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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga. (Romania)

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

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

The Chair: The Committee will now continue its consideration of the cluster “Nuclear weapons” to exhaust the list of speakers, on which 18 speakers remain. Thereafter, we will begin our consideration of the cluster “Other weapons of mass destruction”, which has a list of 51 speakers.

I once again urge all speakers to observe the time limits of five minutes for speakers delivering 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.

I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.57.

Mr. Yaakob (Malaysia): Malaysia associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

As the global community faces mounting challenges, it has become disconcerted by the continuing existence of nuclear arsenals. We need to remain resolute in our quest for the total elimination of nuclear

weapons. Since the Second World War, a growing number of States have denounced nuclear weapons as categorically unacceptable. To that end, Malaysia has consistently viewed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The unequivocal reaffirmation of the commitment to the Treaty by its States parties is indispensable to ensuring effective compliance with the Treaty’s three pillars, namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

As Chair of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, Malaysia will make every effort to carry out its responsibilities in a transparent and inclusive manner. We call on all parties to work constructively together towards agreeing on substantive recommendations by the Preparatory Committee in order to lay the necessary groundwork for the success of the 2020 Review Conference.

At the same time, the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in 2017, saw the political commitment of 122 States to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We believe that the Treaty complements the NPT in establishing a world free of nuclear weapons. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is necessary if we are to protect humankind from the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons.

While we are heartened by the February 2018 decision of the Conference on Disarmament to set up five subsidiary bodies, we hope that further progress will be made to allow for a more fruitful outcome

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from the Conference in terms of moving forward the discussion on disarmament.

Malaysia believes that the expeditious entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is also of pressing concern. Malaysia therefore calls on all States, particularly those in the annex 2 category, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay.

Malaysia recognizes the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the fundamental pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as well as the Agency's indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT. Malaysia also believes that the IAEA's contributing role is equally important in facilitating the use of nuclear energy in a safe, secure and peaceful manner.

As a member of ASEAN, Malaysia will continue to uphold the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. We will remain engaged in ASEAN's ongoing efforts to call on the nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol to the Treaty.

Furthermore, in advancing the cause of peace and stability in the Middle East region, Malaysia calls for all the relevant parties to take concerted action to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons.

Malaysia welcomes the easing of tension on the Korean peninsula. We also welcome the convening of the three inter-Korean summits this year, the most recent of which took place in Pyongyang from 18 to 20 September 2018. At this important juncture, we call on all parties to cooperate and work together to achieve reconciliation and chart the path for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. To that end, we continue to believe that all Security Council resolutions related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must be fully implemented.

As I mentioned during the Committee's general debate (see A/C.1/73/PV.6), Malaysia has submitted its annual draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/73/L.57). We look forward to receiving support from fellow Member States, particularly in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Mr. Saint-Hilaire (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the 14

States members of the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/73/PV.12). I will make several remarks in my national capacity.

At the outset, my delegation believes that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction is an absolute imperative. We urge all delegations to avoid delay through arguments that justify the existence, proliferation or modernization of nuclear weapons and, in general, all other weapons of mass destruction. Nothing is worth the lives that such weapons risk annihilating in a fraction of a second.

My delegation was pleased to note all the expressions of goodwill aimed at meeting the complex challenges in the areas of disarmament and international security. Several speakers have stressed the undeniable link among disarmament, international security and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Our disagreements pertain only to how we view current security challenges. We almost unanimously recognize the great danger that weapons of mass destruction pose to the survival of humankind.

Pondering those dangers should be decisive in determining the security doctrines of all countries. That is what underpins the Republic of Haiti's resolve and constant commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In his address to the General Assembly on Thursday, 27 September, the President of the Republic of Haiti expressed his enormous satisfaction at the significant progress made towards the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula (see A/73/PV.10). My country encourages the international community to continue its efforts to consolidate that progress.

The Republic of Haiti attaches great importance to patient dialogue and international cooperation as the preferred means of achieving the elimination of nuclear danger. We stress the need for full compliance with all agreements and obligations relating to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. That is an essential condition for promoting trust among States and minimizing any unfortunate disagreements. We attach particular importance to the proper implementation and universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We also reiterate our support for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

I do not disregard the concerns expressed by several States about the current strategic context, but my delegation believes that we can go even further. That is demonstrated by the painstaking discussions that led to the adoption, on 7 July 2017, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Allow me to commend in passing the efforts of civil society, and in particular the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, one of the main faces of the effort to raise awareness about the need for the elimination of nuclear weapons. My delegation is focused on the fundamental objective of the Treaty, namely, building a world order that is forever free of nuclear weapons. We are almost unanimous in our support for a world without nuclear weapons. What is being debated among us is the way to achieve that goal. Despite all our differences, we have no choice but to succeed one day. The survival of humankind depends on it.

The Latin America and Caribbean region has eloquently expressed, through the unanimous ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, that it is firmly in favour of a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The region has therefore shown the way forward — and other regions have followed suit. However, there is still much to be done. In that regard, my delegation believes that the nuclear-weapon States have an essential role to play. We urge all States Members of the Organization to refrain from any attitudes that could exacerbate the international security environment, stoke tensions and undermine confidence.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the reduction and, ultimately, the elimination of the nuclear threat is possible if the necessary safeguards are put in place, in accordance with a common vision at the subregional, regional and international levels.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): Hungary associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and that of the representative of Australia delivered on behalf of a group of 30 like-minded States (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

Over the almost five decades of its existence, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been the cornerstone not only of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime but also for multilateral nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The fact that the Review Conference to be held in 2020 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the entry

into force of the NPT is yet another reason to preserve and strengthen its integrity by recommitting ourselves to the fulfilment of the objectives of the Treaty.

As far as the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is concerned, the international community must do its utmost to effectively address the proliferation risks that continue to pose one of the gravest challenges to international peace and security. In that regard, Hungary urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to compliance with its obligations under the NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Until the Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization, sanctions must be maintained and strictly enforced.

We also fully support the efforts of the international community to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We believe that implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains the best available way to achieve that goal.

Concerning nuclear disarmament, Hungary shares the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. In our view, that goal can be achieved only if our respective efforts not only take into consideration the international security environment, but also contribute to the creation of a safer and more secure world. Unfortunately, the current unstable and unpredictable security environment is characterized by the uncertain success of the efforts aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the ambiguous viability of the JCPOA and the most recent developments concerning the fate of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

In order to make progress in the field of nuclear disarmament under these complex and ever-changing circumstances, we must focus on areas where common ground exists. In our view, only a progressive approach, consisting of gradual, concrete and practical steps and of engaging nuclear-weapon States, provides us with such a platform. We therefore cannot and will not sign or ratify any legal instrument that does not meet those requirements or weakens the existing multilateral nuclear disarmament framework.

At the same time, we stand ready to work with all States on elements of an inclusive, incremental approach, which remains the only credible way to

produce tangible results. Concrete steps in that regard include the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and making progress on nuclear-disarmament verification and transparency and confidence-building measures. In that respect, we highly value the report of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group (see A/73/159). We are also honoured to participate actively in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts set up by the General Assembly to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament and in the work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, with a focus on the technical aspects of, and capacity-building for, verification.

As a country with an active and peaceful nuclear programme, Hungary also attaches particular importance to nuclear safety and security, which are enablers for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in conformity with the provisions of the NPT. We recognize that the responsibility for nuclear security rests with States. However, we are convinced that international cooperation can considerably facilitate national efforts. Consistent with that, last month Hungary assumed the convenorship of the Nuclear Security Contact Group, which brings together States prepared to take initiative in this area.

Ms. Vasharakorn (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I wish to underline the following four points in my national capacity.

First, Thailand's commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remains unwavering. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a ratifying State to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), we believe those two instruments are intricately linked and mutually reinforcing. We therefore call on States to pursue the endeavour towards general and complete nuclear disarmament in good faith, as stipulated in article VI of the NPT.

Secondly, the adoption of the TPNW last year is a true achievement in our collective efforts aimed at achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. That good momentum must be continued, and we should do our utmost to bring the Treaty into force at the earliest possible time. Thailand has done its part by

hosting a regional workshop on the TPNW in August to promote regional awareness of the Treaty. Thailand also recognizes civil society's valuable contributions to ensure the Treaty's universalization. We commend the outstanding work that has been done in that regard.

Thirdly, Thailand believes that the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is a prerequisite for the peace and security of the region. We therefore welcome the recent positive developments and will continue to support diplomatic efforts and constructive dialogues among all parties concerned.

Lastly, advancing disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and ensuring that concrete progress is made are our shared responsibilities. Thailand fully supports the United Nations in its efforts towards general and complete disarmament and in advancing the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda. We urge all States to support the United Nations in that regard. We also believe that all stakeholders, including Governments, industry, academia, civil society and youth, must be engaged in order to ensure nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation that are truly inclusive, comprehensive and successful.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.

We, the nuclear-weapon States recognized by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), reaffirm our commitment to the Treaty in all its aspects, 50 years after its signing. That landmark treaty has provided the essential foundation for international efforts to curb the threat that nuclear weapons would spread across the globe, thereby limiting the risk of nuclear war. It has provided the framework within which the peaceful uses of nuclear technology — for electricity, medicine, agriculture and industry — could be promoted and shared, to the benefit of humankind. By helping to ease international tensions and create conditions of stability, security and trust among nations, it has allowed for a vital and continuing contribution to nuclear disarmament.

We pledge our full and continued support for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which plays a critical role in NPT implementation, both in promoting the fullest possible cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and in applying safeguards and verifying that nuclear

programmes are exclusively for peaceful purposes. We emphasize the need to further strengthen the IAEA safeguards system, including the universalization of the additional protocol.

Under the Treaty we remain committed to the pursuit of good faith negotiations on effective measures related to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. We support the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all. We are committed to working to make the international environment more conducive to further progress on nuclear disarmament.

It is in that context that we reiterate our opposition to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). We firmly believe that the best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through a gradual process that takes into account the international security environment. That proven approach to nuclear disarmament has produced tangible results, including deep reductions in the global stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

The TPNW fails to address the key issues that must be overcome to achieve lasting global nuclear disarmament. It contradicts and risks undermining the NPT. It ignores the international security context and regional challenges and does nothing to increase trust and transparency among States. It will not result in the elimination of a single weapon. It fails to meet the highest standards of non-proliferation. It is creating divisions across the international non-proliferation and disarmament machinery, which could make further progress on disarmament even more difficult.

We will not support, sign or ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It will not be binding on our countries, and we do not accept any claim that it contributes to the development of customary international law; nor does it set any new standards or norms. We call on all countries that are considering supporting the TPNW to reflect seriously on its implications for international peace and security.

Rather, we urge all States to commit to the continued success of the NPT — to ensure compliance, to promote universalization, to ensure the highest standards of non-proliferation and to respond to ongoing and emerging proliferation challenges, wherever they occur. In that context, our five countries reiterate our commitment to continuing our individual and collective

efforts within the NPT framework to advance nuclear disarmament goals and objectives.

Ms. Al Awadhi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Due to time constraints, I will read out an abbreviated version of my statement, the full text of which will be available on PaperSmart.

The United Arab Emirates would like to express its support for the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative coalition (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

With regard to the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into force, we would like to affirm the fundamental role that the Conference has played in the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Moreover, we attach great importance to the need to fully implement the resolutions of all NPT Review Conferences.

My delegation would like to express the importance of ensuring the success of the current NPT review cycle, of taking significant steps to implement the agreed 2010 Action Plan and of guaranteeing that the delayed conference on the need to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East will be held with the participation of all the countries of the region. We must find a comprehensive approach to ensuring the implementation of all the pillars of the NPT. In that regard, my country renews its call to Israel to join the NPT, as it is the only State in the region not to have done so.

As for the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, we call for holding negotiations towards concluding a treaty banning the production of fissile material and welcome the report of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group (see A/73/159).

We would also like to underscore the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which paves the way to effectively deterring nuclear tests. We therefore renew our call to all States that have neither signed nor ratified the CTBT, especially annex 2 States, to do so. In that regard, the United Arab Emirates welcomes the positive steps recently taken, in the form of high-level talks, on the Korean peninsula, which constitute an important turning point for the

achievement of peace and security there. We renew our call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the NPT, sign the CTBT, halt all nuclear and ballistic tests and implement the relevant Security Council resolutions.

My country believes that the peaceful use of nuclear energy requires transparency and a full commitment to non-proliferation. We in the United Arab Emirates are implementing our national nuclear-energy programme because we believe that nuclear energy is a clean source of energy and a means for achieving sustainable development. We are committed to the highest standards of quality and safety and to the full verification standards set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). My country also supports the additional protocol, which is an important instrument that complements the safeguards regime of the IAEA. We urge member States to make use of that mechanism. We also urge the Agency to continue its open dialogue on enhancing the safeguards regime. In that regard, my country calls on Iran to exercise transparency, implement the IAEA standards and take further confidence-building measures to make the nature of its nuclear activities clear. We hope that such measures will reflect positively on Iran's conduct in the region.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates affirms the importance of collective action on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. We support all efforts aimed at achieving our common goals related to international peace and security.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia is committed to the noble goal of building a world free of nuclear weapons. In implementing our obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we have drastically reduced our strategic arsenal to less than 15 per cent of its highest point at the time of the nuclear arms race. We are willing to continue making progress in that direction on the understanding that all countries possessing military nuclear power should take further steps in that regard. A realistic approach in this area involves a gradual process of eliminating nuclear weapons, while strengthening international security and stability and providing greater assurances for all participants regarding their own protection. These circumstances are not specific to Russia's position alone but are consistent with balanced and consensus-based arrangements reached through the NPT review process,

under which nuclear disarmament should be carried out in a way that promotes international stability, peace and security, and whose founding principle is ensuring improved and undiminished security for all.

We are against taking any hasty or oversimplified steps in an area as complex and sensitive as nuclear disarmament. In that context, we believe that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is ill-timed and ineffective, especially in a context in which we are seeking solutions to current international security issues. Not only does the Treaty not promote nuclear disarmament, it undermines the NPT regime. Before it has even entered into force, the Treaty has already created additional divisions between participants in the nuclear non-proliferation regime at a time when the existing global problems require concerted efforts on the part of the international community. Nuclear weapons function as a deterrent in a context of concrete external threats, and as long as they exist, many countries will obviously be unable to agree to renouncing them totally and unconditionally. The Russian Federation has therefore consistently supported establishing conditions that are conducive to taking practical measures to liberate the world from nuclear weapons.

In working towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, we have to take current strategic realities into account, especially those resulting from long-standing and systematic United States activities in this area, which are, first, the development of a global ballistic-missile defence system; secondly, an unwillingness to renounce the possibility of deploying weapons in outer space; thirdly, a quantitative and qualitative increase in imbalances in conventional weapons; and fourthly, the development of the concept of the prompt global strike. We are particularly concerned about the new Nuclear Posture Review of the United States, which essentially provides for a substantial increase in the role that nuclear weapons play in its military planning. The Review announces the development of low-yield nuclear weapons that would lower the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons and also contemplates a revival of the concept of a limited nuclear war. In essence, United States military thinking with regard to nuclear weapons has been rolled back half a century to a time when people believed that a nuclear war was acceptable and could be won.

We are very concerned about the situation surrounding the New START Treaty. The President of the Russian Federation has confirmed our country's

willingness in principle to consider an extension to the Treaty. However, that cannot be done without addressing the United States' continuing issues with compliance. We noted President Donald Trump's statement on Saturday on the possible withdrawal of the United States from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Russia will be closely following future developments in United States approaches to this disarmament instrument, which is so key to European and global security. If the statement of the leader of the United States were put into practice, it would represent yet another short-sighted and extremely dangerous step for international peace by his country. A withdrawal from the Treaty would show once again that the political and military authorities of the United States base their foreign policy priorities on an overriding desire to ensure the United States' military superiority over the rest of the world, and are clearly not interested in taking account of issues such as strategic stability, international peace or global security. Progress in nuclear disarmament would promote the stability of the NPT nuclear-non-proliferation regime, which is one of Russia's foreign-policy priorities.

We are now approaching the final stage of the NPT review cycle, but sadly we have seen no results on the issue of implementing the 1995 resolution on establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. As one of the three sponsors of the 1995 resolution, Russia is seriously concerned about the lack of progress in implementing its provisions. We believe that draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, introduced by Egypt on behalf of the League of Arab States, on convening a conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, is a step in the right direction, and we urge everyone to take it seriously. It responds to the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and does not run counter to the interests of the States of the region, and we are fully prepared to support it.

We consider the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to be a universal, effective and verifiable international instrument for the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear tests and one to which there are no alternatives. We call on those States that have not yet done so to ratify it as soon as possible and thereby demonstrate their support for strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

We believe that the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear programme, which was the result of painstaking and difficult compromises, was a serious mistake and a blow to the NPT regime. Russia intends to continue to comply with its obligations under the JCPOA and, together with the other parties to the agreement, to seek effective mechanisms to protect trade and economic cooperation with Iran from extraterritorial sanctions by the United States. We call on the United States to abandon its policy of putting pressure on countries that seek to develop legitimate economic cooperation with Iran and to refrain from preventing the other parties to the JCPOA from fulfilling their obligations under this unique arrangement.

We think highly of the work of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): You have exceeded your allotted time by two minutes. Please try to conclude your statement.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I apologize. The full text of my statement will be available on the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. Kateo Kabangu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Morocco and Indonesia on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

The conclusion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a high priority in our multilateral negotiations, as such weapons are not only a threat to us as human beings but also a tool for domination. We have two particular concerns when it comes to the international community's noble goal of attaining a world free of weapons of mass destruction. The first is about the proliferation of such weapons. The second is the delicate issue of nuclear-technology transfers, because it touches on fundamental principles of cooperation between industrialized countries and those of the Third World. Nuclear-weapon States should lead the way by significantly and verifiably reducing their stockpiles so as to create the conditions for achieving the ultimate goal of a peaceful world free of weapons of mass destruction. We firmly believe that nuclear weapons should follow the path set by chemical weapons, the international solidarity against which, despite what remains to be done, has gained significant momentum.

My country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, a State party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, has a range of legal tools in place to protect against the exploitation of and trade in strategic minerals.

The issue of nuclear disarmament remains a matter of concern because the long-awaited 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, for which our community had held such high hopes, did not achieve its aim of solving difficult nuclear issues. Nuclear Powers therefore bear a heavy burden of responsibility when it comes to the nuclear proliferation reported to date, which may only increase in the years to come if we are not vigilant. Given that civil nuclear development has always served as a pretext and provided access to nuclear weapons for countries that have them, the best way forward would be to completely eliminate such weapons, thereby freeing up these resources for development programmes.

Mr. Robatjazi (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.1/73/PV.11).

Iran's strong support for nuclear disarmament is based on two fundamental convictions: first, that nuclear weapons constitute the most serious threat to the survival of humankind, and any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences; and, secondly, our deep concern at the continued failure to comply with nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which has created a crisis of confidence in the Treaty's ability and capacity to deliver on its promise of nuclear disarmament.

Actions and policies that are completely incompatible with article VI of the NPT and the objective of a world without nuclear weapons continue unabated, particularly by the United States. For example, the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review of the United States is fully and fundamentally incompatible with its obligations under the NPT, for the following reasons: it emphasizes the utility of retaining nuclear weapons; it has increased the role of these inhumane weapons in the military doctrine of the United States by assigning them new missions; it threatens to use nuclear weapons not only in a nuclear exchange but also against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT;

and it seeks to massively modernize and expand United States nuclear missiles, submarines and bombers.

The United States plans to spend \$1.2 trillion on a tremendous build-up of its nuclear arsenal. Such provocative plans should be considered a clear indication of, and explicit invitation to, the start of a new nuclear arms race, as well as a violation of the United States nuclear-disarmament obligations under article VI of the NPT. Moreover, the Nuclear Posture Review envisages the development of new types of low-yield nuclear weapons for use in regional conflicts. The development of new mini-nukes not only indicates a greater reliance on nuclear weapons but also, due to their characteristics, raises the temptation to use them. As long as such irresponsible policies continue, there can be no hope for progress towards nuclear disarmament.

Notwithstanding what I have just outlined, the United States continues to preach to others. That is a hypocritical policy; they must practise what they preach instead of preaching to others. The recent announcement by the United States to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is another step towards the further deterioration of the already complex situation with respect to nuclear disarmament. Under these circumstances, non-nuclear-weapon States should strengthen their unity, remain resolute and work tirelessly towards the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world. That is what we owe to our nations and future generations.

The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a step in the right direction, which should be complemented by the urgent launch of negotiations and the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.

Another deceitful policy of the United States is its continued unconditional support for the possession of nuclear weapons by Israel. Such policies have emboldened the Israeli regime to the extent that it now brazenly threatens others with nuclear annihilation. Those irresponsible policies should no longer be tolerated. Countering the danger of the Israeli regime's nuclear weapons is more urgent than ever.

In conclusion, I thank all delegations that rejected the United States withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). As correctly stated by many representatives, the JCPOA is a great diplomatic achievement and represents the effectiveness of multilateralism. Therefore, strong support for the

JCPOA should continue. The international community should not allow the United States doctrine of withdrawal to dominate international relations. It should not allow bullying to prevail over diplomacy and multilateral institutions and instruments. This is in the interests of the sanctity of international agreements. We therefore have a collective responsibility to reject unilateralism and enhance multilateralism.

Mr. Barro (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Morocco on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

My delegation welcomes the opportunity provided by this thematic debate on nuclear weapons to share our views on the issue, which is quite rightly a matter of concern for the international community. Against the backdrop of growing tensions due to arms races and the repeated failure of United Nations disarmament initiatives, there is a crucial need to work towards the success of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Following the failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference, in May 2015, owing to a lack of consensus on the outcome document, the nuclear disarmament landscape remains a cause for serious concern.

In that context, according to recent estimates, there are currently more than 16,000 nuclear weapons in the world, in the possession of nine States. That proliferation poses a major risk insofar as any mishandling of these arsenals risks irrevocably unleashing unimaginable tragedy. Moreover, unresolved conflict between nuclear States could escalate and lead to these much-feared weapons being used.

This situation is all the more dangerous thanks to the increasing sophistication of nuclear weapons, whose use would be nothing less than catastrophic, especially in humanitarian and ecological terms. This is a reflection of the immense danger the very existence of these weapons represents for the survival of humankind.

Senegal, which remains resolutely committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, is convinced that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and military technology is the only guarantee against their use. By the same token, the world would no longer be haunted by the spectre of such weapons or the possibility of technology falling into the hands of terrorist groups.

Expanding nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in the Middle East, and banning the production of fissile material for military purposes and nuclear testing are imperatives if we are to realize the aim of nuclear disarmament. In that respect, Senegal welcomes the joint statements adopted in Panmunjom on 27 April 2018 and Singapore on 12 June 2018, which give promising signs with regard to the process of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

In addition, the adoption, on 7 July 2017, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons would have marked a major step towards nuclear disarmament had the nuclear-weapon States and their allies participated in its negotiation. It is therefore important that the nuclear-weapon States adopt this international legal instrument so that it can make a significant contribution to the consolidation of the other components of the non-proliferation regime, including the NPT, which represents the cornerstone of the safeguards system and whose authority can be strengthened by its universalization. In the same vein, we deplore the absence of an international authority responsible for ensuring compliance with the Treaty.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two interdependent and equally important objectives. In that regard, general and complete disarmament will remain unachievable if, in addition to the existing nuclear-weapon States, further countries circumvent the relevant provisions of the NPT to acquire nuclear weapons. In that regard, States, civil society actors and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have a leading role to play in establishing a ban regime equipped with verification rules and procedures to counter the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, we reaffirm the right of countries to peacefully use nuclear energy and to ensure the effective and safe transfer of pertinent technology to States upholding their commitments under the NPT, which can happen by strengthening the authority and capacities of the IAEA.

Ms. Edwards (Guyana): Guyana aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/73/PV.12) and by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/

PV.11). My delegation would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Guyana is committed to a world free of nuclear weapons. To that end, we have always taken a progressive approach to questions of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We are also a State party to the major legal instruments that make up the regime governing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Guyana's commitment to the objective of a nuclear weapon-free world is rooted in our deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, as evidenced by their past use and testing, and our firm conviction that the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances is to totally eliminate them.

Guyana was therefore pleased with the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), in July 2017, which prohibits, inter alia, the development, testing, manufacture, production, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Guyana is of the firm view that the TPNW makes a historic and significant contribution to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, since, by strictly prohibiting nuclear weapons, it closes a legal gap that previously existed.

Guyana views the TPNW as complementary to previously enforced nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We believe that both instruments strengthen the global norm against nuclear weapons, and we intend to fully comply with our obligations under those instruments.

Guyana underscores that numbers are critical to the strengthening of norms and urges all Member States that have not yet signed and ratified the TPNW to do so as a matter of urgency in order to facilitate its prompt entry into force. For its part, Guyana was the first country to both sign and ratify the TPNW, and we were pleased with the introduction of a draft resolution on the TPNW in the First Committee this year, which we have since co-sponsored (A/C.1/73/L.24).

Guyana joins other Member States in advocating the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. This is an urgent question that requires responsible leadership on the part of those States whose

ratifications are required for the Treaty to enter into force. We appeal for them to rise to the occasion.

Guyana was pleased to see the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs commit to stepping up their efforts aimed at facilitating dialogue between Member States in order to help them return to a common vision and path leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We are of the view that the nuclear-disarmament architecture provides an ample framework for bringing us to a common understanding of the most critical actions we need to take at this juncture.

In that regard, Guyana shares the view of many other stakeholders that a reduction in overall stockpiles of all types of nuclear weapons; a reduction in the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military concepts, doctrines and policies; a reduction in the operational readiness of nuclear-weapon systems; measures to build confidence and mutual trust; and increased transparency in nuclear-weapon programmes are among the many critical elements that need to be addressed at this juncture and could inform this common vision and path leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Guyana is encouraged by the positive developments on the Korean peninsula. We hope that trend will be sustained, leading to the total denuclearization of the area. We encourage all parties to continue to act in good faith.

As a small developing country, Guyana remains concerned about the diversion of economic resources to the maintenance and modernization of nuclear-weapon stockpiles and their delivery systems. We view this as an affront to development and believe that the resources being expended on unnecessary implements of war would be better invested in the well-being of people.

I will conclude my remarks here. The full version of the statement will be uploaded on PaperSmart.

Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria): At the outset, let me to congratulate you personally, Sir, on your election as Chair and to assure you and the Bureau of the full support of my delegation.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union, as well as with that made by the representative of Australia on 18 October 2018 on behalf of 28 like-minded countries

(see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I would like to make a few points in my national capacity.

Bulgaria's commitment to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons remains as strong as ever. Given the prevailing complex security situation, we are convinced that only through an approach that engages all States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, can we achieve that goal.

Therefore, we are convinced that a progressive approach based on practical and concrete measures is the most feasible avenue that will eventually lead us to fulfilling the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world. That approach takes into account both the security dimension and the risks posed by nuclear weapons and is based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in particular article VI, as the sole framework for the advancement of nuclear disarmament. We should all concentrate on the current NPT review cycle and on fulfilling the commitments of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences on all three pillars of the Treaty. It is our common duty to ensure that the 2020 Review Conference is a success.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a matter of priority. Bulgaria, as an annex 2 State, has upheld its responsibility in ratifying the Treaty. We call on all States, especially on all annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay.

The commencement of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty is another necessary element that will bring us closer to a world without nuclear weapons. In that regard, I would like to commend Canada for its skilful chairmanship of the High-level Expert Preparatory Group and for achieving a consensus outcome. Verification is also essential for effective nuclear disarmament. We are following the work of the Group of Governmental Experts closely and look forward to reviewing the results of its work in 2019.

As underlined earlier, nuclear disarmament is possible only with the engagement of all States and should be based on mutual trust. In that regard, we urge the United States and the Russian Federation to remain engaged in constructive dialogue in order to preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in Europe and to ensure its full and verifiable implementation.

Finally, Bulgaria is convinced that, by building trust and ensuring the engagement of all, we stand a chance of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

Ms. Yaron (Israel): I will deliver an abridged statement in order to adhere to the time limit; the full version will be available on PaperSmart.

For some time, established practice at the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the First Committee has maintained a certain structure with regard to the two nuclear-issue draft resolutions on the Middle East. Even though it was challenging for us, Israel adopted a constructive, responsible and pragmatic approach. It is therefore very unfortunate that the Group of Arab States has come back with another attempt to hijack yet another international body, instrument or treaty in the arms-control forums, rather than confronting the challenges to regional security that we need to address in the Middle East.

For the past few decades, despite the fact that circumstances were — and are still — complicated, Israel came to the table to discuss regional arms control issues with genuine intent. However, the Arab Group and other members from the region did not do the same. Not only did the Arab Group not engage with genuine intent but also, while Israel attended with authoritative high-level officials, most Arab countries did not. Not only that, but the representatives they sent unilaterally stormed out of the room, both at the arms control and regional security talks and during the Helsinki process.

That tells us that the Arab Group never had any genuine intentions to engage in substantive dialogue on the issue but rather aimed — and aims still — solely at singling out Israel in the multilateral forums. It is clear that some of the countries of the region still do not accept Israel's right to exist. Any support for this year's draft decision (A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1) promoted by the Arab Group translates into support for the conclusions I mentioned. The region is not ready for the concept of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

Israel has consistently taken a constructive approach. We emphasized that any process must be conducted on a consensual basis; emanate from the region itself; be freely arrived at by, and inclusive of, all States of the region, without prejudice, directly and not through third parties; be aimed towards confidence-building; and take into consideration all

security concerns of all parties involved, therefore including regional security concerns.

That is the sovereign right of any State in the world. However, it seems that, once again, the Arab Group is interested in creating another platform for no other purpose than singling out Israel by imposing a decision rather than arriving at consensus and resorting to a third party rather than engaging directly, in the knowledge that under those conditions not all the States of the region can participate — and moreover has adopted a one-sided approach with no respect for national security considerations. That was intentional and was done in the knowledge that Israel cannot and will not take such a path.

Regimes in the Middle East are using chemical weapons and pursuing nuclear-weapon capabilities with no regard for compliance with, and in contradiction to, their obligations under international treaties and Security Council resolutions.

Israel is part of the Middle East, and we are here to stay. Only a constructive approach will bring about stability, cooperation and peace. Destructive initiatives, like the Arab Group's current draft decision, will contribute nothing, take another multilateral platform hostage, widen gaps and undermine the achievements made to date.

Some actors in the region claim that a new and comprehensive security architecture can be established in the Middle East without direct engagement with Israel or even recognition of its right to exist. Furthermore, the Middle East is not the only region in the world without a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In no part of the world does a WMD-free zone exist. It is obvious that the draft decision aims to single out the Middle East region so that it can be used as a platform to bash Israel. This zone is no different from any other zone, and there should be no room for discrimination against just one region or one country.

If the Arab Group proceeds with this unfortunate draft decision, sending the clear message that it does not want Israel to be involved in the process and has no regard for its considerations, Israel will have no option but to no longer cooperate with future regional arms-control initiatives and will vote against any initiative in that regard in the relevant multilateral forums.

We call on all States not to support this draft decision. It is destructive and counterproductive. The

draft decision will encourage those in the region that pretend to initiate progress but, in fact, have no serious intention to do so. The draft decision is a hollow and empty initiative being imposed on the United Nations and bound to end in a complete failure that will resonate for years to come

Mr. Masuku (Eswatini): As this is the first time I take the floor, permit me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your able stewardship of our deliberations thus far. Let me assure you of our full support.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as that made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). We also wish to add the following remarks.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the single absolute guarantee of complete nuclear disarmament. The continued possession of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to global peace and the future survival of humankind. There exists, therefore, an urgent need to rid our planet of the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

As a prerequisite for all our efforts in that regard — to make headway towards nuclear disarmament and contribute to international peace and security — the Kingdom of Eswatini welcomed the adoption of the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), on 7 July 2017. Eswatini considers the TPNW as an essential building block in the international legal framework for achieving a total ban on nuclear weapons. In our view, it complements the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime founded on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Kingdom of Eswatini is currently engaged in its internal processes with a view to soon becoming a State party to the TPNW.

The importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world and for the overall objectives of the NPT cannot be overstated. Nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute a significant milestone towards achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, thereby enhancing global and regional peace and security. To that end, we reaffirm our commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba.

We applaud the efforts of the Secretary-General in holding the fifth annual General Assembly plenary meeting on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, on 26 September 2018. We wish to underscore the importance of that International Day, when the world reaffirmed its commitment to global nuclear disarmament as a high priority, as an integral part of multilateral disarmament efforts.

Mr. Penaranda (Philippines): The Philippines associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I would like to highlight the following points on behalf of the Philippines.

Recognizing the catastrophic humanitarian consequences underpinning efforts towards nuclear disarmament, the Philippines reiterates its firm belief that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) we recognize the merit in parallel efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation. However, the ultimate goal of the NPT is a world free of nuclear weapons. In that context, the Philippines also champions the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a positive step towards nuclear disarmament, and we are therefore working towards its ratification.

The Philippines has some concerns with regard to progress in nuclear disarmament. First, we share the concern that the nuclear-weapon capabilities of the nuclear-weapon States continue to be modernized and refined for greater accuracy and lethality. Secondly, we need to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to non-State actors and terrorists, in particular through unstable States. We therefore express support for the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Thirdly, we are concerned that disarmament is being made contingent upon an improved security environment. The Philippines is of the view that disarmament can be pursued despite, and must not take a back seat to, a tense geopolitical situation.

The Philippines welcomes the agenda for disarmament announced by the Secretary-General, having paid attention to the 40 actions and 114 steps and activities in its implementation plan. We have taken note of those that cite, first, the engagement by the Secretary-General with nuclear-weapon States and,

secondly, the importance of the successful conduct of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

On the first point, we are pleased that the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs are engaging with nuclear-weapon States at the highest levels. Together with other Member States, we have been urging nuclear-weapon States to uphold their side of the bargain and deliver, without further delay or further conditions, their commitments to pursue the path to nuclear disarmament, as agreed in the 13 practical steps to advance the implementation of article VI adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the 64-point Action Plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

In addition to engaging with nuclear-weapon States, the Philippines sees the need for a constructive and proactive approach to facilitating discussions on challenging issues and bridging diverse positions. In that regard, the Philippines is supportive of the complementary work of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative in reaching out to nuclear-weapon States and other groups to facilitate frank conversations on thorny topics. Conversations at all levels can bring us back to a common path towards disarmament.

On the second point, the other steps in the implementation plan point to the importance of the successful conduct of the 2020 NPT Review Conference. An important phase would be the successful conduct of the third session of the Preparatory Committee. The Philippines supports the Malaysian Chair of that Committee, who has espoused an approach that is open, consultative and receptive to recommendations from all the parties concerned. We recognize the initiative of the Netherlands on regional outreach activities to generate ideas from the various regions to feed into Preparatory Committee sessions.

I conclude by highlighting the importance of supporting efforts to sustain a public discourse that is duly informed by different perspectives and fields of expertise, including gender considerations, because the very difficult and complex questions we confront must be addressed now.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.11). I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

My country has constantly demonstrated a proactive approach in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular by voluntarily abandoning its nuclear capability and acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in November 1994. We also removed all existing stocks of highly enriched uranium from our territory in 2012.

Regrettably, as our experience has shown, the credibility and effectiveness of some of the key pillars of the NPT have been seriously undermined. Let me recall that the historic decision of Ukraine to renounce its nuclear weapons was largely based on the clear international security assurances provided to my country in writing in 1994, in particular in the Budapest Memorandum. The State signatories to the Memorandum

“reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine ... to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine”

and

“reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine” (*A/49/765, annex I*).

The validity of that document becomes even more vital in an era of evolving proliferation threats and efforts to quell the security concerns of States seeking nuclear-deterrent capabilities.

Blatant violation of its international obligations by Russia — a nuclear-weapon State as well as a permanent member of the Security Council — including under the Budapest Memorandum, has undermined the whole United Nations-based security system. One should also recall in that regard the obligation of nuclear States set out in the 2010 NPT Review Conference final document

“to fully respect their existing commitments with regard to security assurances”.

Still, despite being affected by Russia’s military aggression and temporary occupation of 7 per cent of our territory, Ukraine continues to regard the NPT as a key element of the global nuclear-non-proliferation regime. We have continued our comprehensive participation in the efforts to implement the NPT effectively and further strengthen and universalize it. Ukraine has consistently advocated for the reduction of nuclear arsenals, an end

to the modernization of nuclear weapons and an overall shrinking of the role of nuclear weapons in all States’ military and strategic doctrines.

Ukraine supports the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We call on all States that have yet to sign or ratify it, in particular the remaining annex 2 States, to do so without delay. We are confident that the voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing that various States have declared plays an important but insufficient role in this area, as it cannot replace the Treaty’s legally binding nature. We also continue to support efforts to negotiate and conclude a fissile material cut-off treaty, which is essential both to constraining nuclear proliferation and advancing the goal of nuclear disarmament. We remain ready to contribute to that goal both in our national capacity and as President of the Conference on Disarmament in 2019.

Mr. Sanda (Niger) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and your Bureau, on your election to lead the work of the First Committee, and to assure you of my delegation’s full support.

Our world has often faced and overcome many trials despite the unspeakably tragic consequences of humankind’s actions. We have also learned lessons from our mistakes. Our presence here at the United Nations, this temple to peace, testifies to our nations’ desire to save humankind from the tragedy of another nuclear conflagration. In accordance with the resolutions and decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, the Niger, like all the peoples of the world, will spare no effort in helping to curb any nuclear threat. We ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on 9 October 1992. Today the problem of the proliferation of nuclear weapons is more alarming than ever and should concern us even more, given the flashpoints around the world and the ongoing threat of international terrorism in particular.

The Niger welcomes the launch of a process aimed at denuclearizing the Korean peninsula and encourages the parties concerned to continue down the path of dialogue with a view to reaching a secure and lasting solution for a world safe from nuclear threats. We also continue to believe firmly that multilateralism provides us with a framework for making progress on many issues and finding concrete, inclusive and participatory solutions.

The Niger, a uranium-producing country, has ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba, and by its decree 2013-490/PRN, of 4 December 2013, established a national atomic energy authority that provides for the supervision, coordination and promotion of all peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including nuclear power and ionizing radiation, in collaboration with relevant national and international structures. We intend to play a responsible role in this area. We enjoy excellent cooperation with the International Agency of Atomic Energy (IAEA), which supports the Niger through its Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan, and we have been selected to serve as a pilot country for the African continent.

The Niger has also established a national nuclear security committee that constitutes the formal framework within which all actors in the security field must define the actions required to evaluate activities and make proposals and recommendations to develop a national nuclear security strategy, to be integrated into comprehensive national and regional strategies. In addition, the Niger is a founding member of and full participant in the forum of national authorities and bodies responsible for nuclear safety and security in the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel and Senegal, established in July 2018 in Nouakchott. The Niger supports and demonstrates its interest in the area of human health in the context of monitoring and eradicating malaria and combating cancer through nuclear medicine and radiotherapy.

It is important to point out that since the Niger ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), on 9 September 2002, we have played an active role in its implementation. In that regard, we host a seismic station in Torodi that is one of the most powerful in the entire global network of the International Monitoring System established by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). We should also note that the Niger and the CTBTO have launched a project to install a radionuclide detection station equipped with a rare-gas detection system in Agadez. The Niger is pleased that the project has made significant progress and will soon be operational. Our atomic energy authority also hosts a national data centre, one of three in West Africa with a capacity-building system enabling it to receive seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide data from all over the world and process it in order to

identify any nuclear test in violation of the CTBT and other seismic events.

In addition, the Niger has been chosen from among African members to serve as Vice-Chair of the CTBTO's Working Group B. We are also a member of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, reflecting our dedicated efforts in that area. The Niger therefore calls on annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty, not only to enable it to enter into force but also because peace, security and harmony in the world are priceless commodities. The Niger is pleased with its modest contribution to the implementation of the CTBT and hopes that all the CTBT signatories will maintain their financial contributions so that the most recent stations can be completed and those already in service maintained.

Ms. Roopnarine (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Jamaica, on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) (see A/C.1/73/PV.12), and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.11).

My delegation remains convinced that it is only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that international peace and security can be guaranteed. The prestige of a country should not be associated with its destructive capabilities but rather with its ability to build and maintain peace. In that connection, Trinidad and Tobago supports all efforts to achieve the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

It is noteworthy that the Conference on Disarmament (CD), in its decision CD/2119, decided to establish subsidiary bodies that could also consider emerging and other issues relevant to the substantive work of the Conference. While we welcome that development, we note that the CD has not resumed negotiations. For instance, a fissile material cut-off treaty would be effective in prohibiting the production of fissile material, but negotiations on that have yet to be launched. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) plays an essential role in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Its stated objectives are disarmament and the prevention of the further modernization of nuclear weapons and consequent arms races. However, the CTBT is more than 20 years old and has yet to enter into force.

We expect that the 2019 third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference

of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will produce more tangible results, in keeping with the stated commitment of States parties to fully and effectively implementing the decision and resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, the final document of the 2000 Conference and the conclusions and recommendations for follow-up actions of the 2010 Review Conference. We therefore look forward to the Review Conference in 2020 and urge those countries that are not yet party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to consider joining.

Trinidad and Tobago, as part of CARICOM, participated in the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination. As a small island developing State with porous borders and limited resources with which to secure them, we are cognizant of the extreme risks posed by any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

My delegation is of the view that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will not only complement current norms and reinforce existing legal instruments, including the NPT, but also close loopholes in the existing legal regime that enable States to participate in activities associated with nuclear weapons or claim a perceived benefit from their existence. We welcome the articles of the Treaty on positive obligations, since our support for it is founded on our understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a detonation. Those positive obligations relating to victims' assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance provide an opportunity to address the ongoing threat that nuclear-weapon activities pose to human rights, sustainable development and the environment. It is my delegation's belief that those positive obligations will set a standard for addressing the humanitarian consequences of any weapon.

My delegation acknowledges and commends the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which continues to play an indispensable role in support of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, from which Trinidad and Tobago has directly benefited.

Finally, we wish to highlight the important role of civil society and academia in advancing the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation,

among other things, and we will continue those important partnerships.

Mrs. Moldoisaeva (Kyrgyzstan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. My delegation will fully support the work of the Committee under your leadership.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is one of the longest-standing goals of the United Nations. It was the subject of the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly, in 1946 (resolution 1 (I)), and has been on the agenda of the Assembly since 1959, along with general and complete disarmament. Member States should take the measures necessary to prevent every aspect of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote nuclear disarmament. Kyrgyzstan remains committed to the goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and is an active supporter of the idea of a world free of nuclear weapons. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is one of the most fundamental and effective international instruments in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, it has not yet entered into force, owing to the fact that some States have still not signed or ratified it, and we call on them to do so as soon as possible.

One of the most effective approaches to achieving the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation is the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. For adoption by the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, the countries of Central Asia have submitted draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.48, entitled "Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia". We firmly believe that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, based on agreements voluntarily concluded among the States of a region, represents an important step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes to our achievement of general and complete disarmament. It is important to continue working to strengthen cooperation among such zones to ensure regional and international peace and security.

Nuclear testing harms the most vulnerable peoples and ecosystems. My delegation pays close attention to the problem of mitigating the effects of uranium mining and related activities of nuclear fuel production in creating nuclear weapons. In that regard, Kyrgyzstan will introduce in the Second Committee for adoption by the General Assembly a draft resolution entitled "The role of the international community in the prevention

of the radiation threat in Central Asia” (A/C.2/73/L.41/Rev.1), highlighting the importance of reclaiming areas affected by uranium production and recognizing the need to develop and promote effective programmes for the responsible and safe management of radioactive and toxic waste in Central Asia.

We reaffirm the central role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, noting the importance of multilateral disarmament mechanisms, as well as the significant role of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, academia, parliamentarians and the media, in promoting the goal of nuclear disarmament. Kyrgyzstan remains committed to the goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Father Charters (Holy See): A nuclear war would be a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions. Even limited use of nuclear weapons would kill untold numbers of people and cause tremendous environmental damage and famine. The Secretary-General recently warned that we are one mechanical, electronic or human error away from a catastrophe that could eradicate entire cities from the map. My delegation therefore believes that the continued existence of more than 14,000 nuclear weapons held by a handful of countries is one of the greatest moral challenges of our time. The Catholic Church’s opposition to nuclear weapons has a long history. In 1943, two and a half years before the Trinity test, Pope Pius XII, alerted to the discovery of nuclear fission, voiced deep concern about the violent use of nuclear energy. Since then, the Holy See has been warning of the increasing dangers to humankind posed by nuclear weapons. In his 1963 encyclical letter “Peace on earth”, issued a few months after the October crisis of 1962, Pope John XXIII called for the banning of nuclear weapons. Subsequent popes have consistently called for the abolition of these evil instruments of warfare, which both create a false sense of security and foster distrust and disharmony.

In a landmark document issued in 1965, the Catholic Church declared that the nuclear arms race was an utterly treacherous trap for humankind that injures the poor to an intolerable degree. Today, the maintenance of nuclear weapons continues to siphon off immense resources that among other things could be devoted to the implementation and achievement of the Sustainable

Development Goals, especially the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

During the Cold War, the Holy See gave limited acquiescence to the military strategy of nuclear deterrence on the strict condition that it would lead to disarmament measures. In recent years, however, the major Powers have instead increasingly persisted in their reliance on nuclear deterrence and have begun modernizing their nuclear arsenals. Pope Francis has made it clear that that nuclear escalation is morally unacceptable. Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence. Speaking at an international symposium in 2017, the Pope voiced grave concern about the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of the use of nuclear weapons and noted the risk of accidental detonation that could result from an error of any kind, saying that the threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned.

Unfortunately, the nuclear-weapon States have not fully respected their legal obligation under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue good-faith negotiations towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. More than two decades ago, the International Court of Justice unanimously ruled that negotiations for nuclear disarmament must be not only pursued but concluded. The NPT will soon be 50 years old and no comprehensive negotiations for nuclear disarmament have ever taken place. The reductions in numbers from Cold War highs are important steps in the direction of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, but they should not be cited to mask the modernization of nuclear weapons that some nuclear-weapon States are undertaking.

A significant number of non-nuclear States and civil-society groups, expressing great concern about the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, have joined efforts, under the auspices of the United Nations, to produce the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted at United Nations Headquarters on 7 July 2017. The Treaty prohibits the use, threat of use, development, testing, production, manufacturing and possession of nuclear weapons. While some States have argued that it is a distraction from the NPT, this historic Treaty could on the contrary be a major step towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. The Holy See was one of the first States to

sign and ratify the Treaty, which will enter into force once it is ratified by 50 States. My delegation strongly encourages the Governments of all the States that voted to adopt the Treaty to sign and ratify it.

Considering that so many informed analysts are warning against the extreme dangers that any moves away from further progress in nuclear disarmament pose to the world, as well as Pope Francis's vigorous condemnation of the possession of nuclear weapons, the time for action is not only ripe but pressing. We need a worldwide dialogue that includes both nuclear and non-nuclear States and the burgeoning organizations that make up civil society in order to ensure that nuclear weapons are banned once and for all for the benefit of our common home.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Personal Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Director of the IAEA Office in New York.

Mr. Mabhongo (International Atomic Energy Agency): In line with its statute, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continues to work with its member States and other partners to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies. One of the IAEA's core functions is verifying that countries are not working to acquire nuclear weapons. Agency staff conduct inspections at nuclear facilities all over the world and bring back samples that are analysed for possible traces of nuclear material. The IAEA independently verifies the correctness and completeness of declarations made by States about their nuclear material and activities.

Safeguards provide credible assurances that States are abiding by their international obligations not to develop nuclear weapons. They also make it possible to detect any misuse of nuclear material or technology in a timely manner by alerting the world to potential proliferation. The demands on the Agency in the area of nuclear verification are growing steadily, thanks to the additional significant quantities of nuclear material that are coming under safeguards around the world. The number of States with safeguards agreements in force stands at 182. On top of that, 133 States have put additional protocols into force, an increase from 93 in 2009. That is encouraging, because the implementation of additional protocols significantly increases the Agency's ability to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States with comprehensive

safeguards agreements in force. The safeguards are a vital component of the nuclear-non-proliferation regime and provide an important and unique contribution to international peace and security.

In accordance with its statute, the Agency also stands ready to assist with verification tasks related to nuclear-disarmament and arms-control agreements, if requested by States that are party to the agreements and approved by the Board of Governors. In addition, the IAEA has supported the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and has helped to implement them.

Since January 2016, the IAEA has been verifying and monitoring Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). As of today, Iran is implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. We consider it essential that Iran continue to fully implement those commitments.

The nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains a cause for grave concern. The Agency calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and to cooperate with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues, including those that have arisen since 2009 during the absence of Agency inspectors from the country. The Agency continues to enhance its readiness to play an essential role in verifying the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme, should a political agreement be reached among the countries concerned.

We encourage all States to pay due attention to safety and security when using nuclear and radiation technologies. While nuclear safety and security are national responsibilities, the IAEA plays a pivotal role in ensuring effective international cooperation in those areas. The Agency helps its member States to fulfil their responsibility for nuclear safety by developing safety standards that may be used as a basis for national regulations and by providing a variety of services, including expert review missions, on request. It also plays a leading role in helping the countries of the world to act together against the threat of nuclear terrorism. Among other things, we provide nuclear security training, help countries improve the physical security of facilities where nuclear materials are held, and maintain the world's most authoritative global

database on illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker in the cluster “Nuclear weapons”.

The Committee will now take up the cluster “Other weapons of mass destruction”.

I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.17.

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

NAM would like to emphasize its concerns about the difficult and complex situation in the area 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 been pleased to note the CWC’s effective operation as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), providing a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. We urge the United States, as the only remaining State party to the CWC in possession of such weapons, to take every measure necessary to ensure its compliance with its detailed plan on the destruction of the chemical weapons remaining after its final extended destruction deadline of 29 April 2012, as soon as possible, in order to uphold the credibility and integrity of the Convention.

NAM States parties to the CWC underline that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and the legal norms and standards of the international community. We declare our firm conviction that international support for providing special care and assistance to all victims suffering from the effects of exposure to chemical weapons is an urgent humanitarian need, and that the States that are parties to the Convention and members of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) should pay urgent attention to meeting those needs. NAM States parties to the CWC call for the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, without any discrimination or restrictions. In that regard, we consider it very important to work on

adopting a plan of action on the Convention’s article XI, on economic and technological development, in order to enable the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all of the article’s provisions.

NAM CWC States parties attach high importance to the OPCW and always emphasize the importance of consensus. The OPCW should be strengthened to enable it to deal with its current and future challenges within the confines of the CWC, without distorting the OPCW’s mandate, which could render it susceptible to political manoeuvring. With regard to the OPCW’s future priorities, the NAM CWC States parties believe that the discussions should be brought within the parameters of the policymaking organs guided and driven by States parties, and that the OPCW’s main focus should remain the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons, with a strong assurance that all of the Convention’s pillars will be treated in a balanced manner.

The NAM States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) consider that the Convention represents an important component of the international legal architecture related to WMDs. We 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 the multilateral negotiations to conclude a non-discriminatory legally binding protocol dealing with all articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner, with a view to sustainably strengthening the Convention, including through verification measures. We urge the party that has rejected the negotiations to reconsider its policy.

The NAM States parties to the BWC further emphasize the importance of enhancing, without restrictions, international cooperation, assistance and exchanges in toxins, biological agents, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes without discrimination, in conformity with the Convention. In the context of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and its subsequent resolutions, NAM underlines the importance of ensuring that no action by the Security Council undermines the Charter of the United Nations, existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction or international organizations established in that regard, as well as the functions, power and role of the General Assembly. NAM cautions against the Security Council’s continued practice of exercising its authority to define the legislative requirements of Member States in implementing its decisions. In that

regard, we stress 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 weapons of mass destruction represents an important guarantee that such weapons will not be acquired by non-State actors. We reaffirm the importance of preventing the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and therefore support the necessity of monitoring the situation and triggering international action, as required. In that regard, the Movement welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 72/23, 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". This year the Movement will once again submit an updated version of the biennial draft resolution entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol" (A/C.1/73/L.17). NAM seeks the support of all Member States for the draft resolution.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Group of Arab States aligns itself with the statement just made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group is committed to its steadfast principled position on the establishment of a world free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical or biological, while prioritizing the issue of creating a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in compliance with the relevant international resolutions. It is important to recall that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament identified clearly and by consensus the priorities related to disarmament and decided to give achieving nuclear disarmament the highest possible priority.

The Arab Group has played an effective role in the efforts to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction. We expressed our beliefs in that regard at the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), by proposing practical measures to free the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction. The Arab Group continues to support both the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention

and is working to realize their goals. We also condemn the use of weapons of mass destruction by any party in any circumstances. In that context, the Arab Group welcomes the State of Palestine's accession to both Conventions and emphasizes that Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear party would help to achieve the Treaty's universality, build confidence, improve regional and international security and promote the credibility of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Israel is the only State in the region that has not acceded to any of the three treaties related to weapons of mass destruction.

Despite the tireless efforts of the Arab Group and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference had the negative result of helping to enable the continued current impasse on freeing the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, despite the fact that the outcomes of prior Review Conferences included practical measures aligned with the three pillars of the Treaty aimed at implementing the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

In a bold and well-intentioned decision, the Arab States have agreed to expand the scope of arms-control measures in the Middle East to include other weapons of mass destruction in addition to nuclear weapons, which would nullify the pretext for adhering to nuclear weapons as a deterrent claimed by a single party in the region. The Middle East would then be the only region to have concluded a treaty freeing it not only of nuclear weapons, as is the case with other regional treaties in this area, but of all types of weapons of mass destruction. The Arab Group emphasizes the importance of promoting the international community's efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and reiterates its commitment to participating in serious negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations with a view to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. That position was included in the relevant Arab working paper adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The Group looks forward to seeing Israel, all the other parties of the region, and the three NPT depositary States participate constructively in such negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as to

seeing the Secretary-General use his good offices to support and sponsor that important negotiation track.

Mr. Phansourivong (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

In addition to nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) consist of chemical, biological and radiological weapons, among others. Whether detonated intentionally or by accident, such weapons can cause massive loss of life, damage to property and great harm to the environment. As the Secretary-General stated in his *Securing Our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*,

“[e]nsuring respect for norms against chemical and biological weapons concerns the interests of all humanity”.

Weapons of mass destruction are therefore heavily restricted and controlled by international law. ASEAN emphasizes that the international community should implement all the treaties concerning weapons of mass destruction fully and effectively.

We believe that the international community should increase its efforts to strengthen international cooperation in order to eliminate chemical weapons. In that context, we are heartened by the Secretary-General's commitment to restoring respect for the global norm against chemical weapons. It is also worth noting that all ASEAN member States are party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). ASEAN recognizes that the Convention remains one of the most successful disarmament instruments in its complete prohibition of an entire category of WMDs, in strict accordance with international law. It has made important contributions to the promotion of global peace and security. ASEAN's member States condemn the use of chemical weapons by any party under any circumstances in the strongest possible terms, since it constitutes a serious violation of international law, and we take our international obligations as States parties to the CWC seriously. ASEAN congratulates the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which marked its twentieth anniversary in April 2017, and commends it

for its unwavering efforts to implement the provisions of the CWC since its creation in 1997. We particularly welcome the progress made in eliminating chemical stockpiles since the CWC's entry into force in 1997.

ASEAN reiterates its commitment to preserving our region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

ASEAN recognizes that the Biological Weapons Convention represents a critical component of the international legal framework related to WMDs, and therefore supports the efforts of the international community to enhance cooperation on information-sharing in order to prevent terrorists and other non-State actors from acquiring such weapons of mass destruction and their means of distribution. ASEAN also recognizes the threats and dangers of the existence and use of chemical, biological and radiological weapons, and calls for universal adherence to the applicable international legal instruments prohibiting such weapons. We emphasize the importance of the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and other instruments related to weapons of mass destruction.

In terms of practical cooperation, ASEAN is also committed to improving its regional capacity to address chemical, biological and radiological threats. At their twelfth meeting, held in Singapore last week, the ASEAN Defence Ministers announced the establishment of an ASEAN network of chemical, biological and radiological defence experts to share best practices and make rapid contact during chemical, biological and radiological crises. In addition, in 2013 the network of the European Union Centres of Excellence on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation (CBRN) established a regional secretariat in South-East Asia to enhance the capacity of ASEAN's 10 member States to mitigate CBRN-related risks. This initiative of the European Union was jointly implemented by the European Commission Joint Research Centre and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. The regional secretariat ensures cooperation and coordination in South-East Asia and supports efforts to identify CBRN risk-mitigation needs, develop national CBRN action plans and formulate and implement regional project proposals. As part of the ASEAN Regional Forum Workshop on the theme “Raising awareness

and promoting cooperation on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation”, a three-day forum was held in Manila from 6 to 8 March, attended by policy professionals, practitioners, security forces and health experts.

In conclusion, ASEAN underscores the importance of enhancing international support for States parties in need of assistance in building their national capacities for implementing treaties related to weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with national and international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Nilsson (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 risk of biological and chemical weapons continues to threaten international peace and security. Chemical weapons are being used in flagrant violation of the unequivocal global ban and at the risk of undermining the existing norms against the use of weapons of mass destruction. The potential for the misuse of scientific innovations, for instance in synthetic biology, constitutes an ever-evolving security challenge. The Nordic countries were pleased to see ambitious goals with regard to chemical and biological non-proliferation included in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament.

The Nordic countries welcome the completion of chemical-weapon-destruction operations in Iraq and Libya. At the same time, we are very concerned about the Syrian regime's continued possession of chemical weapons, as evidenced by the repeated horrifying cases of use of sarin and chlorine gas in the past year that were reported by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. All chemical weapons in the possession of the Syrian Arab Republic should have been declared and destroyed. The Nordic countries contributed significantly to the international mission to ship out Syria's declared chemical weapons for destruction in 2014.

We once again strongly urge the Syrian Arab Republic to immediately disclose all the relevant information concerning its chemical-weapon programme and to fulfil its declaration obligations. It is the only way that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) can verify the veracity and completeness of the Syrian declarations and the

irreversible destruction of all its chemical weapons and production facilities.

The recent events in Salisbury and Amesbury are unacceptable. The Nordic countries condemn the assassination attempt on 4 March in which a substance developed as a chemical-warfare agent was employed within the borders of the United Kingdom, a close friend and partner of the Nordic countries. We reaffirm our solidarity with the United Kingdom in the face of that grave challenge to our collective security. The Nordic countries have full confidence in the findings of the United Kingdom investigation, which stated that the Russian military intelligence service was behind the incident. We also deplore the hostile cyberoperation in April by Russia's military intelligence service that targeted the OPCW and thereby challenged the integrity and independence of the international organization charged with promoting a world free of chemical weapons.

The Nordic countries unequivocally condemn any use of chemical weapons, which contravenes the global ban on such heinous weapons. Their use constitutes a violation of international law and may amount to a war crime or crime against humanity. We reiterate our strongly held view that the perpetrators of such inhumane and barbaric attacks must be held accountable. The Nordic countries deeply regret that the Security Council was unable to renew the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in November 2017. We subsequently supported a decision of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to task the OPCW with identifying the perpetrators of chemical-weapon use in Syria and moving forward on establishing a global attribution mechanism. The Nordic countries have also joined the French-led International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. Against that backdrop, it is essential that we stand united and make the best use of the upcoming Conference of the States Parties and the fourth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention to tackle the challenges confronting the global ban on chemical weapons.

The Nordic countries welcomed the agreement reached at the most recent Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention on a strengthened intersessional work programme. The first set of expert meetings in the new format, in August, fulfilled the promise of a more focused and less academic thematic exchange on key issues facing the Convention. While

that is encouraging, more must be done. The Nordic countries call on all States parties not to let the best be the enemy of the good and to move forward incrementally on issues where consensus seems to be within reach.

Given the Biological Weapons Convention's dire financial situation, we want to take this opportunity to call on parties whose payment of their annual assessed contributions is in arrears to provide all of their outstanding funding without delay. Meanwhile, the Nordic countries continue their engagement to reduce biological-weapon threats within the framework of the Secretary-General's investigative mechanism, the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Global Health Security Agenda. We also welcome the launch of the Health Security Interface programme of the World Health Organization, which aims to improve preparedness for possible outbreaks of communicable diseases due to deliberate events, as well as similar initiatives of the World Organization for Animal Health and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we would like to turn to the issue of ballistic missiles. Ballistic-missile programmes can be highly destabilizing, particularly in regions where there is tension. Restraint is of the essence. Besides that, a lack of transparency and predictability with regard to ballistic-missile tests could result in miscalculations with devastating effects. That is why the Nordic countries support The Hague Code of Conduct and call on all States that have not yet subscribed to it to do so as soon as possible.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). My full statement will be available on the PaperSmart portal, and I will deliver the following abridged version in the interests of time.

First of all, CARICOM would like to reiterate its strong support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and for the work being done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to ensure the Convention's full implementation. As the first disarmament agreement that provides for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, the Chemical Weapons Convention has made a significant contribution to the goal of general and complete disarmament and the codification of a

universal norm against the use of chemical weapons. In the preamble to the Chemical Weapons Convention, member States agreed that "achievements in the field of chemistry should be used exclusively for the benefit of mankind".

We are therefore dismayed and alarmed about the incidents confirmed by the OPCW in which chemicals have been used as weapons. CARICOM condemns them in the strongest terms and calls on all member States to uphold the provisions of the Convention. The use of chemical weapons under any circumstances is unjustifiable, unacceptable and illegal and has grave consequences for the populations affected and for the environment. We must therefore ensure that any use of chemical weapons is fully and impartially investigated and that those responsible are held accountable. That will not only contribute to further strengthening the norm against the use of chemical weapons but will help ensure that the victims of such incidents receive redress.

CARICOM welcomes the progress achieved in the global effort to permanently eliminate chemical weapons and takes note of the reports of the Director-General of the OPCW on the full and complete destruction of declared chemical-weapon stockpiles by a number of States parties to the Convention, which we view as serious and tangible steps towards universal implementation. We urge those member States that may be defaulting on their obligations under the Convention to take the necessary steps to bring about full compliance. We encourage the remaining few member States that have neither signed nor ratified the Convention to act in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and join the 193 States that are already parties so that we can achieve the goal of universal adherence. The CARICOM member States will continue to be principled adherents to the Convention and to strongly advocate for compliance with its provisions by both States parties and non-State actors. I want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the OPCW for its ongoing capacity-building initiatives in our region, in keeping with the aims of the Convention.

We also want to reaffirm our support for the Biological Weapons Convention, and we welcome the agreement reached at the Meeting of States Parties in December 2017 on retaining the previous structure of meetings for the intersessional period. Our collective and consistent engagement on issues within the ambit of the Biological Weapons Convention is especially vital

today, when developments in science and technology are increasing the possibilities for acquiring, gaining access to and using biological weapons, including by non-State actors. CARICOM notes the Secretary-General's observation in his Agenda for Disarmament that the world is largely unprepared for the catastrophic consequences that would result from a deliberately released disease. Robust measures must therefore be taken at the national level to complement regional and international efforts to bring about the full and effective implementation of the Convention. We also share the Secretary-General's view that a stronger international capacity for investigating any alleged use of biological weapons and quickly detecting any illegal acts would serve as a deterrent to their use.

CARICOM shares the concerns of other member States about the spread of missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. The efforts of the international community should be geared to limiting the spread of such systems and the equipment, technology and knowledge needed to develop, produce and acquire missile delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate CARICOM's unwavering commitment to the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. We urge all member States to step up their efforts, individually and collectively, to ensure full alignment with the legal regime governing such weapons.

Ms. Kemppainen (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Liechtenstein, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and, most recently, on European soil in the United Kingdom represents a direct challenge to the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture outlawing the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their precursors. The European Union and its member States condemn in the strongest terms any use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone, whether a State or non-State actor, anywhere and under any circumstances. The international community must ensure accountability and continue to take a clear stance against impunity for such abhorrent acts, as

emphasized by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Disarmament.

Last year's failure to reach an agreement on the renewal of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) was of grave concern to the EU, which strongly regrets Russia's vetoes in the Security Council in that regard. The European Union greatly appreciates the independent work conducted by the JIM and its substantial reports confirming four chemical-weapon attacks by the Syrian Arab Armed Forces, including the horrific attack on Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017, and two further attacks by Da'esh. We also welcome and support the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, which are important to further accountability, and call for increased cooperation between those mechanisms.

The EU warmly welcomes the June decision of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to enhance the capacity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to identify those responsible for using chemical weapons in Syria. We look forward to the swift implementation of the OPCW attribution mechanism arrangements, both on Syria and universally. The EU stands ready to support the implementation of that decision. The EU also welcomes the efforts conducted within the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. On 15 October, EU Foreign Ministers adopted a new regime of restrictive measures to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons.

We strongly condemn the continued and repeated use of chemical weapons by the regime in Syria and are deeply concerned about the most recent reports of the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in Syria and Iraq, which found further uses of chemical weapons. The EU reiterates its strong support for the work of the Fact-finding Mission. We also fully support the efforts of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team to verify Syria's declarations and address their gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to fully honour its obligations as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, cooperate fully with the OPCW,

declare the chemical weapons that it still possesses and take substantive action to destroy its chemical-weapon programme in a complete and irreversible manner.

The EU reiterates its condemnation in the strongest possible terms of the March attack in Salisbury. The European Council agrees with the assessment of the Government of the United Kingdom that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation was responsible and that there is no other plausible alternative explanation. The EU has repeatedly expressed its support for the action that the United Kingdom has taken to investigate the attack, which involved the use of a military-grade nerve agent of a type developed by Russia. The information provided by the United Kingdom's investigation concluded that the two suspects are officers in Russia's military intelligence service. We reaffirm our solidarity with the United Kingdom.

We once again call on those States Members of the United Nations that are not yet party to the Chemical Weapons Convention — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Israel and South Sudan — to join it, thereby contributing to the goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

The EU strongly supports the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons and looks forward to his proposal for developing a stronger international capacity. We reaffirm our strong support for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and welcome the start of the intersessional process. International cooperation remains essential to strengthening States' capacities to counter the possible use of biological or toxin weapons by State or non-State actors, a threat that is growing as a result of the possible misuse for malign purposes of the current rapid developments in life sciences.

We are seriously concerned about the BWC's worsening financial situation. States that have not yet done so should meet their financial obligations as quickly as possible in order to ensure that the BWC can convene its meetings and secure the continued operation of its Implementation Support Unit. The European Union will continue to support the BWC, including by offering capacity-building assistance to interested States. Other EU initiatives include the regional EU Centres of Excellence on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation, which provide assistance to more than 60 countries,

with a budget of €250 million for the period from 2010 to 2020.

The proliferation of delivery systems related to weapons of mass destruction is a continued cause for concern. We once again condemn the nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and urge it to fully comply with all of its international obligations. The EU underlines the importance of ensuring that Iran abides by all the provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which calls on it to refrain from any activity related to ballistic-missile design capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic-missile technology.

The EU and its member States strongly support The Hague Code of Conduct, which is the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument related to ballistic missiles. We also strongly support the work of international export-control regimes and underline the continued key importance of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Ms. Poblete (United States of America): As has been discussed, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the international norm against the use of chemical weapons are under direct assault. The value of the Convention and of any arms-control, non-proliferation or disarmament agreement or commitment lies in strict adherence to and compliance with them by their States parties. Furthermore, a lack of accountability for flouting international obligations breeds impunity and undermines arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament writ large.

Unfortunately, there is no region in the world immune to the use of chemical weapons. The chemical agent VX was used to assassinate Kim Jong-nam in Kuala Lumpur International Airport on 13 February 2017. The Al-Assad regime in Syria continues to flout its international obligations and standards of basic humanity by repeatedly using chemical weapons against its own people, with Russia and Iran shielding the Al-Assad regime from consequences in international forums. And as we saw earlier this year, Russia used chemical weapons in its brazen attempt to assassinate the Skripals in the town of Salisbury, using a military-grade nerve agent known as Novichok.

Like Russia, Iran protects Al-Assad's use of chemical weapons from international censure. The United States has had long-standing concerns about

Iran's own compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have observed Iran's behaviour closely. We have detected irregularities in its declaration and insufficient responses have been provided to numerous inquiries regarding its CWC compliance. That is why the United States, in its compliance report, has been unable to certify since 2001 that Iran has in fact been in compliance with its obligations under the CWC. The United States is also concerned about the possibility that Iran is considering chemicals that act on the central nervous system for offensive purposes.

Furthermore, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, known to some as ISIS, has used industrial chemicals and sulfur mustard in both Iraq and Syria in recent years. At the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC, responsible nations collectively and overwhelmingly endorsed decisive action to counter those threats and renew their solemn commitment to a world free of chemical weapons. In that context, the United States, Canada and the Netherlands recently submitted a proposal to the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to add the Novichok chemical families to schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals. Such agents are military-grade nerve agents with no use other than to harm or kill, as we saw in the towns of Salisbury and Amesbury in the United Kingdom. We, the United States, call on all responsible nation States to support the proposal to add that family of agents to the Annex on Chemicals.

The CWC Review Conference also provides an opportunity to finally address the threat posed by chemicals such as fentanyl that act on the central nervous system and have no use outside a controlled medical setting. The United States and many other States parties are seriously concerned about the possibility that some States may be deliberately developing such chemicals for warfare or other harmful purposes. We can no longer turn a blind eye to that threat while claiming to be working towards a world truly free of chemical weapons. We must not acquiesce to non-compliance by States parties to the CWC. We have to highlight such concerns and address them accordingly.

The other treaty that bans weapons of mass destruction is, of course, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The United States and other States parties to the Convention were pleased that a new and constructive programme of work was adopted at last year's annual meeting. Unfortunately, some parties

continue to block movement on essentially any idea other than a resumption of negotiations on a new legal instrument related to the BWC. My Government and those of many other States parties believe differently, and that we should act now to strengthen the Convention in areas on which there is substantial consensus. We cannot, however, address those issues if the BWC does not overcome its financial crisis. It is critical that parties to the Convention in arrears on their payments rectify that situation immediately.

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

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply in response to the remarks made earlier by the representative of the Russian Federation with regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

The United States has raised the issue of Russia's violation of the INF Treaty for well over four years. We have engaged with Russia numerous times in numerous places, calling for it to come back into compliance with the Treaty. We have not been successful. We have said to Russia, on many occasions, that it is an important Treaty. Treaties must be respected. We have provided them with plenty of evidence to show that they had developed and tested a ground-launched cruise missile within the Treaty's limits of between 500 kilometres and 5,500 kilometres. At first, Russia denied that it had produced a missile of that kind and then, after admitting that it had, said that the missile's range was certainly not of the kind that made it a violation of the Treaty.

As I and other officials have said before, our patience has worn very thin with regard to waiting for Russia to come back into compliance with the Treaty. The situation can be resolved very simply and quickly. All that Russia has to do is destroy that missile. Right now we have a situation whereby Russia is in violation of this very important treaty, and the United States cannot stand back and just allow it to continue without a response. I just wanted to make sure that it was understood that the United States has been committed to the Treaty and we want to see Russia come back into compliance with it. This cannot continue.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to exercise my right of reply in

connection with a number of statements that have been made here during our discussion of the issue of nuclear weapons. Today and previously in the Committee, there have been a number of peremptory declarations that Russia has been violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and must therefore take steps to deal with those claims. Similar statements have been made in the First Committee for several years in a row now, and we have repeatedly pointed out that they are pure propaganda and clearly aimed at deflecting criticism of the non-compliance of the United States with its obligations under this important disarmament treaty.

During the entire time that accusations have been thrown around in international forums about Russia's alleged violations, we have seen not a single convincing piece of proof to support them, and no facts have been presented during discussions of these issues at the bilateral and multilateral levels that the Treaty provides for. Unlike the claims against Russia, our concerns about United States compliance with the INF Treaty are based on specific facts. At its missile defence bases in Europe the United States has stationed universal MK-41 launching systems for medium-range cruise missiles. It has removed strike drones that fall into the category of ground-launched cruise missiles from the scope of the Treaty. Incidentally, that has been an issue for more than 15 years. Moreover, the United States is maintaining and developing its potential in low- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, with the help of its work on rocket-launch bases officially intended for testing ballistic-missile defence systems.

Thanks to these violations, the United States and its allies have been forced to start a baseless campaign to discredit Russia as a responsible party to the INF Treaty in full compliance with its obligations. However, recent statements by the United States leadership testify to the fact that the goal of the campaign was to prepare international public opinion for the United States' own withdrawal from the Treaty. That is understandable, since justifying its own shortcomings in complying with the Treaty is a great deal harder than pulling out of it.

I would like to point out that this is not the first Treaty that runs the risk of becoming null and void because of the United States. In 2002, the United States withdrew from the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, which was one of the instruments supporting strategic stability. Another

example of United States inconsistency is its withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for dealing with the Iranian nuclear programme.

We understand and share the concerns of European States about the statement that President Donald Trump made on Saturday. However, is it not a fact that it is some European countries' support for the campaign to discredit Russia that has helped to ensure that today the United States' threat to withdraw from the INF Treaty is becoming beyond obvious? It is particularly surprising to hear calls to Russia to take steps to ease concerns from countries such as Poland, whose territory is home to one of the missile defence bases where MK-41 vertical launch system facilities are stationed, in violation of the INF Treaty, to be used for launching the Trident missiles in the nuclear programme. We once again urge the United States to refrain from diplomacy by megaphone and take steps to end its current Treaty violations. I would like to underscore that Russia is always open to dialogue on the entire range of relevant issues in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

To touch on another question, any accusations that Russia has violated the Budapest Memorandum of 5 December 1994 with regard to security guarantees for Ukraine are entirely unfounded and are a demonstration of anti-Russian propaganda. The Budapest Memorandum was drawn up as part of a package of agreements enabling Ukraine to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Its provisions do not extend to situations that are the result of internal political activity and socioeconomic factors. At the 1994 Summit Meeting in Budapest of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and during the events held on the Summit sidelines, Russia did not take on the obligation of requiring a part of Ukraine to remain in its corpus against the will of the people living there.

We should note that at the signing of the Memorandum, a joint statement was also adopted by the leaders of Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Ukraine, in which they affirmed the importance of their obligations within the OSCE designed to counter the growth of aggressive nationalism and chauvinism. The Kyiv authorities have not fulfilled those obligations and for many years have openly connived at the growth of Ukrainian nationalism in its most aggressive forms. The course of events in Ukraine therefore clearly

testifies to the fact that Russia has not violated the provisions of the Budapest Memorandum, as attempts are being made to assert.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Today's statement by the representative of the Israeli entity under the agenda item on nuclear weapons was reminiscent of theatre of the absurd, as she desperately tried to mislead the Committee with false allegations aimed at diverting attention from the perils of Israel's nuclear weapons and its non-compliance with many international resolutions related to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), along with its refusal to accede to the NPT and other conventions on weapons of mass destruction. As usual, the Israeli entity has rejected every initiative to free the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.

As usual, the European Union's statement is replete with fallacies, lies and errors. Member States of the European Union have sponsored terrorists in Syria since the crisis in my country began, and have provided them with all kinds of weapons, equipment, munitions and materials, including toxic chemical materials. Some of those States have trained terrorists on how to mix and use chemicals and in many cases have instructed them to use such weapons as well.

The representative of Sweden, speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, mentioned my country in her statement. That is naturally part of the policies and positions of NATO and the European Union. The Nordic countries have been exporting terrorists to my country since the beginning of the crisis. The regimes in power there, with the help of armed terrorist groups, provide all kinds of direct assistance to those terrorists. In addition, as members know, some States in that group that are part of the illegitimate so-called international coalition have directly supported Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front by attacking bases of the Syrian Arab Army and its allies who are fighting those terrorists. We will never forget the statements that leaders and senior officials of the Nordic countries made at the beginning of the crisis in my country, instructing terrorists to go and fight in Syria and offering to provide them with medical care.

My country strongly condemns and rejects any use of chemical weapons because it is a crime against humanity that is unethical and unjustifiable in any circumstances. Syria has fulfilled all its commitments

under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Terrorist groups present in Syria are still acquiring and mixing toxic chemicals and using them against both the military and civilians in my country, with the assistance of some Member States' intelligence services.

The statements by United States representatives are consistently full of contradictions in both form and substance. They made no reference whatever to the use of chemical weapons by terrorists in Iraq and Syria. That has been proved in the reports of the Security Council and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. I would like to remind the representative of the United States Administration that the United States has so far refused to destroy its chemical arsenal for incomprehensible reasons. It is probably maintaining those weapons with the aim of using them, as it has done before with all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological.

The United States is sponsoring more than 25 secret laboratories in countries all over the world to develop biological weapons, in contravention of the Biological Weapons Convention and the obligations of the United States under it. The United States is the world's most egregious violator of current international conventions, including the Security Council's resolutions related to combating terrorism, because as we speak it is still training terrorists on how to mix and use chemical weapons and helping them to obtain transport from one location to another throughout Syria's territory. It has also continued to facilitate the smuggling of toxic chemicals to Syrian territories through neighbouring countries.

Mr. Ghaniei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my right to respond to the baseless allegations that the representative of the United States made with regard to Iran's compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). It is no surprise that the current United States Administration is capable of making such baseless and unfounded allegations, because there is no limit to the stories it manufactures, the lies it spreads and the facts it distorts. It is an expert at doing that. It has no shame about adopting such a policy in a forum of the United Nations, and we have to congratulate it on being the Organization's number-one liar. I would like to make a few comments about the allegations we heard.

Iran was a victim in the 1980s of Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons against it, weapons that the

United States helped him to develop and use and for which the United States provided him with intelligence so that they could be used against Iranian civilians and troops. More than 100,000 Iranians were victims of the use of chemical weapons. We therefore reject every kind of weapon of mass destruction, based on our bitter experience and the humanitarian consequences of such weapons. That is why we joined the CWC immediately after it was concluded. It was inspired by the memory of the Iranian victims of chemical weapons and we therefore strongly support it and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

My second point is that the Chemical Weapons Convention and the States parties to the Convention established the OPCW, which has a Technical Secretariat mandated to verify States parties' implementation of their CWC obligations that is the only authority competent to verify their compliance with their obligations. It has been said that Iran is not compliant with its obligations under the Convention. For us, and I think for the international community generally, the assessment and judgment of the representative of the United States have no value or credibility and stand in clear contrast to the established international mechanism. The United States is undermining every international mechanism, and the CWC is no exception. It is undermining the rules-based international system and order, trying to destroy it and pursue hegemony. That is the problem. And it has no respect for the OPCW or its Technical Secretariat.

My next point concerns the state of the United States' compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is no surprise that the United States representative has adopted this kind of strategy at this meeting. We call it an escape-forward strategy, used to cover up its non-compliance with its obligations under the CWC. The United States is the only possessor-State party that has not met its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. It has missed the deadline not once but twice, and is still in possession of a large stockpile of various dangerous chemical weapons, even though it has the financial, industrial, technical and human resources readily available to enable it to comply with its obligations. But it keeps trying to delay and postpone meeting those obligations. So which of us is not in compliance with its obligations? Is it the United States, which possesses a large amount of chemical weapons, or is it Iran?

My last point is that the United States has made great efforts, and will continue to do so, to try to persuade and encourage terrorists in Syria to use chemical weapons, because it has trained them. It has invested millions of dollars in building the capacity of those terrorists. Almost all of those projects have failed. The United States launches missile attacks on the legitimate Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in order to encourage the use of more chemical weapons in Syria. So this will not be the last time that the terrorists use chemical weapons, because the United States wants to put more pressure on Syria and launch more missile attacks. By launching those attacks, it is encouraging them to undermine the global norm against chemical weapons. As the biggest violator of international law and the Chemical Weapons Convention and a supporter of the Israeli regime, which possesses chemical and biological weapons and respects no international regulations governing weapons of mass destruction, the United States has no moral standing to point fingers. It should just look at itself in the mirror.

Mr. Nikolenko (Ukraine): I feel obliged to exercise my right of reply to respond to the remarks by the representative of the Russian Federation regarding the implementation of the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with the Accession of Ukraine to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and also to some extent regarding the situation in Ukraine. I would first like to read out some provisions of the Memorandum.

“1. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine;

“2. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations” (*A/49/765, annex I*).

What do we see now? We see that Ukraine's territorial integrity and current borders have been violated. A part of the territory of Ukraine is under occupation by the Russian Federation and annexed by that State. Before the Russian Federation launched its aggression against Ukraine, no one opposed the provisions I just read out, including the Russian Federation. Only after February 2014 did that country, and that country alone, start to create some sophisticated narratives to justify its illegal action in Ukraine and direct violation of the Budapest Memorandum. What does that mean? Does it mean that Russia can easily violate any other international documents and agreements that it has signed, as was the case with the Budapest Memorandum? That seems to be the case.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am exercising my second right of reply to respond to a number of comments that have been made.

With regard to the remarks by the representative of the Russian Federation about ballistic-missile defences, he was referring to the Aegis Ashore system, which is fully consistent with the provisions of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Although it utilizes some of the same structural components as the Mk-41 vertical launching system installed on ships, which was referenced by our Russian colleague, the Aegis Ashore system is not the same launcher. The Aegis Ashore missile defence system deployed in Romania and under construction in Poland is capable only of launching defensive interceptor missiles. Those missiles are not subject to the INF Treaty, as they were developed and tested solely to intercept and defend against objects not located on the surface of the Earth. Furthermore, the Aegis Ashore missile defence system does not include the software, fire-control hardware, additional support equipment and infrastructure needed to support the launch of a ground-launched cruise missile or any other missile subject to the Treaty. The Aegis Ashore vertical launching system has never contained, launched or been tested for launching a missile subject to the Treaty. It is therefore fully consistent with United States obligations under the INF Treaty.

In response to the comments made by the Damascus regime, Syria is one of the leading State sponsors of terrorism. It has repeatedly used chemical weapons against its own people. That is not in question. Its charges that the United States maintains a chemical-weapon stockpile to use are absolutely absurd.

As I have said many times in this room and in Geneva, we are on schedule to destroy our chemical stockpile by 2023, and it is flatly ridiculous to say that the United States is developing biological- and chemical-weapon capabilities. We are not doing any such thing anywhere, period.

With regard to the representative of the regime in Tehran, Iran is in no position to point the finger at anyone, to call any State a liar or to question any State's moral authority. It is by far the leading State sponsor of terrorism in the world. Last week, I outlined a number of events and terrorist attacks that Iran is responsible for (see A/C.1/73/PV.5). It tries to claim that it is a victim. It tries to paint itself as a moderate, peace-loving nation. No one can take that seriously. Iran has absolutely zero credibility. It is arming dangerous proxies all around the Middle East and in other parts of the world as part of its addiction to terrorism. Iran's support for Syria and its use of chemical weapons is one example of that addiction to terrorism.

For my last point, I want to make it clear that we will not stand idly by while Iran carries out its reign of terror. As of 5 November, we will make it much, much more difficult for Iran to continue to fund its dangerous addiction to terrorism.

The Chair: I have been informed that the interpreters have kindly agreed to continue working for another 10 minutes, so we are ready to continue.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As usual, the claims made by the representatives of the United States Administration are based on systematic misinformation and have only one purpose, which is incitement against the Syrian Arab Republic, even at the expense of logic and scientific fact.

The United States is the world's biggest funder and sponsor of terrorists, as evidenced by its support, financing and sponsorship of terrorists on Syrian territory. Of course, we should not omit to mention that the United States and two other countries were responsible for establishing the Al-Qaida organization and financing it during the 1980s. Even before that, at various times the United States supported armed terrorist groups and used them as an element in its foreign policy.

Successive United States Administrations have refused to eliminate their chemical arsenals for many reasons, which I will not discuss right now.

However, any observer who follows the policies of those Administrations knows for a fact that neither this Administration nor the next one will rid itself of the chemical arsenals it has and will always make excuses and try to justify that. We have provided the Security Council, the Counter-Terrorism Committees and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) with more than 160 letters, many of which address the fact that the United States dispatches experts who train terrorists to mix and use chemical agents. Furthermore, United States forces illegally present in Syrian territories have participated in facilitating and overseeing the transfer of toxic chemical material from one place to another, accompanied by members of the terrorist organization Da'esh. The question that we should then ask is who the sponsor of terrorism is. United States forces illegally present in Syrian territory have transported members of Da'esh, specifically their leaders, from one place to another. There are photographs and videos of that which can easily be found by anyone interested.

The Chair: We have lost the interpreters, so we should try to use one of the two working languages of the United Nations. I have been informed that in five minutes we will also lose the microphones.

Mr. Ghaniei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my second right of reply to respond to the nonsensical remarks made by the representative of the lying regime in Washington. I think that regime has a deep addiction to lying and a deep and persistent addiction to breaking international laws. As delegations can see through its representative, it has a deep addiction to disrespecting the agenda items of the Committee. It has a deep addiction to distorting facts and trying to present them as new facts. It cannot even tolerate hearing that Iran has endured a bitter experience, that Iran has been subjected to the use of chemical weapons or that Iranians have been victims of weapons of mass destruction.

I am very reluctant to say anything about terrorism, which is completely outside the mandate of the Committee, but I will give the representatives in the Committee one clue that will help them to find out who is supporting terrorism. They can just listen to the remarks of the President of one of our neighbouring countries, which is part of NATO, about United States support for terrorism in Syria and how it is providing weapons and assistance to terrorists in Syria. That is not something that Iran is saying. It is what a United States ally is saying.

With regard to sanctions, we are not afraid of the sanctions of the United States. We have been subjected to unilateral and unlawful sanctions by the United States for 40 years because we decided to be an independent State and to say no to the mistaken policies of the United States and its intervention in the region. We will overcome all those challenges and defeat those sanctions. The international community has decided to say no to the sanctions and unlawful actions of the United States. It can try its best, but it will be to no avail.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. Is it all right to speak in French?

(*spoke in English*)

I will switch to English, but next time the Committee should be prepared for French.

The next meeting of the Committee will take place tomorrow morning, Tuesday, 23 October, at 10 a.m. in this Conference Room. The Committee will continue its consideration of the cluster "Other weapons of mass destruction" in order hopefully to exhaust the list of speakers under that cluster before listening to statements under the cluster "Outer space (disarmament aspects)".

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.