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Seventy-second session

First Committee

14th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda items 52 (b) and 90 to 106 (continued)

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

The Acting Chair: In accordance with our programme of work and timetable, the Committee is scheduled to begin its consideration of the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction this morning. However, we still have a total of 19 speakers remaining on the list for the nuclear weapons cluster and we will first hear from them before moving to the next item.

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

Mr. Przenioslo (Poland): At the outset, let me say that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are an important element of Poland's security policy. We share the commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons and believe that we need concerted action in order to achieve that goal.

While Poland fully subscribes to the statements delivered by the representative of Australia on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative

and group of 29 States (see A/C.1/72/PV.10), we would like to share some elements of our national views, which should be seriously taken into account in our deliberations.

The nuclear-disarmament process largely depends on the regional security environment. We cannot ignore geopolitical realities. Recent months have brought us alarming developments in the situation in North-East Asia. We are concerned about the growing tensions on the Korean peninsula due to the provocative actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programmes pose a serious threat to the security and stability of the region. Poland is also concerned about the growing risk of the proliferation of sensitive technologies to other States or non-State actors. We have strongly condemned the nuclear and intercontinental ballistic-missile tests conducted by Pyongyang, which are giving a new dimension to the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and require a strong response from the international community.

In that context, I would like to bring up the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which seems to be the best deal we can have under these challenging circumstances. In our opinion, it should remain in force despite its imperfections. It allows for robust verification measures, as well as for decreasing the number of centrifuges in Iran and making it possible to ship excessive stocks of low enriched uranium out of the country, thereby contributing to de-escalation and stability.

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In our part of Europe, we still have to face the consequences of actions taken in contravention of international commitments in the security arena, affecting nuclear-weapon guarantees. We also want to underline the importance of the full and verifiable implementation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

In these difficult and challenging security environments, and as the country chairing the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to be held in 2018, I would now like to focus on the NPT. The Treaty is still crucial to our international security architecture and to safeguarding our security and stability, and should remain so in the future. We keep reiterating that its full implementation requires the efforts of all States. Global solutions within the disarmament and non-proliferation fields can be effective and sustainable only if worked out together with the nuclear States. Regarding nuclear-disarmament processes in particular, any discussion has to be inclusive and pragmatic, respect the security objectives and commitments of all States and take into account the central role of the NPT. There is no alternative to that forum.

The NPT regime must be preserved. At the same time, it must be strengthened in order to advance the implementation of its commitments and requirements. Any action that could result in weakening the Treaty should be avoided for the sake of all. Next year we will be in the middle of the current NPT review process. The first session of the Preparatory Committee is already behind us. It was a success, and we would like to express our gratitude to the Dutch chairship, and particularly to Ambassador Henk Cor Van der Kwast and his collaborators. We hope that the next one will also be positive and will contribute to robust results for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. As a Chair of the upcoming second session of the Preparatory Committee, we count on everyone's support and cooperation.

The reality is that there will be no shortcuts and no quick fixes if our goal is effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. Only by addressing both the security and humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons can we take the incremental but necessary steps that will enhance security for all and provide the best chance of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

We firmly believe that the right answer and the best proposal for advancing nuclear disarmament are contained in the progressive-approach concept, under which there is an extended list of measures to be taken. Let me mention only a few — achieving the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); negotiating a verifiable and non-discriminatory treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and reaching the limits set in the New START Treaty.

In order to move forward on nuclear disarmament, the international community, as has been mentioned many times, should focus not on what divides us but what unites us. We believe in consensus and good faith, which should dominate in disarmament negotiations. In that belief, we have engaged in the NPT review process as a Chair of the second Preparatory Committee. In that context, as an example of positive and constructive activities that promote our shared goal, let me briefly mention two of the many initiatives that my country is engaged in.

Poland is co-chairing and actively participating in discussions in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). This fall, the IPNDV will accomplish the first stage of its activities focused on establishing the conditions and provisions for trustworthy verifications of nuclear disarmament. As the IPNDV's work involves bringing together nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, we hope its continued efforts will contribute to building trust and promoting approaches to nuclear disarmament in the spirit of the NPT.

We believe that starting negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible would be another important building block for nuclear disarmament. In that context, we welcome the establishment of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group, to which we have contributed an experienced senior diplomat as a member. I am therefore concluding my statement with a reference to the kind of real, concrete engagement and partnership that we hope can move us closer to a stable world free of nuclear weapons.

The Acting Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to remind all delegations to kindly limit their interventions to five minutes when

speaking in their national capacity and seven when speaking on behalf of a group.

Mrs. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): I will be reading an abridged version of my statement. The full text is available online.

At a time when international and regional tensions are threatening international peace and security, our commitment to safeguarding the foundations of our system of collective security and international law must be unwavering. Since North Korea persists in violating its obligations by seeking to acquire operational nuclear capabilities, France wants to stress the importance of strengthening and ensuring respect for the international non-proliferation regime. In the face of this grave threat, it is our shared responsibility to reaffirm the authority and credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as an irreplaceable bulwark against today's proliferation crises. It is in that same context that the agreement concluded with Iran must continue to be strictly applied. France will continue to be particularly vigilant about ensuring that it is scrupulously implemented. It is proof that a proliferation crisis can be dealt with through a robust negotiated diplomatic solution.

France is deeply committed to democratic values and its defence and security policies are designed with full respect for the law. France fully honours its commitments under the three pillars of the NPT, including those specifically linked to its status as a nuclear-weapon State, and is determined to continue implementing its commitments under the 2010 NPT Action Plan. In our resolve to put an end to the nuclear-arms race, we have signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), stopped producing highly enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons and are working on irreversibly dismantling our production facilities. We have also abandoned all ground-to-ground missiles, reduced the number of our missile-launching nuclear submarines by a third and halved the total number of our nuclear weapons. We have cut our airborne component by a third. Our commitment to negative security assurances was reaffirmed in our President's traditional statement on nuclear deterrence in 2015. We also support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

France has continued its national nuclear disarmament efforts up to the lowest level that is compatible with the strategic context, in line with

our principle of strict sufficiency. We also view nuclear deterrence strictly defensively and aimed at protecting our vital interests through self-defence in extreme circumstances. These commitments and decisions are anchored in our awareness of the risks and security challenges that France and its allies and European partners have to deal with. To that end, nuclear deterrence remains an essential part of our regional strategic stability and national security for France and many States in Europe and Asia whose security is directly or indirectly dependent on it. In that context, attempts to challenge the legitimacy of nuclear-deterrence policies are evidence of a worrying readiness to disregard countries' fundamental security interests, of an ignorance of strategic balances and current risks of destabilization and, ultimately, of a refusal to take into account the conditions that have enabled the concrete progress that has been made so far in nuclear disarmament.

The adoption on 7 July of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a clear illustration of that worrisome gap in understanding. Since it ignores the security context and rejects the role of policies of deterrence, it is not an effective nuclear-disarmament measure. It will not lead to the dismantling of any weapons. Since it dissociates itself from the goal of general and complete disarmament that is at the core of article VI of the NPT, it could lead to a conventional military escalation. Since it is based on an exclusively humanitarian approach, it emphasizes political differences and undermines the very foundations of multilateralism. For those reasons, neither the nuclear-weapon States, States possessing nuclear weapons nor the vast majority of non-nuclear-weapon States whose security depends on nuclear deterrence were involved in negotiating the Treaty. In the light of those clear and consistent objections, the new Treaty therefore cannot be seen as a pathway to a new customary norm. The Treaty, which France does not intend to accede to, is not binding and creates no new obligations.

But from both a legal and institutional standpoint, the provisions of the Treaty carry many risks. They could weaken the non-proliferation regime, undermine the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) additional protocols — which, along with its comprehensive safeguards, represent the international verification standard — and conflict with existing norms, to the detriment of the NPT. Ultimately, that means that from now on States will be able to choose to leave the NPT

while outwardly claiming an unverifiable commitment to disarmament. It also risks weakening the CTBT and its prospects for universalization. That is why today we want to issue a warning about the political, legal and institutional risks that the new prohibition Treaty presents. No State should take the sovereign decision on whether to accede to the Treaty without a full understanding of those serious risks.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I shall read out an abridged version of a statement on behalf of Ambassador Mikhail Ulyanov, who was to deliver it on 13 October. The full text will be published on the First Committee website.

Russia shares the goal of building a world free of nuclear weapons and has been making a major contribution to it for the past 30 years. We have reduced our total quantity of strategic offensive weapons more than sixfold. We have reduced our non-strategic weapons by 75 per cent and moved them into our non-deployed category. Taken as a whole, this represents full-on de-alerting with regard to non-strategic nuclear weapons. We have introduced a concept of non-nuclear deterrence into our military doctrine that reduces the role of nuclear force in national security even further. As a result, our overall number of nuclear weapons, strategic and tactical, has been reduced many times over.

The nuclear-arms race between Russia and the United States has not only been halted but reversed, as provided for in the first part of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is astonishing that this fact has not been noted by those who continue to insist there has been no progress, or not enough, in nuclear disarmament. Russia has repeatedly reaffirmed its willingness at the highest levels to have a substantive dialogue on further reductions in nuclear weapons. However, in order to do that, one has to ensure that each successive stage contributes to strengthening the peace and security of all States, without exception, and definitely not the opposite. We have to take into account the totality of the factors affecting global strategic stability, especially considering the sharply deteriorating geopolitical circumstances that many delegations have mentioned. One such step could be ensuring the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. There are also other difficult, potentially destabilizing issues that need solutions, such as the deployment of global ballistic-missile-defence systems, the risk of the placement of weapons in outer space and so forth.

These growing challenges and threats are affecting disarmament processes and make finding collective responses essential. Among other things in that regard, Russia has consistently called for launching a multilateral dialogue with the participation of all States possessing military nuclear capabilities. We understand the views of those who call for an immediate renunciation of nuclear weapons. However, the way they have chosen to do it, by instituting a ban on nuclear weapons, is fundamentally wrong and counterproductive from the point of view of the prospects for nuclear disarmament. My delegation gave its opinion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons during the discussions on it. We did not question the possibility or even the need for a ban on nuclear weapons as an effective measure under article VI of the NPT at a final stage of the multilateral nuclear-disarmament process, which would make the process irreversible. At the moment, however, such a step is patently premature.

We would also like to draw attention to the fact that under article VI of the NPT, the final liquidation of nuclear arsenals must be carried out in accordance with the Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament Under Strict International Control. The drafters of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons have somehow forgotten that important provision. In general, a constructive and results-oriented dialogue on nuclear-disarmament issues is simply impossible without taking account of security considerations, abiding by the rule of consensus and guaranteeing a balance of everyone's interests. Those are the fundamentals of effective multilateral diplomacy, which we urge the States Members of the United Nations to be guided by when addressing issues of international security and stability that current circumstances render so complex.

We congratulate the States of Latin American and the Caribbean on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. The Russian Federation has adhered to all of the protocols to the treaties on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and has strictly complied with its obligations. We are also ready to sign the protocols of the Bangkok Treaty.

As a sponsor of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, we have given special attention to the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We regret that the process has been deadlocked and

intend to do everything we can to move it out of this impasse. In that regard, Russia has proposed convening a conference in 2020 on regional security issues in the Middle East, creating a preparatory committee and doing the necessary preparatory work with the help of the permanent members of the Security Council. We realize that the countries of the region will need time to consider our initiative and we do not intend to force it through, but the proposal will remain on the table.

Lastly, the decision of the President of the United States not to certify Tehran's good-faith implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear programme is regrettable. Rather than calling the results of the JCPOA implementation into question, we should be focusing on fully realizing all of its potential. That is in our common interest. Regardless of the decisions by any individual participants in the JCPOA, there can be no returning to the situation that existed before its adoption. In any event, any sanctions through the Security Council are definitely out of the question.

The full text of this statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry is published on its website.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): At the outset, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

It is a long-cherished aspiration of humankind to live in a peaceful and secure world without war or nuclear threats. The United Nations was established to realize that aspiration, even if peace and security continue to be the main topic under consideration at the United Nations, more than 70 years after its founding. More than half a century later, the reality that we are witnessing today is totally different from what we had hoped. Instead of getting closer to building a world free of nuclear weapons, we are moving away from it. In July, on an initiative in which non-nuclear-weapon States played a leading role, the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which makes legal provision for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has consistently supported the total elimination of nuclear weapons and efforts to denuclearize the entire world. However, as long as the United States, which constantly

threatens and blackmails the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over nuclear weapons, rejects the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will not be in a position to accede to it. In order to ensure the success of nuclear-disarmament efforts, the countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should take the lead in dismantling nuclear weapons, roll back aggressive nuclear doctrines such as pre-emptive strikes and withdraw nuclear weapons deployed outside their own territory.

The situation on the Korean peninsula, which the attention of the world is focused on, is at a crucial juncture. A nuclear war could break out at any moment. In 1957, the United States deployed nuclear weapons to South Korea. Every year since 1970, it has carried out large-scale nuclear exercises involving nuclear assets. In March and April, the United States staged its largest-ever joint military exercise for mounting a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with the participation of 300,000 troops and all sorts of strategic assets, including aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines.

On several occasions, the United States has also dispatched strategic bombers stationed in Guam to sensitive military-demarcation-line areas on the Korean peninsula in order to run nuclear-bombing simulations. What is more dangerous is that it has dared to formulate a plan and stage the exercise of a secret decapitation operation aimed at removing our supreme leadership. That is an intolerable insult to the supreme dignity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and has seriously angered our people and service personnel. No country in the world has been subjected to such an extreme and direct nuclear threat from the United States over such a long period or experienced at its own front door nuclear-war exercises that are extraordinarily vicious and brutal in their scale, form and purpose.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's possession of nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles is a justified measure in self-defence against the clear and concrete nuclear threat posed by the United States. To the Korean people, who have lived through the disastrous results of war on their land at the hands of the United States, a powerful military deterrent in defence of their State is an inevitable strategic option and a precious strategic asset that cannot be reversed or bartered away. Unless the United States completely eliminates its hostile policies and nuclear threat, we

will never put our nuclear weapons and ballistic rockets on the negotiating table under any circumstances and will not budge an inch from the road we have chosen, upholding the policy of simultaneously developing both fronts, which is our everlasting banner in safeguarding peace. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as a responsible nuclear State, will contribute to ensuring peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in the rest of the region.

Mr. Prieto (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

Since the creation of the United Nations, nuclear disarmament has always been one of the goals that the international community has striven for with the aim of achieving international peace and security. Peru, a peace-loving country, advocates the universalization of the regimes for banning weapons of mass destruction with a view to attaining the ultimate goal of complete and general disarmament. We are aware that more than half of the world's population currently lives in countries that possess nuclear weapons or are part of nuclear alliances. Despite the growing concern about the catastrophic consequences of the use of just one nuclear weapon, there are still around 15,000 nuclear weapons in existence. In recent years, nuclear-weapon States have developed their programmes and modernized their arsenals, and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence occupies an important place in their security policies.

Peru was one of the first States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), because we believe that it is a key instrument of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. In that context, we stress the importance of its prompt entry into force, and call on all annex 2 States, whose ratification is crucial, to sign and/or ratify it.

We emphatically condemn the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in flagrant violation of international law and of Security Council resolutions. Peru demands that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea immediately and definitively cease its nuclear-weapon development programme, comply with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect its nuclear installations.

Peru believes that the use and the threat of use of nuclear weapons constitute a crime against humanity and a grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and that the only guarantee against the serious threat that nuclear weapons pose to humankind is the urgent need for their prohibition and total elimination. With that goal in mind, we were one of the first States to accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as we believe that the consequences of their use are catastrophic, transcend national borders, have grave repercussions for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations. In our view, the Treaty is an expression of sincere concern about the tremendous risks posed by nuclear weapons and the growing frustration with nuclear-weapon States that are not honouring their nuclear-disarmament commitments.

Nor do we believe that the Treaty will adversely affect the current disarmament and non-proliferation regime. On the contrary, it will strengthen and supplement it, specifically by contributing to the implementation of article VI of the NPT. The Treaty is the only way to give equal treatment to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which are banned by specific treaties. In that connection, we call on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons without delay, with a view to bringing about its prompt entry into force.

We are pleased that the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017. That important recognition of the efforts of civil society is a testament to the world's due consideration of the potential catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons.

Finally, we wish to reaffirm our readiness to take all necessary measures and back all initiatives that seek to obligate countries legally to renounce and eliminate nuclear weapons as soon as possible.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express our appreciation to the Chair and to the participating delegations for their efforts and to affirm our readiness to continue cooperating in the achievement of the results that we all desire.

My country's delegation would like also to associate itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

The developments that the world has been witnessing daily confirm the importance that the international community attaches to nuclear disarmament. International efforts in that regard have continued since the General Assembly's adoption of its first resolution on disarmament (resolution 1(I)) and the final document of its first special session devoted to disarmament (resolution S/10-2), as well as the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The period since then has been an extremely important one, making nuclear disarmament a non-negotiable legal international commitment.

Almost half a century after the adoption of the NPT and subsequent international instruments, the world has still not achieved the objectives of those instruments or the implementation of article VI of the NPT, owing to the lack of a specific time frame for nuclear disarmament and to some countries' insistence on possessing nuclear weapons. We would therefore like to reiterate the importance of the commitment to the obligations in the relevant international instruments.

The threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East is a source of concern for its peoples. It is the only region that has made no tangible progress towards nuclear disarmament. That concern is aggravated by the continued instability and conflicts in the region, all of which require stepped-up international efforts to spare the region and the world from the dangers of nuclear weapons.

We therefore believe that the international community's goal of complete nuclear disarmament cannot be realized without the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. That is confirmed by the General Assembly's yearly adoption of a resolution on the issue, as well as the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference, which treated it as one of the cornerstones for the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

In our statement during the general debate (see A/C.1/72/PV.4), we stressed the importance that the State of Qatar attaches to nuclear disarmament. We continue to uphold our legal commitments based on our adherence to the international conventions in the area of disarmament, foremost among which are the

NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and other relevant conventions. We do so in support of international efforts to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In the same context, the State of Qatar attaches great importance to avoiding the humanitarian consequences of the existence and use of such weapons. We have sponsored a draft resolution on this issue in the First Committee.

Based on our policy of establishing security and stability in our region and the world, we will pursue our national, regional and international efforts to that end. We would like to stress the importance of developing peaceful nuclear programmes responsibly and of abiding by the comprehensive safeguard measures of the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the aim of guaranteeing the highest standards of safety and security in a world where nuclear proliferation is a source of serious and great concern for everybody.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): The unpredictable international security environment that we face today demands the maintenance of our nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future. Other States might use their nuclear capability to threaten us or try to constrain our decision-making in a crisis, and there is a risk of the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. The threat from nuclear-capable States is very real. We must convince any potential aggressor that the benefits of an attack are far outweighed by their consequences.

Recent changes in the international security context remind us that we cannot rule out further shifts that would put us or our NATO allies under grave threat. Russia is modernizing its nuclear-missile forces, and in the past few years there has been a disturbing increase in Russian snap nuclear exercises. There is a threat, too, from countries that are actively seeking to acquire nuclear capabilities illegally. North Korea continues to pursue its illegal nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes in flagrant violation of a series of Security Council resolutions. And there is the question of further proliferation, leading to new nuclear threats emerging in the future.

Our nuclear deterrent is not just essential for our security; it is essential for NATO's security as well. What is more, the United Kingdom's deterrent allows many nations to remain safe in the knowledge that they are covered by NATO's nuclear umbrella. On 20 September, NATO reconfirmed that as long as nuclear weapons exist, it will remain a nuclear

alliance. The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. Abandoning our nuclear deterrent unilaterally would undermine our security and that of our allies. It would not make us safer.

Last year, the United Kingdom's Parliament voted by a decisive margin to replace the four submarines necessary to maintain the current posture of continuous at-sea deterrence. That does not change the salience of nuclear weapons in our security doctrine. We would employ our nuclear weapons only in extreme circumstances of self-defence, including the defence of our NATO allies.

We continue to offer the assurance that the United Kingdom will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That assurance does not apply to any State in material breach of those non-proliferation obligations and, while there is currently no direct threat to the United Kingdom or its vital interests from States developing weapons of mass destruction such as chemical or biological capabilities, we reserve the right to review that assurance if the future threat, development or proliferation of such weapons make it necessary.

As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, the United Kingdom is committed to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in line with our obligations under the NPT. We play a leading role in disarmament verification. We continue to press for key steps towards multilateral disarmament, including the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and for successful negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We are pleased to participate in the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group and, in our shared efforts to strengthen international peace and security and address further prospects for nuclear disarmament, we will continue to work to build trust and confidence among the permanent five.

Looking to the future, we are committed to retaining only the minimum amount of destructive power needed to deter any aggressor. In 2010, we provided an update on the total size of our nuclear-warhead stockpile. In January 2015, we delivered on our strategic defence and security review 2010 commitment to reducing

the number of deployed warheads on each nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine from 48 to 40. We also announced that we have reduced the number of operationally available warheads to no more than 120, and we remain committed to further reducing our further nuclear-weapon stockpile to no more than 180 warheads by the next decade.

Our negative security assurances regarding the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, our commitment to maintaining only the minimum credible deterrent and our transparency about our arsenal and declaratory policy all help to ensure that the United Kingdom is a responsible nuclear-weapon State. There are other factors, too. The United Kingdom maintains a minimal credible level of deterrence with a single Trident submarine on patrol — normally on several days notice to fire. For more than 20 years, the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons have been de-targeted. We have had a voluntary moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices since 1995, and have declared the amount of fissile material produced prior to the start of the moratorium. We are a strong supporter of nuclear-weapon free zones, which enhance regional and international security, and we have strict accounting and control measures for military nuclear material that are based on United Kingdom legislation and industry best practices. We take our responsibilities for protecting our military nuclear material very seriously.

We remain determined to continue working with partners across the international community to prevent proliferation, make progress on multilateral nuclear disarmament, build trust and confidence between States and take tangible steps towards a safer and more stable world in which countries with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them.

Mr. Mwewa (Zambia): My delegation would like to commend the Chair and his Bureau for their commitment to the work of the First Committee.

On 21 September 1998, the great son of Africa Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly here in New York, asked “these terrible and terrifying weapons of mass destruction — why do they need them, anyway?” (*A/53/PV.7, p.14*)

Zambia remains committed to efforts aimed at attaining broader international peace and security, and reaffirms its support of a world free of nuclear

weapons. In that regard, Zambia appreciates the role that nuclear-weapon-free zones have continued to play in maintaining and enhancing global and regional peace and security, as well as achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. The establishment of such zones is important, as they are a useful tool for disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in view of their interdependency and the fact that they serve to build confidence among States.

Zambia remains strongly committed to the notion of general and complete disarmament. Those steps are important for strengthening confidence-building measures. However, we believe that the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament should be the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We are encouraged that African States, under the auspices of the African Union, are all parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and have agreed to declare the continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. We believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones are the best way to reduce global security concerns, as they help to enhance broader cooperation in various regions.

In that regard, Zambia reiterates the need for enhanced cooperation and consultation among the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones by establishing measures aimed at ensuring the full implementation of the guiding principles and objectives of the various treaties. My delegation would like to call on the United Nations to continue providing leadership and guidance in that regard so as to ensure transparency and the effective implementation of disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

Zambia welcomes global efforts to deter nuclear terrorism and supports the right of States to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. In that connection, Zambia supports the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the strengthening of the Agency's additional protocols. I would also like to point out that the measures that have been undertaken by the IAEA to strengthen technical cooperation activities in Member States are of critical importance to developing countries. Zambia has meanwhile continued to build on the benefits gained from the increased use of infrastructure from human resource development achieved through the IAEA technical cooperation programme, including establishing a counsellor treatment centre and strengthening the nuclear medicine unit in my country's biggest hospital, the University Teaching Hospital.

Zambia appreciates the work of the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa, which has been established to enhance, strengthen and harmonize radiation protection, nuclear safety and security regulatory infrastructure and frameworks among the members. It should also be noted that Zambia has continued to work with the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology, an initiative that seeks to maximize the use of the available infrastructure and expertise in Africa, and helps countries to move towards regional self-sufficiency through peaceful applications of nuclear technology. I also want to highlight that Zambia is in compliance with the international conventions and protocols related to the fight against terrorism. In that regard, our country has deployed adequate security measures designed to frustrate terrorist groups and organizations from acquiring materials.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate the importance of regional mechanisms and disarmament efforts, as they are the best way to reduce global security concerns.

Mr. Ousseï (Comoros) (*spoke in French*): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on its work, which earned it the Nobel Peace Prize, and to thank it for its multi-year campaign on the non-proliferation and prohibition of nuclear weapons.

This meeting of the First Committee during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly opens in a very troubling international context that seriously jeopardizes peace, in particular with the threat of the use of nuclear weapons. Paradoxically, it is also the first taking place in a new era that we hope will lead to nuclear disarmament.

The fact is that the adoption by 122 States on 7 July of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons represents a historic development in the efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. The Treaty complements and strengthens the non-proliferation regime, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In view of the catastrophic consequences of any use of such weapons, it establishes an effective norm for the categorical rejection of nuclear weapons as legitimate tools of war.

As I have just said, today the risks of nuclear detonation are very real. We want to point out that

the development and modernization of nuclear arsenals, the continuation of nuclear testing and even the threat of use of nuclear weapons pose a real risk to international security and seriously undermine the non-proliferation regime.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons highlights the importance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as an essential step towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. It also underscores the fact that the Treaty represents a victory for diplomacy, international cooperation and dialogue among States and provides a vision of international peace and security that is not based on the use of force or weapons.

Since 20 September, 53 nations have signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Union of the Comoros is one of them, and my delegation encourages States that have not yet signed it to do so without delay.

In conclusion, I would like to affirm in this forum that my delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.6, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", and the other draft resolutions endorsing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. Bakanauskas (Lithuania): As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor for this session, I would first like to congratulate the Chair and other members of the Bureau and to assure the Committee of the support of Lithuania in its work.

I will read out a shortened version of my statement, the full text of which will be uploaded to the PaperSmart portal.

The critical risks posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons loom large and are a forewarning of the urgent need for the nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States to assume responsibility for this issue together and chart the future course of nuclear disarmament.

Lithuania strongly condemns the repeated illegal acts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in violation of its obligations and Security Council resolutions. Those acts pose a direct threat to international security and challenge the authority of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The gravity of the most recent violations calls for a steadfast international response that makes

use of all available diplomatic measures. In that regard, Lithuania welcomes the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 2375 (2017), which addresses these concerns of the international community.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the foundation of global nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the further development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The three equally important pillars of the Treaty should be consistently promoted with a view to enhancing the Treaty's credibility and integrity. Lithuania will support every effort to ensure the success of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

We all need to take a progressive approach in seeking practical ways to make tangible advances in nuclear disarmament, as was duly emphasized in the joint statement delivered by the representative of Australia on behalf of 29 States (see A/C.1/72/PV.10). We remain convinced that our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons can be achieved only through a commitment to action by both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. For that reason, we are apprehensive about international efforts that are undertaken without the involvement of nuclear-weapon States, and which may be detrimental to the fundamental international deliberations on nuclear disarmament and counterproductive where the existing non-proliferation institutions are concerned. In that regard, ensuring the entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is crucial to the non-proliferation process and constitutes an essential step towards disarmament.

Confidence-building measures, reciprocal transparency and efficient verification are integral parts of inclusive and balanced nuclear arms control and disarmament processes. In that regard, we acknowledge the importance of a strong and reliable International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system. We welcome the IAEA's work on verifying and monitoring the implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and encourage all the parties to continue implementing and abiding by its terms.

Allow me to affirm Lithuania's commitment to work constructively to achieve our shared goal of enhanced global security and stability through the work of this session of the First Committee.

Mr. Paudyal (Nepal): At the outset, let me begin by congratulating the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work leading to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Nepal has always supported the participation and contribution of civil society regarding the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The vicious race for weapons of mass destruction continues to threaten the world. Nepal remains deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of intended or accidental detonations of nuclear weapons and their indiscriminate impact. The risk of disaster is not hypothetical, it is real. The magnitude would be far greater than the biggest natural disasters in terms of human and material losses.

Nepal commends the efforts of the open-ended working group for finalizing the objectives and the agenda of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We hope that the Assembly at its current session will be able to agree on a preparatory committee for the special session.

Nepal continues to support the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible. We consider the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions to be a critical step forward to give disarmament a genuine meaning.

In line with its principled position, Nepal calls for the time-bound, general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. That alone can help to ensure universal peace and security. The dividends of disarmament and non-proliferation should be used for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for the benefit of mankind.

In that spirit, last month Nepal signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to sign and ratify it. We hope that after its entry into force, the Treaty will contribute to furthering the objective of the total elimination and end of nuclear weapons, which is the only absolute guarantee against their catastrophic consequences.

I take this opportunity to highlight the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex), which affirms that the threat or use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against

humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

Nepal does not believe that nuclear weapons are useful deterrents. They are rather the cause of a security dilemma among nuclear States. There should therefore be no place for nuclear weapons in the national security doctrine of any country. The modernization of nuclear arsenals, ongoing research on new nuclear warheads and the development of new delivery vehicles need to be halted. Nepal urges that multilateral negotiations be initiated without further delay, in the spirit of the first resolution of the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)) and article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), for the realization of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Nepal hopes that the United Nations high-level conference on nuclear disarmament to be convened in 2018 will provide an important opportunity for the international community to review the progress made so far and indicate new directions for nuclear disarmament. As the host to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal underlines the need for further accelerating regional disarmament deliberations under the Kathmandu process.

Nepal also believes that there is an urgent need for a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument for requiring nuclear-weapon States to provide security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Nepal believes that the credibility of the NPT, as a core component of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, lies in the effective implementation of its mutually reinforcing pillars.

Finally, Nepal calls for uniting our strength and political will to create a safer world for our children, divert the resources spent on improving nuclear arsenals to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Chair for giving us the opportunity to address the First Committee and for his able leadership. I wish him every success.

The Sudan aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, Yemen

and Egypt on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of Arab States and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

My delegation believes in the importance of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for the efforts aimed at enhancing international peace and security. We are deeply concerned about the fact that nuclear-weapon States are not fulfilling their obligations. I am referring specifically to the second decision of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty for the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of 1995, the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, as well as the 13 steps that were adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States will show flexibility and the genuine political will needed to implement these instruments in accordance with a set time frame.

Our delegation regrets the failure of the Review Conference held two years ago to adopt an outcome document on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. This failure is attributable to the intransigence of Israel and its consistent and explicit refusal to accede to the NPT and subject its nuclear programme and facilities to inspection by International Atomic Energy Agency. Israel's position is a threat to security in a highly tense region. My delegation believes that any further delays in implementing the 1995 decision providing for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction is a significant setback for nuclear disarmament.

We urge all States that have not yet ratified the Pelindaba Treaty to do so as soon as possible. We stress that all countries without discrimination or precondition have the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes or for scientific research.

The Sudan is an active partner in international disarmament efforts. We have acceded to the relevant instruments and treaties, such as the NPT. We played a leading role in the Pelindaba Treaty, and in 2004 we acceded to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Also in 2004, our capital, Khartoum, hosted the first conference for African national bodies entrusted with implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention, adopting a number of important recommendations, including establishing a chemical-weapon-free zone in Africa. We also stressed in the recommendations

that any related activity by any country should be restricted to peaceful purposes. The Sudan has also made major efforts to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, participating in all the workshops and conferences on this subject.

In conclusion, I would like to state that our position concerning the International Criminal Court (ICC) is well known. We believe that it is merely a political tool used by some States and groups to promote their own interests. It is noteworthy that the countries that called for the establishment of the ICC are the same ones that reject a ban on the use of nuclear weapons despite the fact that the use of nuclear weapons should be considered a crime within the jurisdiction of the ICC.

The Sudan's full statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Mrs. Chatardová (Czech Republic): We would like to express our enduring support for universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and for full compliance with its obligations. The Czech Republic considers the NPT one of the cornerstones of the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and a fundamental instrument for making progress in both areas. With the aim of preserving and strengthening its authority and integrity, we consider the results of the First Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference a very good first step towards its successful outcome.

The Czech Republic remains fully committed to supporting all three pillars of the NPT, including the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This right must be exercised in a responsible manner and in accordance with all non-proliferation obligations and commitments, as recognized in international standards and safeguards agreements, among other things.

It is essential that we reaffirm the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this regard, we would like to mention our active participation in and financial contributions to the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative.

The Czech Republic, as the first European country to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), considers it to be one of the key instruments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

We would therefore like to reaffirm our support for the process leading to the Treaty's entry into force and urge States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT to do so as soon as possible, particularly the eight remaining annex 2 States.

The value of the CTBT was clearly demonstrated in connection with the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Czech Republic has strongly condemned North Korea's nuclear and ballistic-missile tests, which represent a flagrant violation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions, undermine the stability of the Korean peninsula and the entire region, and threaten international peace and security. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from any such destabilizing activities and immediately comply with all its international obligations. We also strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and return immediately to the NPT and IAEA safeguards regimes.

The Czech Republic considers the commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a legally binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices a priority. Given the disappointing continuing stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament, we supported the establishment of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group and we actively participated in the March open-ended informal consultative meeting in New York.

To be quite clear, the Czech Republic remains fully committed to the objective of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons, but any effective, sustainable disarmament must take into account the international security environment. That is why the Czech Republic has joined the group of States that is taking a progressive, incremental, practical and effective approach to disarmament through the adoption of parallel and simultaneous measures or building blocks. The Czech Republic believes that seeking to ban nuclear weapons through a treaty that does not engage nuclear-weapon States cannot be effective, reduce nuclear arsenals or enhance international peace and stability. Any effective, verifiable and irreversible disarmament should be inclusive and firmly rooted in

the NPT, and should recognize that the elimination of nuclear weapons is a long-term process that requires constructive dialogue with nuclear-weapon States.

Mr. Ercan (Turkey): Turkey aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Australia, on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the 29 like-minded countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10). The following statement is an abridged version of our additional remarks in a national capacity.

Turkey shares others' concerns about the possible use of nuclear weapons and is fully committed to our shared goal of the total elimination of such weapons. We must advance towards this goal through concrete, practical and effective steps, in full compliance with our commitments, by proceeding with consensus and the active participation of nuclear- and non-nuclear-States alike. The state of the international security environment should also be taken into account.

We strongly support the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and see it as the centrepiece mechanism of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We are strongly committed to its universalization and strengthening. Turkey will not support any action that could undermine the NPT. We are concerned about the possibility that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons risks undermining the NPT and the safeguards regime established by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That is why we neither took part in the negotiations on the prohibition Treaty nor signed it.

The current NPT review cycle presents us with the opportunity to leave behind or even reverse the frustration caused by failure. Turkey, individually as a nation and together with its partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, is ready to work to rebuild the dialogue that is necessary for progress in nuclear disarmament.

Turkey condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continuing ballistic-missile launches and nuclear tests, calls on it to fulfil its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, refrain from provocative actions and take the necessary steps to facilitate a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action stands before us as an example of the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy in advancing the NPT's objectives. We encourage all the parties concerned to live up to their

commitments, something that is particularly important in the absence of any viable alternative.

We reaffirm the vital importance and urgency of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). That urgency has again been triggered by the recent developments on the Korean peninsula. We urge the remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

It is our firm belief that commencing negotiations in Geneva on a fissile-material cut-off treaty would also be a significant contribution to non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, as well as to nuclear-disarmament verification.

Nuclear and radiological security is a key priority for Turkey. We value the IAEA safeguards system as a fundamental tool in global non-proliferation efforts. We recognize the need for further strengthening and universalizing the Agency's verification authority. We regard the comprehensive safeguards and the Agency's Additional Protocol as an indispensable verification standard. States in full compliance with their safeguards applications should have unhindered access to civilian nuclear technology.

Last year was the thirtieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty of Rarotonga, while this year we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. These anniversaries remind us of our collective promise with respect to the Middle East resolution of 1995 Review Conference. We regret that the convening of the international conference for the establishment of a Middle East zone free from weapons of mass destruction was postponed in 2012, five years ago already. We also believe that existing disarmament agreements such as the New START Treaty and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty have great significance for security, and we welcome the strategic stability talks between the United States and Russia.

Turkey is determined to maintain its level of support for our joint work in the 2020 NPT review cycle.

Mr. Okaiteye (Ghana): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Egypt on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/72/PV.10). Their statements adequately convey our position on the range of issues covered under this cluster. Owing to the time constraints

and the fact that I am speaking in my national capacity, I will limit my remarks to a few issues.

My delegation would like to warmly congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on winning the Nobel Peace Prize award in recognition of its contribution to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This achievement by ICAN is a testament to the valued contribution made by civil society, academia and scientific experts to achieving our objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The most dangerous of all the known threats to global peace and security is arguably the proliferation and potential use of nuclear weapons, which are, by their nature, inhumane and indiscriminate. A deliberate, mistaken or accidental detonation of a single nuclear weapon would wreak far-reaching and devastating consequences on humankind across geographical borders. Our concern about the existence of nuclear weapons is further heightened by the ever-present possibility that such weapons or related materials might fall into the hands of terrorists or other unauthorized non-State actors. We therefore subscribe to the notion that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security is ensuring the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In that context, Ghana welcomed the adoption on 7 July of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as a significant instrument in response to the growing awareness of the risks and catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from the use of nuclear weapons. Ghana joined other Member States in signing the Treaty when it was opened for signature on 20 September.

The Treaty prohibits the use, threat of use, possession, production, acquisition, testing, transfer or stationing of nuclear weapons. It is a comprehensive and progressive instrument that delegitimizes nuclear weapons and includes provisions whereby nuclear-weapon States can participate and eliminate their weapons in an independently verifiable, irreversible and transparent manner. The Treaty further reinforces and complements the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as other norms established in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Following that landmark achievement, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has become

an indispensable part of the general disarmament and non-proliferation discourse. However, we consider it needless for it to be depicted as a divisive instrument, especially when it has been crafted to complement and strengthen the NPT. It is similarly not necessary for States possessing nuclear weapons to undermine it with misconceptions and less positive criticisms. Indeed, no multilateral legal instrument can be said to be entirely perfect, not even the NPT, which is the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We therefore reiterate our call to all States that have not yet signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, including the nuclear-weapon States, to do so without further delay.

Ghana remains firmly committed to the NPT in all its aspects and considers nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to be mutually reinforcing. We believe that our overall objective of a world free of nuclear weapons is shared and strongly professed by Member States, whether they are parties to the NPT or not.

We are nevertheless concerned about the fact that the pursuit of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is cloaked with security doctrines underpinned by nuclear weapons and commitments blurred by a lack of good faith and political will. It therefore behooves all of us to give meaning to the various legal instruments that we have subscribed to and act so as to ensure the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To this end, we look forward to the convening of a United Nations high-level conference on nuclear disarmament no later than 2018, in line with resolution 68/32, in order to evaluate progress and further advance the overall objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is also our hope that the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT will be able to move beyond the setbacks of 2015 and advance the multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, while the journey towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world appears painfully tortuous and distant, we are optimistic that our ongoing positive engagements with new and innovative approaches to all our agreed measures and commitments and their implementation will propel us collectively towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on 11 October by the representative of Australia on behalf of 29 like-minded countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10). However, I would like to

take this opportunity to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Bulgaria has reiterated its commitment to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons on various occasions, and that goal remains high among our priorities. The growing tensions in global security and the sixth nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea last month, as well as its repeated ballistic tests, in defiance of all the relevant Security Council resolutions, only make the case for addressing nuclear weapons even stronger. This year's Nobel Peace Prize, which was awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, is a further illustration of that point. We need the international community to adopt a united approach, one that engages all States, in particular the States with nuclear weapons.

While frustration over the slow progress in nuclear disarmament may be understandable, we are of the view that the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not help to speed that process, nor will it make any contribution to achieving the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Rather, we believe that a progressive approach based on practical and concrete measures is the avenue that will eventually lead us to achieving the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world. This approach includes the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and in particular its article VI, as the only framework for advancement in nuclear disarmament. We should all concentrate on the current review cycle of the NPT, as well as on fulfilling the commitments of 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences with respect to all three pillars of the Treaty.

Bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force is another building block of a progressive approach. As an annex 2 State, Bulgaria is one of those that bear special responsibility for its entry into force, and we therefore call on all States, and especially annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty as a priority.

The commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile-material cut-off treaty is another element that will bring us closer to achieving the objective of a world without nuclear weapons. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Canada on its chairship of the High-level

Expert Preparatory Group and look forward to the results of its work.

Verification is also essential for effective nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we support the decision to establish a group of governmental experts pursuant to resolution 71/67 and are ready to contribute to its work.

As emphasized earlier, nuclear disarmament is only possible with the engagement of all States and should be based on mutual trust. In this regard, we believe that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains of historic significance and that no efforts should be spared to preserve it. We encourage all parties to the JCPOA to continue to abide strictly by its terms.

Lastly, Bulgaria is convinced that through the unity, trust and engagement of all we have the potential to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Manrique Trejo (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country welcomes the fact that this year, 71 years after the adoption of the first resolution of the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)), in which we sought to eradicate the problems resulting from the discovery of atomic energy, in a clear reference to the unfortunate use and existence of nuclear weapons, we have finally adopted a legally binding instrument based on international law that bans the only weapon of mass destruction that has still not been prohibited.

El Salvador, in compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), participated in the negotiation process of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was finally adopted on 7 July, and signed it the first day it opened for signature. We thereby reaffirmed the premise that the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons is an indispensable condition for promoting international peace and security.

The Treaty, which among other things prohibits the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, also delivers a major blow to the reasons why many States still possess these weapons of indiscriminate effect, that is, in order to prevent and deter nuclear threats. We have absolutely no doubt that nuclear weapons do not ensure anyone's safety. Their risk lies in their very existence. For that reason, we urge the States parties to the NPT to comply with the obligations set forth in its article VI. They should not be allowed to further delay the Treaty's

implementation, and our efforts must be aimed at the total elimination of those weapons.

El Salvador is especially concerned about the nuclear tests that have recently been conducted. Such actions only undermine international peace, security and stability, in addition to endangering the lives of millions.

My country supports all denuclearization efforts in strict accordance with international law and respect for the equal sovereignty of States. At the same time, we urge annex 2 States of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to work on ratifying it as soon as possible, with a view to achieving its entry into force without delay. It is unfortunate that a minority of countries have prevented this key Treaty in the framework of disarmament and efforts towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons from entering into force. The only unequivocal way to demonstrate a rejection of nuclear tests is by ratifying or acceding to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Nuclear weapons pose a huge threat to humankind and the survival of civilization. More than half of the world's population lives in countries possessing nuclear weapons or that are part of one of the nuclear security alliances, proof that no State or organization has sufficient capacity to face the immediate, medium- or long-term consequences of a nuclear-weapon explosion.

Accordingly, El Salvador will continue its humanitarian duties and commitments regarding the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, and we urge the countries possessing such weapons of mass destruction to adopt concrete measures without delay to reduce the risks of their production and detonation, including by reducing their operational state and their stockpiles of deployed weapons. Reducing the function of nuclear weapons used in military contexts is not an end but a means for the timely elimination of all types of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, my country rejects the notion of investing significant financial resources in the maintenance and improvement of nuclear weapons and their systems. We call for some of those resources to be allocated to activities that promote disarmament or invested in fundamental needs such as poverty reduction and initiatives that coordinate efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.10).

We reiterate our deep concern about the alarming trends towards new nuclear-arms races and arms-modernization races. They become even more worrisome when a particular nuclear-weapon State wants even more nuclear weapons than it already has, in order to remain ahead of the pack, and now, ironically, after more than 70 years of inaction on nuclear disarmament, states that progress is predicated on patience. These trends, with all their detrimental effects on international peace and security, must end.

While supporting the overall objective of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we stress that it should be complemented by concluding a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons as soon as possible. Concrete practical measures for the total elimination of nuclear weapons should also be adopted at the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), where we will present a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament.

In the current international security situation, countering the danger of the Israeli regime's nuclear weapons is more urgent than ever. To that end, the 2020 NPT Review Conference must take practical steps towards realizing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

A few days ago, the new policy of the United States on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was revealed. The United States Administration's claim that Iran is not in compliance with the JCPOA has no international relevance or credibility. The unilateral claim by the United States of extending Iran's provisional restriction and making it permanent runs counter not only to the letter of the JCPOA but also to the inalienable rights of States under the NPT.

The United States unilaterally and wrongly claims that Iran is not respecting the spirit of the JCPOA and threatens to dismantle the deal entirely in order to preserve that spirit. The fulfilment by the United States of its commitments has been lacklustre and deficient from the very beginning. In several cases, especially during the current Administration, it has violated both the content and the letter of the JCPOA.

Iran has officially registered those violations with the Joint Commission.

As Iran has recently stressed, the JCPOA is a valid international instrument. It cannot be renegotiated or altered, nor is it a bilateral agreement that can be annulled by unilateral actions. Iran will not be the first to withdraw from the JCPOA. However, if Iran's rights and interests in the JCPOA are not respected, it will stop implementing all its commitments. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the sole authority that can verify Iran's commitment under the JCPOA. According to a statement of the IAEA Director-General dated 13 October 2017,

“the nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the JCPOA are being implemented. The IAEA's verification and monitoring activities address all the nuclear-related elements under the JCPOA... Iran is now provisionally implementing the Additional Protocol to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, a powerful verification tool which gives our inspectors broader access to information and locations in Iran. So far, the IAEA has had access to all locations it needed to visit”.

I would like to once again thank all the delegations that have called for the continued and full implementation of the JCPOA. As the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs has rightly stated, First Committee members should

“add their voice in support of this historic agreement, as a demonstration of what can be achieved through direct engagement and a shared commitment to dialogue and cooperation in good faith”.

The international community should not allow the United States Administration to continue to mock and undermine the JCPOA, since that in turn could undermine the non-proliferation regime as a whole. Otherwise, after each and every election in any corner of the world, we can expect the undoing of all decisions and commitments of previous administrations. We therefore have a collective responsibility to counter this alarming trend.

The Acting Chair: I call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): Nearly 60 years have passed since the fourteenth session of the General Assembly first addressed the need for general and

complete disarmament, and nearly 50 since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons committed States parties to pursuing good-faith negotiations on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

In those early years, the plans aimed at achieving this goal came from powerful nuclear-weapon-possessing States. For several years now, however, these hopeful signs of progress towards nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament have dimmed, in spite of significant progress achieved through international treaties and conventions banning various classes of weapons, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and conventional weapons that may be deemed to be excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects.

Progress on nuclear disarmament has not just stalled. There has in fact been some regression, as older nuclear Powers engage in a race to modernize their nuclear arsenals, making it clear that the use of nuclear weapons remains a real option. Other States are simultaneously pursuing nuclear programmes that threaten the viability of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons itself. The concerns about missile development in some countries today ought to awaken the world to the dangers of a global missile race.

Despite considerable progress in international legal frameworks to ban or control specific types of armaments, violent wars and conflicts persist, increase and even worsen. In many cases there has been utter disregard for international humanitarian law and every rule of human decency, as innocent civilians are directly attacked with weapons already proscribed by international treaties. The Holy See is dismayed by the deep chasm that separates commitments from actions in the field of disarmament and arms control.

Against this troubling backdrop, some may regard general and complete disarmament as an impractical aspiration, even a dangerous delusion. That should never be the case in this Committee. While more black spots might appear in the chiaroscuro of disarmament and arms control, the significant progress achieved in these areas must also be acknowledged, and all those who have worked hard to achieve every step forward towards general and complete disarmament deserve gratitude and appreciation.

My delegation would like to suggest that present and future deliberations on the goal of general and complete disarmament should not be reduced to a narrow technical exercise in arms control but should rather be placed within a wider framework of the dynamics of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and peacemaking. In this respect, the laudable work of research institutions and grassroots peacebuilders and peacemakers deserves serious attention. Extensive research on the dynamics of conflict and the best lessons learned in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding are precious elements for moving minds and hearts that are essential to the pursuit of negotiations in good faith on effective arms control.

Before concluding, I would like to note that on 10 and 11 November, a conference on perspectives for a world free from nuclear weapons and for integral disarmament will be held in the Vatican and sponsored by the Holy See. We are delighted that among the distinguished speakers at the conference, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, will make a presentation. We hope that the conference will add impetus to our work towards achieving complete and general disarmament.

In conclusion, my delegation invites all countries to take a decisive and urgent step back from the present escalation in military preparations. All diplomatic and political means of mediation should be deployed to avoid the unspeakable.

The Acting Chair: We have heard the last speaker in the cluster on nuclear weapons.

I would like to remind delegations that, in accordance with the General Assembly's rules of procedure, statements in exercise of right of reply on the cluster on nuclear weapons can be made following this morning's meeting, at approximately 12.30 p.m. The Committee will now take up the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Committee will first hear a briefing by the President of the eighth Review Conference of the State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, His Excellency Mr. György Molnár, Special Representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

and Trade of Hungary. Following the statement by the President, the Committee will change to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions.

I now give the floor to Mr. Molnár.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor to make some brief remarks on the eighth Review Conference of the State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, which took place in Geneva in November 2016, and over which I had the honour to preside. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is a vital part of the international disarmament machinery and plays a central role in the international community's efforts to prevent the misuse of biology for hostile purposes. The BWC was the first treaty to outlaw an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

More than 40 years have passed since the BWC's entry into force in 1975, and much has been accomplished since then. In a sense, biological weapons have disappeared from today's military inventories, security concepts and military doctrines. Moreover, no one would openly question the grave illegitimacy of biological weapons as a means of warfare today. However, this is no time for complacency, not least because there is evidence that non-State actors, as well as terrorist groups, are trying to acquire and use them. In addition, although advances in science and technology promise many great benefits for public health and sustainable development, these same advances have also lowered the barriers to developing biological weapons. The threat is therefore real and not one that we should ignore.

Against that backdrop, the States parties to the BWC met in Geneva in November 2016 for the Convention's eighth Review Conference. As is always the case, the mandate of the Conference was to review the operation of the Convention. I should first like to say a few words about the preparations. The BWC meeting of State parties in December 2015 decided that the Preparatory Committee for the eighth Review Conference would meet in April and August 2016. This was an innovation compared to the preparatory processes of previous BWC Review Conferences and enabled States to have a more substantial discussion prior to the Conference.

The first Preparatory Committee meeting in April 2016 focused on the necessary procedural

decisions for the Review Conference and included a general exchange of views. At the second meeting, in August, States parties undertook a comprehensive consideration of all the provisions of the Convention, as well as such cross-cutting issues as science and technology, the next intersessional programme and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU). Some 114 States parties participated at the Preparatory Committee meeting, which emphasized the considerable interest taken by States parties in the work and relevance of the Convention.

In addition to the work of the Preparatory Committee itself, a number of informal activities contributed to a substantive exchange of views during the run-up to the Review Conference. Four regional workshops funded by the European Union were held between June and September 2016, in Astana, Brasília, New Delhi and Addis Ababa, bringing together more than 200 participants. Furthermore, the Governments of Canada and China, and the ISU co-organized an international workshop in Wuxi, China, the same month. Later that month, a Wilton Park conference on preparations for the Review Conference took place in the United Kingdom. All of these meetings allowed for in-depth informal discussions among States parties on all aspects of the Convention. The comprehensive exchange of views during the preparatory process, with so many ambitious and innovative proposals, led to high expectations among States parties for the Review Conference.

I should like to say a few words about the proposals and the main themes. States parties submitted a total of 83 working papers, nearly triple the number of working papers submitted to the seventh Review Conference in 2011. The proposals covered a wide range of issues, including a mechanism to review developments in science and technology; the establishment of a database under article VII, which concerns assistance to States exposed to dangers resulting from a violation of the treaty; guidelines for the submission of requests for assistance under article VII; voluntary codes of conduct for biological scientists; the concept of operationalizing mobile biomedical units under the Convention; and the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Proposals were also introduced relating to a legally binding instrument, including verification and export-control mechanisms. Also introduced were proposals for dispute settlement and transfer denials, consultation and verification procedures, and the enhancement

of the decision-making authority of the meeting of States parties.

With regard to the proceedings of the Review Conference, after its opening I was elected to serve as President of the Conference, and Ambassadors Biontino of Germany and Delmi of Algeria were elected to serve as Vice-Presidents. I would like to thank them both for their hard work and positive cooperation during the Review Conference. I would also like to thank the other office holders and seven facilitators, who all performed admirably during the meeting.

The opening formalities were followed by a general debate, which included statements by the representatives of 82 States parties and three international organizations, and an informal session, which included 18 non-governmental organizations and research institutes. As the Review Conference drew to an end, in response to a desire expressed by States parties, I circulated a proposal for an intersessional programme for the period from 2017 to 2020, which envisaged 15 days of meetings per year, including five days devoted to meetings of the States parties, and four to open-ended working groups on science and technology, national implementation, international cooperation, and preparedness and assistance.

Despite intensive informal consultations and formal discussions on this proposal, it was unfortunately not possible for the Review Conference to reach consensus on the package owing to the fundamentally different positions of the States parties. The States parties were therefore able only to agree to hold a single annual meeting of States parties per year with a duration of up to five days. States parties also agreed on the continuation and improvement of the cooperation and assistance database under article X as well as the renewal of the BWC's sponsorship programme and the ISU's mandate with three staff members.

Despite the extensive preparation, the large number of proposals submitted and the record participation, the outcome of the Review Conference did not meet the high expectations of most of the States parties. However, consensus was maintained, and the final decision of the Review Conference keeps the window of opportunity open for an agreement to be reached during the meeting of States parties this December. It is also worth mentioning that 2016 witnessed a high level of interest in the BWC, not least reflected in the fact that a total of five States joined the Convention

that year — Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Nepal.

Finally, as to the 2017 meeting of the States parties, the eighth Review Conference gave the following mandate to the first meeting of States parties, which will take place in December 2017. The final document says that the meeting

“will seek to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next review conference with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process”.

This means that if the political will is there, we have an opportunity at the December 2017 meeting of States parties to move beyond the current situation and put the BWC back on a substantive track, with focused discussions on topics of particular interest and relevance to all States parties.

Ambassador Gill of India has been appointed Chair of the meeting of States parties, and I wish him all the best in his efforts to steer it to a successful conclusion. He can count on my full support.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that the traditional draft resolution on the BWC, which Hungary has already submitted (A/C.1/72/L.49), is an important stepping stone on the road to the meeting of States parties. Maintaining consensus on the draft resolution will give positive impetus to the preparations of the meeting.

The Acting Chair: In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion on the briefing we have just heard through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 11.50 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now continue its consideration of the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction. Delegations are reminded to observe the speaking limits of five minutes for national statements and seven for statements on behalf of groups. The buzzer will continue to be used to remind delegations when the time limit has been reached.

Mr. Rahdiansyah (Indonesia): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

NAM reiterates its continued concern about the difficult and complex situation in the field of disarmament and international security. NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC) have noted with satisfaction the CWC's effective operation as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. NAM States parties urge all possessor States to take every measure needed to ensure that they have complied with their detailed plans to destroy, in the shortest time possible, whatever remaining chemical weapons they have following the final extended destruction deadline of 29 April 2012, in order to uphold the credibility and integrity of the Convention. In this regard, as a new development, NAM welcomes Russia's completion of the full destruction of its chemical weapons, confirmed by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

NAM States parties call for the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention without any discrimination or restriction. In this regard, they attach high importance to the adoption of a plan of action on article XI on economic and technological development, in order to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of its provisions.

With regard to the future priorities of the OPCW, NAM States parties to the CWC believe that discussions should be brought within the parameters of the policymaking organs, guided and driven by States parties, while the main focus of the Organization should remain the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons, in the firm belief that all pillars of the Convention should be treated in a balanced manner.

NAM States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) believe that the Convention represents an important component of the international legal architecture in relation to weapons of mass destruction. They recognize that the lack of a verification system continues to pose a challenge to the effectiveness of the Convention and call for the resumption of multilateral negotiations to conclude a non-discriminatory, legally binding protocol dealing with all articles of the Convention in a balanced and

comprehensive manner so as to sustainably strengthen it, including through verification measures. They urge the party that is rejecting negotiations to reconsider its policy, and further emphasize the importance of enhancing, without restrictions, international cooperation and assistance as well as exchanges in toxins, biological agents, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes without any discrimination, in conformity with the Convention.

NAM calls on all Member States to support international efforts aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and urges them to take and strengthen national measures, as appropriate, to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and materials and technologies related to their manufacture. In the context of resolutions 1540 (2004), 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008), 1977 (2011), 2310 (2016) and 2325 (2016), adopted by the Security Council in the areas covered by multilateral WMD treaties, NAM underlines the need to ensure that any action by the Security Council does not undermine the Charter of the United Nations, existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction or international organizations established in this regard, as well as the functions, power and role of the General Assembly.

NAM warns against the Security Council's continuing practice of using its authority to define the legislative requirements for Member States in implementing its decisions. In this regard, NAM stresses that the issue of the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors should be addressed in an inclusive, non-discriminatory manner by the General Assembly, taking into account the views of all Member States. The Movement also underlines that the total elimination of all WMDs represents an important guarantee that such weapons will not be acquired by non-State actors.

The Movement reaffirms the need to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and therefore supports the necessity of monitoring the situation and triggering international action, as required. In this regard, the Movement welcomed the adoption of resolution 69/27, entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament".

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

The Nordic countries welcome the completion of the destruction of declared chemical weapons in the Russian Federation, which is an important achievement in the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. Several Nordic countries are among the members of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction that have supported the Russian Federation in completing this important treaty obligation.

There are also less positive developments to note on this twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Nordic countries condemn in the strongest terms the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria and in Iraq. That must end. We were greatly shocked to learn about new incidents of use of sarin in attacks on 30 March and 4 April in Idlib province, claiming large numbers of victims, including many children. All sarin was supposed to have been removed from Syria for destruction in 2014.

We remain deeply concerned about the continuing reports of inconsistencies and unresolved issues in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) investigation into the initial chemical-weapons reporting of the Syrian Arab Republic, and the assessment by the OPCW that Syria has so far failed to provide the cooperation necessary to address those open issues. As long as this situation persists, we continue to harbour great concerns that the Syrian Arab Republic might still possess chemical weapons and that they could be used by or fall into the hands of terrorist groups. Syria must disclose all requested information and extend its full cooperation to the OPCW without further delay.

Any use of chemical weapons constitutes an international crime, and attacks involving such weapons could amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. The perpetrators of these inhumane and barbaric attacks must be brought to justice. The investigative work carried out by the OPCW fact-finding missions and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) are indispensable to identifying those responsible for confirmed cases of chemical weapons use. Both mechanisms must be equipped to continue their important work. We call on the Security Council

to unite in ensuring accountability for the perpetrators, in connection both with the cases identified by the JIM last year and with those currently under investigation.

The Nordic countries welcome and support the recent decision of the Executive Council to recommend to the Conference of States Parties the appointment of Ambassador Fernando Arias González of Spain to the position of new Director-General of the OPCW. We would like to thank and congratulate Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his successful management of the organization during very challenging times.

The Nordic countries were disappointed by the lack of a substantive outcome of the eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. We share the desire of the vast majority of States parties in all regional groups to achieve a consensus result at the next Meeting of States Parties that will strengthen the intersessional process on the basis of the Chairman's paper of last December.

The Nordic countries continue their engagement within the framework of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the Global Partnership and the Global Health Security Agenda. We are supporting efforts to bolster the operational readiness of the Secretary-General's Mechanism through trained experts and networks of forensic laboratories, in coordination with the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs.

Several of our efforts at the interface of public health and security support the implementation of articles VII and X of the Biological Weapons Convention. Through capacity-building and joint evaluations, the Nordic countries are helping countries to upgrade their capacities to prevent, detect and respond to disease outbreaks, in accordance with the International Health Regulations, the One Health principle and the all-hazards approach, and spearheading an alliance in support of such capacity-building. The Nordic countries are among the leaders in promoting an international response to the critical problem of anti-microbial resistance and the initiators of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations — a private-public partnership investing in research on new vaccines that could be used to combat global pandemics. In parallel with this work, we have also contributed significantly to efforts to make the World Health Organization better

prepared to lead an international response to public health events of international concern.

In conclusion, the potential for the deliberate spread of disease remains a serious threat to global security. While we hope that this will never occur, we all share a responsibility to strengthen our joint response mechanisms in case such a scenario ever becomes reality.

Mr. Al-Dobhany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, which aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group maintains a firm position in support of freeing the world from weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological, with a particular focus on achieving the lofty goal of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We should also recall the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which clearly and by consensus identified the priorities related to the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, it agreed that the issue of greatest importance was achieving nuclear disarmament.

The Arab Group has played an effective role in the efforts leading to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Based on that position, at the latest Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Arab Group translated that belief into practical measures aimed at freeing the Middle East from all weapons of mass destruction. The Arab Group has always supported the goals of the two treaties on the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons, and the Arab States will continue to participate actively in their implementation. The Group stresses that Israel's accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear party would achieve the universalization of the Treaty, build confidence, strengthen regional and international security, and promote the credibility of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT to agree on a final document, in spite of the active efforts by the Arab Group, will have negative repercussions for the ongoing efforts to free the Middle East from weapons of mass destruction. Previous review conferences have included practical measures

regarding the three pillars of the Treaty, including the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which offered an unprecedented opportunity to establish a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In a courageous and good-faith decision, the Arab States have agreed to expanding the list of weapons that should be eliminated from the weapon-free zone in order to include other weapons of mass destruction, with the aim of refuting the baseless allegations that the existence of such weapons could pose a regional threat and provide sufficient justification for the existence of Israeli nuclear weapons. At the same time, the Arab States, through the traditional draft resolutions that they submit to the First Committee each year in this regard, are keen to achieve the priority of nuclear disarmament in the Middle East.

The Arab Group calls on the international community to strengthen and expand its efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Arab Group renews its commitment to engaging in serious negotiations to that end, as affirmed by the relevant Arab paper adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement at the 2015 Review Conference. We also look forward to the positive participation of Israel and all regional parties in those negotiations while the United Nations plays its role with a view to supporting and sponsoring this important path.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the cluster under consideration, "Other weapons of mass destruction".

As this is the first time I have taken the floor in the Committee, let me begin by congratulating the Chairman on his election as Chair of the First Committee for the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. He can be assured of my delegation's full support as he carries out his duties. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

CARICOM remains fully committed to the disarmament agenda of the United Nations. At the heart of that agenda is concern for the safety and well-being of people everywhere, the pressing need for collective action to build and maintain a secure and peaceful

international community and the recognition that development and security are inextricably linked.

We welcome the progress achieved in the global effort to permanently eliminate chemical weapons. Developments in that area can be viewed as an illustration of how the disarmament agenda can be advanced if all countries demonstrate the necessary political will. One hundred and ninety-two countries, including all 14 CARICOM member States, are now States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and more than 96 per cent of all chemical-weapon stockpiles declared by possessor States have been destroyed under the verification of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We look forward to the continued implementation of the Convention in those States still possessing chemical weapons, and we encourage the few remaining Member States that have neither signed nor ratified the Convention to take the necessary steps to enable it to achieve universal adherence.

CARICOM wants to underscore the importance of international cooperation to ensure full compliance with the Convention's obligations. In that connection, we would like to express our appreciation to the Government of Spain and the OPCW for facilitating the recently concluded training for technical experts from Latin America and the Caribbean on how to respond to incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals. As small island developing States with unique security challenges, the members of CARICOM welcome all initiatives aimed at enhancing our capacity to confront those challenges. As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, our work for universal adherence is especially significant.

CARICOM has taken note of the outcome of the eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, held in Geneva from 7 to 25 November last year. We noted with satisfaction that the States parties to the Convention took the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to completely excluding the possibility of bacteriological agents and toxins being used as weapons, since that could have catastrophic consequences for humankind.

The current rapid advances in life sciences and the globalization of biotechnology present both challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the Convention, and that reality highlights the need for Member States to be consistent in their collaboration in fulfilling the obligations in the Convention. We look forward to an early agreement among States parties to the Convention on a new intersessional programme, to facilitate its continued implementation.

The Convention's effectiveness would be greatly enhanced if all Member States agreed to be bound by its provisions, and we are encouraged that the number of States parties now stands at 179. We encourage those Member States that have not yet signed and ratified it to do so without delay, in keeping with our obligations as States Members of the United Nations to work for a peaceful, secure and stable world.

CARICOM is deeply concerned about the increasing threat posed to international peace and security by terrorists and other non-State actors. We are particularly concerned about the danger posed by their possession of any type of weapon of mass destruction. We are also conscious of the difficulty of ensuring that terrorist entities do not install themselves in the sovereign territories of Member States and develop such weapons there. That reality is especially acute for Member States of CARICOM. Our porous borders make it relatively easy for undesirable individuals and resources to enter our territories, where we cannot ignore the nexus between poverty, privation and marginalization, on the one hand, and radicalization, on the other.

It is against that backdrop that we have collaborated with the United Nations in formulating a Caribbean Community counter-terrorism strategy to strengthen the region's response to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. While we acknowledge the inextricable link between our security and economic growth, we are fully conscious that our economic viability as a region is not tied to a secure Caribbean space alone, but also to the security of all other regions of the world.

We therefore reiterate the need for continued cooperation among Member States and the international community, and for greater levels of support to address the development challenges that create fertile ground for radicalization. For its part, CARICOM is committed to ensuring that we do not facilitate terrorists' pursuit of their sinister goals. CARICOM member countries have also been working to fully adhere to their obligations

under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and will continue to collaborate with other partners to that end. We will also continue to join the consensus on the adoption by the First Committee of its draft resolution on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, the member States of CARICOM have a vested interest in a stable international architecture that is buttressed by the rule of law and peaceful coexistence among nations. Weapons of mass destruction do not fit into such an architecture, and we therefore urge all Member States to work collectively within the ambit of international law to rid our world of such weapons. CARICOM pledges its unwavering commitment to that effort.

Mr. Tozik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of the member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) — Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and my own country, Belarus — on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In reaffirming their commitment to the goal of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the member States of the CSTO note the growing role of every country, without exception, and of international and regional organizations, in implementing coordinated, comprehensive measures and steps to combat this problem. Only through joint and consistent action at the international level can we establish a firm foundation for implementing the goals of combating the proliferation of WMDs, their means of delivery and related technologies and materials. What should be central to international efforts is strict compliance with the existing universal and unshakable non-proliferation regimes, including the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The CSTO member States appeal to all countries to stand united with regard to the crucial importance and uniqueness of the mechanisms provided for in resolution 1540 (2004), which plays a key role in the maintenance of international peace and security. We welcome countries' active national efforts to prevent

the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Our member States note the need for more active collaboration on preventive action with regard to the development, acquisition, production, transportation and use of weapons of mass destruction. We believe in the importance of continuing to strengthen countries' domestic capacity for implementing the tasks outlined in resolution 1540 (2004), including by developing related legislation, improving export controls and strengthening the existing domestic non-proliferation machinery. Aware of the growth and change in the nature of threats related to the proliferation of WMDs, and in the spirit of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), we call for strengthening international legal mechanisms geared to preventing the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

The CSTO member States are open to and ready for further cooperation with all interested countries, without exception, with a view to strengthening the universal non-proliferation regime as an intrinsic element in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ms. Dallafior (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): As has already been mentioned several times, this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In that time, 192 States parties, which make up 98 per cent of the world's population, have joined the Convention, and 96 per cent of the world's declared stockpiles of chemical agents have been destroyed, which is unquestionably a great achievement and one that we should monitor carefully in view of the numerous continuing challenges to the CWC.

Despite that success and the tremendous efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its member States over the past two decades, the use of chemical weapons by both State and non-State actors persists, as confirmed by the conclusions of the OPCW's Fact-finding Mission in Syria and Iraq and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

Switzerland firmly condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, regardless of the circumstances. The use of chemical weapons is a serious violation of international law and therefore a crime. The international community must take resolute action to ensure accountability and bring those responsible to justice. Ignoring the facts or failing to react to such violations

jeopardizes the norm against the use of chemical weapons, which is an essential pillar in the structure of disarmament, non-proliferation and international law that the CWC represents. Inaction in the face of such serious violations of international norms is simply not acceptable. In that regard, Switzerland would like to express its full confidence in and support to the work of both the Fact-finding Mission and the JIM.

The OPCW continues to prove that it plays a crucial role in building a world free of chemical weapons. In order to fulfil that challenging task and ensure that toxic chemicals will never be used for hostile purposes again, it must be prepared for the future and provided with the means, resources and workforce it needs. In order to suppress chemical weapons, it is vital to preserve the OPCW's know-how and maintain its high-quality verification regime. Switzerland also believes that a discussion in the OPCW's policymaking entities of chemicals that act on the central nervous system is essential. In addition, it must constantly remain up to date on relevant scientific and technological developments, such as the convergence of biology and chemistry. It also has a key role to play in the global fight against chemical terrorism.

This year, with the completion of the destruction of the chemical-weapon stockpiles declared by the Russian Federation and the consensus agreement on a candidate for the position of the next Director-General of the OPCW, we have achieved two important milestones. In the same spirit and at this critical juncture in the OPCW's history, its States parties should take advantage of the upcoming fourth Review Conference of the CWC, in 2018, to set a course that will ensure the OPCW's future strength and relevance.

The minimal result of last year's Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention clearly fell short of our hopes and expectations. In particular, we regret that the efforts to improve the Convention's intersessional programme did not achieve consensus. A number of proposals discussed at the Conference benefited from strong support among the vast majority of the States parties. We must take advantage of the upcoming meeting of States parties in December to take the issue forward, as mandated by the Review Conference.

For Switzerland, issues of science and technology remain at the core of our commitment. In the light of rapid scientific and technological developments, this

question should be allocated adequate time and resources during the intersessional process in order to ensure the continuing identification of relevant developments and consider their implications. Scientific and technological developments are fundamental, because they underpin nearly all the articles of the Convention. My country believes that this strengthened approach is essential to ensuring the Convention's continued effective implementation and relevance.

Mrs. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico is pleased to be taking the floor in this debate at a time when we are at a historic juncture in which we finally have legally binding international standards that prohibit every category of weapons of mass destruction. However, that is only the beginning. Our priority must be to continue making progress towards disarmament and non-proliferation, since the use of chemical weapons and the threat of the use of biological weapons persist, despite their explicit prohibition.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, created under it, are close to achieving universality and the Convention's principal objective, the complete destruction of chemical arsenals. Today the resolve of its 192 States parties has made it possible to establish the highest existing standards for the verification of weapons of mass destruction. Despite that, in the year 2017, we are still witnessing the indiscriminate and terrible effects of the use of chemical weapons, which Mexico categorically condemns. That war crime reaffirms the duty of States to come together to give meaning to the measures adopted in international bodies, clarify the facts and determine who is responsible.

With respect to the Biological Weapons Convention, Mexico restates its commitment and its shared responsibility with the international community regarding that issue. In that regard, we deeply regret that the results of the eighth Review Conference of the Convention, held in November last year, were not equal to the common challenges we face or to our ultimate goal as States parties. That regrettable experience has required Mexico to restate its intention to continue working actively to achieve a comprehensive strengthening of the architecture of the Convention, including verification, through a method or body that, should it be necessary, would verify the elimination of weapons prohibited by that instrument.

In the light of scientific and technological progress that has made it ever easier to develop chemical substances or biological agents, Mexico underscores the need to strengthen our collective efforts to achieve non-proliferation and prevent the acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors. In any case, it is clear that we must strengthen coordinated action among Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector. It is precisely with that in mind, and in close cooperation with the Government of Germany, the Group of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, that Mexico held a meeting in June of the Wiesbaden Process, which launched a dialogue with the countries and industries of the Pacific Alliance and Brazil.

In conclusion, I want to underscore that our satisfaction with the fact that the current situation now prohibits all categories of weapons of mass destruction should not make us complacent or willing to let up. On the contrary, it should encourage us to make progress towards universality and the full implementation of the instruments of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime, which is the only way that we can give impetus to the consideration of the issues discussed in the Committee and achieve, once and for all, the total eradication of the most dangerous categories of weapons man has ever created.

The Acting Chair: I now call on those delegations who have requested the right of reply on the nuclear weapons cluster. Delegations wishing to speak in exercise of the right of reply on the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction will have an opportunity to do so at the end of this afternoon's meeting.

I would like to remind all delegations that the first statement is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the Israeli entity delivered a statement under the nuclear weapons cluster that lacked the most basic acknowledgement of the facts. We are once again astonished by his hypocrisy and lies as he makes accusations against other States with a view to diverting attention from the threats posed by Israeli nuclear weapons and Israel's non-compliance with international and Security Council resolutions calling on it to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation

of Nuclear Weapons and subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In addition, the Israeli entity refuses to accede to any conventions prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical or biological. It not only has nuclear weapons, it has often threatened to use them, including during the October 1973 war of liberation. Why does Israel possess rockets capable of carrying nuclear warheads with a range of more than 5,000 kilometres? Which States do these Israeli threats target?

Israel's nuclear military programme could not have been maintained without the protection and support of a group of States, including some permanent members of the Security Council, that provide it with financial and technological support, nuclear material and experts. Its crime in possessing nuclear weapons is a shared one, perpetrated both by Israel and those who protect Israeli nuclear weapons. How long will that spoiled child be the exception to the rule and march to its own drummer?

I shall conclude by citing a verse by the famous poet Al-Mutanabbi, which says that if I am humiliated by a man at fault it means that I am right.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): On Friday, the representative of the Israeli regime repeated its unfounded allegations against Iran (see A/C.1/72/PV.13). I have no intention of dignifying them with an answer, except to say that I reject them all categorically.

In order to conceal its brutality, the Israeli regime traditionally resorts to accusing others of deception and lies. On Friday, in addition to that, the representative of the Israeli regime was more Catholic than the Pope with regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). He said that Israel maintains a policy of responsibility in the nuclear domain, in accordance with the goals and principles of the non-proliferation regime, and he cried wolf about non-compliance with the NPT.

That reminds me of a similar statement in support of the activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), when another representative rightly advised Israel that the best support and service that it could render to the OPCW was to become a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. If Israel, which is the only non-party to the NPT in the Middle East, truly believes in the goals and principles of the NPT and the non-proliferation regime,

it should immediately eliminate all its nuclear arsenals, adhere to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon Party and place all its clandestine nuclear activities and facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency's full-scope safeguards. That is the only way that it can prove the veracity of its words. But decades of the lying and hypocritical policy of the Zionist regime, which hides behind a so-called strategic ambiguity, will not allow Israel to do so. Until then, therefore, all such statements should be deemed mere meaningless rhetoric.

Expressing concern about the introduction of draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.2, on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, the Israeli representative declared his country's commitment to a process of direct dialogue and confidence-building. That is yet another hypocritical statement. We have to remind Israel that its regime is the only obstacle in the way of the international efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Israel's latest attempts to neutralize all such efforts during the 2015 NPT Review Conference, with the support of its principal patron, is well known to every representative in this room. That process was a real test that Israel failed. Now, by putting forward such irrelevant issues as direct dialogue, it wants to distract attention from the real threat to the region, its nuclear-weapon arsenal.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to speak in exercise of my right of reply in response to the representatives of France, the United Kingdom, Poland, Lithuania and Turkey and others who have made unacceptable allegations about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which we categorically reject. Before they make such allegations, those countries should first learn about the actual state of affairs and issues on the Korean peninsula and about their background.

I want to say to the representatives of France and the United Kingdom that if they really believe nuclear weapons to be as bad as they claimed in their statements, we strongly urge them to dismantle their own nuclear arsenals and accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as non-nuclear States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply in response to the representative of the North Korean regime, who earlier referred to the military exercises conducted by the United States and the Republic of Korea. I would just

like to remind everyone that those military exercises are long-planned, transparent and defensive in nature.

The threat posed by North Korea to the Korean peninsula, Asia and the rest of the globe is a grave one. North Korea is a pariah and an outlier that is condemned regularly and strongly in multiple forums, including here again today, and that condemnation grows stronger every day. The United States will never recognize North Korea as a nuclear-weapon State. It is certainly not, as the regime's representative claims, a responsible State.

Let me again remind the regime that its provocations, threats and ballistic-missile and nuclear tests will not weaken the international community's resolve, and that the United States commitment to the defence of its allies remains ironclad.

Mr. Kim In-Chul (Republic of Korea): I will use my right of reply to respond to the remarks made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this morning. I am taking the floor to urge that delegation to come to the table for dialogue on denuclearization, because its argument is untenable.

North Korea rarely misses an opportunity to repeat its mantra. That mantra seems to be based on one thing only — hostile policies towards it from the outside. On other occasions, I have made it clear that the situation is actually the other way round. In order to illustrate that, I need only quote any of the assertions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, for instance:

“We have to think only about pacifying the South by mercilessly sweeping away our enemies with our gun barrels and occupying Seoul in the blink of an eye.”

That was made well before the beginning of this year's session of the General Assembly, in late August, when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted an exercise occupying certain islands of South Korea. Its rhetoric and argument therefore constitute a very basic level of primitive behaviour, blaming everything on the other side. They simply say that the other side are the bad guys, and then follow that by claiming victimhood and fomenting domestic resentment. However, we all know that false words alone cannot camouflage actions, behaviour and the thoughts behind them. North Korea's provocations alone loudly attest to that contradiction.

On this occasion, the North Korean representative's impossibly repetitive, self-contradictory and absurd remarks revolved around a handful of false concepts, based on a total distortion of the facts and a total ignorance of international law that we are all familiar with. The representatives of North Korea therefore need to get those concepts right. They include the very important and extremely basic concepts of self-defence, the meaning of withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the authority of the Security Council, among other things. They are all features of their standard mantra, which is very easy to decipher.

Since the North Korean representatives make reference to the United Nations, and since the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a member of the United Nations, I would simply ask them to at least read Articles 25, 39, 41 and 103 of the Charter of the United Nations. They are very plainly written and are not susceptible to any acrobatics in interpretation, which is tantamount to what North Korea's representatives are doing, thereby shooting themselves in the foot. Repeating groundless mantras makes such omissions much more conspicuous. I would like to ask them to please come to the table for a dialogue.

Ms. Yaron (Israel): In response once again to the accusation made by the Syrian representative, once again, as we said last week (see A/C.1/72/PV.13), we should not expect to hear the truth from a State that has repeatedly violated its international obligations, not to mention one that could not care less about truth and fact. That country has breached its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and is cooperating in and committing war crimes against the Syrian people, including through the use of chemical weapons.

As for the Iranian radionuclide laboratory report, I would like to remind all representatives here that Iran is the main State sponsor of terror across the globe. Its forces and proxies spare no effort in training, financing and executing acts of terror all over the world, mainly in the Middle East. Both directly and through its proxy, Hizbullah, Iran has been committing atrocities against the people of Syria, while also supporting the Al-Assad regime, which is guilty of massacring its own people, including women and children. Iran spreads extremism, threatens its neighbours and destabilizes the Middle East. Even against that horrific backdrop,

the Iranian representative found it appropriate to spread lies against Israel, lies of which Iran itself is guilty.

Mr. In Il Ri (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am going to exercise my right of reply to respond to the representatives of the United States regime and South Korea, who just made groundless remarks about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First, for some time now, the power balance in North-East Asia has been tipping. That is a reality. According to the nuclear doctrine of the United States, when it or its allies face any threats, that country mobilizes its massive military force, including nuclear weapons. That nuclear doctrine is based on the use of nuclear weapons. In other words, the United States is going to use nuclear weapons against any threat. The United States offers its allies a nuclear umbrella or deploys weapons of mass destruction on the pretext of defending its allies. That means that non-nuclear States that are allies of the United States virtually possess its nuclear weapons themselves.

However, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is quite different. It is not under anyone's nuclear umbrella. Furthermore, no country in our neighbourhood has offered us a nuclear umbrella. In the twentieth century, the United States was the first country to produce and use a nuclear weapon., and it has threatened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with that weapon for more than 70 years. In those circumstances, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no choice but to possess its own nuclear deterrent in order to safeguard its sovereignty and its right to existence and development against the nuclear threats and attacks of the United States. That is why it persists with its nuclear deterrence and strengthening its nuclear force.

Secondly, to the South Korean representative, who made groundless remarks, I just want to say that he should not act like a spokesman for the United States. I have warned him before. South Korea should be responsible for the catastrophic consequences of its outrageous actions.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As usual, when the Israeli position is weak and fragile, we see the representatives of Israel resort to propagating falsehoods, turning the facts upside down and evading accountability for the crimes and violations that the Israeli entity is committing.

We all know that the Israeli entity — and this is noted in Security Council reports — provides all kinds of assistance, weapons, munitions, intelligence, technology and training, along with toxic chemicals, to armed terrorist groups, notably Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and affiliated groups, and habitually violates all Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions. All reports, studies and research papers affirm that the Israeli protectorate is the only entity in the Middle East that possesses a nuclear arsenal. It also possesses an arsenal of biological and chemical weapons.

In her farcical statement, which recalls the theatre of the absurd, the representative of the Israeli entity desperately sought to mislead the Committee with

false accusations, in order to divert attention from the threats posed by Israeli nuclear weapons, Israel's non-compliance with the highly relevant international resolutions on non-proliferation and its failure to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

As we have done before, we recently relayed to the Security Council information about Israel's transfer of toxic chemicals to armed terrorist groups in Syria. We look forward to seeing the Security Council fulfil its role and hold Israel accountable for those and the other grave violations that it has committed.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.