



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

First Committee

13th meeting

Monday, 17 October 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

Thematic discussions 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: In accordance with our programme of work and timetable, the Committee is scheduled to begin its consideration of the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction this afternoon. However, we still have 16 speakers remaining on the list for the nuclear weapons cluster, and we will hear from them first before moving to the next item.

All delegations taking the floor are reminded to observe the limits of five minutes for national statements and seven minutes for statements made on behalf of groups. The buzzer will remind delegations when the time limit has been reached.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the following States: Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

We are all united in our common goal of attaining a world without nuclear weapons. We believe there is a pragmatic and effective way forward that can lead us to the total elimination of such weapons — global zero.

Over the course of recent multilateral disarmament processes, through interventions and working papers we have outlined the elements in that progressive approach. We have also underlined the importance of addressing the relevant political, security and humanitarian considerations. That approach begins with a hard assessment of the realities of the current international situation. Nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved without taking regional and global security considerations into account. While we should recognize those realities, they should not be used as an excuse for inaction.

The underlying premise of the progressive approach is that if we want to see real progress, all of us, including the nuclear-weapon States, must be in it together. We must be open and inclusive in advancing nuclear disarmament. We do not claim that our approach will be swift or easy, but we do believe that it will take us forward substantively, given that there is no quick fix. We already know many of the steps we need to take; they have been outlined many times. To this day, the action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the gold standard for a truly sustainable and global project. Far from maintaining the status quo, our goal is to take practical and effective action to advance disarmament right now. In that regard, there are several proposals currently before the First Committee.

Many States have advocated for a new initiative to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament by negotiating a nuclear-weapon ban. While we respect

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those States' desire to see change, it is our understanding that such negotiations would engage only non-nuclear-weapon States that are already bound by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) not to develop nuclear weapons. They would likely mirror existing obligations, creating confusion and ambiguity without any mechanism to ensure that obligations were being fulfilled.

We would like the international community to focus on the hard and indispensable work that remains ahead of us on key issues, including those in the 2010 NPT action plan. While the progressive approach will take time and effort, it is the key to building the confidence that States will need so that they will no longer consider nuclear weapons necessary for their security and can proceed towards the verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons that we all seek to achieve.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and my own country, Norway. In full awareness of the horrible effects of the use of nuclear weapons, the Netherlands and Norway would like to reaffirm their shared and continuing efforts to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which is the only way we can avoid the risk of their being used again. No one should ever again have to suffer the humanitarian consequences of their use.

For decades, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has made an enormous contribution to global security as a cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and we are working actively to achieve its full implementation, basing our efforts on the sequencing and chronology inherent in article VI of the NPT and taking a long-term perspective on working towards a legally binding framework to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. We would like to reiterate that we are all obliged to work towards this goal in good faith — indeed, in the context of our collective obligations under the NPT, we are obliged to reach it.

We would like to stress that a nuclear-weapon-free world will require the adoption of a legally binding instrument. Such an instrument should be based on the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons and must be supported by nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States alike if we are to ensure that we can achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. There are disagreements on

the required timing, sequencing and modalities for a legally binding framework that will satisfy those conditions, but despite those differences of opinion, we must continue to work in the context of article VI to make further progress on nuclear disarmament and create the conditions that will enable negotiations on a credible and effective prohibition of nuclear weapons to begin.

In that regard, the Netherlands and Norway, together with Chile, Finland, Mexico, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, have drafted a resolution on the multilateral verification of nuclear disarmament that we hope every country will support. The draft resolution goes beyond the question of sequencing. In order to reach our overarching goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, we will at some point need multilateral verification tools. Let us start that work now.

It is exceedingly important to ensure that we do not let ourselves be divided to a point where progress is halted. Our views converge on many issues and we share a common goal, and those are the issues we should focus on. The Netherlands and Norway will continue to do so.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26.

Mr. Sano (Japan): I will read out a shortened version of my statement, the full text of which will be available on the United Nations website.

At the outset, my delegation would like to offer its sincere condolences and sympathies to the royal family, the people and the Government of Thailand on the sad demise of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Over the past several years, the worsening global and regional security environment has changed the nuclear-disarmament landscape. Unfortunately, the different approaches to nuclear disarmament have led to divisions in the disarmament community. Faced with uncertain security situations, the international community should be united in maintaining and strengthening the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is the overarching architecture aimed at ensuring international security by preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and promoting nuclear disarmament. We continue to underline the importance of complying with the Treaty and ensuring its universality. In that regard, Japan has submitted a draft resolution entitled "United action with renewed

determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons” (A/C.1/70/L.26) to the First Committee. The draft resolution represents a realistic common denominator on a wide range of issues relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and we hope very much that it will receive unanimous support.

At this juncture, I would like to emphasize the following points, based on our national perspective. First, Japan encourages the five nuclear-weapon States to take the lead in nuclear disarmament, despite the difficult global and regional security environment. We call on Russia and the United States of America to resume disarmament negotiations as soon as possible. Japan also urges all the nuclear-weapon States to undertake as many concrete disarmament measures as possible, including even small steps that they can take voluntarily. Among other things, they should emphasize the importance of continuing with reporting mechanisms for transparency. We look forward to seeing reports from all the nuclear-weapon States submitted to the NPT Preparatory Committee next spring, giving member States an opportunity to discuss them.

Secondly, Japan believes that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and a fissile material cut-off treaty are practical and effective nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation measures that can be carried out through constructive cooperation between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. The Conference on Disarmament has long been considered the most appropriate venue for negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty, in view of the fact that it engages all stakeholders. However, since few prospects appear to be emerging in the Conference on Disarmament for the time being, we believe that we should seriously start considering other ways that could facilitate a start to negotiations. In the meantime, we strongly urge all nuclear-weapon States and States possessing nuclear warheads to declare or continue to maintain a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

Thirdly, Saturday’s missile launch by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea seems to have been a failure, but that country has launched more than 20 ballistic missiles this year alone, including sea-launched missiles. The recent claim of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea that it has successfully detonated a nuclear warhead, together with these missile tests, has added a new and unprecedented dimension to the threat it poses. Japan condemns the Democratic

People’s Republic of Korea in the strongest terms and urges it to comply immediately with the relevant Security Council resolutions and other commitments. At the same time, all States Members of the United Nations have an obligation to implement the related series of Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2270 (2016), and should also display a firm attitude in addressing the new dimension to this threat. Japan will continue to work in close coordination with the countries involved on drafting a new Security Council resolution that includes additional sanctions. We fear that such regional nuclear issues are likely to seriously undermine the advancement of global nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, Japan believes that both a precise recognition of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and an objective assessment of the severity of the security environment should be taken into account in a balanced manner while promoting nuclear disarmament. We believe that the humanitarian issue can play a bridging role between different approaches to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and unite the entire international disarmament community. At the same time, against the backdrop of an increasingly severe security environment, including in North-East Asia, we must address these security concerns as we promote nuclear-disarmament efforts.

Ms. Urruela Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We associate ourselves with the statement made previously by the representative of Indonesia (see A/C.1/71/PV.10) on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and an essential foundation of our efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. In order for the Treaty to be effective, it is important to pay equal attention to its three pillars of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, since they are closely related and mutually reinforcing. As a State party to the Treaty, we are committed to promoting its universality and full compliance with all of its provisions. We regret the failure of the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, but we should remember that the NPT’s goal is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, not the indefinite preservation of consensus and the status quo. It is clear that the non-nuclear-weapon

States have fulfilled their obligations. All that remains is for the nuclear-weapon States to do the same.

We are also concerned about the lack of genuine quantitative progress in reducing weapon arsenals, and about the fact that the improved quality of nuclear weapons makes it possible to decrease the numbers of nuclear warheads without decreasing their total power. While our priority is achieving the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, until then we must emphasize the full implementation of all initiatives that could mitigate their risks. We therefore believe that it is vital to maintain the current moratorium on nuclear testing until the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force. In that regard, we urge all annex 2 countries to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible so that it can enter into force.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an essential component of nuclear disarmament. Guatemala is proud to be a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world and has served as an example and inspiration for other regions to create denuclearized zones. It can also serve as an example in making progress towards a legally binding instrument for a total ban on nuclear weapons. Such zones support nuclear disarmament and strengthen the non-proliferation regime, which is why it is so important to give them the space they deserve, including in the work of this Committee. We are very pleased with the inclusion of the initiative on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in the discussion at the United Nations through various resolutions adopted in the Committee's last session. In that regard, various conferences were instrumental in initiating that debate and moving the multilateral disarmament agenda forward.

We would like to acknowledge the excellent efforts of Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi of Thailand as Chair of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which met recently in Geneva to seek real solutions to the impasse in which we find ourselves. We welcome the final report of the Working Group (see A/71/371) and its recommendations, which make it clear that the countries that want a ban are an increasingly vocal majority and increasingly less willing to be contented with reiterating the same commitments in the hope that this time they can make progress. We reiterate our support for the related draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26, which aims to convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate

a legally binding instrument to ban all nuclear weapons that would be open to all States and the participation of international organizations and civil society. We do not see this as any kind of duplicative path or as intending to undermine the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as some have said, but rather as a measure that complements and reinforces it. It has given many States renewed optimism and interest in our efforts to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

We are encouraged by this dynamic, which could enable us to move forward to a position that would demonstrate clearly that a small group of States possessing nuclear weapons cannot be the sole decision makers about what happens when with nuclear disarmament. It is therefore up to the Committee to adopt this draft resolution. For the first time in many years, the goal of a ban on nuclear weapons is within reach. While we know that prohibition will not immediately lead to the elimination of all nuclear weapons, we are nonetheless convinced that it is a key element in the process of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Eloumni (Morocco): I would first like to express our sincere condolences to the Kingdom of Thailand on the passing of its King.

The version of the statement that we delivered during the general debate (see A/C.1/71/PV.8) was entirely devoted to nuclear disarmament, so I will not repeat it. We will post the full version on PaperSmart. I would just like to reaffirm its validity and to add a few very brief points.

First, Morocco supports the recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, including the recommendation to convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. Secondly, we insist that the work of the 2017 conference be conducted on a consensus basis. Thirdly, we attach great importance to verification and nuclear disarmament, which is why we have joined others, including Norway and Switzerland, in sponsoring the draft resolution on nuclear-disarmament verification. All the other aspects and elements of our statement remain valid, and it will be posted.

Mr. Al Towaiya (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to head the work of the First Committee. We also welcome the role of the members of your Bureau.

My country aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the representative of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

With regard to nuclear weapons, my country emphasizes that the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is based on respect for its three pillars — disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology. In times of crisis, when the reality on the ground can change very rapidly and fear clouds rational thinking, achieving nuclear disarmament becomes a very difficult task.

We firmly believe that in order to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, we have to strengthen the Treaty itself by ensuring its universality. In particular, and in the light of the security situation in the Middle East, Israel, the only country in the region that has yet to accede to the Treaty, should do so and should also place its nuclear installations under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In view of the humanitarian dimensions of the elimination of nuclear weapons, we welcome the results of the three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which focused on the ethical and humanitarian issues around such weapons and the risks that they pose.

My country has no weapons of mass destruction. We do not produce or possess any stockpiles of them. Our position regarding development in every area remains the same because we wish to underscore the links between disarmament and development. We call on all countries to honour their nuclear-disarmament commitments. We hope that the discussions and the work of this Committee under your leadership, Mr. Chair, will enable us to meet the aspirations of all peoples who seek to live in peace, stability and security.

Mr. Herraiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): For Spain, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation and nuclear-disarmament regime.

A year has passed since the conclusion of the agreement between the E3+3 and Iran and the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2231 (2015), which endorses it. Spain welcomes the implementation of the agreement, which will make it possible to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. We

commend the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its vital efforts in completing the complex task of verifying Iran's compliance with the nuclear commitments in resolution 2231 (2015). We would also like to congratulate Iran on its compliance with those commitments. Spain, as a facilitator of the resolution, emphasizes the importance of ensuring its full implementation by all the parties.

Spain also firmly condemns the two ballistic nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 January and 9 September, in flagrant violation of various Security Council resolutions. Those tests and the repeated ballistic-missile launches that have been conducted in recent months are a very serious threat to international peace and security and stability on the Korean peninsula. As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), Spain calls for rigorous implementation of the relevant Council resolutions, including resolution 2270 (2016). We reiterate our call to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with those resolutions and with the provisions of the NPT in its entirety, as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

The NPT and its 2010 Action Plan constitute the main framework for advancing nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI, with particular emphasis on the responsibility of the States with the largest arsenals. We were pleased to note the effective implementation of the New START treaty, between the United States and the Russian Federation, and we call for that to be continued and deepened, specifically by including non-strategic and non-deployed weapons in future negotiations. However, all the other nuclear-weapon States have an enormous responsibility in this issue as well.

My country, like many others, participated in the work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, convened in Geneva. Spain regrets that it was not possible to reach consensus in the Group. The recommendation included in paragraph 67 of the Group's report (see A/71/371) does not represent the opinions of a large number of countries, including mine. The debate on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons highlights the urgent need to drive the nuclear disarmament process forward. However, we must also take security issues into account. We therefore believe they should be addressed realistically, in the framework of the NPT, and should include the participation of the

nuclear Powers. If we try to move forward in a direction that does not offer any guarantees, that could seriously undermine the Treaty's legitimacy, which is something that my delegation is quite concerned about. I would like to recall here the proposal that my country, together with 23 other States, put forward in the Open-ended Working Group. It is reflected in annex I of the Group's report and establishes a battery of effective measures aimed at making progress towards a world without nuclear weapons.

Spain regrets that we have still not reached an agreement on the future convening of a conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. We reaffirm our support for the 1995 resolution and the obligations agreed to at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and we encourage all parties to demonstrate genuine political will in seeking a consensus on holding such a conference, including all the countries of the region, as soon as possible.

Spain would like to reiterate its support to the Conference on Disarmament as the only permanent multilateral body for negotiating treaties in this area, and we support measures that can promote its revitalization. We understand that drafting a fissile material cut-off treaty could enable the Conference to grow politically and technically and would constitute the next logical step in addressing the negotiating process. There are valuable precedents to help us do that, which should not be forgotten, such as the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and the Shannon mandate, as well as the work of the 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. Recent proposals were also made at this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty that would include past production of fissile material, which we consider a positive, creative and flexible effort to advance the goals of disarmament.

Spain calls on the countries that have not signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, especially those in its annex 2, to do so as soon as possible. Spain was a sponsor of resolution 2310 (2016), which reaffirms the importance of the Treaty in helping to reinforce the prohibition of nuclear tests as a *de facto* international standard.

Threats to the security of nuclear and radioactive materials and facilities are rapidly evolving and require urgent action. Spain has participated actively throughout the process of the Nuclear Security Summits, including the one held in Washington, D.C., in April. We support the crucial work of the IAEA in this area and will participate in its upcoming international conference on nuclear physical security, to be held in Vienna from 5 to 9 December, which should help to strengthen the international architecture on nuclear security. Spain also welcomed the entry into force in May of the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Lastly, Spain actively participates in other key initiatives in this area, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Proliferation Security Initiative and the various export control regimes, which establish key international standards to strengthen the fight against the diversion of nuclear materials and their dual use for illicit purposes.

Ms. Šorytė (Lithuania): My country remains strongly committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear-non-proliferation regime, an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and a basis for the further development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The three mutually reinforcing pillars of the Treaty should be promoted in a balanced manner to further enhance its credibility and integrity. It is crucial that we uphold and preserve the NPT as a multilateral instrument for reinforcing international peace, security and stability. All obligations and commitments assumed under the Treaty or undertaken during previous Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty must be fully implemented. We stress the importance of confidence-building measures, reciprocal transparency and effective verification as integral and essential parts of nuclear-arms control and disarmament in an inclusive and balanced process.

Our collective efforts in the areas of nuclear-arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are driven by a profound understanding of the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Yet if we are to make real progress we must maintain an inclusive approach, promote reciprocity and transparency, avoid fragmentation and involve all States, particularly those in possession of nuclear weapons, and take into serious consideration the realities of the current international situation. In that regard, we associate ourselves with

the statement delivered earlier this afternoon by the German Ambassador on behalf of States that support the progressive approach.

Lithuania remains strongly committed to seeking practical ways to make tangible progress in the nuclear-disarmament process. That is why we view a legal ban on nuclear-weapon initiatives as counterproductive to international disarmament efforts and capable of resulting in dangerous ramifications for regional and global security. The only viable way to achieve nuclear disarmament is through persistent practical work that takes into account both humanitarian and security considerations. The international community already has a framework of mutually reinforcing and complementary treaties, institutions and commitments that support the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

In addition to the goals of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we also support the objective of increasing international cooperation on nuclear security and the physical protection of nuclear material, both of which are becoming increasingly urgent in the face of the clear risk of nuclear terrorism, and we call for a new, robust and clear security paradigm in fostering international cooperation in those areas. We welcome the official entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, whose adoption has been an extremely important step in the global strengthening of nuclear security and whose successful ratification inspires the promotion of other goals.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and successful negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty are also essential to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Nuclear Security Summit process, with the culminating Summit held in Washington this year, marks a tremendous advance in international efforts and an important achievement in strengthening nuclear security. We are delighted to have contributed to the process over the years.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Committee that Lithuania will spare no effort in continuing its active engagement in international cooperation efforts to promote a safer world for all of us.

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Turkey is fully committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We

consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of the utmost importance as the central mechanism of the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Implementing it through practical, incremental steps is still the only viable way forward, and proceeding through consensus is equally important. We do not subscribe to the idea that a ban on nuclear weapons that is instituted without the participation of the possessors of such weapons will lead to their elimination. We urge all stakeholders to refrain from any action that could undermine the integrity of the Treaty or create an alternative to its full implementation and universalization.

Turkey aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Germany earlier this afternoon on behalf of like-minded States regarding our general approach on how to proceed with nuclear-disarmament negotiations. We also wish to underline the importance of universalizing the NPT and to reaffirm our commitment to creating a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. With those goals in mind, we look forward to contributing to a successful NPT review cycle and hope to see progress at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee in 2017.

This year we mark the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As was emphasized in the joint statement at the eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT in New York last month, we regard the Treaty as a core element of the international nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We welcome its recent ratification by Swaziland and Myanmar and once again invite all States, particularly the eight remaining annex 2 States, to ratify it without further delay. The twentieth-anniversary Ministerial Meeting in Vienna in June was also helpful in raising awareness on the need to work for the Treaty's entry into force as soon as possible. We welcome the joint statement of the permanent five members of the Security Council in which States pledged to strive for the Treaty's early ratification and reaffirmed their moratoriums on nuclear-weapon-test explosions.

Turkey was a sponsor of Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), which recognizes that the Treaty's early entry into force could be an effective nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation measure, and calls on States to refrain from conducting nuclear explosions and to maintain their moratoriums. That said, we wish to reiterate our conviction that such

voluntary restrictions are no substitute for the entry into force of the Treaty itself. Turkey also values its relations with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and is willing to further its contributions to its Provisional Technical Secretariat, including to its representation.

As an active supporter of the efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, we wish to reiterate our condemnation of the nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which are a threat to regional and international peace and security. We expect the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as the only country that has conducted nuclear tests in this century, to immediately and fully comply with its international commitments.

In our belief that diplomacy and dialogue represent the only option in the resolution of the Iranian nuclear file, we expect to see the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action implemented fully and uninterrupted and in complete transparency, under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Nuclear and radiological security is a key priority for Turkey. We value the international safeguards system of the IAEA as a fundamental tool in global non-proliferation efforts. Turkey recognizes the need for the further strengthening and universalization of the Agency's verification authority. We regard the comprehensive safeguards and the Agency's Additional Protocol as an indispensable verification standard. We call on all States that have not yet done so to sign, ratify and implement them as soon as possible. Strengthening the safeguards system and promoting the Agency's role and finances are also essential to the sustainability of the NPT regime in the long run.

States in full compliance with their safeguards obligations should have unhindered access to civilian nuclear technology, as provided for in the NPT, thereby helping to further strengthen and universalize the NPT regime. We must also ensure that all requisite steps are taken to ensure that no nuclear programmes are diverted from peaceful to military uses. Turkey is very concerned about the possible humanitarian catastrophes that could result if such lethal weapons are used, whether intentionally or accidentally.

Finally, it is our belief that the time is right for starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which would contribute significantly to disarmament

and non-proliferation efforts. It would also pave the way for parallel advances on the other core agenda items of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We note the recommendations of the 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 and believe that they should be followed up on. The CD's centrality, and the importance of moving forward by consensus, are crucial to the success of any initiative in that regard.

Mr. Benítez Verson (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation fully supports the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (A/C.1/71/PV.10).

The international community cannot remain a passive spectator in the face of the grave danger that nuclear weapons pose to the survival of humankind. The detonation, intentional or not, of even a minute fraction of such weapons would have disastrous consequences for our planet. The existence of more than 15,000 nuclear weapons, 4,000 of which are ready for immediate use, has no justification and is unacceptable. Programmes modernizing such weapons should be halted immediately. We urge that the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines and security policies be eliminated once and for all. The successful holding on 26 September of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons was an affirmation that nuclear disarmament is the area's top priority and a central focus for the United Nations.

There are those who continue to attempt to preserve the status quo, justifying the existence of nuclear weapons and trying to indefinitely postpone their prohibition and elimination through the step-by-step or progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, which is associated with strategic global stability and security. The ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed and ended up as another lost opportunity. Not even the limited nuclear-disarmament Action Plan adopted in 2000 has been fulfilled. The Conference on Disarmament has been paralysed since 1996.

For its part, the Security Council is increasingly taking on issues that are outside its remit, as exemplified in its recent adoption of resolution 2310 (2016), on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. That has created a dangerous and unnecessary duality from

which some States parties and signatories of decisions on issues intrinsic to the Treaty are excluded. Given that unfortunate scenario, it should not be a surprise that the majority advocate immediate concrete action.

There are reasons for optimism, however, because we have also seen some significant results. On 19 August, Member States took a decision to recommend to the General Assembly that negotiations begin in 2017 on a legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons with a view to their elimination. We hope that in the coming days the Committee will take the historic step of approving a resolution to authorize the launch of these negotiations, in what will probably be its most significant decision for present and future generations taken this year.

A ban on nuclear weapons is fully justified, since their use or threat of use, regardless of the circumstances, would constitute a violation of international law and a crime against humanity. In Cuba's opinion, we should formally adopt a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons in 2018, on the occasion of the high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to be convened by the General Assembly. But while banning nuclear weapons would be an important step forward, it is not enough. Cuba will continue to vigorously advocate for the speedy adoption of a comprehensive convention that would include the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame and with strict international verification. The only way to ensure that humankind will no longer suffer from the terrible effects of nuclear weapons is through their total elimination.

Mr. Díaz Reina (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Legally binding instruments and international institutions are a top priority for Colombia, because they provide a road map for universalizing the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as well as for compliance with each of its three pillars, which together are designed to protect humankind from the danger of nuclear war and to safeguard international peace and security.

Colombia, as a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which created the first densely populated zone free of nuclear weapons, promotes the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones in accordance with arrangements freely agreed on by States in the relevant regions with a view to contributing to the international nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We

believe it is vital that we make substantive progress on the existing relevant international instruments, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, particularly where the effective implementation of its article VI is concerned, and on the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, among other measures.

While there can be different approaches to actions that lead to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, it is crucial that we adopt measures that include the obligation to eliminate nuclear arsenals in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, as well as specific obligations concerning the reduction of existing arsenals within a multilaterally agreed-on and defined time frame. Such inclusivity would encourage an ongoing dialogue with countries possessing nuclear weapons as we continue to strive to find the political will needed to achieve our goal of the total elimination of such weapons.

Colombia has participated in international forums considering issues of global concern, such as the First Committee, the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, and has always emphasized the importance of synergies and complementary processes between these institutions and formulating and adopting initiatives that can bring us closer to a world free of the threat that the possession and use of weapons of mass destruction pose to the world. We are marking the sixtieth anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency and in that regard, we would like to emphasize the vital role that it plays in building global peace, security and development through the peaceful use of nuclear technology and science.

Colombia condemns the nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September and its Government's previous actions, which are clear violations of the prohibitions contained in the relevant Security Council resolutions. We are deeply concerned about the escalation on the Korean peninsula of nuclear tests and their frequency and magnitude. The situation poses a threat to regional and international stability, peace and security. Based on those concerns, Colombia urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully observe its international commitments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation and fully

comply with the provisions of the Security Council resolutions on the subject, especially resolution 2270 (2016). We will continue to implement the provisions of that resolution, since that due compliance, together with the comprehensive enforcement of instruments related to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, is intended to provide a path to dialogue and to safeguard peace and international security.

Lastly, Colombia supports multilateral initiatives that can lead to the eventual denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, with a view to preventing greater tension in its region of Asia, which is why we support the verification and monitoring process of the IAEA and urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Agency's safeguards system. We also urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resume the Six-Party Talks process, which can make it possible to find a peaceful and diplomatic solution to these issues and to make progress on the path of dialogue and agreement, which are key to addressing issues of international security.

Mr. Otto (Palau): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

As a nuclear-free constitutional Government, Palau strongly supports all efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. That is why we have sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.26, led by Japan and entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". That total elimination is a humanitarian imperative of the highest order. It is unacceptable that nuclear weapons remain the only weapons of mass destruction that are not yet outlawed. They threaten the security of all nations, peoples and the planet as a whole.

Palau participated actively in this year's Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in Geneva and voted in favour of its landmark report (see A/71/371). As an endorser of the humanitarian pledge, we firmly support the recommendation to convene negotiations in 2017 on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. We are proud to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41, which takes that recommendation forward, and we strongly urge all member States to vote in favour of it later this month. Together with our Pacific island neighbours Fiji, Nauru, Samoa and Tuvalu, Palau submitted a

paper to the Open-ended Working Group proposing elements for a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, including provisions on victim assistance. We hope that our suggestions will be useful during the negotiating process next year.

On Thursday, the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, Mr. Peter Thomson, reminded the First Committee that our region, the Pacific, "still bears the human and environmental scars from nuclear-weapon testing" (see A/C.1/71/PV.10). Over the course of half a century, more than 300 nuclear-test explosions occurred in our region. Their impact on our fragile ecology and the physical health, mental and psychosocial well-being of our people has been profound. We continue to experience epidemics of cancers, chronic diseases and congenital abnormalities as a result of the radioactive fallout that blanketed our homes and the vast Pacific Ocean on which we depend for our livelihoods. Entire atolls remain unsafe for habitation, agricultural production and fishing. Many Pacific islanders have been permanently displaced from their homes and disconnected from their indigenous way of life. They have suffered and continue to suffer untold anguish, heartache and pain. We urge the Committee to bear that experience in mind when it decides how to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41.

How can any nation claim that nuclear weapons are legitimate when we know the harm they do to people and the environment? How can we ignore the pleas of survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? For 71 years, nuclear disarmament has been on the agenda of the United Nations. A ban on the most dreadful weapons ever created is long overdue and is now on its way. Those of us who support the prohibition of nuclear weapons are not fooling ourselves, as one delegation suggested last week. We understand the challenges we face in realizing our goal. Equally, we understand that it would be foolish to believe that such weapons can exist for decades to come without ever being used again. On the contrary, we believe that the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be speedily and fully achieved when the funds that are being spent on nuclear weapons are instead spent on the 17 Goals that will transform our world.

In conclusion, Palau looks forward to next March, when the first round of negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons will be held. It will be a historic moment. To those not yet convinced that a ban is needed, I implore them to recall the first-

hand testimonies of the people who have suffered, as recounted in the Trusteeship Chamber last month by the Permanent Representative of the Marshall Islands on the occasion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and by the petitioners from French Polynesia during the first week of this year's session of the Fourth Committee. Like us, they are Pacific islanders whose fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters have experienced — from the moment of the first explosion until today — the horror that such weapons of mass destruction unleash.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Mongolia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.20.

Mr. Sukhbold (Mongolia): Under sub-item (v) of agenda item 98, I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of Australia, Austria, the People's Republic of China, France, Indonesia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Morocco, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Viet Nam and my own delegation, Mongolia, draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.20, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status".

In 1992, as a demonstration of its commitment to maintaining international peace and security, Mongolia declared its territory a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone. The General Assembly has considered the issue of Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status since 1998 and has supported and welcomed Mongolia's efforts to promote and strengthen that status, adopting resolutions on the subject on a biennial basis. In 2012, the five nuclear-weapon States signed a joint declaration whereby they pledged to respect Mongolia's status and not to contribute to any act that would violate it. A broader approach to Mongolia's external security and the pledge by the permanent five members of the Security Council, which include our two immediate neighbours, to respect our status and not to contribute to any act that would violate it, constitute the specifics of the unique approach to Mongolia's case.

Ms. Urruela Arenales (Guatemala), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

This year's draft resolution is based on the Secretary-General's report (A/71/161) on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/63. It is also a result of consultations that my delegation has had with interested delegations and sponsors. We would therefore like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the subject and to

all the member States that have sponsored the draft resolution. It is based on previous resolutions on the subject, which were adopted without a vote, with some technical and factual updates. Its eleventh preambular paragraph reflects the support expressed for Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status at the seventeenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held on Margarita Island in September 2016. The thirteenth preambular paragraph also reflects the support expressed by the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, held in New York in April 2015.

Mongolia greatly values the dialogue and interaction we have had with member States and the support they have given our efforts. We would be more than happy if other delegations joined us as sponsors of the draft resolution. My delegation expresses the hope that, as with similar resolutions in previous years, the Committee will adopt it without a vote.

Mr. Wibono (Indonesia): I would like to express our deepest sympathy and condolences to the people and the Government of Thailand on the demise of King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation for the Chair's efforts and able leadership and to assure him and the Bureau of my delegation's support and cooperation.

Indonesia fully aligns itself with its earlier statement (see A/C.1/71/PV.10), delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and 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).

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are a high priority for Indonesia. As long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, the risk of their detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, remains unacceptably high. The three international Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, convened by Norway in March 2013, Mexico in February 2014 and Austria in December 2014, have given us compelling evidence and findings on nuclear weapons' grave humanitarian impact that should be a catalyst for a renewed and urgent commitment on the part of all States to fully implementing their existing obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The slow progress on nuclear disarmament is disheartening. Seventy-one years after the creation of the United Nations, nuclear arms are still the only weapons of mass destruction that have yet to be universally and comprehensively prohibited. Under the NPT, the ban on possessing nuclear weapons applies only to non-nuclear-weapon States, while nuclear-weapon States are exempted. That exemption, however, was never intended to go on indefinitely. As the International Court of Justice concluded in its 1996 advisory opinion on the *Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons*, article VI of the NPT implies an obligation to pursue in good faith and ultimately conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international controls.

Indonesia remains concerned about some States' security doctrines, which still rely on nuclear weapons. We are of the view that such reliance is inconsistent with their legal obligations and commitments on nuclear disarmament. We would therefore like to call on those States to abandon the possibility of using nuclear weapons in their security doctrines. In that regard, we are particularly concerned about nuclear-weapon modernization programmes, since we fail to see how they fit with nuclear-weapon States' disarmament commitments. We have yet to be convinced as to how such programmes can contribute to nuclear-disarmament efforts.

As my delegation highlighted during the general debate (see A/C.1/71/PV.3), Indonesia welcomes the final report of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (see A/71/371). During the course of the Working Group's work, it became undeniably clear that a majority of States support the convening in 2017 of negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. Indonesia rejects the notion, claimed by some delegations, that such a treaty would undermine the NPT. We do not see how the proposed treaty could do that. On the contrary, we believe firmly that such a treaty is entirely compatible with the NPT and would strengthen it, since in categorically and universally prohibiting nuclear weapons it would unarguably contribute positively to nuclear disarmament. Based on that strong conviction, Indonesia has decided to become a sponsor of the draft resolution on taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations (A/C.1/71/L.41) and would like to take this opportunity to invite all States to support and consider sponsoring it.

The progress on nuclear disarmament is unacceptably slow. Indonesia believes that pursuing it will inevitably contribute to non-proliferation and that States must redouble their efforts if we are to achieve our shared goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is high time that all States showed good faith regarding nuclear disarmament.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.57.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): I would first like to join others in expressing our deep sympathy and condolences to the Thai people and Government on the passing of His Majesty the King of Thailand.

Norway's position on nuclear weapons has already been outlined in the statement delivered by the representative of Iceland on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.12), and the joint statement delivered by my delegation earlier today for Norway and the Netherlands. I would like to add a couple of words in my national capacity.

On 26 April, the Storting, Norway's Parliament, agreed by consensus to a motion by which it requested the Government to actively work for a world free of nuclear arms and promote the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a driving force for non-proliferation and disarmament, with a view to achieving the balanced, mutual, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons and, on those grounds, to take a long-term perspective in working towards a legally binding framework to achieve that goal.

There are many different views on how to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. Despite those differing positions on the means to achieve our shared goal, there should be common ground on practical and effective measures that can enable us to move closer to the full elimination of nuclear arms. One area of convergence lies in the verification of nuclear disarmament. Verification is essential for fostering and enhancing confidence that disarmament obligations are being fulfilled, an element that is important both for non-nuclear-weapon States and for those that will have to irreversibly destroy and eliminate their stocks of nuclear arms. As we referred to in our joint statement with the Netherlands, a number of countries from various regions have submitted a draft resolution on nuclear-disarmament verification (A/C.1/71/L.57).

We invite all countries to join in supporting it. Its overall intention is to increase multilateral knowledge and awareness of verification within a United Nations framework and in an inclusive manner.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.49.

Mr. Ayoko (Nigeria): I would like to begin by expressing our appreciation for the Chair's leadership.

The delegation of Nigeria aligns itself with the statements on this cluster delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.10); by our own delegation, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.11); and by Germany, on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (see A/C.1/71/PV.11).

Also on behalf of the African Group, the Nigerian delegation would like to introduce a draft resolution entitled "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty" (A/C.1/71/L.49), which refers to the Treaty also known as the Treaty of Pelindaba and has already been circulated to Member States. We appreciate the overwhelming support that delegations have given the resolution in the past and welcome and request their continued support during this session. The fact that we are presenting it once again re-emphasizes Africa's strong commitment to maintaining the continent and adjacent areas as a zone truly free of nuclear weapons.

The Nigerian delegation considers nuclear-weapon-free zones a credible means of promoting the two-pronged approach to reaching our overall objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The significance of such zones lies not just in the fact that they ban outright the production and possession of nuclear weapons within the territory of States in the region, but that they also prohibit stationing them within those zones. In that regard, my delegation would like to stress that despite the clear setbacks there have been to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, we must continue our efforts to ensure that the commitments and obligations of the Action Plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are honoured.

The monumentally catastrophic humanitarian consequences that could result from either deliberate

use or an unintentional explosion of a nuclear weapon remain a compelling reason why some Member States should end their continued possession of such weapons. That compelling realization is part of what has motivated Nigeria to sponsor, along with its partners Australia, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa and others, a draft resolution (A/C.1/71/L.35) on convening a conference in 2017, open to all States, as well as international organizations and representatives of civil society, among others, for negotiating a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons. In that regard, my delegation urges all States to support the extensive work of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, as a broad base on which to launch this opportunity of a lifetime.

Nuclear weapons and their proliferation create security challenges, especially in the context of new realities such as the threats posed by global and transboundary terrorism. My country continues to welcome the Nuclear Security Summit's efforts to address the risks of nuclear materials falling into the hands of non-State actors, including those risks associated with the possible transfer of nuclear technology to terrorist groups, which is a matter of great concern to my delegation.

We commend the ongoing work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), particularly its role in monitoring and inspecting nuclear facilities. To that end, my delegation welcomes the IAEA's second ministerial International Conference on Nuclear Security, scheduled for 5 to 9 December, whose preparatory meeting is co-chaired by Nigeria and South Korea. We urge States to ensure their observance and compliance with IAEA safeguards and standards at all times. States must also be alive to their responsibilities regarding compliance with other measures, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other mechanisms aimed to promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the promotion of its entry into force. We also look for full commitment to the Conference on Disarmament.

Ms. Roopnarine (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago aligns itself with the statements delivered on this cluster by the representatives of Jamaica, on behalf of the Caribbean Community, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.10).

At the outset, we would like to point out that nuclear disarmament has been deadlocked. Last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed to produce an outcome document, and most of the commitments of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference remain unfulfilled. Other steps towards achieving disarmament have failed to materialize. Trinidad and Tobago believes that the continued lack of progress in disarmament is an affront to multilateralism. The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. The outdated paradigm of national security must be replaced by one of human security. There is now a shared understanding that responsibility for nuclear disarmament lies not only with nuclear-weapon States but with the entire international community. Trinidad and Tobago is therefore proud to be among the majority of States that subscribe to the Humanitarian Initiative and that have endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge.

We welcome the final report of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (see A/71/371), which met recently in Geneva, and in particular its recommendation that negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons commence in 2017. We believe that such a treaty could break the deadlock that has existed for so long in nuclear disarmament and would open the door for other worthy initiatives, such as a fissile material cutoff treaty and efforts to ensure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Most importantly, it would represent a decisive step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons by demonstrating how the vast majority of States are united in rejecting such weapons as morally and legally unacceptable.

Trinidad and Tobago supports and is a sponsor of the draft resolution on taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations (A/C.1/71/L.41), which establishes a mandate for negotiations in 2017 on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. It is incumbent on every nation to work to eliminate the threat of nuclear annihilation and attain a world free of nuclear weapons. The full text of this statement will be posted on the First Committee portal.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Monsignor Kassas (Holy See) (*spoke in French*): As early as February 1943, two and a half years before the Trinity atomic test, Pope Pius XII had already expressed his deep concern about the violent use of atomic energy. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, witnessing the totally uncontrollable and indiscriminate consequences of nuclear weapons, he demanded that nuclear war be effectively banned and called the arms race a costly relationship of mutual terror. In that regard, the delegation of the Holy See would like to reiterate the conviction of Pope Francis that the desire for peace and fraternity planted deep in the human heart will bear fruit in concrete ways to ensure that nuclear weapons are banned once and for all, to the benefit of our common home.

The Holy See echoes the cry of humankind in its desire to be freed from the spectre of nuclear war. We therefore actively participated in the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and regularly support the First Committee's resolutions and States' individual steps aimed at contributing to nuclear and general and complete disarmament, in order to fulfil the requirements of article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

States' non-specific possession of nuclear weapons is morally reprehensible and an affront to the entire United Nations framework, and it runs counter to the very mission of the Organization, which is to serve humankind and international peace and security. We cannot ensure lasting peace by maintaining a balance of terror. Peace must rather be built on justice, socioeconomic development, freedom, respect for human rights, the participation of all in public affairs and the building of trust between peoples.

Eight years ago, the Secretary-General issued a five-point plan for nuclear disarmament whose central element was negotiating a convention on nuclear weapons or a framework of instruments leading to a universal ban on nuclear weapons. The Committee should therefore seriously pursue the recommendation of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (see A/71/371), with the support of the majority of participating Member States, that the General Assembly convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination.

The Holy See continues to plead for the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, we welcomed the Security Council's adoption on 23 September of its resolution 2310 (2016), urging the eight States whose ratification is still required for the Treaty's entry into force to sign and ratify it. There is no reason to put this off.

The Holy See reaffirms its support for the NPT as an instrument that is essential to international peace and security, and deplores the international community's collective failure to move forward with a positive disarmament calendar. As Pope Francis has said,

"We must work hard for a world free of nuclear weapons by implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in letter and in spirit, until such weapons are totally banned." (A/70/PV.3, p. 5)

Finally, the Holy See believes that negotiations on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament must be accompanied by negotiations on the balance and deployment of conventional forces and on reducing them, in the spirit of article VII of the NPT. The task ahead is difficult and the challenges are multifaceted, but we must tackle them with hope, determination and confidence.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the cluster on nuclear weapons.

The Committee will now take up the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction. However, before giving the floor to the first speaker, I wish to remind delegations that statements in exercise of right of reply on both the cluster on nuclear weapons and the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction can be made after 5.30 this afternoon.

I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.43 on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Ms. Jenie (Indonesia): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on this very important subject.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons (CWC) have noted with satisfaction the effective implementation of the CWC, as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction

(WMD), providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. We urge all possessor States parties to take every step necessary to ensure their compliance with their detailed plan for the destruction of chemical weapons remaining after the final extended destruction deadline of 29 April 2012, in the shortest time possible, in order to uphold the Convention's credibility and integrity.

We also call for the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, without any discrimination or restrictions. In that regard, we attach great importance to the adoption of a plan of action on economic and technological development, under article XI of the Convention, in order to achieve full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all of the article's provisions.

NAM States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) believe it represents an important component of the international legal architecture for WMDs. We recognize that the lack of a verification system poses a continuing challenge to the Convention's effectiveness, and we call for resuming multilateral negotiations to conclude a non-discriminatory, legally binding protocol, dealing in a balanced and comprehensive manner with all articles of the Convention, in order to sustainably strengthen it, including through verification measures. We urge the party that has rejected the negotiations to reconsider. NAM further emphasizes the need for the ability to enhance, without restrictions or discrimination, international cooperation, assistance and exchanges conducted for peaceful purposes regarding toxins and biological agents, equipment and technology, in conformity with the Convention. NAM States parties to the BWC look forward to the successful holding next month of the Review Conference of the Convention.

NAM calls on all Member States to support international efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and urges them to take and strengthen national measures, as appropriate, aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and materials and technologies related to their manufacture.

In the context of Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004), 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008) and 1977 (2011), regarding the areas covered by multilateral treaties on

WMDs, NAM underlines the importance of ensuring that no action by the Security Council undermines the Charter of the United Nations, existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction, the work of international organizations established in that regard, or the functions, power and role of the General Assembly. NAM cautions against the Security Council's continued practice of using its authority to define legislative requirements for Member States in implementing its decisions. In that regard, we emphasize that the issue of the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors should be addressed in an inclusive manner by the General Assembly, taking into account the views of all Member States.

NAM is once again introducing an updated draft resolution entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol" (A/C.1/71/L.43), for which it welcomes the support of all States Members of the United Nations.

Mr. Marshall (Barbados): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction.

CARICOM has a long-standing and vested interest in the disarmament and international-security agenda of the First Committee and of the United Nations as a whole. Our countries' very existence and development depend on a safe and secure world. We are therefore concerned about any threats, real or perceived, posed to it and our stability, including by weapons of mass destruction.

CARICOM countries do not possess such weapons, nor do they produce them. Nonetheless, given their place and stake in the international community, the States members of CARICOM find it necessary to reiterate that the use of such weapons is unjustifiable, that it leads to severe harm to and devastation of societies and the environment, and that it diverts valuable resources from important development work. For those reasons, and in today's increasingly globalized world, no country can be indifferent to that threat. In fact, we must become more alert, as the possibilities for designing, producing, sharing and deploying such weapons increase. The information and communication technologies and networks that are progressively shrinking space and time, and thereby providing opportunities for many around the world, are also providing criminals and terrorist groups with the wherewithal to perpetrate

violence and instil fear within and across borders, often going undetected and unpunished for their crimes. All countries must act to detect and deter such threats, including through a transparent, rules-based system for safeguarding cyberspace.

Other threats exist. The persistent reports of the use of chemical weapons by State and non-State actors are a stark reminder that the international community needs to do more to totally eliminate weapons of mass destruction in all their forms. While we often speak explicitly about nuclear, radiological and biological weapons and their production and delivery, we must also remain cognizant of the threat posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The development and use of IEDs continue to expand. While major aspects of their use are covered under international law, those laws are often blatantly violated by criminals and armed groups. The challenge is that many of those devices are easy to design and their components are cheap and readily accessible.

Recognizing the persistence and urgency of those issues, CARICOM member States remain committed to pursuing non-proliferation, including through the implementation of their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, as provided for in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and its subsequent mandates.

Despite the other significant security challenges that our countries face — especially preventing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the trafficking of illegal narcotics — CARICOM States continue to commit considerable resources to implementing legislation and the attendant regulations and administrative controls to prevent the transshipment, transit, import, export and brokering of dual-use materials and other strategic goods that can be used to produce weapons of mass destruction. We would like to note our ongoing focus on the development of an adequate export-control infrastructure, control lists governing strategic items and the training of enforcement and operational personnel to detect, identify and interdict such prohibited commodities and prosecute violations where appropriate.

CARICOM's sense of urgency about those efforts, and its commitment to them, is bolstered by the recognition that small States, owing to their scarce and stretched resources, are often considered easy targets by those who organize to do harm. It is well known, for example, that the many passages and straits across our Caribbean Sea, while important for maritime navigation and trade, can also serve as nodes for illicit transport and trade if they are left unpoliced. CARICOM therefore welcomes the continuing work of the International Maritime Organization to protect port facilities and ships through preventive measures aimed at deterring and detecting unlawful acts. The work of the International Civil Aviation Organization to deter and detect similar unlawful acts in airspace should be encouraged and supported as well.

Meeting our key objectives in the area of non-proliferation has been significantly aided by our ongoing cooperation with the CARICOM-United Nations implementation programme for resolution 1540 (2004), which has coordinated meaningful assistance with other key partners, including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the International Criminal Police Organization, and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Given the programme's role in advancing regional non-proliferation efforts and its designation as the regional focal point for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee to aid CARICOM member States' efforts to implement Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005), it is critical to ensure that the programme continues to receive adequate support to enable it to assist CARICOM member States with those important obligations.

That need for continued and expanded support was further underscored by the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), which, among other things, calls for the development of legislation and appropriate enforcement mechanisms to prevent the facilitation of foreign terrorist fighters and their movement to conflict zones. The requisite assistance to CARICOM member States for meeting those obligations, as well as those pertaining to non-proliferation and the broader fight against terrorism, will undoubtedly demand the sustained engagement of the international community in supporting the work of the CARICOM coordinator. That work will also complement hemispheric

commitments under the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

CARICOM looks forward to continued engagement with the United Nations system and other partners, including women worldwide, committed to countering the use of weapons of mass destruction, promoting a safe and secure world and safeguarding our sustainable development.

Mr. Mackay (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) — Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Belarus — in a joint statement on combating the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The member States of the CSTO are convinced of the vital importance of preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and related technologies and materials. In today's circumstances, the issue has continued to grow, making combating it a priority for the international community as a whole, and for regional organizations in particular. We firmly believe that effectively combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction can be possible only with the collective efforts of the entire international community to coordinate the actions and measures taken by States and international and regional organizations. In that regard, we stress the importance of a comprehensive approach to preventing the spread of WMDs, which, in our view, must be based on strengthening all non-proliferation regimes, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), as well as on effective and existing national export-control systems.

We note the relevance and essential nature of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) as the only instrument that provides a comprehensive approach to combating the spread of WMDs, and we believe that the comprehensive review of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2015) being conducted this year will facilitate the increased effectiveness of national efforts in the area and will help the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) to optimize its cooperation in that process with all participants, especially States.

The States members of the CSTO are implementing resolution 1540 (2004) at the national level in various ways, including by developing voluntary plans of action, united by a common strategic purpose, which is the importance of implementing all the resolution's provisions as quickly and effectively as possible. Our efforts are based on ensuring that assistance given by countries that have the relevant capacities to States in need should not present obstacles to scientific and technical cooperation for peaceful purposes.

The CSTO member States cooperate closely on issues related to implementing resolution 1540 (2004) and are open to further cooperation with the 1540 Committee, as well as with relevant regional and international organizations when necessary. We firmly believe that synergizing the efforts of the CSTO and other international organizations, together with coordination by the 1540 Committee, can make the resolution's implementation more effective and eliminate duplication in the assistance process. The CSTO member States welcome innovative approaches, particularly by holding regional courses for national contact points and conducting partner reviews of the resolution's implementation aimed at exchanging experiences and national practices. Representatives of the CSTO member States participated actively in a seminar organized by the Russian Federation under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, which took place at the end of June in Kaliningrad.

The CSTO member States note the generally positive progress that countries have made in implementing the resolution and stress the importance of maintaining that momentum, while taking into account the particularities and realities of individual countries' expert and financial capacities. We are ready to cooperate with all interested parties in strengthening the international non-proliferation regime on WMDs.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

I would like to recall here that, in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, signed in 2003, our countries proclaimed their goal of making the Americas a zone free of biological and chemical weapons. Moreover, through the 2005 adoption by the General

Assembly of the Organization of American States of its resolution 2107, we decided unanimously to make a concrete commitment to that shared objective of making the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons. The States members of UNASUR firmly condemn the continued existence of chemical and biological weapons and reiterate their belief that their use constitutes a crime against humanity. The catastrophic consequences of their use must be prevented by eliminating them completely.

UNASUR reaffirms its commitment to the prohibition of the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and to their total elimination, as agreed on in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We also support its full, effective, non-discriminatory implementation and encourage the efforts to work for its universalization.

As we reiterated at the seventh UNASUR Summit, held in Paramaribo, our region considers the use of chemical weapons in any of their forms to be a war crime and a crime against humanity, and affirms the importance of addressing the issue impartially and transparently and on a basis of international law. We also take this opportunity to emphatically condemn the use of any toxic chemical, such as chlorine, as a weapon. UNASUR strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons or any other weapon of mass destruction by any actor, at any time and under any circumstances. In that connection, UNASUR is extremely concerned about the use of chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria. We reaffirm the importance of adopting and strengthening national measures, as appropriate, in order to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction or their means of delivery and materials and technology related to their production, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Turning to Libya, we welcome the Security Council's initiative to unanimously adopt resolution 2298 (2016) in response to a request by Libyan authorities. The resolution authorized Member States to acquire, control, transport, transfer and destroy chemical weapons identified by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in Libya, in order to ensure that the country's chemical-weapon arsenal can be eliminated as quickly and safely as possible. In that regard, we applaud the OPCW's August announcement confirming that Libya's remaining chemical weapons

have been totally eliminated by transferring them out of the country with a view to their eventual destruction. UNASUR warmly welcomes Angola and Myanmar's recent accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention. While we are pleased with the increasing number of States parties to the Convention, we urge States that have not yet signed it to do so promptly. We also thank the OPCW for its efforts to ban chemical weapons by promoting the universalization of the Convention and the full implementation of its provisions.

We reiterate the importance of the agreement reached in December 2011 that provides for completing the destruction of any remaining chemical-weapon stockpiles and thereby safeguarding the integrity of the Convention and the OPCW's credibility. In that regard, we call on chemical-weapon States to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and destroy their arsenals within the specified time frame. We also call on all States that may possess chemical weapons to eliminate them and comply with the Convention quickly and unconditionally. We believe that the Convention should be implemented in a manner that does not jeopardize the economic and technological development of States parties, hinder international cooperation in chemical activities not prohibited under the Convention or create obstacles to international scientific and technical information for the production of chemicals and equipment for the production, processing or use of chemical substances for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. The UNASUR States acknowledge the Provisional Technical Secretariat's contribution to the development and the effectiveness of the OPCW, which is key to achieving the Convention's objectives and purpose and ensuring the full implementation of its provisions, including those relating to the verification of international compliance, while acting as a forum for consultation and cooperation with States parties.

UNASUR appreciates OPCW's cooperation and international assistance, including through the promotion of events to do with assistance and protection against chemical weapons, which are held annually in several UNASUR States. We believe that such initiatives will help to promote a more secure environment in our region. UNASUR welcomed the outcome of the third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held from 8 to 19 April 2013 in The Hague. We would particularly like to highlight the outcome document's consensus

statement on prohibition, which covered all aspects of the Convention and made important recommendations regarding its ongoing implementation.

UNASUR also reaffirms the fundamental importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). We pledge to continue cooperating actively and constructively to advance the Convention's full implementation and universalization. In that regard, we welcome the upcoming eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, to be held in Geneva in November, and we hope it will have a successful outcome. We join other States in stressing that effective international action against biological weapons must be universal, legally binding and non-discriminatory. Additional measures should be designed and implemented in order to ensure the effective enforcement of the ban. That is why we support the swift resumption of negotiations on the protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention to establish an effective verification regime that can guarantee its universal implementation.

UNASUR members have actively participated in meetings of States parties and of experts. We welcome the discussions based on the standing agenda adopted at the seventh Review Conference of the parties to the BWC, particularly with regard to increasing cooperation and assistance in accordance with article X of the Convention, which represents an essential tool for achieving its objectives. UNASUR believes firmly that national measures should translate the obligations undertaken by States into practical and effective action, and to that end we pledge our renewed support to the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, which assists member States.

In conclusion, UNASUR reaffirms that the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention are vital international legal instruments for guiding multilateral efforts in the struggle to achieve the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international control.

Mr. Ben Sliman (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to state that the Group of Arab States associates itself with the statement on this cluster delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group continues to maintain its principled and unwavering position in support of making a priority of reaching a world free of weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical, biological or nuclear, while giving special attention to a more immediate goal, which is the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It is important to ensure that the international community does not forget that the very first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament determined very clearly and unanimously that disarmament was a priority, both with regard to nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and agreed on the vital importance of achieving nuclear disarmament based on resolution 1 (I), adopted on 24 January 1946.

The Arab Group has played a significant role in the efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. In that respect, the Group worked at the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to translate its beliefs into effective measures to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We have consistently supported the objectives of both the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and will continue to participate in their work. We would like to underscore that it is essential that Israel accede as a non-nuclear party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as to become party to the BWC and the CWC, which will help to achieve their universalization, strengthen international and regional security and improve the credibility of the international disarmament regime. Israel continues to be the only State in the Middle East that has not adhered to any of the three international treaties on weapons of mass destruction, which of itself poses a threat to international peace and security.

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to agree on an outcome document, despite all the efforts of the Group of Arab States, will have a negative effect on the possibility of ending the stalemate that has blocked efforts to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. That is in spite of the fact that the previous Review Conferences included concrete measures linking the three NPT pillars to implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and that the 2010 NPT Review Conference set forth an Action Plan regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons

of mass destruction in the Middle East, giving us unprecedented opportunities to establish such a zone in the region. In the past, through a bold and historic decision based on the Arab States' good intentions, the Arab Group approved an expansion of the zone in order to put to rest the baseless claims that the existence of nuclear weapons in Israel might be justified when other weapons of mass destruction existed elsewhere. In any case, through the draft resolutions that we submit year after year in the First Committee, we will continue to reiterate the importance of achieving nuclear disarmament in the Middle East.

The Arab Group calls urgently for strengthening all the efforts of the international community, as well as the universality of all the conventions and agreements on weapons of mass destruction, in order to help to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We also renew our commitment to engaging in serious negotiations in that regard, underscored by the constructive proposal the Group made at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We also look forward to constructive engagement by Israel and all other regional parties in those negotiations.

The Group of Arab States would also like to remind the international community of its role and its ethical and political responsibility in making the necessary effort to enable us to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which will help to revive the credibility of the international disarmament regime.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Körömi (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their means of delivery remains a growing threat to international peace and security. The European Union is gravely concerned about the risk of State or non-State actors acquiring such weapons or material, which has already become a dark reality in

Syria and Iraq. The international community must not remain silent when challenged by the use of chemical weapons. While we welcome the complete destruction of the chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, we find the gaps and discrepancies in its declaration unacceptable, and the continued use of chemical weapons in the country deeply shocking and disturbing.

We reiterate that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, at any time, anywhere and under any circumstances is clearly contrary to international law and must be wholly condemned. In that regard, we fully support the work of the Declaration Assessment Team and the Fact-Finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), as well as the work of the United Nations-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism. The Joint Investigative Mechanism's third report (see S/2016/738) identifies the Syrian Government as responsible in at least two cases of chlorine-attack incidents, and Da'esh in another attack involving sulphur mustard gas, thus warranting appropriate action as set out in Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). There can be no impunity for this, and those responsible for any use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

Earlier this year, the risk that terrorists could acquire some of the chemicals remaining in Libya demanded swift international action. We commend the OPCW for planning the chemicals' safe removal and destruction, to which several EU member States contributed. The EU and its member States affirm their readiness to support the implementation of the destruction plan.

Recent events have reminded us of the importance of universal adherence to the relevant treaties and conventions in this area, particularly with regard to the Middle East. The European Union continues to support the objective of creating a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons, all other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We regret that the projected conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems has not been convened. We maintain the view that ensuring dialogue and building confidence among all stakeholders represent the only sustainable way to agree on arrangements for a meaningful conference, to be attended by all States in the Middle East on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them, as was

decided at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We once again call on all States that are not yet party to the Chemical Weapons Convention to ratify or accede to it without delay, thereby contributing to the goal of a world free of chemical weapons. The European Union continues to support activities in all areas of the Convention, including national implementation, assistance and protection; international cooperation and, in particular, its African programme. Implementing all the articles of the Convention also constitutes a tangible contribution to efforts to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism by non-State actors in the area of chemical security.

The European Union considers strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) to be a high priority. We are strongly committed to a successful outcome of the eighth Review Conference of the BWC and are providing a substantial contribution to that end. In preparation for the Review Conference, a series of EU-sponsored regional workshops for Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America were organized with the aim of increasing understanding of the key issues and challenges involved and building consensus on strengthening the Convention. We are working to ensure that the States parties address the following priorities: building and sustaining confidence in compliance; supporting international implementation; supporting the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical, Bacteriological (Biological) or Toxin Weapons and agents; and promoting universality among the 21 States that are not yet party to the Convention. We call on all those States to join the BWC without delay.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) remains a central pillar of the international non-proliferation architecture. The European Union warmly welcomes the comprehensive review of the resolution being conducted this year. We expect that process to reaffirm the resolution's centrality, importance and authority. In the wake of the review, the European Union and its member States would like to see a strong restatement of the Security Council's support for the resolution, including through the adoption of another resolution. The European Council is at present considering the adoption of a new decision in support of resolution 1540 (2004) and its implementation and universality. We are confident that new projects based on this dossier can

be implemented from early 2017 onwards, taking into account the outcome of the comprehensive review.

We are very concerned about the proliferation of ballistic missiles and the continuation of missile tests outside all existing transparency and pre-notification schemes and in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The European Union once again urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately halt all of its launches using ballistic-missile technology and to fully comply with its international obligations. We also underscore the importance of Security Council 2231 (2015), which calls upon Iran to refrain from any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic-missile technology. Furthermore, the attempts of the Syrian Government to acquire and use ballistic missiles only add to the suffering of the Syrian people and further undermine efforts to establish peace and security in the region.

The European Union strongly supports The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, to which all European Union member States have subscribed. We call on all States, especially those with significant activities in the area of ballistic missiles and space-launch vehicles, to adhere to the Code. The European Union will continue to promote its universalization and, where possible and appropriate, a closer relationship between the Code and the United Nations system. We are also in favour of examining further multilateral steps to prevent the threat of missile proliferation and to promote disarmament efforts in the missile field. Export controls are very important tools for preventing the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, as well as the proliferation of missile technology. In that regard, the Australia Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime continue to play a key role. All European Union countries follow the European Union control list in order to implement their commitments under the multilateral export control regimes. We are therefore actively promoting the full membership of all 28 European Union member States in the international export-control regimes, as it can reinforce the efficiency of export controls and contribute to strengthening the regimes.

It is vitally important that we strengthen national capabilities and enhance international cooperation to address threats related to weapons of mass destruction. The European Union will support countries in preventing, detecting and combating chemical,

biological, radiological and nuclear risks. Progress has been made on establishing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk-mitigation centres of excellence in eight regions of the world, an EU initiative whose aim is to reinforce the institutional capacity of 56 partner countries and strengthen their overall security architecture. The EU also supports other international mechanisms designed to prevent the proliferation of WMDs, such as the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the centres of excellence continue to contribute within the Global Partnership. States members of the EU also play an active role in several other forums, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Global Health Security Agenda.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to remind delegations that they should limit their statements to five minutes when speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

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

Regrettably, the past year has seen continued cases of the alleged use of chemical weapons in both Iraq and Syria. The United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Joint Investigative Mechanism, established by Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), has confirmed something that many already believed to be true, which is that the Syrian regime is responsible for several attacks involving chlorine gas and that the terrorist group Da'esh has used mustard gas in the Syrian conflict. The perpetrators of those inhumane and barbaric acts must be brought to justice. As the Secretary-General has said, there must be no impunity for those who commit war crimes and other international crimes.

The Nordic countries are deeply concerned about the gaps, inconsistencies and ambiguities in the chemical-weapon declarations that the Syrian regime submitted in 2013, as reported by the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team. The Syrian regime must cooperate fully and proactively with the OPCW in addressing all outstanding questions comprehensively, so that the international community can be confident that the reports are accurate and complete. We welcome the work conducted over the past year by the Joint Investigative Mechanism, the OPCW fact-finding mission and the

Declaration Assessment Team, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. The Nordic countries have supported the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the OPCW teams in the form of analytical services as well as financially.

Following the contribution of Danish and Norwegian vessels to the removal of chemical weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic and the destruction of some of those chemicals in Finland, Denmark took on the leading role in ensuring the safe and secure removal of Libya's remaining chemical weapons. In response to a request by the Libyan Government of National Accord, and in a mission coordinated by the OPCW, following its endorsement by the Security Council in its resolution 2298 (2016), in August the chemicals were successfully loaded onto a Danish container ship to be sent from Libya to Germany for destruction. Finland provided funding to the OPCW and a chemical-weapon protection team on board the Danish vessel.

Biological weapons continue to pose a significant threat to international peace and security, risks that are exacerbated by the dual-use character of some of the most beneficial scientific advances of recent years. Next month the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) will be held. The Nordic countries share the objective of the European Union and most other States parties, which is to achieve a result that can strengthen the Convention through an enhanced intersessional process. Finland, Norway and Sweden have submitted a working paper on science and technology. We hope that this and similar contributions will help facilitate a substantive outcome that will enable States parties to engage in a more focused review of the relevant scientific advances. We look forward to engaging with other States parties in reaching a successful consensus outcome.

In the view of the Nordic countries, the Review Conference should encourage international cooperation in the life sciences, supporting national health systems and addressing global health threats. The Ebola crisis in West Africa demonstrated the significant global security risks associated with the outbreak of contagious disease. The Nordic countries contributed significantly to the international support to the fight against Ebola. Recently, the Nordic Prime Ministers and President Obama of the United States made a joint pledge to help strengthen worldwide capacities to implement the International Health Regulations (IHR) of the World Health Organization (WHO) in

order to strengthen global health security. Norway is implementing a specific project on IHR capacity-building, and assistance projects by other Nordic countries support the same end, thereby combining global security priorities with the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 3, on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being.

The Nordic countries continue to engage in the Global Health Security Agenda and its various action packages. Finland, Norway and Sweden participated actively in last week's high-level meeting of the Agenda in Rotterdam. Finland, in coordination with WHO, has spearheaded the development of a mechanism for external evaluations of health security capacities and an alliance in support of them. The Nordic countries are also members of the Biological Security Working Group of the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

The Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical, Bacteriological (Biological) or Toxin Weapons is indispensable to the international community's ability to deal with allegations of the use of biological and chemical weapons, including in countries not party to the OPCW or territories outside State control. The Nordic countries are strong supporters of the Mechanism. Earlier this month, Sweden hosted its third United Nations training course for biological-weapon experts on the United Nations roster, as well as the second international workshop on laboratory cooperation related to biological weapons. We welcome all international efforts aimed at ensuring the continued operational readiness of the Secretary-General's Mechanism.

In conclusion, we would like to express the Nordic countries' serious concern about the continued risk of biological and chemical weapons falling into the hands of non-State actors. In that regard, we welcome the ongoing comprehensive review of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We have taken note of the Russian proposal for a new convention on biological and chemical terrorism, and we are reviewing its potential added value and the most effective venue for possible further discussion of it. First and foremost, however, it is important to realize the full potential of the existing international instruments — such as the BWC, the Chemical Weapons Convention, resolution 1540 (2004) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings — in order to minimize the risks associated with the possession of such weapons by

non-State actors. The Nordic countries therefore call for the universalization and full national implementation of all legal instruments relevant to combating the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons. Last but not least, we call for an urgent and immediate halt to all attacks involving chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria.

Mr. Riquet (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I would also like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

The issue of other weapons of mass destruction is extremely important to my delegation. Progress has been made in the past year, but the current situation is still worrying, especially because proliferation crises persist. France condemns the nuclear tests and numerous ballistic-missile launches conducted by North Korea in violation of Security Council resolutions. They constitute a threat to regional and international peace and stability, and such provocations are unacceptable and destabilizing. France urges North Korea to dismantle its nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes completely, verifiably and irreversibly.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed on 14 July 2015 in Vienna and endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 2231 (2015), has paved the way for restoring confidence in the Iranian nuclear programme and strengthened our non-proliferation regime. However, those two documents will be a diplomatic success only insofar as they are strictly complied with.

The reports from Iraq and Syria concerning the use of chemical weapons are especially alarming. The implementation of the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Joint Investigative Mechanism has enabled us to identify the perpetrators of those attacks. Of the nine cases studied, two are reliably attributable to the Syrian authorities, and one to Da'esh. If we are to address such flagrant violations of international commitments, we must end the possibility of impunity and the threat of chemical weapons. Those responsible must answer for what they have done. Today more than ever, France believes that a political transition is the only way to reunite Syrians and build sustainable peace. In addition, doubts remain about the Syrian Government's declaration about its chemical-weapon programme to the OPCW. The possibility that there are still residual capabilities

on Syrian territory only increases the risk of the proliferation of such weapons to the benefit of terrorists. We believe that draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.61, on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, to be submitted by the delegation of Poland, should reflect those very worrying developments, along with the international community's consensus in support of the actions of the OPCW and the United Nations.

Today, resolution 1540 (2004) and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), which monitors its implementation, represent an essential tool. In the 12 years since the resolution's adoption, it has been increasingly implemented in every region of the world and every area of action. But the threat has evolved and new challenges have emerged, as has been highlighted by the comprehensive review of the resolution currently under way. The role of the 1540 Committee and its expert capabilities should therefore be enhanced.

France also sees the issue of securing materials as a priority, particularly radioactive sources. That was the objective of an initiative introduced by France and supported by 28 other partners during the most recent Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C. In that regard, France, together with Germany, will submit its biennial draft resolution on radioactive sources once again this year.

The issue of the delivery systems of weapons of mass destruction is also vital. Resolutions 1540 (2004), 1887 (2009) and 1977 (2011) have described the proliferation of missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction as a threat to international peace and security. North Korea has been advancing its ballistic-missile programme, in violation of United Nations resolutions. Iranian ballistic-missile launches are destabilizing and contrary to the Security Council's exhortation in resolution 2231 (2015). It is crucial that we step up our efforts to strengthen multilateral arrangements, including The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, which we would like to see universalized, and the Missile Technology Control Regime. We therefore welcome India's accession to those two important instruments.

This year will see an important watershed when the eighth Review Conference of the State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,

Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and Their Destruction convenes, providing an opportunity to make real progress towards a common understanding of the Convention and leading to the establishment of a robust road map for the next five years. If that is to happen, we need collaborative effort to overcome bilateral and regional divisions. France and India have jointly submitted a concrete, operational proposal on establishing a database for offers of assistance within the framework of article VII of the Convention, and it has already received positive feedback. We therefore encourage delegations to become sponsors of it. France is also fully committed to seeking innovative solutions aimed at strengthening transparency and building confidence. We have also proposed creating a voluntary peer-review mechanism aimed at facilitating collective and participatory evaluations of States parties' implementation of the Convention. France hopes that the Review Conference will enable us to examine and consolidate the outcomes reached so far, as well as to lay the foundation for a peaceful dialogue equal to the challenges to that Convention.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): We have seen positive developments this year with regard to Libya's chemical weapons, but also disturbing revelations about Syria's chemical-weapon programme and the use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq. The good news is that Libya's stockpile of sulphur mustard has been eliminated, and this year the country's remaining precursors, which were at risk of falling into the hands of Da'esh, were repackaged and transported to a facility in Germany for destruction. Canada is grateful to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for its coordinating role in that.

However, Syria is not a good-news story. While the destruction of its declared chemical-weapon programme is nearing completion, that accomplishment has been overshadowed by Syria's incomplete and inaccurate Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) declaration and by its continued use of chemical weapons. The gaps, discrepancies and inconsistencies identified by the Technical Secretariat have raised concerns that Syria has retained a covert chemical-weapon capability. The OPCW Declaration Assessment Team has now concluded that it cannot fully verify that Syria has submitted an accurate and complete declaration, and that situation is unacceptable. We call on the Syrian regime to disclose the extent of its chemical-weapon programme, comply

with the CWC and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), resolve all the ambiguities in its declaration and destroy its remaining chemical-weapon facilities.

In addition, the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, which Canada has supported, believes that Da'esh is responsible for at least two chlorine attacks on Syrian Government forces and one using sulphur mustard gas. The OPCW and the Security Council now face an unprecedented situation, in which a State party to the CWC has been found to have used chemical weapons, in violation of the CWC, the relevant Security Council resolutions and international humanitarian law. Canada is extremely concerned about those findings. The perpetrators must, and will, be held accountable and brought to justice.

(spoke in French)

With regard to biological weapons, Canada considers the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) a cornerstone of the global multilateral disarmament framework. The Convention has become increasingly important with the growing concerns about the threat of the development and use of biological weapons, particularly by non-State actors. While developments in the life sciences are helping to improve health globally, they are also creating new concerns. Pathogens used for public-health purposes could be stolen by those who wish to do harm, while advances in biotechnology could enable extinct pathogens to be re-created. Improving the review process of science and technology within the BWC and promoting effective national implementation of the Convention in ways that will enable legitimate life-sciences research to continue are priorities for Canada. Furthermore, while States participate in productive discussions during intersessional meetings, it is still hard to reach agreement on issues. We seek amendments to the intersessional meeting structure that would facilitate an ongoing dialogue capable of leading to actionable outcomes. We also support granting supplementary decision-making powers at the Conferences of the States parties to the Convention so that effective action can be taken in a timely manner.

Lastly, the BWC's lack of universality remains a challenge. While welcoming the recent accessions of Angola and Côte d'Ivoire to the Treaty, we also encourage States outside the Convention to join as soon as possible. The President of the eighth Review Conference of the Convention can count on Canada's support next month.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.56.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): I have asked for the floor to deliver two short statements, the first being in my capacity as President-designate of the eighth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. I will read out a joint statement by the Foreign Ministers of Hungary, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States on the Review Conference of the Convention.

The joint statement reads as follows.

“The Foreign Ministers of Hungary, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States underline the fundamental importance of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention as a key pillar of international security and of the pressing need to enhance its effectiveness. The Foreign Ministers look forward to the eighth Review Conference of the Convention in November this year agreeing on substantive measures that will significantly strengthen the Convention and contribute in a measurable way to reducing the threat of biological agents being used as weapons. We are committed to working hard and constructively to that end, and we call upon all States parties to approach the Conference in a similar spirit and come ready to take the necessary decisions to ensure that the Convention serves its purpose in an effective and sustainable manner.”

Secondly, in my national capacity, I would like to briefly introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.56, on the Biological Weapons Convention. Hungary, following the practice of previous years, after extensive open-ended informal consultations, has submitted a draft resolution on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

In addition to technical changes, such as that welcoming the increase in the number of States parties to the Convention, this year's draft resolution recognizes that the States parties have established an innovative preparatory process for the Review Conference to consider both substantial and procedural issues. The draft resolution also reintroduces updated language

from resolution 66/65, adopted prior to the seventh Review Conference, and urges States parties to work together to achieve a consensus outcome to the eighth Review Conference, which will be held in Geneva in November. Hungary wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the draft resolution. Our goal, as it is every year, is to have the draft resolution adopted by consensus.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that regard, I would like to remind delegations that statements are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I take the floor to exercise my right of reply.

This morning, the representative of South Korea raised the nuclear issue with regard to the Korean peninsula, citing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This afternoon, Japan again raised the nuclear issue with regard to the Korean peninsula, citing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea totally rejects all of those allegations as absurd nonsense, a ridiculous distortion of the truth that is contrary the reality of what is happening on the Korean peninsula. I will take them one by one.

What is ridiculous? What is absurd? What is contrary to reality? My first point relates to the question of a world free of nuclear weapons. South Korea really talked nonsense. Its representative said that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula had to go ahead, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must be denuclearized before we can have a world free of nuclear weapons. I think he is putting the cart before the horse. I would like to remind him of the relevant historical facts. It was the United States that created nuclear weapons, which are very dangerous and destructive and represent a grave threat to the international community and the very survival of humankind. It was the United States that used this weapon against two areas of Japan populated by innocent civilians — Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Everyone in this forum talks about the dangerous actions of the United States, so it is very strange that South Korea is supporting the United States by reinforcing its threat. It is the United States that is modernizing all of its existing nuclear weapons. Just recently, the United States Government announced a new modernization

plan whose cost is estimated to be \$1 trillion. That is an astronomical figure. It does not care about peace and security. South Korea is ignoring this issue, and I therefore seriously recommend that the South Korean representative not try to fool or deceive the world with his plethora of lies.

Secondly, the representative of South Korea spoke of the threat of North Korea's development of ballistic missiles. Again, he is confused: the threat comes from the United States. South Korea has been under the nuclear umbrella of the United States for more than six decades — an umbrella that threatens the very survival of the people of the entire Korean nation, North or South, and even the United States itself. The Americans have been actively involved in accumulating a massive quantity of more than 1,000 nuclear weapons in South Korea, turning that country into a nuclear outpost for attacking the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Very recently, as I informed the Committee earlier, for the whole of last week, from 10 to 15 October, the United States and South Korea conducted another joint naval exercise in the eastern and southern Korean peninsula. And when we look at the kinds of weaponry involved, Committee members will be surprised to discover that they included the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Ronald Reagan*, accompanied by a large collection of strategic vessels and other nuclear submarines, frigates, cruisers and more sophisticated warships, fully armed with Tomahawks and other means of attack. They were ready to attack our land, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, at any time. Their targets were the office building of the Supreme Leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and our nuclear facilities and rocket bases. The Korean peninsula has become the most dangerous place in the world. No one can predict when another Korean war might break out. No one can predict or guarantee that another disaster like Hiroshima or Nagasaki might not occur on the Korean peninsula.

Again, for the Committee's information, just a few days ago, a senior official of the United States Department of State, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel, stated openly that he would take issue with the supreme leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if a nuclear attack by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were imminent, and that, in such a case, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be finished. That is another extreme act of

hostility showing that the United States is ready to put its bellicose declarations into practice.

Once again, we know very well what that meant. The United States Administration pushed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to go nuclear and into becoming a nuclear-weapon State, an indication that its policy towards my country failed. It is therefore deadlocked and in crisis, both inside and outside the country. This is a last-ditch effort by the United States, which is losing sight of reality today on the Korean peninsula. The nuclear force of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has the defence of the supreme leadership of our country as its first and foremost mission. We will therefore do our best to defend our leadership, and our forces will target the White House.

With regard to my third point, it has been said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been developing its nuclear programme while our people were suffering in the disaster-affected areas of the country. That is not true. Those were lies, intended to mislead. Our Government and party appealed to the entire population and army to mobilize all their resources nationwide. Our country's policy is one of love and respect for its people. It is in their interests that this policy was established. The rehabilitation effort is almost finished, and residential housing has been reconstructed in the north of the country before the onset of winter. Our people will be housed.

To return to South Korea, it is there that people are suffering. There are many examples. South Korea has the highest incidence of suicide in the world. It is the suicide champion. We also witnessed the sinking in 2014 of the *MV Sewol*, a large passenger ship with hundreds of schoolchildren on board. The South Korean Government did nothing to save them, while the captain and rescue —

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I must inform the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that he has reached the time limit for statements.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I exercise my right of reply to respond to some remarks made earlier today by the representative of Egypt.

I would just like to say that the efforts by some parties to exclude the views of others in the context of working out the modalities for a conference on a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction,

and to dismiss the need for arrangements for the conference to be freely arrived at by the States of the region, are very negative signs, leading one to question the commitment of some to bringing about a truly inclusive conference. Only a conference that includes the key players can bring about the results we seek.

I would now like to turn to the remarks made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Once again, unfortunately, we have had to sit here and listen to a delusional diatribe from the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I do not know if there is much more we can say. The country's regime has been censured in a wide variety of forums. It is under Security Council sanctions, which, for the information of the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, constitute international law. The regime is thoroughly isolated internationally. It knows that and just lashes out at everyone else around it. It remains the primary threat to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. The United States will not recognize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a nuclear-weapon State. My advice to that country is to stop spouting and actually believing its own outlandish propaganda. It should stop its dangerous behaviour and begin to take steps to fulfil its international obligations. And if I have not been clear enough already, I would like to make it clear now that the commitment of the United States to defending its allies the Republic of Korea and Japan is ironclad.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): In his statement during this morning's First Committee meeting (see A/C.1/71/PV.12), the representative of the United Arab Emirates repeated a number of baseless remarks about Iran without, as usual, any effort to substantiate or provide any proof in support of them. The Emirates is flatly wrong in imagining that repetition makes a claim credible. On the contrary, it makes such baseless claims tedious and repellent. We know that the United Arab Emirates and some of its partners in the Persian Gulf region are unhappy about the nuclear deal that put an end to what was a fabricated crisis. We also know how hard they tried to obstruct the road to the deal, in collaboration with the Israeli regime, to no avail. What United Arab Emirates officials are doing and saying is in fact an expression of their frustration over the success of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. They are trying to increase pressure on Iran to neutralize the détente that the deal brought about.

While I have the floor, I would also like to exercise my right of reply with regard to the remarks by the representative of France about Iran's ballistic-missile programme and conventional capability. We agree that ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear warheads constitute a primary threat to international peace and security. France's nuclear-armed ballistic missiles meet that criterion exactly, and therefore constitute a primary threat to international peace and security. France should not raise baseless concerns about Iran's legitimate conventional capability in order to gloss over the risk that the French nuclear arsenal constitutes to the international community. We call on France to comply with its legal obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) with regard to nuclear disarmament. We are deeply concerned about the French Government's allocation of billions of euros for modernizing its nuclear arsenal, in clear defiance of the aims of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and article VI of the NPT. Those are the attempts that are destabilizing and impeding the process of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Various States this afternoon have tried to go fishing in murky waters by making a big deal about an inconclusive report (see S/2016/738) from the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Joint Investigative Mechanism. We would therefore like to ask those delegations if they took the trouble to read and carefully analyse that inconclusive report, or if they were content to limit themselves to simply reading the page containing its few paragraphs of conclusions.

I am speaking both to those who are willing, and those who are unwilling, to listen and wish to remain inside their own limited world view. I have said before that we have already indicated our concerns about the serious gaps in the Joint Investigative Mechanism's report, which, I repeat, is inconclusive. We conveyed those concerns to the Security Council in an official document that states that the report provides no concrete, convincing proof of the use of chemical weapons in the two incidents in my country. Once again, I urge the representative of the Government of France to read the book *Les chemins de Damas*, by Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot, who point out the role played by a former Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Laurent Fabius, in the incident

involving the use of chemical weapons east of the road to Damascus in 2013. The French regime is helping to provide terrorist groups in Syria with various types of weapons, including chemical agents.

Today Syria is a victim of European terrorism. Europe is exporting its own terrorists, born in Paris, London, Rome, Brussels and every other European capital. Instead of exporting their technology, they are exporting their terrorists, who leave Europe to travel through Turkey to Iraq and Syria, and then freely return to Europe, under the cover of European intelligence services, with the support of Turkey and some of the Gulf States. A report published in Germany points out that more than 100,000 foreign terrorists have been killed by the Free Syrian Army and its allies, out of the 300,000 foreign terrorists who have entered the country clandestinely from countries all over the world since 2011.

Weapons are bought and transit through central Europe to Syria or its neighbours, after which they are smuggled into Syria in support of terrorist groups. Not once have we heard the names of the countries that are selling those arms. They know perfectly well who they are, where they are destined for and who will be using them.

The appeal by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.12) for the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention was timid and weak, since it did not demand that Israel become a party to the Convention. Everyone knows that certain countries are helping Israel to build its capacities for nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The States members of the European Union are helping to supply chemical agents to terrorist groups that are fighting against Syria's armed forces and its people.

Mr. In Chul-kim (Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have asked for the floor to exercise our right of reply to the previous statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. His delegation has repeated the same argument numerous times, which once again confirms that it is nothing more than a *reductio ad absurdum*. It is absurd because it is based on two contradictory issues.

First, no one is threatening the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We have said that on numerous

occasions, and we are saying it again today. The exercises to which the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea referred to are, as we all know, defensive, routine and transparent, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was notified that we would be conducting them.

Secondly, I would like to remind the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of a fundamental principle of the rule of law, which is *ex injuria jus non oritur*, which means that no illegal act can result in a right. No pretext can justify the attitude and actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which are prohibited under many international laws.

With regard to the floods that were mentioned, I would just like to sum up the sequence of events. First there were floods, and a few days later, as if nothing had happened, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test. After that, they begged the international community for assistance. It is clear that the implications with regard to that are very grave.

Lastly, we once again urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes forever.

Mr. Sano (Japan): I would like to briefly exercise my right of reply to the remarks made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Basically, he simply tries to justify his country's nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes by laying the responsibility for them on other States. We would like to remind the international community once again that it is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that has violated the relevant Security Council resolutions, and those resolutions decided that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should abandon all of its nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should refrain from any further provocations and fully comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the joint statement of the Six-Party Talks.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt): I am exercising my right of reply to the statement made by the representative of the United States of America.

It is ironic that this view comes from the same State that decided unilaterally, illegitimately and with no excuse whatever to indefinitely postpone the conference on a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons. Our precise collective vision for a Middle

East as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is clearly reflected in both the traditional draft resolutions in that context (A/C.1/71/L.1 and A/C.1/71/L.2), which have already been introduced this year. We believe that the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should not be considered an obstacle when the international community needs to find a way forward. Basically, the Arab working paper, which was endorsed and adopted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at the 2015 Review Conference, proposes the following practical steps.

First, it calls on the Secretary-General to convene a conference as soon as possible based on the same concept as the 2012 conference, aimed at launching an inclusive regional process for concluding a legally binding treaty establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, with the full application of the consensus principle among all the States of the region.

Secondly, the conference should then meet annually in its plenary format, as well as in its technical working groups, until a regional treaty for the zone is inaugurated, following the example of the many similar mechanisms around the world, such as in Latin America, Central and Southeast Asia, the Pacific Ocean region and Africa.

Thirdly, as a practical step, the Secretary-General should inform the 2020 Review Conference and its Preparatory Committees about the progress that has been made and the status of the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The five nuclear-weapon States should also provide all the necessary support for the implementation of that mandate and present reports on their action in that regard to the next Review Conference and its Preparatory Committees, particularly the sponsors of the 1995 resolution, which are the same as those of the depositary Governments of the Treaty at the time when it was indefinitely extended.

Fourthly, the Secretary-General should work to secure the required funds, including through a voluntary fund that could be established to support the implementation.

Finally, the international community is still waiting for a constructive response to this issue from the regional and international stakeholders.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Once again the United States, South Korea and Japan have attempted to spread false rumours full of lies about the realities on the Korean peninsula. The representative of the United States spoke of the danger posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is the other way around. The United States is behind the biggest problems occurring in the world.

That rings true on the Korean peninsula as well. Using false information, the United States invaded Iraq under the pretext of so-called counter-terrorism and non-proliferation efforts. It is that same country that would invade the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under the same pretext. However, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now a nuclear-weapon State. That change was created, prompted and pushed by the United States. Since I have already clarified all the supporting facts, I will not repeat them. However, one thing I should make clear is that whether or not the United States acknowledges, approves or recognizes our status, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a nuclear-weapon State.

With respect to the remarks made by the Japanese representative, Japan has greater nuclear ambitions than any other country. It has accumulated over 40 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium and uranium. That is the equivalent to what is needed to make 6,000 nuclear weapons. Japan has already developed nuclear-weapon technology. Able to make nuclear weapons in one week, Japan can become a nuclear-weapon State. Moreover, Japan has never apologized for the inhumane war crimes it committed during the Second World War, in particular the inhumane treatment inflicted upon the 200,000 Korean women who were forced into sexual slavery for the Imperial Japanese Army.

As for the remarks made by the representative of South Korea, as I have already said, that country has been a nuclear outpost for over six decades. It has positioned its own territory as such in order to attack the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and now they are talking about others. South Korea has no legal or moral grounds to raise the issue of the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Riquet (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to exercise my right of reply with respect to the comments made by the representative of Syria, who called France into question. I formally reject the wild and unfounded allegations of the Syrian representative,

which will fool no one. France does not feed terrorism. France is a victim of terrorism.

With respect to the condemnation of the use of chemical weapons, I repeat that the Joint Investigative Mechanism, mandated by the United Nations, has clearly shown the Syrian authorities to be responsible in at least two cases. I can therefore confirm what I said in my statement.

Since I have the floor, I wish to briefly use the right of reply in response to the Iranian representative, who also called France into question. I simply wish to confirm that France is acting in accordance with its international commitments and obligations. Furthermore, on a lighter note, I also wish to clarify the fact that since 2001, France no longer spends billions of francs, but billions of euros.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor a second time, but I need to respond to the comments made by the representative of Egypt and, of course, by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First, on the question of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, allow me to say again what we have been saying for quite some time, and I am sure the Egyptian representative knows exactly what I am talking about. Efforts to exclude the views of a country of the region will not result in a conference that can address the questions around weapons of mass destruction. These efforts call into question the sincerity of some who profess a desire to achieve a successful conference.

Turning to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I will be very brief. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and his leadership need to ask themselves some very simple questions. Why is it that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been condemned internationally for its nuclear activities? Why is it that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is under international sanctions, specifically Security Council sanctions? They need to ask themselves why it is that the country is isolated internationally. If they are honest with themselves, they will come to realize that they — and by “they” I mean the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — are the threat. They are the threat to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, and they

need to stop lashing out at other countries that pose no threat to the regime. I would submit that the biggest threat to the regime is the regime itself.

Mr. Sano (Japan): We do not want to be involved in an unproductive game of catchball with the colleague from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, allow me to briefly respond to the nuclear-related issue, among others — that is, the issue of plutonium — which was mentioned by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In reality, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has thoroughly inspected the Japanese activities related to nuclear material for a long time and has repeatedly concluded that all nuclear materials held by Japan, including plutonium, are used in peaceful activities and according to the rigid IAEA safeguards. Moreover, we have been voluntarily publishing information on our plutonium management that is more detailed than what is required by international guidelines.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of France has tried in vain to avoid speaking of the responsibilities of the regime he represents with respect to the use of chemical weapons in Syria and the provision of supplies and weapons to terrorist groups. But he will not succeed.

In 2012, senior French officials declared that the jihadists in Syria do good work. They also stated that jihadists would be treated as terrorists upon their return to France. Since the beginning of the crisis Syria has made cautionary remarks concerning terrorism. We have noted that terrorism works like a boomerang, effectively coming back to those who support and finance it. And unfortunately, this is what has happened in some European countries.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The representative of France asserts that his Government is complying with its international obligations. However, France is not complying with its international obligations with respect to nuclear disarmament, particularly their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This assessment and conclusion is not Iran's alone; it is the international community's as a whole. If they could open their ears and listen to the debate in the First Committee, they would realize that this view is shared by a solid majority of the international community, except for France and some nuclear-weapon and nuclear-umbrella States.

My final point is that deeds speak louder than words. Nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved through words, claims or mere affirmation of commitments. France must comply practically with its obligations

under article VI of the NPT, and it should stop spending billions of euros modernizing its nuclear weapons.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.