals, the one where lack of progress casts a shadow over all others. For some time, Ireland has drawn attention to the interconnected nature of international obligations on nuclear disarmament, and

so we were pleased to hear the President of the General Assembly reiterate that the work of the First Committee is integral to the universal master plan represented by the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

On the twentieth anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which has still not entered into force but does represent an important global norm, we take note of the fact that the Security Council has called on all States to refrain from testing nuclear weapons. Given that the impact of nuclear weapons is such that they must never be tested again, it seems only logical that they should never be used again, either. Historians are divided about the effectiveness of nuclear deterrents, and there are no guarantees at all that they will work in the future, in this world of cyberthreats and the application of emerging technologies in the nuclear sector, such as robotics and autonomous systems — or, indeed, against threats from those who may feel that they have nothing to lose or do not fear their own destruction, as was very clearly stated by the representative of Thailand in her statement on Friday (see A/C.1/71/PV.11).

Semantics are also important. We must be clear and unambiguous in the language we use about these weapons. Deterrence requires the threat of use, a threat that we are told has to be believable in order to be effective. But there should be no prestige attached to the ability to threaten the life of the planet and every living thing on it. Any such prestige can beget only proliferation and runs counter to the intention of the NPT.

It is long past time to prohibit and eliminate these inhumane, indiscriminate and indefensible weapons of mass destruction. In this room and elsewhere, we have made many lists and action plans on multilateral nuclear disarmament. But our lists and plans must lead to action if they are to have any real effect. Steps must be taken and blocks must be built if they are to be anything more than words on a page or in the air. The United Nations is a global governance organization, and we have heard a great deal about the evolving security situation. In our view, that only makes it all the more essential to remove nuclear weapons from the equation. As our then Foreign Minister said, speaking to the First Committee in 1958, change is the law of all historical situations. We cannot forever chase the elusive perfect security situation before we take the first step. Such a nirvana does not exist of its own accord, but we can contribute

to its creation with the required vision and by taking the necessary actions.

Ireland, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, fully accepts its commitment under the NPT to nuclear disarmament. The NPT is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation architecture, but it does not profess to be the last word on the elimination of nuclear weapons. Parties to the Treaty have already committed, under article VI, to pursuing negotiations in good faith on a separate and complementary treaty on general and complete disarmament. It is in order to begin to put that commitment into practical effect that Ireland is supporting the recommendation calling for holding a conference in 2017 on a new legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, with a view to their total elimination, because we believe in it and in the promise to humankind that the United Nations has made and must fulfil.

In conclusion, the day is coming when, very sadly, as the Ambassador of Japan reminded us (see A/C.1/71/PV.5), we will have no more living witnesses to the terrible harm done by nuclear weapons. We should have the courage now to honour the bravery that those living witnesses have demonstrated in sharing their suffering with the world, so that it may never be repeated. In that context, I commend to the Committee the draft resolution on taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations (A/C.1/71/L.41), together with the draft resolutions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/71/L.23) and on the Humanitarian Pledge (A/C.1/71/L.24) and the ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world (A/C.1/71/L.36).

Finally, I would like to recall that President Obama said, in his address to the General Assembly (see A/71/PV.8), as he also said on a recent visit to Hiroshima, that we can choose a better future and a better history. We fully agree.

Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria): As this is the first time my delegation takes the floor in the First Committee, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your assumption of the chairship of the Committee. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Van Oosterom of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for his outstanding leadership, and to assure you of my delegation's full support in your efforts to steer us to a successful conclusion to our deliberations.

There can be no doubt that everyone in this room shares a common objective — reaching the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. What we differ on is the approach. While we understand that there may be frustration about the pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament, we are of the view that a prohibition treaty, as has been proposed for negotiation in 2017, would not be effective without the participation of all States and, most importantly, without the participation of the States that possess nuclear weapons. Instead of bringing us closer to achieving the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons, it will further divide us. Unfortunately, recent developments in global security have demonstrated that the security environment is complex and far from stable. That has to be factored in when we are advocating for rapid solutions. Being cognizant of the specificities of the security environment of each State is key to understanding why there can be no shortcuts to nuclear disarmament.

Achieving the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons requires unity, understanding and trust — that is, unity in action and an understanding of the security concerns of every State, while the notion of trust is self-explanatory. That is why Bulgaria has advocated for a progressive approach. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the framework for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Action Plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons offers a solid basis for working towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons. What we need is unity and concerted efforts to implement it. The start of the new NPT review cycle in 2017 is an opportunity that we must all seize if we are to advance our efforts to advance the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Advancing nuclear disarmament requires our joint efforts. A common understanding of the necessary steps can be built only through inclusive and comprehensive discussion, with the substantive participation of the nuclear-weapon States. Bulgaria supports a constructive, realistic and gradual approach based on practical and implementable measures, the building blocks that can strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Such practical steps could include overcoming the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, including through

its enlargement, starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force. This session of the First Committee has seen some very constructive initiatives offering practical steps, such as the draft resolutions on a fissile material cut-off treaty (A/C.1/71/L.65) and nuclear-disarmament verification (A/C.1/71/L.57/Rev.1), among others.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the CTBT. We should be working to ensure its entry into force as soon as possible, since it is a key building block in our efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Bulgaria also welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), of which it was a sponsor, and reiterates the call for refraining from nuclear testing.

Finally, Bulgaria remains hopeful that through unity, understanding and mutual trust, we have the potential to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Nguyen Doan Minh (Viet Nam): Our delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives, respectively, of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.10), and the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/71/PV.11). We wish to add some comments from our national perspective.

Progress in the reduction in the number of deployed nuclear weapons has been limited, and the rest of the disarmament picture is bleak. Thousands of nuclear weapons still exist, many on alert status, while international peace and security is being threatened by the increasing danger of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. We regret that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet come into force, 20 years after its adoption. We are still witnessing a prolonged stalemate in the multilateral disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as well as, more recently, the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, despite intensive consultations. In a world of complexity and volatility, we firmly believe that ensuring the total elimination of such weapons and making tremendous and determined efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world must be the objectives guiding our collective action.

The international efforts to achieve those goals should include, first and foremost, our commitment to the continued role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Besides that, we should also invest adequately in the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We call on the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations under article VI of the NPT and to work towards the early signing and ratification of their respective protocols, including through continued engagement with ASEAN member States. Progress should also be made on the efforts to conclude a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States as soon as possible, along with negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Challenges to nuclear proliferation should be addressed comprehensively and prudently. While we share the view that the relevant international obligations should be met, we also believe that the legitimate interests of the parties concerned must be taken into account, including the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development purposes. We also emphasize the importance of promoting action, coordination and information-sharing among international mechanisms, as well as among countries, in order to improve the effectiveness of the fight against potential nuclear terrorism activities and to enhance nuclear security in line with international and domestic laws.

Viet Nam has been an active participant in international initiatives and mechanisms on disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and we have strictly implemented our obligations under the relevant treaties and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1540 (2004). Since its ratification, in September 2012, of the Additional Protocol to its International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards Agreement, and its accession to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and ratification of the Convention's amendment, in October 2012, Viet Nam has joined the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Just last month we submitted our instrument of accession to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We also cooperate effectively with the IAEA and other

international partners in ensuring global nuclear safety and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

I would like to reiterate Viet Nam's commitment and willingness to work with you, Mr. Chair, and other Member States to renew our political commitment and translate it into concrete steps, in a comprehensive and balanced manner, in order to achieve our common goals.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.48.

Mr. Sobral Duarte (Brazil): At the outset, I would like to associate my delegation with the statements delivered by the representative of Venezuela, on behalf of the Union of South American Nations, and Egypt, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

The nuclear threat has been at the forefront of the disarmament and non-proliferation debate for decades. It is a complex and challenging issue, a peace and security puzzle that must be faced head-on. Unfortunately, and in spite of some successful initiatives on nuclear arms control and non-proliferation, progress on genuine nuclear disarmament is still lacking. As things stand, the international community has now faced more than two decades of disappointment in multilateral processes dealing with disarmament. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's entry into force is still pending and, it seems, will remain so in the short run, and we have not even begun negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty. The Conference on Disarmament is mired in controversy and the United Nations Disarmament Commission has not been able to fulfil its mandate for 17 years. If we are to change that scenario, fresh and more ambitious approaches are needed.

It is in that light that we see the recommendation made by the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations for a conference in 2017 to negotiate a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. Such a treaty is not an end in itself, nor a panacea to cure an ailing regime. It will be thoroughly compatible with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the wider nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. By doubling up on their commitment never to acquire nuclear weapons, non-nuclear-weapon States will reinforce both their own credentials and the international non-proliferation regime. Further efforts needed to attain the complete elimination of nuclear

arsenals can be pursued either within a framework laid out by the prohibition treaty — the approach preferred by Brazil — or in parallel with it. In either case, the treaty would necessarily work in tandem with the review mechanism of the NPT and the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

A historic achievement such as this would reflect the international community's growing consciousness of the urgent need to abolish nuclear weapons. It is important to underline that the results of the Open-ended Working Group are not a short cut to reaching nuclear disarmament but part of a gradual process that begins by setting out core prohibitions, to be followed by arrangements on elimination and verification. The convening of a conference to negotiate a prohibition on nuclear weapons, as recommended by the Working Group, is a meaningful and concrete contribution to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Despite the differing national positions on joining such a treaty from its outset, a prohibition is widely recognized as a necessary element of any approach to nuclear disarmament. We therefore urge all States to support the convening of the conference and engage actively in the ensuing negotiations, in order to voice their concerns and points of view and contribute to the best possible outcome.

In my conclusion, I would also like to take this opportunity to draw attention to draft decision A/C.1/71/L.48, submitted by Brazil. It pertains to the triennial reports of the Secretary-General regarding developments relevant to the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof. The reports were requested back in 1989, under General Assembly resolution 44/116 O, and were supposed to inform the fourth Review Conference of the Treaty, which, after nearly 30 years, has yet to be convened. In view of that and of the fact that few States have contributed to the Secretary-General's reports, our draft decision proposes that they be submitted again only when the General Assembly so decides.

Mr. Tenya Hasegawa (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since the inception of the United Nations, nuclear disarmament has been a priority goal for the international community. Proof of that is the fact that nuclear disarmament was addressed in the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly, in 1946 (resolution 1(1)), and has been on its agenda since 1959.

Peru, as a State firmly committed to peace, shares that global concern and has promoted and is party to all the international regimes on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

As our history shows, the chief drivers of our foreign policy have always included the quest for mechanisms that can help to combat that threat to international security. One of our first steps in that regard was promoting the establishment in Latin America and the Caribbean of the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone, in accordance with the international agreement known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, a regional instrument that will mark its fiftieth anniversary in February of next year. It is a source of pride for the region and an example to the rest of the world.

In that regard, Peru reaffirms its commitment to one of the pillars of the international disarmament regime, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and to its full implementation, recognizing the inalienable right of all States to peacefully develop research, produce and use nuclear energy without discrimination and in accordance with articles I, II, III and IV of the Treaty. We also emphasize that it is essential to achieve its universalization, and we would like to take this opportunity to urge the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations under article VI of the NPT. We would also like to highlight the fact that, in November 1997, Peru was one of the first States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which has been a key step in international efforts to achieve complete disarmament and one that has become more relevant in the wake of recent events in Asia.

We would like to acknowledge the excellent work done by Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi of Thailand as Chair of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, established pursuant to resolution 70/33. We welcomed the resolution's adoption by a majority vote, as well as the Working Group's final report (see A/71/371), which includes a proposal on convening a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, with a view to their total elimination.

More than half of the world's population today lives in countries that possess nuclear weapons or are part of nuclear alliances. Given the serious potential consequences of the use of nuclear weapons for life on our planet, Peru has joined the Humanitarian Pledge, in the hope that we will not see a repeat of the terrible

suffering that resulted from the use of such weapons in the past. My country feels that the current situation on this issue is unacceptable, which is why we must work with determination to forge a path whose ultimate goal is the establishment of international legal guarantees that can strengthen the principle of collective security. And that involves achieving nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, we reaffirm our commitment to advancing all the measures necessary to achieve international peace and security in our world, a goal that necessarily presupposes a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mrs. Chatardová (Czech Republic): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election. You can count on our cooperation.

The Czech Republic has been a long-term supporter of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially regarding the issues of universal adherence to the Treaty and full compliance with its obligations. Like the vast majority of States parties to the NPT, we were disappointed with the outcome of the last Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in 2015. Nevertheless, it is still our firm belief that the NPT, as the cornerstone of the global regime of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, remains indispensable for our global security and will continue to serve as a fundamental instrument for taking forward nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. With the aim of preserving and strengthening its authority and integrity, we must all do our best to ensure that the next review cycle is successful. The first important opportunity to show our joint determination will be in May in Vienna, which will host the first session of the Preparatory Committee.

The Czech Republic remains fully committed to the objective of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. In that regard, we have noted the increasing calls for convening a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. We are of the opinion, however, that a legal ban negotiated in such a manner would in no way guarantee the elimination of existing nuclear arsenals. Rather, we believe that an effective disarmament strategy, firmly rooted in the NPT and taking into account both security and humanitarian considerations, should recognize that the elimination of nuclear weapons is a long-term process that will not succeed without engaging our nuclear-weapon States in a constructive

dialogue. We are of the view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons can be realized only through mutually reinforcing practical measures and in the presence of a robust verification regime that can provide credible assurances of irreversible disarmament.

The Czech Republic, as the first European country to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), would like to reaffirm its support for the process leading to its entry into force, which will significantly strengthen the international security architecture founded on the NPT. For that reason, we urge those States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as soon as possible, particularly the remaining annex 2 States, whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force. In that context, we welcome the emphasis on the importance of the CTBT in Security Council resolution 2310 (2016) and in the joint statement of the eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT, both adopted last September.

The Czech Republic is disappointed with the continuing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament that, among other things, has failed to offer any progress in negotiations on a legally binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The international community must look for new approaches and creative solutions in order to reach an agreement that will finally enable us to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible.

The Czech Republic is appalled by the continued acts of provocation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the accelerating spiral of escalation over the past nine months, including two nuclear tests and the launch of more than 20 ballistic missiles. They represent a clear and serious violation of the obligation to refrain from producing nuclear weapons and testing nuclear explosive devices and long-range ballistic missiles, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return to the NPT and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards immediately.

I will conclude by reiterating that the Czech Republic attaches great importance to nuclear disarmament. It was in Prague in 2009 that President Obama set out his vision of a world without nuclear weapons, a vision that has become known as the Prague agenda. We share that

vision, and in the past five years Prague has gradually established itself as a venue for taking stock of topical issues related to nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We intend to continue those endeavours in December, when the Czech Republic will host the Prague Agenda Conference for the sixth time.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.47.

Mr. Htin Lynn (Myanmar): During our general debate over the past few days, many delegations, including my own, truly mindful of the danger posed by nuclear weapons, have called for their complete elimination. We are now working to produce draft resolutions aimed at achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world, and my delegation welcomes all such efforts on their own merits.

Myanmar has been advocating in this forum for a world free of nuclear weapons for more than 20 years. The aim of the annual draft resolution on nuclear disarmament submitted by my country, with the support of the wider United Nations membership, particularly the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, is to achieve peace and security for present and future generations. On behalf of all its sponsors, therefore, I would like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.47, entitled “Nuclear disarmament”. The draft resolution outlines and calls for interim and practical steps to be taken, particularly by the nuclear-weapon States, as well as multilateral actions by all in various forums leading to nuclear disarmament.

They include the following provisions: to immediately end the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems; to immediately de-alert and deactivate nuclear weapons; to carry out effective nuclear-disarmament measures with or within a specified time framework; to agree on an internationally and legally binding instrument on a joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; to conclude international legal instruments on unconditional security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances; to immediately commence negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials; to immediately commence negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapon convention; and to convene, no later than 2018,

a high-level United Nations international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made on the issue.

I believe that those steps and others in the draft resolution are pragmatic and feasible, assuming that we all approach them with renewed political will. As of today, a total of 38 countries have already become sponsors of the draft resolution. I would like to urge all Member States to sponsor the draft resolution I have just introduced, in the spirit of making the world free of nuclear weapons and a safer place for future generations.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea is strongly committed to the vision of a world without nuclear weapons. It is also our unwavering belief that a world free of nuclear weapons must start at the Korean peninsula. Such a world is only a daydream without the denuclearization of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Yet the deplorable state of play is that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is now nearing the final stages of nuclear weaponization. This year alone, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea conducted two nuclear tests and 23 missile launches — the latest just this past weekend — defying the warnings of the international community. The magnitude and frequency of the most recent nuclear test was a major departure from previous ones. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is therefore accelerating its nuclear and missile programmes and even openly threatening preemptive nuclear strikes. And there is another important aspect to the issue. In its blind pursuit of nuclear weapons, the leadership of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea continues to divert scarce resources from where they are most needed, which is to alleviate the human-rights and subsistence plight of its own people, who, to add insult to injury, are currently suffering from the worst flood in decades.

We must act swiftly and resolutely to combat this unprecedented threat not only to international peace and security, but also to the international non-proliferation regime. In just the past two weeks, both during the general debate of the General Assembly and in the First Committee, we have heard the North Korean delegation say that “[o]pting to become an armed nuclear Power is our State policy” (*A/71/PV.17, p. 49*). The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea must realize that it will never be recognized as a nuclear-weapon State, that it must abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible

manner, and that it must immediately cease all related activities, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Furthermore, by adopting a new, robust Security Council resolution on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's fifth nuclear test, the international community must make it clear to that country that by continuing its pursuit of nuclear and missile programmes it will only face tougher sanctions and further diplomatic isolation, which will eventually lead it to self-destruct.

Also on the subject of nuclear non-proliferation, we would like to reiterate our firm support for the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and additional protocols, which are essential to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Meanwhile, the Republic of Korea is ready to work together with the international community to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime as Chair of both the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime from 2016 to 2017. We will also guard against the possible proliferation of nuclear materials to non-State actors as President of the International Conference on Nuclear Security, to be held under the auspices of the IAEA in December.

On disarmament, the Republic of Korea believes that it is important that we make progress on the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As a country that has seen thousands of its own people suffer the consequences of atomic bombings, we share the international community's concerns about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. However, we should not let frustration push us towards a conclusion that is neither viable nor sustainable. We believe that the best way to attain a world without nuclear weapons is through practical concrete measures within the existing legal and non-legal frameworks. In that regard, we would like to make the following suggestions.

First, we must continue to uphold the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the foundation of our efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. We encourage all Member States to narrow their differences in future discussions, starting in 2017 with the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Secondly, we underscore the imperative need for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

(CTBT) as soon as possible, and we call for the eight remaining annex 2 countries to sign and ratify it, in order to bring this dormant 20-year-old Treaty into force. In that regard, the Republic of Korea welcomes the joint statement of the Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT on 21 September, and draws the attention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the overwhelmingly strong condemnations of its five nuclear tests voiced at the meeting. Thirdly, we support the speedy commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, which is our sole multilateral disarmament negotiation forum. We have already waited two decades, and we cannot justify any further delay. Fourthly, and finally, we greatly value the ongoing international initiatives aimed at fostering enhanced transparency and confidence in nuclear disarmament, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize once again that it is now more imperative than ever that we exert our efforts and mobilize all available means to denuclearize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are under no illusions that the task will be easy. Unity in action is the sole answer to enhancing our collective security.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): I would like to begin today by recalling events that took place 16 years ago at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the Conference, and for the first time, the five nuclear-weapon States gave an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, as one of the 13 practical steps. That undertaking was not offered up by the nuclear-weapon States in the early stages of the Review Conference, and some might even say that it was wrung rather reluctantly from them. But I think it is safe to conclude that each of them agreed to it only after a very careful analysis of its costs and benefits. The benefits were very clear. Their undertaking was a key factor in securing a consensus outcome at the Review Conference, and in retaining the good health and standing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The same was true for the 2010 Review Conference, when they reaffirmed that same undertaking.

Quite possibly, the nuclear-weapon States did not choose to explain to anyone at either the 2000 or the 2010 Conference exactly how they would give effect

to their undertaking while meeting their expressed determination to maintain strategic stability and base their actions on the principle of undiminished security for all. And I doubt that they were asked. It was sufficient that all five accepted, very evidently, that it was doable. Their undertaking provided reassurance that the obligation under article VI of the Treaty to achieve progressively full nuclear disarmament — the basis on which so many non-nuclear-weapon States had entered the Treaty — would be given reality. Again, it is likely that no one asked exactly when that would be, but there must have been confidence that good faith, the bread and butter of all international engagement, meant that it would be within a reasonable period of time.

Since then, our perception — that quite a number of agreed-on Review Conference outcomes, including the unequivocal undertaking, have not delivered what we understood they promised — has been compounded by frustration at the lack of meaningful progress on article VI. Not only has nothing in the way of a vision, or framing, for a world free of nuclear weapons been put forward by the nuclear-weapon States, they have not outlined anything along the lines of a plausible road map or scenario — one that does not lead instantly to a seemingly insurmountable roadblock for the way forward.

New Zealand agrees with what we have frequently been told, especially at NPT Review Conferences, that it is also the responsibility of non-nuclear-weapon States to work assiduously for a nuclear-weapon-free world. As a member of the New Agenda Coalition, we believe we have been doing that for some time, but we can accept that now, with progress on article VI seriously faltering, there is a need for non-nuclear-weapon States to step up and play a fuller part by moving forward with the rule-based framing for the end-state promised in article VI. Accordingly, New Zealand is pleased to have become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41, carrying forward the recommendation of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We hope that others will not simply criticize this new process for what they suggest it might not do — for instance, remedy the NPT's failure to persuade the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to relinquish its nuclear weapons, or prevent nuclear materials from falling into the hands of terrorists — but will join with us in doing everything possible to ensure that it both strengthens the NPT

regime and contributes yet more broadly to global peace and security.

At the same time, as we join with others here in moving forward on the framing for a nuclear-weapon-free world, New Zealand will continue its full support for interim and transitional measures — steps we have long pursued and supported, such as on de-alerting, and in favour of greater transparency in nuclear holdings and a reduced role for nuclear weapons in security doctrines. And we will certainly participate, as wholeheartedly as ever, in all NPT deliberations on all its pillars. There is no question of supporters of the nuclear prohibition treaty withdrawing from the NPT. That suggestion made in the debate this morning is a false, but dangerous, fantasy.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express my condolences to the delegation of Thailand on the death of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

My delegation aligns itself with the positions of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of Arab States on this agenda item.

(*spoke in English*)

Egypt would like to express its concern about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, and reaffirms its belief that the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is the primary objective of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That objective is dependent on the nuclear-weapon States' fulfilment of their obligations under article VI of the NPT, and on the achievement of universal adherence to the Treaty. It is therefore essential that negotiations begin without further delay on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, within a specific time frame, and including a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention.

In that regard, Egypt emphasizes the importance of conducting timely and essential negotiations — in the context of the productive outcome and unprecedented achievement of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which met recently in Geneva — aimed at mobilizing the international community to adopt a more action-oriented approach to reaching the total elimination of nuclear weapons through a legally binding universal instrument.

Egypt has repeatedly demanded that the 13 practical steps agreed on at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons be implemented, as well as the 2010 Action Plan, yet the lack of the political will needed to implement those commitments has enabled nuclear weapons — and the real and present threat they represent to international peace and security — to continue to exist.

It is important to emphasize that the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 in no way granted permission to nuclear-weapon States to possess such weapons indefinitely. Any such assumption is contrary to the spirit and letter of the Treaty, as well as to its main objective. Egypt is concerned about the increasing trend among nuclear-weapon States to develop new types of weapons and conduct studies and research into modernizing their nuclear armament systems, rather than joining international efforts to achieve universality of the NPT, as the cornerstone of disarmament policy. That is why Egypt has rejected the nuclear-weapon States' joint statement made in September in that regard.

For more than four decades, as a top priority of our foreign policy, Egypt has striven to free the Middle East from nuclear weapons, in our understanding of the danger that such weapons pose, particularly considering Israel's continued regional monopoly of nuclear arsenals — the weapons and warheads themselves, and their various delivery systems — without any inspection or International Atomic Energy Agency verification regime, which undermines regional security and is a threat to Arab national security.

Although more than 20 years have passed since the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East as a basis for the indefinite extension package of the NPT, its implementation is still a distant prospect, owing to insufficient effort on the part of its sponsoring States and the unilateral announcement of the indefinite postponement of the crucial 2012 Conference, which was planned to be held in Helsinki, but never happened. The international community is still waiting for it. That shocking postponement was decided by a single nuclear-weapon State, with no acceptable excuse or consultation with the States of the region. Nevertheless, Egypt and the Group of Arab States did everything possible to interact positively in all the relevant proceedings, participating actively in meetings in Vienna, Lyon and Geneva in 2013 and 2014. Regrettably, however, in

the absence of a clear role for the United Nations, and contrary to the 2010 NPT mandate, the Arab Group's positive interaction came up against an unjustified exercise of veto power aimed at blocking the procedures as well as the substantive negotiations.

The ultimate way forward is highlighted in a working paper adopted by the the Non-Aligned Movement at the 2015 NPT Review Conference — to be found attached to the longer version of my statement on PaperSmart — which called on the Review Conference to ask the Secretary-General to invite all States in the Middle East to convene a conference aimed at establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The aim of the conference would be to launch a political and technical process for negotiating a regional treaty on such a zone, with the States of the region joining that treaty if they decide to do so. Convening such a conference, based on the principle of consensus, is seen as an opportunity — perhaps the last — to restore the credibility of the NPT and the entire disarmament regime. That is the way forward that we are still sticking to and supporting within the context of the two annual resolutions on the Middle East — of which this year's draft resolution submitted by Egypt is entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East" (A/C.1/71/L.1), and that submitted by the Arab Group is entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" (A.C.1/71/L.2). We seek the traditional support of the international community for both.

Based on its role and interest in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues, Egypt will continue to make every effort to arrive at a fair and comprehensive agreement during the Committee's proceedings this year, providing the foundation for a new phase in the collective international efforts to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. Scappini Ricciardi (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Paraguay would first like to thank the panellists who spoke on the current state of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates related to those issues.

Paraguay also reaffirms its commitment to establishing, consolidating, respecting and strengthening nuclear-weapon-free zones and to the provisions of the Treaty of Tlatelolco prohibiting nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the first

to declare a zone free of nuclear weapons in a densely populated region, 50 years ago. We also welcome the establishment of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean to take on the responsibility of ensuring the Treaty's implementation. We urge States possessing nuclear weapons to retract their interpretive declarations on the protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and on other international instruments establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. In our view, the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity, a violation of international law and international humanitarian law, and contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Paraguay reiterates its support for establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones and for broadening and respecting those that already exist. We also encourage Member States to continue to work to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in accordance with the recommendations of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2), particularly those contained in paragraphs 60 to 63, especially sub-paragraph (d) of paragraph 63.

Regarding nuclear disarmament, Paraguay calls for compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the total and speedy elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that all States have an obligation in good faith to undertake and conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, and that bilateral negotiations cannot replace multilateral negotiations in that area. For those reasons, we have been working to put together an international convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons and providing for their destruction, and we are very pleased with the recommendation of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations to convene a conference in 2017 with the purpose of negotiating an international instrument on the subject.

We also welcome the General Assembly's decision to convene a high-level conference no later than 2018 to identify measures and actions for eliminating nuclear weapons as soon as possible. And we support efforts to formulate an international convention assuring non-nuclear-weapon States, without exception or discrimination, against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Paraguay supports the call in the General Assembly to all States to continue to refrain from testing nuclear weapons or carrying out any other nuclear explosions, to continue their moratorium with regard to such tests and to refrain from any action contrary to the Treaty's provisions. We support the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes through the implementation of development programmes while taking every possible precaution to limit the deleterious effects of nuclear power on the environment. States that conduct such programmes on their territories should ensure that they are based on broad cross-border responsibility, conform to best practices in the areas of international cooperation, damage prevention and due diligence, and can respond appropriately to potential cross-border harm or damage.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to emphasize the role of technical assistance and international cooperation for developing countries, especially for developing and strengthening national capacities and detecting and preventing illegal trafficking in radioactive sources and materials.

Mr. Przeniosło (Poland): At the outset, I should emphasize that nuclear disarmament is an important element of Poland's security policy. We share the commitment to working for a world without nuclear weapons.

Poland believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of progress towards total nuclear disarmament and should remain central to the international system of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It is essential if we are to stay on a path to complete nuclear disarmament, keep countries seriously involved in non-proliferation efforts and ensure peaceful access to nuclear energy.

Next year will see the start of the new NPT review process, which will culminate in 2020 in the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In an indication of its engagement and attachment to the Treaty, in 2018 Poland will chair the second Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference. We would like to remind Member States that full implementation of the NPT requires the efforts of every State. Global solutions

in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation can be effective and sustainable only if they are devised together with nuclear-weapon States. Where nuclear disarmament is concerned, in particular, discussions must be inclusive and pragmatic, respect the security objectives and commitments of all States and take into account the central role of the NPT, for there are no alternatives to that forum.

This year, Poland actively participated in the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations in Geneva, with an aim to contributing to a shared vision of the best way to advance multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. Poland, both individually and as part of the group of States, submitted working papers, made statements and negotiated in good faith. However, we were unable to support the final report of the Working Group (see A/71/371), owing to its recommendation in support of a ban treaty. We expressed our opinion on such a treaty repeatedly during the negotiations.

Considering current circumstances and the state of international relations, such a treaty would be ineffective. It would neither eliminate nuclear weapons nor contribute to a safer world. On the contrary, it would have serious negative consequences for regional and global security, as well as for the NPT and the implementation of article VI. We firmly believe that the best solution to the issue of moving nuclear disarmament forward is in a gradual approach. Such an approach in no way aims to preserve the status quo but rather to work for sustainable, safe and effective change. There is an extensive list of the various measures that can be taken in order to reduce risk and move multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations forward.

The nuclear-disarmament process largely depends on the regional security environment. We cannot ignore geopolitical realities. We believe that dealing with regional security concerns will help us to achieve our goal. In the past year we have seen acts that are contrary to the spirit and letter of the international community's commitments in the areas of security and nuclear weapons. Such serious threats to global security show that our efforts are more important than ever and our ability to achieve a majority consensus even more desirable.

I would like to conclude by mentioning the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, of which Poland is a member, participating

actively in discussions and co-chairing its working group. The work of the International Partnership shows how complex and difficult it will be to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. It is unrealistic, indeed impossible, to consider nuclear disarmament without taking the importance of trustworthy verification into account. We hope that this initiative's continued efforts will help to build trust and promote an approach to nuclear disarmament in the spirit of the NPT, which we believe to be realistic and feasible. With that reference to a real, concrete engagement and partnership that can bring us a step closer to a stable and nuclear-weapon-free world, I will end my statement. In order not to exceed the time limit, the full text of my statement will be sent to the Secretariat and will be available on the website.

The Chair: I thank the representative of Poland for his kind words and respect for the time limit.

Mr. Benson Lim (Singapore): In the interests of saving time, I will read out a shortened version of my statement. The full version will be available online.

I would like to congratulate you and your colleagues, Sir, on your appointments to the Bureau of the First Committee.

Singapore aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.11).

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of Singapore's ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We remain committed to the objectives and the three mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty, and we have supported efforts to enhance the non-proliferation regime. Singapore has participated constructively in the series of Nuclear Security Summits, and in September we hosted Exercise Deep Sabre 2016, a multinational proliferation security initiative.

Singapore reaffirms States' inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, as provided for under the NPT. We are committed to working with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in order to help our fellow developing countries with the safe and peaceful application of nuclear technologies. Under an enhanced memorandum of understanding on the Singapore-IAEA Third Country Training Programme, Singapore will work jointly with

the IAEA to support nuclear-related capacity-building throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Singapore believes that much more can be done on nuclear disarmament. We propose taking action on four steps towards achieving our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. First, Member States must look beyond the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and work constructively to lay the groundwork that will ensure the success of the next NPT review cycle. As long as some countries possess nuclear weapons and others do not, a sense of insecurity will persist. A lack of progress exacerbates that mistrust. Nuclear-weapon States must do more to assure non-nuclear-weapon States that they are taking concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament. One possible way is for nuclear-weapon States to commit to significantly reducing their nuclear arsenals in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner. We must also continue to make universalizing the NPT a priority.

Secondly, Singapore notes the adoption of Security Council resolution 2310 (2016) and supports its call for all States that have not signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, particularly the eight remaining annex 2 States, to do so without delay. Its entry into force will bring us one small but important step closer to a world without nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, we should continue to consider pragmatic options for taking our work on nuclear disarmament forward. Singapore acknowledges the open and comprehensive work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. The Working Group has discussed possible approaches to reaching our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We recognize that the proposal for the General Assembly to convene a conference in 2017 in order to negotiate a legally binding instrument that would prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination, received widespread support in Geneva. Singapore supports such a conference as a possible avenue for taking multilateral disarmament negotiations forward. Nevertheless, for any instrument to be effective, all the relevant parties have to be on board or, at the very least, subscribe to its principles and objectives. If not, it will not be meaningful. In that regard, we have called on all the relevant parties to engage in those discussions constructively.

Lastly, Singapore supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We encourage efforts to achieve genuine and lasting peace in a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East, with true, open and constructive dialogue involving all the relevant parties. Closer to home, Singapore has consistently emphasized its resolve to preserve South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We reaffirm our commitment to the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. Singapore will continue to work towards the collective signing and ratification by the nuclear-weapon States, without reservations, of the Treaty's protocols.

Singapore calls on delegations in the First Committee to keep an open mind and work constructively during our collective deliberations. We should remind ourselves of the importance of setting aside self-interest in the hope of achieving a larger goal. Let us strive to generate momentum towards a nuclear-weapon-free world during this seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your leadership of the work of the First Committee.

We also join our colleagues in endorsing the statements delivered previously by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by our own delegation, on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

The most critical and urgent task facing the world right now is eliminating the threat of a nuclear holocaust. Seventy years have passed since the horrors wrought by the nuclear bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the civilian population, in which the explosions spread indiscriminately in every direction, reaching temperatures of up to 4,000°C and vaporizing everything in their path — women, children, animals, trees and buildings. Cities with hundreds of years of culture were reduced to dust, while 250,000 people lost their lives as a result of the explosions. Almost half of them were killed on the first day, while the rest died in slow agony, from burns and radiation, in the weeks that followed. The devastating effects also affected the DNA of the inhabitants of the two cities, who to this day are still at greater risk for cancers, infertility and birth defects.

On many Pacific islands, all of them under colonial rule, the humanitarian effects of the hundreds of nuclear tests carried out by colonial and nuclear Powers have

been devastating — cancer, genetic defects and damage, weakened immune systems and radioactive waste in the atmosphere. It is estimated that atmospheric testing caused approximately 430,000 deaths from cancer by the year 2000, a figure that will only increase with time.

Despite the humanitarian horrors resulting from the use of nuclear weapons and testing, the two major world Powers continue to possess more than 1,550 nuclear warheads apiece, with destructive power equivalent to that of 10,000 Hiroshima bombs, with no restrictions on their ability to continue modernizing their arsenals and keep thousands of additional nuclear weapons in reserve. As long as their security doctrines continue to revolve around the assured destruction of their adversaries, with collateral damage for the rest of humankind, the survival of the human race cannot depend on bilateral relations between Powers.

There are countries with smaller but equally potentially catastrophic arsenals maintaining a similar stance, such as Israel, which refuses even to begin talks on creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and a planet free of the scourge of nuclear genocide. Every country possessing nuclear weapons, without exception, must ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and implement its obligations. Is it really so impossible to conceive of an international relations system in which the assured destruction of adversaries and their cities and civilians, women and children, hospitals and schools is not a strategic goal of the most powerful States?

The step-by-step approach to achieving nuclear disarmament advocated by the NPT has not brought us closer to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Establishing unattainable steps and preconditions, such as an end to conflict, or general and complete disarmament, has blocked any progress on the pillar of nuclear disarmament. Creating nirvana on earth cannot be used as blackmail to avoid a nuclear holocaust on the planet. Venezuela supports every approach that might help us progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. The various approaches are not mutually exclusive, and while some seek short cuts and others would move at a glacial pace, at the end of the day, we all know that the only worthwhile nuclear disarmament is verifiable, transparent, irreversible, binding and universal. I hope that at the very least that is something we can agree on.

Venezuela is a party to all the nuclear-disarmament treaties and protocols. Our commitment to a world free

from nuclear weapons is reflected not just because we are part of the first densely populated zone in the world declared free of nuclear weapons, but also owing to our ancient culture of peace and dialogue and our daily commitment to international peace and security. We urge all States and members of civil society to work together to eliminate nuclear weapons from our world once and for all.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Italy fully shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. It is enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and its full implementation is a firm priority for us. The NPT is the cornerstone of the international nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as well as its essential legal foundation. We emphasize the importance of its universalization and call on States that have not yet done so to join it as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay or conditions. We also call on all States parties to the Treaty to comply with all its provisions, and to respect commitments agreed on at subsequent Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The NPT remains the only realistic legal framework for attaining a world without nuclear weapons, and it is the overarching norm on which all nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation measures are based. Italy is fully committed to a successful outcome for the next NPT review cycle, starting with the first Preparatory Committee meeting in 2017.

Our deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons underpins our efforts to achieve effective progress on nuclear disarmament. Italy is committed to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in a way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. Our action in that regard should focus on practical and effective measures as the steps in a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the NPT. We also firmly believe that eliminating nuclear weapons is possible only through substantive and constructive engagement with nuclear-weapon States.

In the year of the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) for signature, the Treaty's entry into force remains a top priority and a major building block of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

In that regard, we hope that the Security Council's recent adoption of resolution 2310 (2016), of which Italy was a sponsor, will encourage further ratifications. In particular, we urge all the States whose ratification is essential for the CTBT's entry into force to sign and ratify it without delay or conditions. Pending the Treaty's entry into force, Italy calls on all States, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions and refrain from any action that would undermine the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

Italy strongly condemns the nuclear tests and launches using ballistic-missile technology by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, since they represent a clear violation of all relevant Security Council resolutions and a serious threat to international peace and security. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the NPT as soon as possible, put all of its nuclear installations under International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards and sign and ratify the CTBT.

Italy attaches fundamental importance to the immediate commencement of negotiations, without preconditions, on a treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Pending its entry into force, we call on all States concerned to declare and maintain a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We also support the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which we consider an important practical step towards disarmament, representing as it does an effective partnership among nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States.

We welcome the nuclear arsenal reductions that have been carried out by most nuclear-weapon States, and value the progress that the Russian Federation and the United States have made so far in implementing the New START treaty. We strongly encourage both countries to continue their dialogue and mutual efforts to promote strategic stability, enhance confidence and transparency, and further reduce their respective nuclear weapons arsenals.

The establishment of more nuclear-weapon-free zones will greatly contribute to our common goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Italy firmly believes that the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States in the

region, remains a priority. In that regard, we continue to strongly support the process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 NPT Review Conference resolution on the Middle East. Last year, we welcomed the historic agreement between the E3+3 and Iran on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which provides for a comprehensive and peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. We look forward to its continued, full and effective implementation, which in our view will contribute to enhancing regional security.

We share the increasing concerns about the possible use of nuclear weapons, particularly radiological weapons, by non-State actors and terrorist groups. In that regard, while we reiterate our support for the universal and full implementation of all relevant international instruments, we are pleased to be able to inform the Committee that in a few days' time, Italy will deposit its instrument of ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We actively support other important international initiatives in that area. In Rome in November, for example, we will host the next meeting of the Nuclear Forensic Working Group of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and a tabletop exercise in the framework of the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Finally, we greatly value the entry into force of the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, which Italy ratified last May, since it enhances the scope of the Convention and expands cooperation among States in preventing risks of proliferation. We encourage the remaining third of States that are parties to the Convention to ratify it as soon as possible.

Mr. Quinn (Australia): Australia is committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, pursued in an effective, determined and pragmatic way. Reaching that global-zero goal is not only consistent with our clear international obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is also a key requirement for making the world a safer place.

The disturbing recent developments on the Korean peninsula, including the two nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2016, have been a potent reality check for us all. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic-missile development programmes,

which pose a grave threat to global peace and security and are in defiance of Security Council resolutions and the country's other international obligations. The challenging security environment has been brought into stark focus in the First Committee, not least through the numerous rights of reply exercised in relation to security concerns in various regions. Dedicated and practical confidence-building measures are now needed in all those regions, as a matter of priority.

Australia's position on the proposal before the Committee to begin negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons has been consistent and clear. We do not support such an approach. A ban treaty would not rid us of a single nuclear weapon. It would not change the realities we all face, such as a nuclear-armed Democratic People's Republic of Korea or tensions among major Powers. And without the involvement of States possessing nuclear weapons, the practical value of negotiating a ban treaty is questionable. In our view, far from giving expression to article VI commitments, a ban treaty would do the opposite, creating parallel obligations and thereby ambiguity and potential for confusion. Indeed, we do not see the logic of a ban treaty for non-nuclear-weapon States. For example, Australia is a party to the NPT and the Treaty of Rarotonga, and has already twice made legally binding commitments not to acquire or possess nuclear explosive devices.

It is axiomatic that States will get rid of their nuclear arsenals only when they feel that it is safe to do so. Laying the groundwork for eliminating such weapons requires much greater trust, more effective verification processes and assurances that capabilities for developing new weapons are not being used for that purpose. Logical and indispensable next steps include the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); addressing the technical problems of verifying nuclear disarmament; and beginning negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Together with New Zealand and Mexico, Australia is pleased to be presenting this year's draft resolution on the CTBT (A/C.1/71/L.28). We are marking the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty and its verification system, which have helped underpin an international *de facto* norm against nuclear testing. It is now more urgent than ever that the CTBT enter into force.

Australia also welcomes the important Norwegian-led draft resolution on nuclear-disarmament verification (A/C.1/71/L.57/Rev.1), which provides a practical means for building broader partnerships

and cooperative verification arrangements, including addressing relevant technical challenges. We must also realize the gains from the highly productive Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to, but not negotiate, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We commend Canada's ongoing leadership on a fissile material cut-off treaty and support its efforts in the Committee to sustain momentum on this critical track of disarmament.

The progressive approach paper that Australia submitted to the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and the Disarmament Commission, on behalf of 24 countries, provided recommendations on practical and achievable ways forward. We urge those possessing nuclear weapons to take the lead in implementing them. We also call on nuclear-armed States to enhance transparency with regard to their nuclear arsenals. This would contribute immediately and significantly to building confidence and laying the groundwork for a collective effort to reach global zero.

In conclusion, it is now more than ever a critical time for us to protect and strengthen the NPT regime. We must seize the opportunity presented by the forthcoming meeting in May 2017 of the NPT Preparatory Committee to lay a solid foundation for a successful 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador aligns itself with the statements delivered previously by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

Following the conclusion of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which met in Geneva this year, and the adoption of its recommendations, reflected in draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41, which is under consideration by the First Committee under Ecuador's sponsorship, we believe that this year will be remembered as an important one for nuclear disarmament, marking a before and after.

In 2017, we will begin the process of negotiating a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, with a view to their total elimination. The

process is genuinely inclusive, because it will be open without conditions to participation by all States, including nuclear-weapon States and those that are party to broader deterrence alliances. It will therefore be open to participation by all States, unlike other non-proliferation processes in which participation is limited but that some have promoted as legitimate and relevant in various other draft resolutions submitted to the Committee.

We are aware that an instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons will not make them disappear immediately, but its negotiation and adoption will help to establish a legal foundation and standards for their elimination, as has been done for other weapons of mass destruction. Negotiating such an instrument is consistent with the provisions of article VI of the NPT. It will strengthen the current non-proliferation and disarmament regimes, which is why we reject the arguments of some nuclear-weapon States and some of their allies, who affirm, without substantive support, that a legal ban on such catastrophic weapons would weaken the Treaty. On the contrary, it would strengthen it. We therefore do not agree with those who argue — and we have heard some of them this morning — that negotiating a treaty banning nuclear weapons would lead States to abandon the NPT. That argument is dangerous, illogical and contrary to the facts and declarations of those of us who support a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

We should also reject, as inherently contradictory, the arguments we have heard so far from States that affirm their willingness to advance nuclear disarmament while, in the same breath and with the same urgency, declaring that such weapons are essential to their security. But if we suppose that they are essential to the security of a few States, they must also be essential to all States. Along with the great majority of States, Ecuador rejects that assumption. Nuclear weapons guarantee security for no one; rather, they are a source of permanent insecurity for all humankind. In this and other disarmament forums, we have heard that some nuclear-weapon States are annoyed that their efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals have not been recognized. Yes, their arsenals have been reduced, but at the same time they are being modernized and made more effective, without any clear action being taken to totally eliminate them. That is why huge financial resources are being budgeted for them in the next few years, resources that could be better used to reduce poverty and achieve development goals.

Once a ban treaty enters into force, work on nuclear disarmament must continue even more intensively. We must negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty. We must decide on nuclear-disarmament verification mechanisms and agree on timelines for destroying the banned weapons, while all of that must be implemented on a firm and sure legal foundation for the ban. My delegation would like to reiterate its profound disagreement with the assertion in the joint statement of the nuclear-weapon States that are party to the NPT, in which they claim that preserving their nuclear arsenals is compatible with their obligations under the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. That is demonstrably false, since neither of those instruments allows for the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons.

I will conclude by reading my final paragraph, but my full statement can be found online. I would like to affirm our belief that with the adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41, “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations”, we will be taking a necessary and substantive step, more than 70 years after the first nuclear explosion, towards finally ridding ourselves of those weapons forever. We therefore urge all States that genuinely believe in nuclear disarmament, and in affirmation of their commitments under article VI of the NPT, to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered previously by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

Despite some progress made by the international community towards nuclear disarmament, there are still thousands of nuclear weapons capable of destroying the whole planet and therefore of posing the greatest possible threat to the whole of humankind. That leaves us with no choice other than to vigorously continue our efforts to abolish nuclear weapons before they annihilate us all. In order to do so, we must identify the current challenges in the area of nuclear disarmament and the most effective ways to overcome them. In our view, the main challenges are the following.

First, with regard to quality versus quantity, there are many fewer nuclear weapons in existence than there were during the Cold War era. Qualitatively, however, their destructive power is far greater, because the yield of today’s nuclear weapons has increased from kilotons to megatons as atom bombs have been

replaced by hydrogen bombs, which are thousands of times more destructive.

Second, all the nuclear-weapon States have continued to modernize and upgrade their nuclear-weapon arsenals, and some of them plan to develop new types.

Third, with regard to nuclear postures, nuclear weapons continue to play a significant role in the military doctrines of the States that possess them, and which justify their use by resorting to concepts such as the defence of their vital interests or those of their allies and partners.

Fourth, the development of new types of easy-to-use tactical nuclear weapons, such as so-called mini-nukes, has increased the possibility of their use.

Fifth, the effective proliferation of nuclear weapons continues, through the sharing of such weapons between nuclear-weapon States or between them and non-nuclear-weapon States, in clear defiance of those countries' explicit obligations under articles I and II of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Sixth, 20 years after it was opened for signature, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, with all its imperfections, is still in limbo. The first country to sign it, which has still failed to ratify it, continues to defy the Treaty's objective and purpose by resorting to the use of the tools of today — virtual capacity, computerization and artificial intelligence.

Seventh, despite more than 40 years of international efforts, there is still no hope for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, a situation due only to the stubborn objections of the Israeli regime, the only State of the region that is not a party to the NPT.

Eighth, the failure of the efforts to universalize the NPT continues to seriously challenge its effectiveness.

Lastly, the most important challenge of all to nuclear disarmament is the lack of genuine political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations under article VI of the NPT.

Despite all those challenges, the 71-year-old global quest for the total elimination of nuclear weapons is still a determined one. In recent years, those efforts have gained new momentum through the General Assembly's holding of its first ever high-level meeting on nuclear

disarmament in 2013, at its sixty-eighth session, followed by the three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in 2013 and 2014, and the high-level meetings on nuclear disarmament held annually in the General Assembly from 2014 to 2016. That trend will be continued with a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, to be held in 2018, and by the 2017 conference proposed by the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The most promising aspect of the current trend is that none of the initiatives are based on the failed, old-fashioned step-by-step approach. For instance, one can refer to the NAM proposal on negotiating a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention. In our view, that is the only practical option for putting the nuclear disarmament process on the right path.

The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to actively engage in all international efforts to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, including by strongly supporting negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Abbani (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to offer its sincere condolences to the delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand following the death of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Algeria endorses the statements delivered previously by the representatives of Indonesia (see A/C.1/71/PV.10), on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.11), and Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

My country would like to reiterate its consistent position on nuclear disarmament, which is that it is an urgent priority in our efforts to strengthen peace and security in the world, a goal that we can achieve fully only by totally eliminating such lethal weapons and freeing humankind from the fear of their use or threat of use. While article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) does exist, and the successive Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have established commitments to be met, we must recognize the fact that no real progress has been made on nuclear disarmament. Such weapons are the backbone of the military doctrines of several countries

and are used as deterrents in their security policies. The complete elimination of such weapons is therefore still our ultimate goal and requires that we conclude a comprehensive treaty on nuclear weapons, with the convening of an international high-level conference to that end by 2018.

We welcome the recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, established under resolution 70/33. Until nuclear weapons can be completely eliminated, we would like to emphasize the importance of concluding a legally binding convention on negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. My country would like to reiterate its commitment to ensuring the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, with the aim of strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, because we have suffered from the consequences of nuclear weapons.

We are committed to respecting all of our obligations under the NPT, which is the cornerstone of the international multilateral nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. We stress the importance of emphasizing its universality. All countries must accede to it if we are to strengthen international peace and security. Given the importance of focusing equitably on the Treaty's three pillars, we urge a balanced approach to all the three. We call for the elimination of nuclear weapons based on the fact that nuclear disarmament is the responsibility of every party to the Treaty.

With regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear power, we reaffirm the inalienable right of all the parties to the Treaty to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes aimed at fostering social and economic development for all peoples, especially in developing countries. We also reaffirm the importance of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world. Because we deem that goal crucial to consolidating international stability, we have contributed to it by being one of the first African countries to accede to and ratify the Pelindaba Treaty, which created a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. We urge all States to ratify and sign the three protocols to that Convention. In that regard, we would once again like to express our concern about the obstacles that have prevented the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Twenty years have passed since the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and no real progress has been made in

that regard, creating a real threat to peace and security around the world and in that region in particular.

At the international level, we have been witness to the dangers that can result from the use of nuclear weapons, which is yet another proof of the importance of dealing with the issue decisively. We share the concerns and motives that have led to the launch of the key initiative of the Humanitarian Pledge. We believe that the momentum that its humanitarian aspect has created will help to consolidate our international efforts to overcome the challenges that lie between us and a total ban on nuclear weapons, with a view to their complete elimination. In that regard, the annual commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which we regularly participate in, represents an additional international platform from which to affirm the concept of criminalizing the use of nuclear weapons, paving the way for the continuing process that will enable us to ultimately achieve the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mrs. Comanescu (Romania): In the interests of saving time, I will limit my remarks to the main focus of the debate for this session.

Romania also associates itself with the statement to be delivered later today by the representative of Germany on behalf of the countries supporting a progressive approach on nuclear disarmament.

Romania attaches great importance to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation through multilateralism and international cooperation, and believes that the universalization of the existing legally binding instruments is the only way to achieve long-term results. We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the foundation of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and an indispensable instrument in our work that is still able to provide the room we need for common understanding, compromise and progress. We fail to see any viable alternative to the NPT, and we cannot support initiatives that undermine it. We are facing unprecedented proliferation crises that are threatening international peace and security, and those challenges cannot be addressed by weakening the existing system. Our key priority is to uphold and preserve the NPT and to work for its universalization.

Like many others in this room, we believe that the entire international community shares the responsibility for working for concrete results in order to achieve the

common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are ready to work towards that goal through practical effective measures, some of which have already been submitted for consideration in this forum. We are willing to support all initiatives that contribute to confidence-building and that are inclusive and take into consideration the security concerns of all. We are reluctant to endorse proposals and resolutions that will only increase fragmentation.

Our goal has been effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. Our conviction is that only by addressing both the security and humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons can we reach the goal of eliminating them in a predictable and secure way.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Due to the time limit, I will shorten my statement. The full text can be found on the website.

The world's largest nuclear Power's effort to blackmail the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is reaching an extreme phase. The joint military exercise of the United States and South Korea took place in the southern half of the Korean peninsula in March and August this year in simulation of a real war, with hundreds of thousands of members of the armed forces, nuclear strategic assets and special forces participating in their goal of decapitating the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and occupying Pyongyang.

By introducing nuclear strategic bombers into Guam in the same week that it made an official decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system in South Korea and bring strategic assets, including a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and nuclear submarines, to the Korean peninsula and its vicinity, the United States is creating an extremely explosive situation there. What is worse, the United States has recently flown fully armed nuclear strategic B-1B bombers very close to the military demarcation line. It is deployed in the Osan Air Base in South Korea and has not hesitated to hold joint military naval exercises, by deploying strike groups — headed by the *U.S.S. Ronald Reagan* nuclear aircraft carrier and various naval forces — in the seas east and west of the Korean peninsula, with the purpose of conducting a pre-emptive strike against the supreme leadership and nuclear and strategic rocket bases of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. While various types of military exercises are conducted in different parts of

the world, this kind of vicious, high-handed nuclear-war drill can be found nowhere else in terms of its scope, intensity, methods and means.

The consistent position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been aimed at entirely removing the danger that the United States poses for nuclear war, relying on the power of its nuclear deterrent and defending regional and global peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has opted to build up its nuclear armed forces as a self-defence measure designed to protect its State and social system in the face of constant nuclear threats from the United States, and we are holding steadfastly to our strategy of bolstering those nuclear forces.

The launch exercises of strategic ballistic rockets regularly conducted by the Korean People's Army, and the nuclear explosive tests for judging the power of nuclear warheads, are just a part of an entire course aimed at implementing our strategic policy. Standardization of its nuclear warheads will enable the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to produce as many of a variety of smaller, lighter and diversified nuclear warheads as it needs. As long as the United States continues its nuclear threats and arbitrary actions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to strengthen its self-defence nuclear deterrent both qualitatively and quantitatively and further consolidate its strategic status as a nuclear Power. The nuclear deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea does not constitute a threat to any non-nuclear-weapon States that refrain from participating in acts of aggression or attacks on it, or to nuclear-weapon-free zones. As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will engage actively in global efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): The growing polarization of views on nuclear disarmament is one of the greatest challenges facing the First Committee. We and many others are frustrated by the pace of nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, that frustration has spawned divergent approaches that threaten to overshadow our accomplishments rather than renew our common commitment to the universal goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. It also risks undermining the foundation of trust and compromise, which others have spoken about this morning, that is essential for further action.

In Geneva this year, the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations provided an opportunity to refocus discussion on nuclear disarmament. It is regrettable that States possessing nuclear weapons did not join the Working Group. Given its commitment to ridding the world of nuclear weapons, Canada sought to participate constructively, and was disappointed when the Group was unable to reach consensus on its final report (see A/71/371). We remain concerned that its principal recommendation may widen divisions among States rather than uniting us in a common cause. Canada believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) provides a basis for advancing disarmament, and we are concerned that proposed new measures might undermine its primacy.

We support negotiation of a ban on nuclear weapons, but only as an ultimate step in achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. If our goal is to achieve effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament, we remain unconvinced at this time that without the participation of States that possess nuclear weapons, a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons will offer anything more than an illusion of progress. Ultimately, a world free of nuclear weapons will be achieved through progressive and realistic steps, and there are no quick fixes for that.

Canada has long been a determined advocate of a fissile material cut-off treaty, and this year, along with Germany and the Netherlands, we have introduced a draft resolution that tangibly moves that project forward by establishing a high-level fissile material cut-off treaty preparatory group. Its mandate would be to build on the work of the recent Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, engage in open-ended informal consultations with the broader United Nations membership and ultimately make recommendations on substantial elements for a future treaty. We believe that we have developed a credible, realistic and inclusive proposal that will set the stage for future negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, and we are convinced that many here also believe that we can and should move beyond the status quo. We encourage members to support our draft resolution and demonstrate our firm, collective resolve to finally get this treaty done.

(spoke in French)

Canada is pleased with the progress made on disarmament verification this year, particularly by the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, and we welcome Norway's new draft resolution (A/C.1/71/L.57/Rev.1) on the subject. Canada continues to strongly encourage all States parties to the NPT, particularly nuclear-weapon States, to increase their transparency in fulfilling their NPT commitments. The twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Security Council's recent adoption of its resolution 2310 (2016), which promotes universalization of the Treaty, are providing an impetus for renewed efforts to bring it into force. In that regard, we welcome its recent ratification by Myanmar and Swaziland.

However, regional and international peace and security are being increasingly jeopardized by the accelerated pace of North Korea's nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches, in flagrant violation of its own commitments, multiple Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the international community. We condemn such provocative acts and believe firmly that it is in the interest of both the international community and North Korea to seek to negotiate a peaceful political solution.

It was through such dialogue and negotiations that the P5+1 were able to reach agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action last year. Canada firmly supports the crucial role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in verifying its implementation by Iran, and we urge all Member States to consider making extra-budgetary contributions to ensure that the IAEA has the resources to fulfil its verification mandate.

In conclusion, developing flexibility and compromise based on trust- and confidence-building efforts will be increasingly important if we are to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament measures. It is now incumbent on us to work more closely together to overcome the remaining challenges and achieve the greater peace and security that we all desire and that the whole world deserves.

(spoke in English)

We will submit our full text to the Secretariat.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): The well-documented catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of

nuclear weapons should remind us all that we must remain steadfast in seeking a world free of nuclear weapons. In Portugal's view, such a vital goal must be unwaveringly promoted through a balanced but concrete approach to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we consider it essential to preserve the integrity of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article IV, but also in order to achieve a substantive outcome at the next NPT review cycle. Once again, we reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States.

Portugal is seriously concerned about the growing challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. As has been proved twice this year, North Korea continues to pursue its nuclear programme, as its delegation acknowledged here today. The Portuguese Government firmly condemned both nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in violation of multiple Security Council resolutions, and considers these developments a grave threat to regional and international peace and security. It is significant that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been the only country to conduct a nuclear test in this century, a fact that emphasizes the urgency of achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We appeal to all States involved to do their utmost to enable a dialogue to be resumed.

The historic agreement reached last year on Iran's nuclear programme proved that highly complex issues can be resolved through diplomacy if the parties involved have the necessary political will and determination. Portugal reiterates its support to the ongoing implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

We also continue to support a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, firmly anchored in the NPT process. Our commitment to inclusiveness and emphasis on consensus have guided our participation in the work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament issues, which has met throughout the year. We regret that despite the constructive efforts of the Chair of the Working Group and many countries, including my own, we could not produce a consensus report.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a crucial step towards advancing nuclear disarmament and nuclear proliferation, and we once again urge all States, particularly the annex 2 countries, that have yet to ratify it to do so without delay and, pending their accession, to observe the moratorium on nuclear test explosions. We acknowledge the progress that has been made in creating verification and monitoring systems that ensure that nuclear tests do not remain undetected. We also welcome the most recent ratifications by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland as relevant steps towards the universalization of the Treaty.

Negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty must begin, and until then we should observe a moratorium on the production of fissile material. It is highly regrettable and very disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to deliver on the matter so far. There is a clear need to take forward multilateral negotiations in an inclusive way. I would like to reiterate how important it is to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament functions on a more inclusive basis, notably by enlarging its membership. Portugal would also like to urge all countries to join the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation with a view to its universalization. Reinforcing confidence-building measures, such as full compliance with existing instruments, including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, remains crucial.

The international community must continue to work for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We must remain seized of the efforts to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, guided by the action plan set forth at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In conclusion, there is widespread frustration over the slow pace of the process of effective nuclear disarmament. The specific responsibilities of the NPT nuclear-weapon States demand their full engagement in advancing nuclear disarmament. There is a very real obligation incumbent on nuclear-weapon States to take concrete steps towards major reductions in their nuclear arsenals. As we stated last year, there is no justification for delaying or, even worse, justifying the absence of any concrete steps on nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, Portugal looks for renewed resolve on the part of the international community in confronting our shared nuclear challenges and making progress towards achieving a peaceful, nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. Fares (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to endorse the statements on the nuclear weapons cluster in the First Committee delivered previously by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.10); Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.11); and Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/71/PV.10), respectively.

The prevention of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons cannot be ensured except by their complete elimination. Achieving that appears to be elusive in the short run, but we are occasionally given a glimmer of hope by initiatives under which some countries, including Libya, have abandoned their nuclear-weapons programmes. We recognized the importance of getting rid of those weapons of mass destruction on 19 December 2003, and we have adhered to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards system since 2004. Since that time, we have cooperated with the Agency's inspectors and have continued to engage with them in order to ensure the safety and integrity of all our installations and their use for peaceful purposes. We are seeking international cooperation with the Agency and other partners with a view to helping Libya build its capacities to use nuclear energy in formulating and implementing development projects, including electricity generation, nuclear medicine, radiology treatment and water desalinization.

The commemoration on 26 September of the International Day for the Complete Elimination of Nuclear Weapons has had a significant impact on the international campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we would like to voice our support for the efforts to convene a high-level international conference, no later than 2018, in order to take stock of the progress that we have made towards achieving nuclear disarmament.

Libya commends the work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which met most recently in Geneva this year, pursuant to resolution 70/33. We welcome the Group's decision to call for a conference to be convened in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding

international instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. In that regard, we call on all States to work in good faith and with genuine political will to achieve that goal.

Libya would like to stress the importance of establishing zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction by taking immediate, concrete steps to that end. Such zones can help to ensure peace and security and, ultimately, the survival of humankind. We believe that Libya is part of such international efforts, and because of that we have become a State party to the Pelindaba Treaty, which declared Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In that regard, we would like to recall General Assembly resolution 70/23, which called on all African States that have not yet signed or ratified the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty to do so.

Libya has also contributed to the efforts of the Group of Arab States to establish a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We would like to stress that any delay in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, aimed at establishing such a zone, would be a demonstration of a lack of will on the part of the countries involved and would in turn have a serious adverse impact on global nuclear disarmament efforts.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China supports a total ban on nuclear weapons and their complete elimination, with a view to achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We have always implemented an open, transparent nuclear policy and adhered to a nuclear strategy of self-defence. China has faithfully honoured its commitment to no first use of nuclear weapons, and it is the only nuclear-weapon State that has made an unconditional commitment to refraining from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State or nuclear-weapon-free zone.

China does not provide a nuclear umbrella for other States or deploy nuclear weapons on other States' soil. We have not and will never engage in a nuclear arms race, and we have always kept our nuclear force at the minimum level required for our own national security.

China has always complied with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and has spared no efforts in enhancing the Treaty's universality, authority and effectiveness. China has already signed and ratified all the additional protocols of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties that are open for signature.

China supports the objectives and purposes of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We have honoured our commitment to a moratorium on nuclear tests and made steady progress with domestic preparations for the CTBT's implementation. We are committed to promoting its early entry into force.

China supported negotiating a nondiscriminatory multilateral, international, effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty, within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and on the basis of the Shannon mandate, as soon as possible. China is opposed to any attempt to initiate any negotiations outside the Conference on Disarmament.

We attach great importance to the issues of transparency and confidence-building measures. In recent years, we have published several white papers and submitted our national implementation reports to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, comprehensively detailing China's nuclear strategy, policies and related efforts. China actively promotes the efforts of the five NPT nuclear-weapon States (P5) to implement the outcomes of the NPT Review Conferences and will continue to take the lead in the P-5 Working Group on the *Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms*, with a view to contributing to enhancing mutual understanding and trust on nuclear issues among the relevant parties.

China believes that we should promote the international nuclear disarmament process in the following aspects.

First, universal security should be upheld as the guiding principle in nuclear disarmament. We should adhere to a new security concept characterized by shared, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; abandon the Cold War mentality with the goal of eradicating the root cause of the existence of nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation; and create the necessary conditions for further progress in nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, we should adopt a step-by-step incremental approach to nuclear disarmament. We cannot achieve the total prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons overnight. On the contrary, that can be done only through a just, reasonable process of gradual, balanced reduction. Nuclear-weapon States should publicly commit to refraining from holding on to nuclear weapons indefinitely. The countries

that possess large nuclear arsenals bear a special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament and should continue to significantly reduce their arsenals in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner. When the conditions are ripe, other nuclear-weapon States should join the multilateral nuclear negotiation process.

Thirdly, the authority of existing multilateral disarmament mechanisms should be preserved. Any attempt to abandon such existing mechanisms as the Conference on Disarmament and the NPT review process, or to compromise the principle of consensus, is counterproductive. It cannot guarantee the full and effective participation of all stakeholders or produce any meaningful results.

Fourthly, a global strategic balance and stability must be maintained. Nuclear disarmament must abide by the principles of maintaining a global strategic balance and stability and undiminished security for all. The deployment of global missile defence systems undermines both the strategic stability and nuclear disarmament efforts. China urges the relevant countries to immediately abandon their efforts to achieve an absolute strategic advantage.

Fifthly, the role of nuclear weapons in national security doctrines should be effectively reduced and downplayed, thereby creating an important precondition and essential step in the process of achieving the total prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. A commitment by nuclear-weapon States to no first use of nuclear weapons is the most realistic measure that can be taken in that direction. China calls on all nuclear-weapon States to commit to no first use of nuclear weapons, as well as to commit unconditionally to refraining from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and urges for the negotiation of international legal instruments of that type.

Mr. Al Mutawa (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the United Arab Emirates wishes to associate itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/71/PV.10); Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.10); and Germany, on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (see A/C.1/71/PV.11).

More than 70 years have passed since nuclear weapons were first used and demonstrated to the entire

world their horrific and catastrophic impact on human beings and the environment, making it incumbent on the international community to take stronger, credible steps to achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament and strengthen the international non-proliferation regime.

The United Arab Emirates believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regimes, and that priority must be given to fully implementing its provisions and the outcomes of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, my delegation was disappointed with the failure of the 2015 Review Conference and the inability to convene a conference in 2012 on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. My delegation affirms the continued support of the Emirates for any constructive efforts to achieve that goal. We also call on Israel to accede to the NPT.

We would like to emphasize that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete abandonment. That requires both quantitative and qualitative reductions to all types of nuclear weapons within a transparent and credible framework. It also requires that States minimize and end the role of nuclear weapons in their security and military strategies. While we welcome the bilateral and gradual efforts that have been made to reduce nuclear weapons, we do not believe that they can replace multilateral negotiations or the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We therefore call on nuclear-weapon States that have not yet taken practical steps towards disarmament to start reducing their nuclear arsenals. Regarding the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, we urge that international action be taken to conclude a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices as soon as possible.

It has been 20 years since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was opened for signature, paving the way for effectively deterring nuclear tests and playing a fundamental role in disarmament and the prevention of nuclear proliferation efforts. The Emirates emphasizes the importance of the Treaty and its entry into force and calls on its annex 2 States to sign and ratify it in order to ensure its entry into force as soon as possible.

My country also urges States to meet their international commitments and to refrain from conducting any nuclear tests. In that regard, we have expressed our deep concern regarding North Korea's development of its nuclear and ballistic capacities and conduct of nuclear tests that threaten the security of its neighbours as well as international peace and security.

In that context, the United Arab Emirates hopes that Iran will continue its commitment to the nuclear agreement reached with the P5+1 States. We call on Iran to fulfil its international commitments and to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency. It should stop developing its ballistic-missile programme and work on building confidence, regionally and internationally, in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates affirms the importance of collective action on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues and its support for all efforts aimed at achieving that goal. The United Arab Emirates has clear positions on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, based on its firm belief in their importance for the achievement of our shared goals of international peace and security. My country also believes that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy require transparency and full compliance with non-proliferation commitments. We therefore emphasize how important it is that States accede to and fully implement all existing international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.