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Seventy-first session

First Committee

10th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed”.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

The Chair: I would like to warmly welcome the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, who is here today to share his vision for the current session of the Assembly. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Thomson (President of the General Assembly): It is a pleasure to address the First Committee this afternoon. I would like to begin by congratulating Ambassador Boukadoum on his election as Chair of the Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau. I wish them good luck in their work.

The General Assembly's First Committee is tasked with advancing one of the most gravely consequential mandates of the Charter of the United Nations — the maintenance of international peace and security through the promotion of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation, and collective approaches to international security. In recent years, however, the quantity of arms around the world has been increasing and global insecurity rising, and new threats and challenges have emerged. The work and effective functioning of the Committee has never been more vital.

Former United States President Dwight Eisenhower threw the futility and high cost of arms into sharp relief when he said,

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a

That is a sentiment that I urge all members to consider closely as they undertake their work during this session. Global military spending currently stands at over \$1.7 trillion annually. At the same time, hundreds of millions of people live in extreme poverty, suffer from lack of food and water and want for housing and basic education. It is unconscionable that funds are being diverted away from meeting the basic human needs of people and are instead being spent on weapons. It is an expense that is draining national and global economies.

Last year, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted, setting out, for the first time, a universal master plan that — if implemented urgently, effectively and at scale — will build peaceful and inclusive societies, end extreme poverty, empower women and girls, increase prosperity and combat climate change. It is now a global priority to ensure that those words are translated into concrete action. Within my Office, we have made driving the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals the principal objective of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

The First Committee has a critical role to play in the realization of the 2030 Agenda. Disarmament, peace and security, development and human rights are all inherently interrelated. After all, there can be no sustainable peace without sustainable development, and no sustainable development without sustainable peace. One goal in particular — Goal 16 — has a cross-cutting impact on the achievement of all the Sustainable

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Development Goals, and it specifically recognizes the importance of reducing illicit financial and arms flows, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, strengthening the rule of law and reducing violence and related deaths. The critical role of the First Committee in transforming our world should not be in doubt.

As we meet today, millions of people are being affected by the devastating impact of armed conflict, fuelled by weaponry that the Committee is charged with regulating. Heavy conventional weapons are destroying cities, homes, businesses and infrastructure. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is causing great human suffering — fuelling the growth in criminality, weakening economies, setting back development and undermining political stability. And land contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war continues to inflict human suffering and to impede post-conflict development. More action is desperately needed.

The current global momentum to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit arms trade — as underlined in the outcome to the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects — needs to be built upon. Member States also need to take steps towards achieving our common goal of a mine-free world by 2025, including by fulfilling their financial obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Three weeks ago, in accordance with a draft resolution emanating from this Committee, I convened a high-level meeting on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. It was an opportunity to refocus attention on the disastrous consequences of the use of nuclear weapons — from death and destruction to long-term environmental damage. Coming from the Asia-Pacific region — which still bears the human and environmental scars from nuclear-weapon testing — it was a meeting of particular significance to me. Put simply, there are no longer any justifications for any more nuclear tests, and I call on all who have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The First Committee forms an integral part of a complex system of bodies tasked with pursuing international disarmament, non-proliferation and

arms-control issues. The complexity of that machinery, however, is impeding its ability to fulfil its mandate, as is the lack of political will and trust, which has led to an intractable stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The work of all of those bodies is far too consequential for the deadlock to persist. I therefore call on all Member States to renew their commitment to collective action, end the business-as-usual approach and make progress, not only on disarmament but across the entire disarmament agenda — from the full implementation and universalization of treaties to driving consensus outcomes in the First Committee, and ultimately to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Before concluding, I want to acknowledge the significant work that was undertaken during the previous session on aligning the General Assembly agenda with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I intend to continue those discussions during this session, in order to enhance the synergy and coherence of the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, the Economic and Social Council and other related forums. Lastly, I would like to wish everyone here, especially the Chair, the Bureau and Member States, every success during this session. They can all count on my support and that of my Office during their deliberations.

The Chair: On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly warmly for his presence here today and for his thorough and insightful statement.

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chair: In accordance with the programme of work, the Committee will now begin the second phase of its work, namely, thematic discussions on specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items.

In keeping with the timetable for this phase, as contained in document A/C.1/71/CRP.2/Rev.1, adopted by the Committee at the organizational meeting (see A/C.1/71/Pv.1), we will first hold a high-level exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

and other officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in the field.

Before proceeding further, I would like to inform members that, immediately after the conclusion of the high-level exchange and the departure of our guests, I will report to the Committee on my consultations with delegations on the request received from the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I now warmly welcome our panellists: Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; Mr. Michael Møller, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament; Mr. Xolisa Mabhongo, Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Director of the IAEA New York Office; Mr. Kai Chen, Director of the External Relations Division of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; and Mr. Patrick Grenard, Special Assistant for Programme and Technical Coordination of the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

I will first give our panellists the floor to make their statements. Thereafter, we will change to an informal mode to afford delegations an opportunity to ask questions. I urge our panellists to kindly keep their statements concise so as to ensure that we have adequate time for an interactive discussion on the subject.

I now give the floor to the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. Kim (High Representative for Disarmament Affairs): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting, and the President of the General Assembly for his insightful statement. I would also like to thank our international panellists — Mr. Møller, Mr. Grenard, Mr. Chen and Mr. Mabhongo — for their participation and for travelling all the way to New York to be with us today.

Today I want to focus on an issue that should be of great concern to us all — the threat and risk related to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) material. As the President of the Assembly said, that threat is growing and becoming increasingly real. We live in a challenging and fast-evolving security environment. Vicious non-State actors have captured

territory, committed atrocities and shown no respect for human life. It is well documented that such groups will do anything they can to acquire and use CBRN weapons. Toxic chemicals continue to be used as weapons of war in the Middle East. There have been disturbing reports of terrorist groups contemplating attacks on nuclear power plants. The recent Ebola outbreak demonstrated how quickly a disease or pathogen can spread and wreak havoc — havoc that would have been even worse if it had been the result of a deliberate release targeted to inflict maximum infection. That threat is being exacerbated by the global technological revolution. The same technology that can drive development is also capable of multiplying the consequences of a CBRN attack.

The international community must now step up its efforts to enhance prevention and preparedness. Today I would like to focus on three priorities.

The first is the November Review Conference of the Biological Weapons and Toxins Convention (BWC). In that regard, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the presence here today of Ambassador György Molnár, who will preside over the Review Conference and whom I would like to thank for his globetrotting commitment. When the BWC entered into force, in 1975, it was the first treaty to outlaw an entire category of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Yet its institutional base is still the weakest of that group of conventions, as it is not backed up by anything similar to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency. The global capabilities for responding to a biological incident are unclear and untested. Such an incident would certainly become a complex international health and humanitarian emergency and would disrupt law and order as well.

The upcoming Review Conference is particularly important due to three conflating factors — first, the growing threat of a deliberate biological attack; secondly, the absence of an institutionalized response mechanism; and, thirdly, technological advances that could make it easier to acquire biological weapons. A revitalized BWC is in everyone's interest, and I hope that all States parties are united around that purpose. Article VII of the Convention obliges States parties to provide assistance in the case of a biological attack. However, there are no established State-to-State coordination mechanisms, let alone multilateral ones. The Review Conference could build on intersessional discussions to

strengthen article VII, including how to coordinate with the United Nations and the World Health Organization in case of a biological attack. We cannot wait until it is too late to be forced to respond to the consequences of a biological attack. The consequences of inaction will be much greater than the cost of acting now.

On keeping pace with technological advances, article XII specifically mandates the Review Conference to take into account new developments, both positive and negative. There have been widespread calls to improve how the BWC handles science and technology issues. We hope that the Review Conference will consider many suggested approaches, such as enforcing the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit with technical expertise and finding the most optimal mechanism to ensure that the BWC is able to stay ahead of the technological curve.

The second priority is the comprehensive review of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). For the past 12 years, the resolution has addressed a critical gap in WMD non-proliferation by targeting non-State actors. In the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, it has become an important component of the global security architecture. The comprehensive review, due to be finalized in December, is an opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved but also to ensure that the resolution remains fit for purpose.

On biological security, the review could encourage stronger measures related to accounting for and securing materials, an area that lags behind chemical and nuclear measures.

On radiological threats, the resolution's preamble recognizes radioactive material as sensitive material in need of effective accounting and security measures. By adopting the operative language on radiological sources, the review could help strengthen the security of radiological sources.

The capacity gap in national implementation also needs to be addressed. States' needs must be better matched with donor expertise and funds. The review could also consider how to use the expertise of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) to be helpful to national implementation.

The review is also an opportunity to think through the implications of emerging technology that can increase the risk of WMD use and proliferation. It

could consider ways in which the 1540 Committee can keep ahead of such technological changes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Spain and Ambassador Román Oyarzun Marchesi, Chair of the 1540 Committee, for the leadership displayed throughout the review process. The Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to support the Committee in any way possible.

Thirdly, I want to highlight the need to strengthen the operational capacity and readiness of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of the Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons. The Mechanism was institutionalized by the General Assembly in 1987, and reaffirmed by the Security Council in 1988. It predates the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). It is still the only mechanism by which any Member State can seek an investigation by the Secretary-General into any allegation of the use of chemical or biological weapons. It authorizes the Secretary-General to undertake an investigation and ascertain the facts of such an allegation. In the absence of a biological-weapon-related institution, it is the only international mechanism internationally mandated to investigate the alleged use of biological weapons.

In cases involving chemical weapons, the OPCW would take the lead in investigations on CWC States parties. However, as was the case in the Syrian Arab Republic before that country joined the CWC, the Secretary-General's Mechanism filled the gap for any allegations that may occur in non-State parties or in territories not controlled by States parties. During the past three decades, the Secretary-General's Mechanism has been used three times — twice in 1992 and most recently in 2013, in Syria.

I thank Member States for their generous contributions, which have allowed us to expand the roster of experts and to continue to train those experts. But going forward, regular budget support for the Secretary-General's Mechanism deserves a closer look by Member States. We will revert back to Member States on the issue in the near future. Given the institutional gap in response mechanisms for biological incidents, we need to sharpen the roster of experts to ensure it is capable and readily deployable. That is a top priority for my Office.

I want to thank all our international partners, in particular the OPCW and the World Health Organization, for their collaboration on the Secretary-General's Mechanism. I want to assure all Member States that the partnership with our international partners will continue to be mutually reinforcing and complementary.

I also want to acknowledge the International Atomic Energy Agency for its leading role on radiological and nuclear security. I hope that the forthcoming International Conference on Nuclear Security, to be held in early December in Vienna, will build on the momentum established by the Nuclear Security Summit process.

This year, the international community also marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as highlighted by the President of the General Assembly. Unfortunately, that was not a cause for celebration but a sober reminder of our unfinished business. In September at the General Assembly and in the Security Council, Member States held two unprecedented high-level events aimed at bolstering the international norm against nuclear tests and accelerating the entry into force of the CTBT. But that is not enough. We must step up efforts to reach our shared destination of a world without nuclear tests, as a step towards a world without nuclear weapons. That was the message that the Secretary-General personally took to Vienna in April for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the CTBT, as well as to the ministerial meeting held in September in New York.

Every ratification matters. I therefore commend Myanmar and Swaziland for joining the Treaty this year. However, I also want to reiterate the Secretary-General's call on those remaining eight annex 2 States, whose ratification is required to bring the Treaty into force, not to wait for others but to act fast and now. More than 20 non-annex 2 States also need to accelerate their action.

In my opening statement to the plenary last week, I raised the serious issue of non-payment by States of their treaty-based financial obligations. The immediate concern was the risk posed to the fifteenth meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, to be held in Santiago de Chile in November.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sweden, Switzerland and the United States for their prompt action following our appeal, and for the latest payments made, including by Belarus, Croatia, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands and San Marino. I would also like to thank those States that have pledged payments before the deadline of 26 October. They include some European Union States, as well as Algeria, New Zealand and Australia. I welcome the efforts made by a number of countries, and I hope they will be followed by those remaining countries that have outstanding dues. We still have a shortfall, but will continue to do our best, together with Michael Møller and the host Government of Chile, to make the anti-personnel landmine meeting possible. Finally, I appreciate the efforts by States parties to clarify or correct the status of their own payments. We will update the table of late payments and redistribute it to the First Committee as soon as it is ready.

The international community faces many complex challenges, none of which will be easy to overcome, but by working together, we can find solutions. We count on all Member States to lead the way.

The Chair: I thank Mr. Kim Won-soo for his statement.

I understand that the President of the General Assembly has to leave at this time due to another engagement. We thank him once again for his presence here today. We look forward to great collaboration during the current session.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Møller (Secretary-General, Conference on Disarmament): I am very pleased to have this opportunity to join my colleagues from the disarmament community at this high-level panel in the framework of the First Committee during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. I thank the Chair of the First Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Boukadoum, and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, my colleague Mr. Kim Won-soo, for the kind invitation to this important exchange.

The disarmament machinery is a prime example of where New York and Geneva, the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament are closely linked. Attending today's discussion is therefore a priority

for me in my capacity as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me start with a look at the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament from Geneva's perspective. As members know, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons all originated in the Conference on Disarmament or its predecessors. Those treaties and conventions signified important progress. However, as we all know, in more recent years, Geneva has no longer been associated with successful disarmament negotiations. Over the past 20 years of deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, frustration has turned into disillusionment. While many share my continued frustration about the deadlock, increasing attempts are being made to turn that frustration into intensified efforts to revitalize discussions. While there has not yet been agreement on a programme of work, we have seen some innovative proposals by Member States.

We must use that renewed energy to make meaningful progress on disarmament, because the urgency is becoming more insistent. The increasing reliance on nuclear weapons to convey messages is returning as a worrying element of foreign policy and security strategies around the world. That is occurring in parallel to an alarming decrease in respect for the protection of civilians in various conflicts, including the use of chemical and other non-nuclear weapons. On top of those developments, rapid technological advances — in lethal autonomous weapons, hypersonic missile technology or the further perfection of nuclear weapons — have implications that the disarmament community has yet to fully grasp, let alone address. They are clear warning signs, and we need to act preventively — and we need to do so now. Against that background, let me highlight a few trends and proposals that were made in the Conference on Disarmament over the course of past year.

We have not seen much movement on the substantive core issues. The issue of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices — the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) — has been part of the ongoing debates for the past two decades, and it is still seen as ripe for negotiations.

As shown by the discussions at the four Nuclear Security Summits, hosted by the United States of America since 2010, many States are concerned and have taken voluntary measures to increase the security of civilian stockpiles of weapon-usable fissile material. However, the vast majority of those materials have been accumulated through military production and weapon stockpiles. An FMCT has great potential to serve the objectives of nuclear security. It could also serve as a tool to promote, within its scope, safety and security, as well as effective verification.

One important step in the efforts to revitalize multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations was the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in Geneva pursuant to resolution 70/33. The discussions, summarized in its report (see A/71/371) issued in September, added a new dimension to the deliberations on concrete effective legal measures, provisions and norms that would need to be included to achieve and maintain a world free from nuclear weapons. That process is of great importance to the Conference on Disarmament. As the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, it would be the natural place for eventual negotiations on a new treaty or convention. That will of course ultimately be the decision of Member States here. A robust discussion on the topic at the current session of the General Assembly is expected.

There have also been discussions this year in the Conference on Disarmament on other emerging issues that are of concern to the international community. One example was the debate on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. Terrorist attacks have occurred in various shapes and forms on all continents in recent times, and the fear of chemical, biological or nuclear attacks is growing. While Member States did not agree on the proposals regarding the issue, it points to the fact that the Conference on Disarmament continues to be a major forum to address current security challenges. We need to recreate an atmosphere and a structure in which proposals and counter-proposals are made not just to call out the other side, but to genuinely work towards a common understanding.

An issue on which progress is urgently needed is that of lethal autonomous weapons, which will also feature at the fifth Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in December. As I mentioned earlier, there is an impetus to develop ever-

more supposedly surgically precise weapon that reduce human error. However, as we dehumanize the firing of weapons, we see that the awareness of the pain and damage that weapons continue to incur on humans, particularly civilians, appears to decline. That is a dangerous development, and regulation needs to be put in place.

There are various additional aspects related to the development of new technologies, including the weaponization of outer space and cyberwarfare, all of which can have an impact on nuclear capabilities and safety. They are issues on which the international community has to move before positions and technologies become too entrenched. The desire to keep an apparent advantage over the other side has fuelled the nuclear arms race for far too long. The accelerated development of hypersonic weapons, whose destructive power is such that they do not even need a conventional warhead, is a case in point. We really need to come to our senses and realize that there are no lasting advantages in the costly attempts to outpace others by developing ever-more sophisticated and powerful tools to destroy entire societies.

The topics I have just mentioned illustrate some fundamental flaws in the current setup of the Conference on Disarmament. First and foremost, the narrow interpretation of consensus — namely, unanimity in the Conference on Disarmament — is simply not practical. Consensus should leave room for diverging views on the details in order to address them during negotiations. What we have at the moment is a situation in which a single Member State can block any form of substantive progress before negotiations have even begun — *de facto* veto power for each of the 65 members of the Conference. That cannot function in a body in which countries are starting from very different political and armament positions.

I also think that negotiations do not necessarily always have to be aimed at immediately concluding a legally binding treaty. There may be merit in concentrating on voluntary politically binding agreements first, in the hope that they may later translate into legally binding disarmament instruments. A combination of side negotiations and flexibility on those mandates could help delegations reach agreement. Consideration can also be given to scientific working groups to look at the required technical dimensions.

Secondly, the membership of and possibilities for interaction in the Conference on Disarmament do not reflect the realities of multilateralism in the twenty-first century. The rules of procedure state that membership is to be reviewed at regular intervals, but that has not happened for quite a while. An expansion in the membership of the Conference needs to be considered. The need for addressing that issue was also mentioned in the recent report of the Open-ended Working Group.

All major international agreements negotiated recently — from climate change to sustainable development — benefitted greatly from civil society involvement. That held true in the disarmament domain in the past — for example, on the issue of anti-personnel mines. The continuing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament is a source of disappointment to millions of people around the globe, and the Conference on Disarmament needs to adapt to the changing realities of global governance and start engaging with civil society in a structured and formal manner. To that end, at the request of members of the Conference on Disarmament and civil society organizations, I organized a second Conference on Disarmament civil society forum this past June. The meeting showed once again — if that were needed — that more structured civil-society engagement is of substantive benefit to both sides.

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) provides an important interface between academic research and disarmament practitioners, and thereby provides important useful tools for Member States. That includes a number of new projects that the Institute commenced this year on nuclear or conventional weapons and emerging security issues. I am also happy to note that last year the Institute managed to transition to a more stable institutional and administrative footing, made possible from strong support from Member States, United Nations senior management and the continued efforts of the Institute's dedicated staff. In order to enable UNIDIR to continue to provide its independent and acknowledged wide-ranging expertise, I draw the Committee's attention to a letter that members received recently from the Director of UNIDIR concerning the persistent need for core contributions from all Member States.

The various reviews of the work of the United Nations on peace and security over the past years and the realities on the ground have reiterated the urgent need for all us to act preventively. Disarmament is

obviously an extremely effective tool to limit the risk of accidents that could spark conflict and to set limits on the potential destructiveness of armed disputes. At the same time, the comprehensive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development pushes us towards an ever-more integrated, horizontal way of working across issues, with clear links to disarmament. Reducing arms stockpiles would free up money to be invested in development — another obvious statement.

During the Secretary-General's visit to Geneva last week, he planted a ginkgo biloba sapling from a tree that withstood the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, a strong symbolic reminder of the destructiveness of those weapons and their impact on development. Similarly, particularly through Goal 16, with its focus on the rule of law, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can help reduce the risk of conflict, thus making the arms race even more redundant.

The political will that made possible the groundbreaking agreements reached last year on the Sustainable Development Goals, on climate change and on other defining policy frameworks should also serve as an example for all Member States on the issue of disarmament. The clear connections between disarmament and development reminds us that the Conference on Disarmament does not exist in isolation. What is, or rather should be, negotiated in a conference has consequences that go far beyond the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Most certainly, the Conference on Disarmament does not exist in isolation from the General Assembly, which has the primary role in setting the agenda of the Conference.

Mr. Zelený (Czech Republic), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak here in New York, and I would like to reiterate my call on the General Assembly to use its moral and political weight to help move the Conference on Disarmament forward. We need to rebuild trust. Instead of returning to the animosity of past difficult times, let us return to the constructive pragmatism that saw some of the most important disarmament treaties negotiated in Geneva.

The Acting Chair: I thank Mr. Møller for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Personal Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA) and Director of the IAEA Office in New York.

Mr. Mabhongo (International Atomic Energy Agency): Nuclear terrorism is one of the potential threats facing the world today. The impact of nuclear terrorism would be catastrophic for any country, and could also have cross-border effects. While an array of tools exists for the international community to address that problem, a lot still needs to be done. Nuclear security is the national responsibility of States, but the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a central role in helping States to fulfil that responsibility.

The IAEA's activities in the nuclear security field have grown significantly over the past years. With 168 Member States and considerable technical expertise, the IAEA has played a leading role as the global platform for strengthening nuclear security. The Agency provides advisory services to States to establish the necessary infrastructure to protect nuclear and other radioactive materials from theft and diversion, to protect nuclear installations and transport against sabotage and other malicious acts and to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials. In that regard, the Agency is also active in assisting States' efforts to strengthen computer security at nuclear facilities. We have developed cybersecurity guidelines for nuclear facilities.

Other support measures of the Agency include training police and border guards, supplying instruments for detecting nuclear material and helping States to improve their nuclear security frameworks. The Agency's Incident and Emergency Centre is a major focal point for international preparedness and response to nuclear and radiological safety- or security-related incidents. It would become operational within minutes after a State reported a nuclear security-related incident to us. We could send nuclear security experts and radiation measurement teams to the affected country, help organize medical assistance and organize nuclear forensic investigations.

The Agency also maintains a unique global incident and trafficking database, through which Member States report incidents of illicit trafficking and other unauthorized activities involving nuclear and other radioactive material. Since 1995, when the database was established, nearly 3,000 such incidents have been reported. The IAEA also helps States to develop tailor-made integrated nuclear security support

plans. Such plans provide a platform for nuclear security work to be implemented over a period of time, thereby ensuring sustainability. They also enable some States to prepare and implement the necessary nuclear security improvements internally, without the need for external assistance. Currently, 72 integrated nuclear security support plans are being implemented by various countries, with 31 others at varying stages of development and finalization.

Last May, the IAEA celebrated an important milestone, namely, the entry into force of the 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. The amendment expands the original Convention, adopted in 1979, to cover the protection of nuclear facilities and nuclear material in domestic use, storage and transport. In addition, it expands the existing offences identified in the Convention, such as theft of nuclear material, and introduces new ones, in particular the smuggling of nuclear material and the threat or sabotage of nuclear facilities. Furthermore, the amendment provides for expanded cooperation and information-sharing among States to locate and recover stolen material, as well as in the case of sabotage.

The IAEA will assist States in meeting their new obligations under the amendment. We will hold a meeting of representatives of States parties to the amendment and the Convention from 30 November to 2 December. A large number of countries are still not yet parties to the amendment, and we therefore continue to urge all States to adhere to that important legal instrument.

In 2013, the IAEA organized the first ministerial-level International Conference on Nuclear Security, which was open to all Member States. This December, we will host the next International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna. We invite all member States to be represented at the ministerial level at the conference. It will be an important opportunity to review the progress made and to discuss the way forward.

Lastly, let me refer to the work of the IAEA in the context of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), where, together with the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons, we co-chair the Working Group on Preventing and Responding to Weapons of Mass Destruction. The current CTITF Working Group project is entitled “Ensuring effective inter-agency interoperability and coordinated

communication in case of chemical and/or biological attacks”. It is focused on improving inter-agency coordination in terms of operational activities and communication with the public to ensure an effective response to a terrorist attack involving chemical or biological weapons. The project builds on two earlier reports of the Working Group — one in 2010, entitled *Interagency Coordination in the Event of a Nuclear or Radiological Terrorist Attack. Current Status, Future Prospects*, and the other in 2011, entitled *Interagency Coordination in the Event of a Terrorist Attack Using Chemical or Biological Weapons or Materials*. The latter report recognizes the importance of inter-agency cooperation in that area. The implementation of phase 2 of the project has started, and will consist of an inter-agency table-top exercise and a field exercise simulation to test the phase 1 outputs. The final report will be prepared and will include recommendations for new models of cooperation.

The Acting Chair: I thank Mr. Mabhongo for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Director of the External Relations Division of the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons.

Mr. Chen (Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons): It is a pleasure to be here today. The Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations share a long-standing partnership. Over the years, we have worked closely together on a range of issues in pursuit of our common goals in favour of disarmament and peace and security. That cooperation has resulted in tangible disarmament gains. It is exemplified in the important work jointly undertaken by the OPCW and the United Nations in Syria. Another important area of cooperation between our organizations and other international and regional organizations is in the field of preventing and responding to attacks using chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) materials.

The theme of today’s exchange is very familiar to us at the OPCW. But before I elaborate further on how our mandates collectively contribute to those efforts, I would like to briefly touch upon our work in the context of relevant current developments.

At the OPCW, we continue to closely follow allegations regarding the use of chemical weapons and the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in Syria. Of course, that is a matter of serious concern to the

international community. As members of the First Committee may be aware, the Director General established a fact-finding mission to examine alleged uses of chlorine gas as a weapon in Syria in 2014. In March 2015, in resolution 2209 (2015), the Security Council expressed deep concern regarding the fact-finding mission's findings, which concluded, with a high degree of confidence, that toxic chemicals had been used as a weapon in Syria. In November last year, the OPCW Executive Council expressed grave concern regarding the mission's latest findings, which linked an alleged instance with confirmed exposure to chemical weapons. The mission continues to monitor and analyse all credible allegations of the use of chemical weapons and the use of toxic chemicals as weapons, and makes every effort to establish the facts surrounding such allegations.

OPCW States parties have repeatedly stressed that the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the legal norms established by the international community. The norms of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction can be upheld only if we show zero-tolerance for the use of chemical weapons. The tragic reconfirmation of the use of chemical weapons in Syria by the most recent report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism is deeply disturbing.

Separately, in March of this year, the Government of Iraq shared information with the Technical Secretariat regarding alleged chemical-weapon attacks at three locations in Iraq. The Technical Secretariat deployed a technical assistance visit to assist Iraqi authorities in the conduct of their investigations. Its reports confirmed the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors.

In response to growing concerns regarding the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, OPCW States parties have paid increasing attention to the matter in the context of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism. Established in 2001 after the 11 September attacks, the Working Group is an important platform for the development of policy initiatives regarding the prevention of, and response to, attacks using chemical weapons or toxic chemicals and other CBRN materials. It has endeavoured to promote a better understanding of the work of the United Nations and other relevant international organizations in the context of global counter-terrorism, such as the work of the Security

Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), which plays a critical role in international efforts to prevent non-State actors from gaining access to materials and technologies for the production of weapons of mass destruction.

We are working closely with the 1540 Committee and other partners in that field. Earlier this week, the Working Group on Terrorism met for its third meeting this year. The meeting was addressed by an official of the Group of Experts that assists the 1540 Committee. The discussion once again underscored the importance of building on the long-standing cooperation between the OPCW and the 1540 Committee.

The OPCW also works together with the United Nations and other organizations in its capacity as the co-Chair of the Working Group on Preventing and Responding to Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorist Attacks, which was established at the initiative of the OPCW as part of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. The Working Group, with 17 participating organizations, seeks to ensure effective inter-agency interoperability and coordinated communications in the event of a chemical or a biological attack.

We have also redoubled our efforts to further strengthen effective response-capacity in the event of the use of chemical weapons. The Chemical Weapons Convention, under its article X, obligates States parties to provide assistance to each other in the event of such use. In addition, earlier this year, the Technical Secretariat established rapid response and assistance team to be deployed at the request of a State party to provide assistance in case of the use of chemical weapons.

The International Cooperation and Assistance Programme is another important pillar in the effective prevention, of and response to, attacks involving chemical weapons or toxic chemicals. The Technical Secretariat undertakes numerous capacity-building events throughout the year in all regions and strengthens and reviews States parties' capacities — for instance, in the area of assistance and protection. We also provide support to the States parties in the implementation of the Convention at the national level, as effective national implementation of the Convention is key to any prevention of, or response to, chemical attacks, a philosophy that also underpins Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The implementation of the Convention can sometimes pose challenges that require swift action. In a recent extraordinary mission to remove the remaining chemical-weapon precursors in Libya from its territory for destruction outside the country, States parties and Libya's national authority demonstrated their steadfast commitment to the goals of the Convention. That successful operation was also an example of effective preventive action to safeguard chemical weapons from possibly falling into the wrong hands.

I would like to conclude my remarks by touching on the subject of outreach to a broad range of Convention stakeholders — a policy area to which we have paid increasing attention. In our view, raising awareness about the provisions, goals and objectives of the Convention is a crucial element in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons in the long-term. In order to be effective in our outreach and education work, we must engage a much smaller group of stakeholders in new proactive ways. That includes, for instance, the chemical industry and science and academia, two stakeholder groups with which we enjoy ever-closer partnership.

Our work also involves universities and schools, as we must nurture an understanding of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of responsible and ethical use of science as early as possible among new generations. Last year, the twentieth session of the Conference of States Parties took a decision to establish an advisory board on education and outreach. The board's recommendations will be essential to an expanded and strengthened OPCW education and outreach programme, and will contribute, among other things, to the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2017. I hope that the celebration of that important anniversary will reverberate at the international, regional and national levels. It will be a crucial occasion to highlight the international community's unwavering commitment to the Convention and the core message of zero tolerance for chemical weapons.

The Acting Chair: I thank Mr. Chen for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Special Assistant for Programme and Technical Coordination of the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

Mr. Grenard (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): I deliver this statement on behalf of Mr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

I would like to express my appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, for participating in this important exchange. The efforts he and his staff have made to focus and enliven this discussion are very welcome.

This afternoon we are asked to consider how our respective organizations prevent and respond to attacks using chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological materials. That is highly pertinent to our work, and it is quite timely given the current state of geopolitical affairs. Although some truly historic achievements in international diplomacy have been attained in recent years, such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we have also witnessed a decrease in trust and confidence among many States on critical global security issues. That is particularly troubling when we think about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, where the consequences of mistrust and hostility can result in catastrophe.

All sovereign States consider their national interests in different ways, and it shapes their world views on foreign policy decisions. However, we must never lose sight of the fact that it is in the common interests of all States to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction. The world has experienced the horrors of such weapons on too many occasions, and we have a shared responsibility to act.

For that reason, the international community decided to put in place a legal and technical framework to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, paving the way for their eventual elimination. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was negotiated and concluded in that context, and was opened for signature almost exactly 20 years ago. Twenty years ago, common security and multilateralism trumped narrow self-interests and zero-sum defensive postures. We need a return to that spirit. Without mutual trust, confidence and a participatory framework established on the principles of equality and democracy, how can we ever expect to thrive in an interdependent world?

The CTBT and its verification regime embody the attributes that are essential for progress, not only in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament but for international peace and prosperity more broadly. The Security Council explicitly recognized that last month in its adoption of resolution 2310 (2016). The Treaty has now been signed by 183 States and, since Swaziland and Myanmar recently completed their procedures, ratified by 166. It is one of the most adhered-to instruments in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is backed by a robust verification regime and is a model for international cooperation and confidence-building.

As we consider how we can best prevent and respond to threats, we must keep the broader picture in mind. Today's topic is a sharp reminder of how interconnected the global nuclear security framework is. It also reminds us of how important it is to move the nuclear security agenda forward by working together on matters of common agreement. We all want to put an end to nuclear explosions for all time and to move steadily towards eliminating the dangerous legacies of the Cold War. We should recall that the only true guarantee of the non-use of nuclear weapons is eliminating them — completely, transparently, irreversibly and verifiably. Quite simply, the CTBT puts the brakes on the development of nuclear-weapon technologies by those that already possess them. It also severely constrains first-time proliferators' ability to develop nuclear weapons. The fewer the countries that possess nuclear weapons, the less likely it is that they will ever be used.

As a result of the successful build-up of the International Monitoring System (IMS), we have at our disposal a global network of stations and laboratories with proven value in nuclear disaster response and mitigation. And IMS data can equally be applied in responding to nuclear and radiological attacks or accidents. We made data available for that purpose following the Fukushima disaster in 2011, and went on in 2012 to join the Inter-Agency Committee on Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies. But in addition to such efforts across the United Nations system, we should keep in mind that we have a real comparative advantage in bridging international and national response. IMS stations are owned and operated by Member States, and we also have networks of national data centres and national authorities linked through the organization. The benefits of IMS data are at the disposal of the international community right now.

That brings me to the resolution adopted by the Security Council on 23 September, which was momentous for a number of reasons — partly because it is the Council's very first CTBT-specific resolution, but also because of its content. The resolution calls on States to support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in its tasks even before the Treaty enters into force. That represents clear recognition of the importance of the verification regime for international peace and security, and reinforces resolution 50/245, adopted 20 years ago by the States signatories themselves for the purpose of carrying out the necessary preparations for implementing the CTBT effectively. Each State signatory has a role to play.

Twenty years ago last month, the States Members of the United Nations voted by an overwhelming majority to adopt the CTBT and open the Treaty for signature. That was without question one of the most important milestones in the effort to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons. The objective of a nuclear-test-free world had been pursued by the international community for decades. The Member States delivered to the world what had remained elusive for so many generations before — a credible, effectively verifiable and internationally enforceable prohibition of nuclear testing.

Looking beyond the Treaty's twentieth anniversary, it is crucial that the international community maintain its focus on the next step towards the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. My plea is simply this: Let us finish what we started. Let us keep moving forward in furthering international peace and security. With the support of the Member States, the prevention of nuclear explosions once and for all is within reach.

The Acting Chair: In keeping with the established practice of the First Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations an opportunity to hold an interactive discussion with our panellists through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 4.05 p.m. and resumed at 4.55 p.m.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Mr. Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. De Macedo Soares (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the

Caribbean): I would like to thank the Chair for giving me the floor.

I believe that a statement from us at this point will broaden the scope of today's meeting, whose aim is to give delegations an overview of the intergovernmental institutions devoted to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which is precisely the function of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

Of the five nuclear-weapon-free zones, Latin America and the Caribbean is the only one that has an intergovernmental organization in place. The aim of the Agency, created by article 7 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, is to ensure compliance with the Treaty's obligations, principally, of course, those stated in the first article of the Treaty, which in a very pioneering and complete way outlines a total prohibition on nuclear weapons in all their aspects. But where OPANAL's functions are concerned, compliance is not merely about ensuring the non-existence of nuclear weapons in the region but also about furthering all the other purposes of the Treaty, including its preamble.

For that reason, besides its regular duties related to the control system, OPANAL has functioned as an assembly of its member States focused on enhancing the region's expression and actions in the overall international debate on the subject. In the past few years that has been reinforced through declarations made by the Heads of State and Government of the region in the context of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). We should keep in mind that CELAC is not really an international organization but rather a political mechanism, composed of the 33 States of the region, that meets every year in a summit of Heads of State and Government. At the past three summits, CELAC has adopted specific declarations on disarmament. It has also formally designated OPANAL as the specialized regional body for articulating common positions and joint efforts on nuclear disarmament. In that regard, the mandate conferred on OPANAL by the Treaty of Tlatelolco is strengthened by CELAC's decisions.

One example of action related to that mandate has been the issuance of comprehensive declarations for the past three years on 26 September, the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We have also witnessed the region's active participation in

the recent meetings of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations this year in Geneva, which was strong, unanimous, and appropriately influential. On that occasion, OPANAL presented working paper 40, which offers specific recommendations, taken from the Treaty of Tlatelolco, for future negotiations on nuclear weapons.

Of course, the nuclear-weapon-free zone of Latin America and the Caribbean has a keen interest in the older nuclear-weapon-free zones and in the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, thus gradually reducing the area of nuclear-weapon-infested zones. In that context, one of the priorities of OPANAL and its member States is the establishment of an area free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in consideration of the powerful effect it would have on world peace. The resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is fully in force, and it seems that no one denies it. The decisions concerning this subject, taken in the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, were not carried out, but the intention of States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) do not seem to have changed. Timetables lapsed but the commitment remains.

I also wish to comment on the fact that in 2015, the third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia could not adopt a conclusion. It is essential to maintain contact among the 115 States members of the five nuclear-weapon-free zones, plus Mongolia. The idea of an informal contact group, meeting at the site of the First Committee, has been suggested several times. I have already mentioned, in the general debate (see A/C.1/71/PV.8), that the Treaty of Tlatelolco and its institution will soon reach 50 years of existence, and it took 35 years for the full completion of the structure of the treaty and its organizations. That is why agenda item 91 has traditionally included the word "consolidation" in the title related to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, but for the first time this year, the draft resolution does not include that term. For 15 years now the Treaty and everything related to its application have been fully consolidated.

Concerning the problems raised by interpretative declarations made by States parties to the additional protocols, OPANAL has identified, among the different

declarations, the specific aspects that cause problems. OPANAL is ready to approach those specific States in order to discuss and address those problems with a view to reaching a satisfactory solution.

Finally, I would like to mention the actions of OPANAL in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation education as an important part of our activities. Delegations can find a summary in document A/71/124. With the general support of the Netherlands, we run an annual programme for six internees, two are earmarked for Caribbean countries. OPANAL co-sponsors the annual summer course organized by Mexico for diplomats of all regional States. Next year, OPANAL will offer at least two courses in two different countries of the region. I would also mention our contributions to United Nations reports on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons (A/71/122) and on the Law of the Sea (A/70/74). Those are aspects that I would like to bring to the attention of the Committee on the action of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Chair: On behalf of all delegations of the committee, I would like to thank our panelists for this lively exchange.

The Committee will now proceed with its scheduled thematic discussions, which will run from today, 13 October, to Wednesday, 26 October, for a total of 12 meetings. In accordance with established practice, our discussions during this segment of our work will focus on specific issues grouped under the following seven agreed clusters: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction; outer space (disarmament aspects); conventional weapons; other disarmament measures and international security; regional disarmament and security; and disarmament machinery.

Before I open the floor, and as I announced during our organizational meeting on 30 September, I would like to remind all delegations that the time limit for statements during the thematic segment is five minutes when speaking in their national capacity and seven minutes for statements on behalf of several delegations. A buzzer has been installed to remind delegations when the time limit has been reached.

Delegations taking the floor are encouraged to use that opportunity to introduce draft resolutions and decisions, where applicable. In that regard, I wish to remind delegations that the deadline for submitting

drafts to the Secretariat for processing elapsed at noon today. I trust that the sponsors of the draft proposals before the Committee were able to meet that deadline.

In keeping with the indicative timetable for our thematic discussions, the Committee will now take up the cluster on nuclear weapons, and the first speaker on our rolling list for that clust.

I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.64.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Let me begin by extending our heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand on the passing of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. May His Majesty rest in peace.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM). I shall read out a short version of the NAM statement so that I can limit my statement to seven minutes. The full text is available on the First Committee web portal.

The Movement reaffirms its principled position on nuclear disarmament, which is its highest priority, and remains extremely concerned by the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The situation in the realm of nuclear disarmament continues to be characterized by an impasse. The international community has waited too long for the realization of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It has become obvious that the existing approach adopted by nuclear-weapon States — the so-called step-by-step approach — has failed to make concrete and systematic progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Movement underlines that resolution 70/34, entitled “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament”, provides a concrete road map for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament, in particular its call for the urgent commencement of negotiations on the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

NAM reiterates that the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, to be convened no later than 2018, as stipulated in resolution

70/34, would indeed provide the General Assembly with an opportunity to review the progress in nuclear disarmament and to make concrete recommendations in order to maintain the momentum created by the 2013 high-level meeting and to intensify international efforts towards a nuclear-weapons-free world.

The Movement also notes the convening of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, held in Geneva in 2016, as mandated under resolution 70/33. NAM member States participating in the Open-ended Working Group appreciate the efforts of the Chair of the Working Group, Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi of Thailand, and welcome the report of the Working Group (see A/71/371) and the recommendations therein as a contribution to global discussions on nuclear disarmament. They look forward to the follow-up discussion in the First Committee.

NAM once again renews its strong call on nuclear-weapon States to fully and urgently comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons without further delay in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. NAM expresses concern regarding the joint statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the nuclear-weapon States, issued on 15 September, and rejects their assertion in that statement that their nuclear stockpile maintenance and stewardship programmes are consistent with the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the CTBT.

NAM affirms the importance of humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons and in promoting the goal of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, NAM welcomes the growing focus on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including at the three conferences in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna. The broad participation at those conferences reflects the fact that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are a fundamental and global concern.

The Movement expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long-term catastrophic consequences on human health, the environment and other vital resources, thereby endangering the lives of present and future

generations. In that context, we reaffirm the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. As reaffirmed by the General Assembly over decades, any use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity. NAM also reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again are the only absolute guarantees against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences from their use.

NAM stresses the importance of enhancing public awareness about the threat posed to humankind by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination, including through the observance of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. NAM welcomes the strong calls to expeditiously and with priority achieve complete nuclear disarmament that were made by a large number of speakers at a recent meeting of the General Assembly to mark the Day.

The Movement reaffirms its principled position on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. NAM believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and essential to strengthening international peace and security. NAM States parties to the NPT regret the failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a final outcome document, despite the efforts made by NAM delegations. That failure should serve as a stimulus to work harder towards achieving nuclear disarmament, which is the ultimate objective of the NPT.

NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of each State to develop, research, produce and use of nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. NAM strongly rejects and calls for the immediate removal of any limitation or restriction on exports to developing countries of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes, consistent with the provisions of relevant multilateral treaties. NAM is of the firm belief that non-proliferation policies should not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire, have access to, import or export nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

Finally, the Movement would like to stress that, on its part, it remains ready to engage constructively with all countries and work actively to help fulfil the collective vision of a world free from all nuclear weapons. But that vision can be realized only if the required political will and action are clearly demonstrated by all parties.

This year, the Movement will once again submit an updated version of the draft resolution on follow-up to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament (A/C.1/71/L.64). In that regard, NAM seeks the support of all Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The Chair: I now call on the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.31.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Like the preceding speaker, let me start by expressing our heartfelt condolences to Thailand on the passing of King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Indonesia, New Zealand, South Africa and my country to present our joint draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.31, entitled “Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas”. The text of the draft resolution has been circulated to all delegations, and I take this opportunity to comment briefly on its key elements.

The elimination of nuclear weapons and of the threat they pose to humankind is a seminal goal of the United Nations. As the international community strives towards the ultimate goal of complete, transparent, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament, all measures to enhance and strengthen the existing international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime must be explored.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has already been acknowledged as a significant interim measure to promote cooperation among Member States and with the international community to hinder nuclear proliferation and to support nuclear disarmament, as the final document of the 2010 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Review Conference reaffirmed.

In that context, the draft resolution reaffirms our conviction of the important role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and in moving towards the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It welcomes cooperation among States parties and signatories to

treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as Mongolia, and notes with satisfaction that all existing treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones — namely, Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, as well as Central Asia — are now in force.

We also call upon all relevant States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and urge all nuclear-weapon States to withdraw any reservations or interpretative declarations contrary to the object and purpose of the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. We have just heard Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares mention that such undertakings are now happening in our part of the world, under the leadership of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin American and the Caribbean.

The draft resolution further welcomes steps taken envisioning the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States concerned, including the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and encourages efforts to reinforce coordination among nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Seventy years after the General Assembly’s first resolution sought the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons, they continue to pose a global threat to peace and security. It is incumbent on all States to alter this bleak scenario and move beyond the nuclear status-quo — indeed to achieve not just a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere, but a nuclear-weapon-free world. We therefore encourage all Member States to support the draft resolution, including through their co-sponsorship.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.33.

Ms. Walder (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Switzerland and my own country, Sweden, the countries that form the De-alerting Group, on the issue of de-alerting or decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems.

The Group has, since 2007, called on States that maintain nuclear weapons on high alert to take practical steps to decrease their operational readiness. We have persistently made these calls in the General Assembly, as well as in the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

De-alerting is not an alternative to nuclear disarmament or a step that makes the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons more acceptable. Rather, de-alerting constitutes an interim disarmament measure that must be pursued alongside efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

The contribution that lowering the operational status of nuclear weapons can make to nuclear disarmament has been widely recognized. De-alerting is a yet unfulfilled NPT disarmament commitment. It was a part of the 13 practical steps agreed at the NPT Review Conference in 2000. It was confirmed in the 2010 action plan. De-alerting is a key element of risk reduction and can contribute to diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. Despite the recognition of the importance of de-alerting as a risk reduction measure, there are still hundreds of nuclear missiles estimated to be carrying some 1,800 warheads ready to be launched within a matter of minutes. This increases the risk of an inadvertent, unauthorized, erroneous or precipitated launch of nuclear weapons.

We know that de-alerting is possible. We note that some States have lowered the level of operational readiness of non-strategic nuclear weapons and that some other nuclear-weapon-possessing States do not keep their nuclear weapons on high alert. A wide range of practical measures to move forward on de-alerting have been put forward by experts. A notable contribution is the report of the Global Zero Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction. Our Group put forward recommendations in a working paper to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We also submitted a working paper on this issue to this year's Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament, where de-alerting was discussed and gained considerable support among the participating States.

De-alerting should remain high on the disarmament agenda, not least in view of the upcoming review cycle of the NPT, as progress is needed on yet unfulfilled disarmament commitments. References to operational readiness of nuclear weapons were made in reports of nuclear-weapon States during the most recent review cycle of the NPT. We urge them to continue with this practice during the upcoming cycle, building upon information provided so far.

It is against this background that the De-alerting Group has submitted draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.33,

entitled "Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons". This year's draft resolution is very similar to resolution 69/42, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2014, the last time a resolution on this subject was presented in the First Committee. It contains only some technical updates.

The main objective of the draft resolution remains unchanged. It calls for further practical steps to be taken to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems, with a view to ensuring that all nuclear weapons are removed from high alert status.

The growing support for de-alerting underlines the expectation that progress be made on practical disarmament steps. Advancing on such an issue would have positive security implications and underline the readiness to deliver on commitments made. We look forward to continued strong support for the draft resolution.

Mr. Toro-Carnevali (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela): The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) expresses its condolences to the people of Thailand for the passing away of King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chair and the members of the Bureau on their election. We look forward to successful meetings under their leadership.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, UNASUR welcomes the recommendation adopted by the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations that the General Assembly at its seventy-first session convene a conference in 2017 open to all States, international organizations and civil society to negotiate with the widest possible agreement a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, which is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The very existence of those weapons diminishes the security of all States, including those who possess and rely on them. While nuclear weapons exist, there will always be a real risk of their use and proliferation. Nuclear disarmament is the only credible way to consolidate the non-proliferation regime. Priority should be given to the negotiation of a convention on nuclear disarmament that would completely ban such weapons.

UNASUR expresses its deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and reiterates its support for the humanitarian pledge, in which 127 States have pledged to pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

UNASUR welcomes the annual commemoration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, aimed at mobilizing international efforts to attain the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. UNASUR welcomes with appreciation the decision of the General Assembly to hold a high-level conference no later than 2018 to identify further measures and actions to eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible term, and reaffirms its decision to join the efforts of the international community towards the urgent commencement of negotiations on a legally binding multilateral instrument prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons within a multilaterally agreed time frame.

UNASUR reiterates its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the balanced implementation of its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is UNASUR's view, however, that the disarmament pillar continues to suffer from a serious implementation deficit. In that regard, UNASUR regrets the failure to adopt an agreed outcome document on the occasion of the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, due to the lack of consensus related to the issue of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The States of UNASUR also express their deep regret at the failure to implement the agreement arrived at at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to hold the international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction. UNASUR strongly believes that such a zone would be a significant contribution to the process in the Middle East and the world, and therefore continues to reiterate its call for the conference to be held as soon as possible, with the active participation of all States in the region, as agreed by the States parties to the NPT in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

UNASUR would like to stress that the indefinite extension of the NPT agreed at the 1995 Review Conference does not entail the right to indefinitely possess nuclear weapons by any State. In this regard, UNASUR rejects the assertion present in the joint statement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), issued on 15 September by the nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, whereby those States noted that their nuclear stockpile maintenance and stewardship programmes are consistent with NPT and CTBT objectives, which is an incorrect affirmation.

UNASUR is very proud of the formal proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace on 29 January 2014, on the occasion of the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Cuba. It was a historic decision aimed at uprooting the use or threat of use of force in our region, which was reaffirmed at subsequent CELAC Summits in Belén, Costa Rica, and Quito.

As members of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, the States of UNASUR urge all nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all interpretative declarations to the Protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which will help to eliminate the risk of the use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

It is a legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States, including all UNASUR members, that nuclear-weapon States provide unequivocal and legally binding guarantees of not using or threatening to use those weapons. Therefore, we call for work in the negotiation and adoption, in the shortest possible time, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. UNASUR also calls on nuclear-weapon States to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their doctrines, security policies and military strategies in order to reach the complete elimination of these lethal weapons, regardless of their type or location.

Our countries will continue to support the efforts aimed at reviving the work of the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We believe that there is an urgent need to begin the negotiation of new international legal instruments governing fundamental issues for disarmament and non-proliferation.

We reaffirm the need for all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty, particularly those in annex 2, to do so as

soon as possible, as a sign of their political will and their commitment to international peace and security. We therefore welcome the ratification of the CTBT by Myanmar and Swaziland. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the States members of UNASUR reiterate the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear testing, as well as refraining from the development and use of new nuclear-weapon technologies and any action that would undermine the object and purpose of the CTBT.

The Chair: I would like to remind delegations that they should limit their interventions to five minutes when speaking in their national capacities and to seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.35.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Egypt, to introduce the annual draft resolution of the New Agenda Coalition, contained in document A/C.1/71/L.35 and entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments". We hope that it retains the traditional support of the international community.

As mentioned in the statement made on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition during the general debate (see A/C.1/71/PV.2), the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and the risks associated with the very existence of nuclear weapons will remain as long as those weapons exist. This year's New Agenda Coalition draft resolution focuses on a number of issues related to nuclear disarmament, which are of paramount importance are of paramount importance for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons, in accordance with the legal obligations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The draft resolution emphasizes the compelling evidence presented at the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which detailed the catastrophic consequences that would result from a nuclear weapon detonation, reaching well-beyond national borders and jeopardizing also the Sustainable Development Goals.

The draft resolution welcomes the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear

disarmament negotiations, established pursuant to resolution 70/33 of 11 December 2015, as well as the report submitted on its work pursuant to that resolution (see A/71/371). It reiterates that each article of the NPT is binding on all States parties and in all circumstances and that all States parties should be held fully accountable with respect to strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty. It also calls upon all States parties to comply fully with the commitments and obligations made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. It further reiterates the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, and calls upon Member States to give due prominence to the humanitarian imperatives, which underpin nuclear disarmament, and to the urgency of achieving this ultimate goal.

The draft resolution recalls the reaffirmation of the continued validity of the practical steps agreed to in the final document of the 2000 Review Conference of the NPT, including the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI of the Treaty. It also recalls the commitment made by the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate concrete progress on the measures leading to nuclear disarmament, and calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to take all steps necessary to accelerate the fulfilment of their commitments.

It also calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitment to undertaking further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, regional and multilateral measures in a verifiable and transparent manner. It encourages the nuclear-weapon States and those States party to the regional alliances that include nuclear-weapon States to make concrete reductions in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military concepts, doctrines and policies pending their total elimination. It also encourages all States possessing nuclear weapons that are part of regional alliances that include nuclear-weapon States to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their collective security doctrines pending their total elimination.

The draft resolution further underlines the recognition of States parties to the NPT of non-nuclear-weapon States' legitimate interest in constraining the development and qualitative improvement by nuclear-

weapon States of their nuclear weapons and ending their development of new and advanced weapons, and it calls on nuclear-weapon States to take steps in that regard. It also encourages all nuclear-weapon States, in accordance with their previous commitments and obligations on nuclear disarmament, to ensure the irreversible removal of all fissile material designated as no longer required for military purposes. And it calls on all States to support, within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the development of appropriate nuclear disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding verification arrangements, thereby ensuring that such material remains permanently and verifiably outside military programmes.

The draft resolution calls on all States parties to the NPT to work to achieve full implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is strongly linked to the Treaty's indefinite extension. It also expresses disappointment and deep concern about the lack of a substantive outcome of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, including on the process for establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as provided for in the 1995 Middle East resolution, which remains valid until fully implemented.

The draft resolution stresses the NPT's fundamental role in achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It further calls on all States parties to promote the Treaty's universality and in that regard urges India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States, promptly and without conditions, and to place all their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

It urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its commitments under the Six-Party Talks, including the joint statement of September 2005; to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes; to re-accede to the NPT as soon as possible; and to adhere to its IAEA safeguards agreement, with a view to achieving peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. It also reaffirms its support to the Six-Party Talks.

The draft resolution urges all States to work together to overcome the obstacles within the international disarmament machinery that are

inhibiting efforts to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament in a multilateral context, and calls on the Conference on Disarmament to commence substantive work that advances the agenda of nuclear disarmament, particularly through multilateral negotiations, without delay. It also urges nuclear-weapon States to include in their reports to next year's first Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference concrete and detailed information on their implementation of their obligations and commitments on nuclear disarmament.

Taking due note of recent efforts on multilateral nuclear disarmament, the NAC draft resolution seeks to uphold existing legal obligations and previous commitments agreed on by consensus. We therefore believe that it has been drafted in a manner that all States should be able to support and encourage them to show their commitment to nuclear disarmament by supporting it.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

At the outset, on behalf of CARICOM's member States, I would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Thailand on the passing of their revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Our region attaches tremendous importance to the agenda item under discussion, because it addresses a fundamental and essential aspect of our disarmament agenda — nuclear weapons. I would like to express our appreciation for the briefing provided earlier by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in the field.

CARICOM has had a long-standing policy advocating the total elimination of nuclear weapons, in line with the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We have arrived at that position conscious of the deleterious humanitarian and other devastating effects that nuclear weapons can and have had on humankind. It is for that reason that we have sought to engage on

the matter in various United Nations forums, because we are convinced of the gravity of the situation and the importance of taking urgent action to ensure that nuclear weapons do not remain a feature of our global security landscape.

Our interest is fuelled by the reality of our strategic location, porous borders and socioeconomic realities, which can potentially make us soft targets for nuclear terrorism. Consequently, while as non-producers of weapons-related dual-use technologies we present a negligible threat, we are ever mindful of the potential threat to national, regional and international peace and security should nuclear weapons continue to be retained and relied on by those who possess them as part of their strategic posture.

As a region, we have long argued that nuclear weapons provide a false sense of security. They are not effective tools for deterrence since, contrary to arguments in that regard, they actually encourage some non-nuclear-weapon States to alter their nuclear status. Rather than making the world a better, safer place, they heighten global security risks and increase the likelihood that they could fall into the wrong hands. For us, therefore, the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons remains a grave threat to international peace and security.

It is against that background that we have lamented the limited progress made in addressing nuclear disarmament. We are convinced that more has to be done to fill the legal gap that currently exists in the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. As a group, we have been dismayed by the reluctance of nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their moral obligation to advance the common objective of nuclear disarmament. The reluctance of some States to become parties to the NPT and the inability of the 2015 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty to arrive at a consensus outcome document point to the fragility of the current mechanisms at our disposal and the potential for even greater instability. It is equally disconcerting that 20 years after its adoption, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has yet to enter into force, despite having been ratified by a total of 166 Member States. We therefore urge the eight remaining annex 2 States to complete the steps necessary for their signature or ratification.

A key element of our work going forward will be to revamp the disarmament machinery. It must be

emboldened and strengthened so as to promote faith and confidence in the international community's ability to address nuclear weapons. For too long, the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to function as envisaged. Such a situation is untenable. CARICOM therefore urges the Conference members to continue their efforts to adopt a programme of work that will enable it to discharge the mandate it has been given.

The challenges that the Conference on Disarmament is facing should not force us to retreat or shy away from finding additional methods by which we can pursue the objective of nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, it should strengthen our resolve to find new and creative ways of complementing the existing mechanisms at our disposal. That firm belief has led CARICOM countries to warmly and fully endorse the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. We welcome the decision of the General Assembly to create a working group with a mandate, among other things, to effectively address legal measures, provisions and norms aimed at attaining and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. We are especially pleased that it was able to meet throughout 2016, and welcome the report and its recommendations emanating from its third and final formal session in August (see A/71/371).

Like other delegations, CARICOM also joins the call for the General Assembly to convene a fourth special session on disarmament that would, among other things, provide for a comprehensive consideration and review of all issues in the field of disarmament and international security, including measures for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

CARICOM is proud to have been associated with the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a highly populated area, pursuant to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which in turn established the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. We are pleased that the Latin American and the Caribbean region was at the forefront of this initiative, which has since witnessed the creation of similar nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. We therefore continue to be concerned that there has been no progress in having such a zone created in the Middle East. We believe that the time is ripe for clear and decisive action to be taken in that regard.

Our efforts at playing our part in combating nuclear weapons are bolstered by the support received by such entities as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The invaluable work of the Agency and its centrality in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and the application of safeguards regime for verification, safety and security cannot be overemphasized. Consequently, CARICOM has been steadily increasing its presence and participation in the work of the IAEA and is looking to deepen the level of cooperation that currently exists.

The Chair: I give the floor to the representative of New Zealand to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.28.

Ms. Higgle (New Zealand): May I also formally extend to Ambassador Plasai and his delegation my Government's condolences at the passing of the world's longest-serving monarch, his King.

I take the floor on behalf of New Zealand's fellow sponsors, Australia and Mexico, to briefly introduce this year's draft resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban treaty (A/C.1/71/L.28). I will be speaking later in this debate in my national capacity.

The draft resolution, which our three countries have proposed together now for more than a decade, has particular significance in 2016. It is 20 years since the Treaty was first opened for signature. While the three of us welcome this opportunity again to express our strong support for the CTBT, it is a matter of deep regret to our delegations — as it is to so many others here — that we remain unable to submit a much more desirable draft resolution welcoming the Treaty's entry into force. Such a draft resolution would have been a better way to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty's adoption and its effort to bring a legally-based end to the era of nuclear testing.

We remain convinced of the importance of the entry into force of the CTBT. It is therefore appropriate that, as previous texts have in the past, our draft resolution first and foremost calls on those States that have not yet signed and/or ratified the Treaty, in particular those whose ratification is needed for its entry into force, to do so as soon as possible. Our draft resolution also highlights the recent activities that have been undertaken in support of the CTBT. It commends in particular the two most recent ratifications by Myanmar and Swaziland, and encourages further progress in

the already impressive development of the Treaty's verification regime.

In conclusion, we urge all colleagues here to support this text as a demonstration of our shared commitment to the importance and urgency of achieving the entry into force of the Treaty.

Mr. Ben Sliman (Tunisia): At the outset, I would like to extend the deepest condolences of the Group of Arab States to the delegation of Thailand following today's passing of His Majesty the King.

(spoke in Arabic)

Let me assure you of our confidence, Sir, in your ability to conduct our deliberations successfully. I would also like to support the statement that was made earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the thematic item of the agenda. We also join in celebrating 26 September as the International Day for the Complete Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, as a tangible step towards the eradication of nuclear weapons.

We also call on the international community to begin negotiations on a non-discriminatory and comprehensive convention to prohibit the use, acquisition, production and stockpiling of weapons and the need for an international high-level conference on nuclear disarmament by 2018 at the latest, so that we can review the progress made on this important topic.

We are encouraged by the recommendations made by the Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, established by resolution 70/33, towards the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons in Geneva. The Group of Arab States will continue to contribute constructively to maintaining the forward momentum of ending nuclear weapons. We have always actively participated in the various multilateral disarmament forums, and all States members of the Group of Arab States have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and subjected their nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The Group of Arab States expresses concern over the international community's continued inability to achieve nuclear disarmament and to implement Decision 2 of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the 13 steps adopted at the 2000 NPT

Review Conference, and the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In that regard, we stress that the nuclear-weapon States are attempting to avoid committing to any specific time frame to implement their international obligation to eliminate nuclear weapons.

On behalf of all States members of the Group of Arab States, we reject the ongoing military mindset of the nuclear-weapon States, which allows for the use of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear States. In that context, the Group of Arab States reiterates that the complete and final elimination of nuclear weapons, pursuant to article VI of the NPT, is the only safeguard against the use of those weapons.

The failure of the latest NPT Review Conference and the reluctance of nuclear-weapons States to uphold their nuclear disarmament commitments require us to shoulder our responsibility by stepping up our collective efforts to expedite the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In that context and owing to the lack of the consensual decisions of the 2010 Review Conference, the Group of Arab States tried, during the 2015 NPT Review Conference, to break the status quo through a new proposal presented during the Conference. That constructive joint proposal, which had been integrated in the final outcome document of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, did not achieve the expected goal. The decision taken by the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada in that connection was disappointing, violated the international consensus and prevented the adoption of an outcome document that included the Middle East.

We reaffirm that ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons is a collective and global responsibility. The Group of Arab States has upheld its part of the responsibility in that regard. The other parties also have to do their share. Otherwise, the very credibility of the NPT will be jeopardized and the stability of the disarmament and non-proliferation system in general undermined. We support the establishment of nuclear-

weapon-free zones throughout the world, including in the Middle East. In that regard, the Arab countries emphasize the importance of taking critical measures and decisive steps. That is the objective of the draft resolution submitted by the Arab Group to the First Committee every year concerning the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. We hope that the international community will again this year support our draft resolution in order to achieve the universal objective of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

In that same context, the Arab Group reiterates its condemnation of the ongoing threat to international peace and security, especially in the Middle East, posed by Israel's persistent refusal to adhere to the NPT. Israel is the only State of the Middle East that has not joined the Treaty and still refuses to submit its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), posing a clear and flagrant threat to peace and security in the Middle East. We reiterate that any further delay in the implementation of the 1995 resolution calling for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in the Middle East would represent a critical reversal in our efforts on behalf of nuclear disarmament and undermine progress in all the efforts we have made for nuclear non-proliferation.

In conclusion, we call for universalizing the NPT, which is the major foundation of multilateral disarmament and international peace. We also confirm the importance of respecting the balance among the three pillars of nuclear disarmament, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and non-proliferation. Non-proliferation and disarmament must be balanced with more international cooperation by using nuclear energy in a peaceful way and in conformity with international obligations under agreements signed with the IAEA.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.