



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

## First Committee

**15<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Tuesday, 23 October 2018, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Jinga. . . . . (Romania)

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

delegation may choose whether or not to exercise its right of reply.

### Programme of work

**The Chair:** Before proceeding with our work this morning, I would like to consult the Committee on its programme of work this week.

As members are aware, as a result of the high level of participation in the interactive exchanges last week, we are very much behind schedule in hearing speakers for the thematic discussions. Yesterday, I mentioned that the Secretariat would look for a room for an additional plenary meeting this week. In the meantime, I recognize that some representatives have arrived in New York this week expecting to speak on a specific cluster, based on the original programme of work.

Therefore, to assure the Committee of some level of predictability in terms of its programme of work, I would propose that for the rest of the week, the last hour of our meetings be dedicated to hearing statements on the cluster scheduled for that day. Today, for example, we were scheduled to begin discussions on outer space — therefore, from noon to 1 p.m. today, discussions will indeed begin on that cluster.

Those delegations whose representatives are here in New York only for this week will be given priority. Likewise, Ambassadors presenting group statements will be assured of some level of predictability in terms of their presence in the conference room. That arrangement will not affect a delegation's ability to exercise its right of reply at the end of any meeting this week. I hope there will not be too many, but every

Are there any comments on this proposal?

**Mr. Ghainei** (Islamic Republic of Iran): My understanding is that this arrangement will not affect the right of representatives of groups of States that usually deliver their statements at the beginning of each cluster. That is to say, their right to speak first will not be revoked under this arrangement. Is that correct?

**The Chair:** The answer is yes. That right is part of the Committee's rules of procedure. The arrangement will not affect representatives speaking on behalf of groups of countries. They will have priority.

As there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly. Representatives wishing to speak during the noon to 1 p.m. meeting should contact the Secretariat in the room.

*It was so decided.*

### Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

**The Chair:** The Committee will now continue its consideration of the cluster "Other weapons of mass destruction". There are 45 speakers remaining on the list. At noon, the Committee will begin its consideration of the cluster "Outer space (disarmament aspects)".

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Delegations taking the floor are reminded to kindly observe the established speaking limits.

**Mr. Carrillo Gómez** (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): A ban on all weapons of mass destruction has been enshrined in a constitutional norm in Paraguay. We reaffirm our conviction that the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction and their elimination are necessary conditions for the promotion of international peace and security.

Paraguay is party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. It therefore urges all States to abstain from any action that runs counter to the goals and purposes of those Conventions, and to promote their universalization.

We stress, however, that the fulfilment of the commitments under both Conventions will require international cooperation and must be interpreted with a view to safeguarding the development of science for the benefit of humankind, the sustainable development of peoples and the promotion of the development and transfer of technology so as to bridge the technology gap between developed and developing nations.

Paraguay once again condemns the use of weapons of mass destruction and endorses the efforts promoted by the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to verify facts and identify those responsible for their use. In that spirit, this year my Government ratified the Agreement between the OPCW and the Republic of Paraguay on the Privileges and Immunities of the OPCW (EC-67/DEC.4), signed in 2012.

Paraguay also continues to work internally and inter-institutionally to improve its internal institutional and normative framework for combating terrorism, with the assistance and coordination of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States, in order to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors.

**Mrs. Dallafior** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of

Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), as well as the international norms that they set, are fundamental pillars of international law and the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Their universal ratification must remain a priority objective. We call upon the Member States that have not yet ratified the two Conventions to do so as soon as possible.

Abiding by the rules is absolutely essential. The repeated use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic and the self-proclaimed Islamic State group, as confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) in 2016 and 2017 after thorough, impartial and professional investigations, is an unprecedented violation of the norm against chemical weapons. In many cases, their use may constitute a war crime that must be prosecuted.

Likewise, the use of the Novichok-class nerve agent in the United Kingdom is illegal, reprehensible and extremely worrying. I wish to reiterate Switzerland's full confidence in the results of the investigation of the British authorities and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We call on the Russian Federation to clarify the origin of the nerve agent and to disclose any nerve-agent development programmes and stockpiles to the OPCW.

Switzerland condemns in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons and underlines once again that their use is prohibited in all circumstances. A strong and united reaction by the international community to these and other violations of the CWC is of the utmost importance. We need to collectively reaffirm that violations of the chemical weapons ban are unacceptable, that they will be investigated and that appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that all responsible parties are held to account.

Given that the Security Council failed to renew the JIM's mandate, Switzerland supported the decision of the Conference of States Parties to the CWC to establish, within the OPCW, a mechanism to identify the origin of chemical weapons used as well as the parties responsible for them. It is now essential that this decision be implemented and endorsed by the upcoming Conference of States Parties and Review Conference.

In addition to their responsibility to respect the Convention under all circumstances, States parties also bear the primary responsibility to prosecute the individuals responsible for violating it. We need to send a clear signal that there will be no impunity for such crimes. In that regard, we support the calls for cooperation and information-sharing between the OPCW and the other relevant mechanisms, including the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

I wish to reiterate Switzerland's confidence in and full support for the work of the OPCW, which has consistently conducted its missions in a professional, impartial manner that fully respects its mandate. Its contributions have clearly demonstrated the importance of the OPCW's investigative know-how, which must be developed further.

Serious challenges remain to implementing and strengthening the BWC. In that regard, I would like to highlight a few key issues.

First, the implementation of the provisions of the BWC at the national level is a fundamental prerequisite for an effective long-term biological weapons ban. Switzerland believes that the Convention needs more robust mechanisms to address problems related to the implementation of the BWC and compliance with its provisions.

Secondly, it is vital for the BWC to keep up with the rapid progress being made in the biological sciences.

Thirdly, the strengthening of confidence-building measures is of great importance, as such measures are currently the only recognized tool within the framework of the BWC that contributes to transparency and confidence-building among States parties.

Finally, Switzerland is alarmed by the financial difficulties of the institutional structures that support the implementation of the BWC. We must rapidly take the necessary measures to address that situation.

**Ms. McCarney (Canada)** (*spoke in French*): First of all, Canada associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of France on behalf of the participating States of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

The taboo against the use of chemical weapons has been broken. Toxic chemicals have been used as weapons in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

All States must comply with their obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and international humanitarian law and cease any activity that runs counter to those obligations. The now-defunct Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and the United Nations found the Syrian regime responsible for three chlorine attacks and one sarin attack in Khan Shaykhun. We urge Syria to fully declare and destroy all its chemical weapons.

(*spoke in English*)

Regarding the use of the Novichok-class chemical nerve agent in Salisbury on 4 March, we have full confidence in the United Kingdom's assessment that the two suspects in the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal were officers from the Russian military intelligence service and that this operation was almost certainly approved at a senior Government level. We urge the Russian Federation to declare its offensive Novichok programme to the OPCW, and we call on all States not party to the CWC to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible and, in so doing, to declare any chemical-weapon programmes they may have.

Given that many chemical-weapon attacks in Syria remain unattributed due to Russia's vetoes of the JIM renewal at the Security Council, Canada welcomes the decision adopted at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC that gives the OPCW a mandate to attribute responsibility for chemical-weapon attacks. The meeting was well attended, and support for the decision was broad.

It is unacceptable for States parties to spurn their obligations under the CWC, and we will work with all parties to uphold the norm and ensure the accountability of those who break the rules. Canada expects the OPCW to continue its professional and unbiased work in attributing responsibility for these and any further chemical-weapon attacks.

Canada will continue to do its part to mitigate chemical-weapon threats globally. Canada has contributed more than \$41 million to date to chemical-weapon destruction, monitoring, verification and

investigation efforts in Syria, Iraq and Libya. Under Canada's current presidency of the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, we are further coordinating the Partnership's efforts to collectively mitigate global threats related to weapons of mass destruction.

**Mr. Hassan** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the League of Arab States and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.14).

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament affirmed the utmost importance of nuclear disarmament. The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017 is a historic step as it equates nuclear weapons — which violate the most fundamental humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law — with other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), thus establishing an important new customary principle in international law.

Despite the fact that the Middle East region is fraught with chronic tension and instability and that Egypt has suffered from consecutive wars imposed upon it for more than four decades, Egypt has demonstrated its good intentions, acceded to the NPT and met all its obligations under the Treaty. It also joined the 1995 consensus on the indefinite extension of the Treaty, on the basis of the fact that the extension package included a decision that has yet to be implemented on the establishment of a zone free of WMDs in the Middle East.

Egypt calls for prompt, practical and serious steps to be taken to redress the grave security imbalance in the Middle East region that is the result of one party's continued obstruction of efforts to rid the region of WMDs. Egypt looks forward to seriously meeting the objectives of ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and WMDs, advancing equal security for all States in the region and redressing the current imbalances, the continuation of which can result only in further conflict, arms races, instability, pretexts for foreign intervention and obstacles to the achievement of sustainable peace.

Egypt is opposed to the use of all WMDs by any party and under any circumstances. Egypt has demonstrated its credibility by supporting all Security Council resolutions related to the use of WMDs by any

party. Egypt continues to vote in favour of General Assembly resolutions regarding the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and supports efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to prevent non-State actors from acquiring WMDs.

We would like to highlight the clear contradiction in the position of States that call for the universalization of the CWC and BWC and call on States by name to accede to those Conventions yet fail to call on Israel to accede to the NPT. Those States are also clearly reluctant to support the convening of a conference to negotiate the establishment of a zone free of WMDs in the Middle East, under the pretext that political and security circumstances in the region are not favourable.

Many States that continue to call for the universalization of the BWC and CWC possess nuclear weapons or are under the nuclear-protection umbrella but claim that circumstances are not favourable for the elimination of nuclear weapons either in the Middle East or universally. We remind those States that humanitarian principles are indivisible and that the security of certain States is not more important than the security of others as all States are equal in rights and sovereignty. We advise those States to reconsider their positions, which reflect only a blatant double standard.

**Mr. Pildegovičs** (Latvia): Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (EU) (see A/C.1/73/PV.14) and the statement to be delivered by the representative of France on behalf of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

In recent years, the Chemical Weapons Convention has been challenged on a number of occasions. The reckless use of chemical weapons in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and, most recently, in the United Kingdom is a gross violation of the international norms stipulated in the Chemical Weapons Convention. It poses a serious threat to the rules-based international order and the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime, which we have committed to protecting and strengthening.

Latvia reaffirms its condemnation in the strongest possible terms of the use of chemical weapons by State and non-State actors, under any circumstances.



No one anywhere should ever be exposed to such horrendous attacks and threats. Hence, it is our duty and responsibility to uphold the long-standing international norm against the use of chemical weapons.

We are dismayed by the attempted cyberattack against the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in April this year. Attempts to undermine the global norm against the use of chemical weapons and to interfere with the work of the OPCW and its investigative mechanisms must be strongly opposed and deterred. We support the intention of the OPCW to strengthen its capabilities in that regard. Latvia also welcomes the steps taken by the host country of the OPCW, the Netherlands, to avert those actions.

We deeply regret that it was not possible to renew the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism last November. In that regard, Latvia welcomes the decision of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, adopted at its fourth special session, to enhance the capacity of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to work on attributing responsibility for crimes committed. As the next regular conference of the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention is approaching, Latvia wishes to lend its support to the efforts of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW in implementing that decision.

Latvia also supports and has joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, which already unites 39 countries from different geographical regions. United and coordinated multilateral action is the only way forward to effectively tackle the threats of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, Latvia also welcomes the adoption of the new EU autonomous sanctions regime specifically designed to fight the proliferation of chemical weapons and their precursors.

In conclusion, it is the duty and responsibility of the international community to ensure that the use of chemical weapons does not become a norm and that the perpetrators of those heinous crimes are brought to justice. Latvia remains strongly committed to the principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention and expects no less from other States parties.

**Ms. Flores Liera** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing my country's deep concern at the recent announcement by the United States Government that it is considering withdrawing

from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Equally troubling are the reasons that are being put forward as motivation for that decision.

The INF Treaty is a key disarmament instrument which, over the past 30 years, has created stability among the Powers that possess the largest number of nuclear weapons in the world. Its termination could have very important consequences for the international community as a whole by destroying balance, further eroding confidence and triggering a new arms race.

Mexico respectfully calls on the United States and the Russian Federation to step up their dialogue and resolve their differences and strategic problems through diplomatic negotiation without jeopardizing international peace and security. It also calls upon all nuclear-weapon States to respect, at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, the international treaties on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control that they have signed during the past 73 years of the nuclear era, which constitute the pillars of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

This session of the First Committee is meeting under circumstances that were unthinkable a few years ago, with reports of incidents and attacks involving chemical weapons or nerve gases in different parts of the world. We regret the fact that certain actors are resorting to such actions, in clear contravention of international law. Mexico will remain attentive to investigations and prosecutions with regard to reported incidents.

My country has categorically and irreversibly renounced weapons of mass destruction, which are unacceptable, inhumane and have indiscriminate effects. We strongly condemn their use by any actor under any circumstances. Those who resort to such weapons must assume criminal responsibility in accordance with the mechanisms established at the international level.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is the only multilateral agreement that prohibits a complete category of weapons of mass destruction in a non-discriminatory and verifiable manner under strict and effective international control. Despite the progress made during the 21 years of the implementation of the Convention, both in the destruction and control of chemical substances, it is regrettable that there are still States that are not parties to that instrument.

The CWC has been a valuable example of effective multilateralism, and we can say with satisfaction that it has contributed to the maintenance of international peace and security — so much so that, in 2013, it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. We call upon all States to cooperate in good faith with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as the entity responsible for dealing with technical issues arising from incidents in which the use of chemical weapons is suspected.

We applaud the decision taken at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC, which allows for the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention, including the attribution of responsibilities to identify State and non-State perpetrators that use such weapons. In addition to strengthening the national criminal legislation of States parties in order to punish those responsible for the use, funding, trade and transfer of chemicals used as weapons, the frameworks of the competent multilateral bodies and mechanisms must be used to prevent impunity for the perpetrators.

The Biological Weapons Convention, the first treaty to be negotiated at the United Nations to ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, 43 years ago, is one of the most important pillars of the international disarmament, non-proliferation and public-health regime. Greater multisectoral coordination is therefore essential, above and beyond defence and military systems, to address international security and human security risks in the area of global health, biosafety and biosecurity or situations involving the threat or use of chemical and biological weapons by any actor.

As I have exhausted my allotted time, the full version of my statement will be available on the Internet.

**The Chair:** I give the floor to the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.42.

**Mr. Bayyapu (India):** India associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.14).

India views the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) as a unique, non-discriminatory disarmament instrument that serves as a model for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. India therefore attaches great importance to

the CWC and stands for its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation.

It has been India's consistent position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, under any circumstances, cannot be justified and that the perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable. The use of chemical weapons demonstrates complete disregard for humanity and is reprehensible and contrary to the provisions of the CWC and accepted international legal norms.

The delegation of India shares the widespread concern about the allegations of the use of chemical weapons in different parts of the world. All investigations into the alleged use of chemical weapons should be conducted in an impartial and objective manner and strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. It is important to maintain the credibility and integrity of the Convention.

India has the second-largest number of declared facilities and receives among the largest number of industry inspections from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. India has a flawless track record of verification inspections. It is important that the provisions of the Convention be implemented in a manner that does not hinder legitimate activities.

With regard to the Biological Weapons Convention, we were pleased that the meeting of States parties in 2017 could successfully deliver on its mandate, owing largely to the constructive engagement of all States parties, which led to the adoption, by consensus, of an intersessional programme for 2018-2020. The fact that we have had robust discussions on a range of issues in the meetings of experts this year has been a significant contribution towards strengthening the Convention. India participated actively in all meetings of experts and looks forward to further constructive engagement over the next two years until the ninth Review Conference in 2021.

India continues to place importance on the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention. We have made significant strides towards that goal in the recent past, with Niue, the State of Palestine and the Central African Republic acceding to the Convention this year, taking the total number of States parties to the noteworthy number of 182. The sponsorship programme, in our view, could make an important contribution in that regard, and India has been one of the

countries that has been making a financial contribution to the programme.

In the run-up to the eighth Review Conference, India submitted a joint working paper with France on measures to strengthen assistance under article VII of the Convention, as well as a joint working paper with the United States on strengthening the implementation of article III of the Convention. We look forward to taking those important initiatives forward.

It is critical to ensure the financial health of the Convention by ensuring both the stability and predictability of resources. We urge all States parties to ensure that their financial contributions are made in time, which would help to address the severe challenges the Convention currently faces with regard to its financial status.

In conclusion, India will be presenting a draft resolution under this cluster entitled “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction” (A/C.1/73/L.42), which has enjoyed strong support since it was first introduced in 2002. The large number of sponsors of the draft resolution reflects the continuing concerns of the international community with respect to the risks posed by terrorists gaining access to weapons of mass destruction and sensitive materials and technologies. The draft resolution enumerates a number of measures to address that threat at the national and international levels. We hope that, as in previous years, the First Committee will adopt it by consensus.

**Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.14).

Cuba reiterates its support for the total and complete prohibition and elimination, in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, of all weapons of mass destruction — the only absolute guarantee to prevent the acquisition and use of such weapons, including by terrorists. Our country is a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and strictly complies with their provisions. Cuba does not possess, nor does it intend to possess, any type of weapon of mass destruction and firmly rejects the use of such weapons by any actor under any circumstances.

Cuba supports and promotes the regimes banning weapons of mass destruction and believes that they must be fully implemented, respected and preserved. With regard to our priorities for achieving the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we call upon the United States, the only State possessing such weapons that has not completed the destruction of its remaining declared arsenals, to complete the process as soon as possible and under international verification. In addition, the implementation of article XI of the Convention on economic and technological development must be full, effective and non-discriminatory and achieved through an action plan. We reject selective, biased and politically motivated approaches to the implementation of the Convention and the creation of mechanisms and procedures beyond its scope.

Cuba strongly condemned yet another attack perpetrated by the United States and some of its allies on 13 April against military and civilian installations in the Syrian Arab Republic, using as a pretext the alleged use by the Syrian Government of chemical weapons against civilians in Douma, without proof and prior to an investigation by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Such unilateral action, outside of the Security Council, was a flagrant violation of the principles of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations.

We reiterate that the only truly effective and sustainable way to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention and ensure its strict implementation is through the adoption of a legally binding protocol that includes a verification mechanism. The full, effective and non-discriminatory application of article X of the Biological Weapons Convention, pertaining to international cooperation for peaceful purposes, remains a pending and urgent priority.

Cuba rejects and demands the immediate removal of limitations and restrictions that impede the broadest exchange, in particular for developing countries, of materials, equipment and technology for chemical and biological activities for peaceful purposes, in line with the provisions of the relevant international conventions. A clear example of that is the commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

In conclusion, we reiterate that no measure adopted by the Security Council or selective and discriminatory initiative promoted by groups of countries, outside of the multilateral framework, can undermine the central role

of the General Assembly and the relevant multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.

**Ms. Malekane** (South Africa): For my delegation, the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction remains one of its key priorities. That includes achieving the universality and full and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as well as transparent, irreversible and verifiable progress towards nuclear disarmament.

In the area of chemical weapons, we welcome the progress made by other major possessor State parties to destroy their remaining chemical-weapon stockpiles, abandoned chemical weapons and all other chemical weapons. We call on all possessor State parties to expedite the destruction of their declared chemical-weapon stockpiles in order to rid the world of those deadly weapons in line with the objectives of the CWC and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

That notwithstanding, much work remains to be done. Many old and abandoned chemical weapons continue to present hazards for people and the environment, as well as technical challenges related to their elimination. We are further concerned that parallel to the stated achievements, new and emerging security challenges threaten to undermine the disarmament gains that the OPCW has made. In that regard, my delegation is concerned about the reports of the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria, Malaysia and the United Kingdom. South Africa therefore reiterates its unwavering condemnation of the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, including non-State actors, and in any circumstances.

While South Africa chairs the work of the international community in supporting the OPCW, my delegation remains concerned about the polarization unfolding in OPCW policymaking organs by taking decisions through a vote and not by consensus. We therefore urge caution in preserving the integrity of the OPCW as an objective and impartial organization. In addition, we look forward to the presentation by the Director-General, at the OPCW Conference of the States Parties to be held in November, of detailed proposals for consideration by States parties on an attribution mechanism and its legal framework, reporting function and means of funding.

South Africa calls on the Director-General of the OPCW to further enhance the African Programme through measurable programmes, goals and outputs. We urge the OPCW to work to expedite assistance to developing countries to identify laboratories that qualify as designated laboratories that could be used by the OPCW in the event of the use of chemical weapons and natural disasters in their geographical regions. That will go a long way towards empowering and enabling first responders to identify rapid, appropriate and scientifically informed strategic interventions.

South Africa welcomes the convening of the BWC Meeting of Experts as part of the 2018-2020 intersessional programme. South Africa will work constructively towards an outcome that will strengthen the Convention and its balanced implementation, including through an enhanced intersessional process that is appropriately resourced.

Finally, my delegation would like to underscore that the universalization of the BWC and the CWC is crucial for the effective eradication of all biological and chemical weapons. We therefore welcome the recent accession of the State of Palestine to the BWC and CWC and call on those countries not yet party to the Conventions to join without further delay.

**Mr. Tauassarov** (Kazakhstan): The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are vital international legal instruments to guide multilateral efforts in the struggle for the total elimination of specific types of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international control, leading to the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament.

The BWC was the first comprehensive disarmament instrument in which the international community committed itself to eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. We reaffirm the fundamental importance of the Convention. The Republic of Kazakhstan intends to continue working actively with all relevant States, international organizations and regimes to achieve the goals of the Convention. Only the participation of all countries, without distinction, in the Convention will provide a solid foundation for the total prohibition of the use of biotechnologies for military purposes.

My country is fulfilling its obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and one of its central requirements — to create an effective system of



export control for the transfer of goods and technologies. The standards that we have developed comply with the strictest requirements. It is of great importance that that system be constantly improved.

Terrorism represents a real threat in all its manifestations. That danger becomes particularly urgent against the background of the rapid development and level of accessibility of scientific and technological achievements. In that regard, the initiative on starting negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism, put forward two years ago, is becoming increasingly relevant. In general, the development of bioscience and technologies should always be under the scrutiny of States parties to the Convention. One should not let biological research cross the thin line of morality and pose a threat to security.

Kazakhstan will host a regional workshop for Central Asian States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention on scientific and practical implementation issues, to be held in Almaty on 23 and 24 October. The workshop will serve as a platform for a comprehensive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention. We hope that it will also explore opportunities for cooperation with and assistance provided by the relevant international and regional organizations.

Kazakhstan attaches the utmost importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention and all its provisions to address concerns regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons. Any use of chemical weapons is in complete disregard of humankind and cannot be justified. We reaffirm the need to address the issue in the light of international law in an impartial and transparent manner.

In the meantime, the creation of a mechanism to strengthen the Convention should be predicated only on the amendments to the Convention. We call on the chemical-weapon countries to fulfil their obligations under the terms stipulated by the Convention and to destroy their arsenals within the agreed time frame. We also call on all States that may possess chemical weapons to eliminate them and to join the Convention promptly without any precondition.

Kazakhstan continues to support the important goal of achieving a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We deeply regret that a conference on the establishment of such a zone free of weapons of mass destruction

and their delivery systems has yet to be convened. As part of its global non-proliferation efforts, Kazakhstan has established an effective export-control regime based on international regimes, including that of the Australia Group.

**Mr. Groome** (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.14), and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery continues to be a growing threat to international peace and security. The alarming increase in the instances of WMD use in recent years has reinforced the need for a resolute and global approach. The risk of non-State actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction adds a further critical dimension.

It is vitally important to enhance international cooperation. We regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as key instruments in the international community's efforts to achieve a world free of all WMD. Ireland finds it deeply shocking that the international community is still confronted with the use of chemical weapons despite international law prohibiting them. The development and use of chemical weapons goes against the very purpose upon which the United Nations was founded.

We would like to voice our continued support for the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), while marking the twenty-first year since its establishment and the entry into force of the CWC. The CWC is a key component of the non-proliferation and disarmament framework. Its integrity and strict implementation must be fully guaranteed. Ireland has long supported and trusted the efforts and work of the OPCW, including the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and its Fact-finding Mission and Declaration Assessment Team.

We are dismayed that the JIM's mandate was not renewed by the Security Council. The repeated use of the right to veto in the Security Council to prevent moves towards accountability for chemical-weapon use in Syria is highly regrettable. We ask States to consider the negative impact that that decision has

on our collective efforts to ensure accountability. My delegation is of the firm belief that breaches of the CWC must be matched by action. Those responsible for such abhorrent attacks against humanity must be held to account. The failure to ensure effective accountability only serves to embolden those who dare to use them.

Ireland welcomes the decision of the special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC in June. We believe that the first step towards accountability is attribution. The decision to enhance the capacity and capabilities of the OPCW to identify perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons strengthens the CWC and will help to end impunity for the use of those chemical weapons. Ireland joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons earlier this year, and we look forward to continuing the work of that important initiative.

A further compelling reason for working to strengthen and reinforce our WMD conventions are the well-substantiated reports that some non-State actors are seeking to acquire and use of WMDs. My delegation continues to fully support the comprehensive implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is a key tool in the fight against non-State actors seeking to acquire and use WMDs.

Strengthening the non-proliferation regime is a high priority for Ireland. The role played by export-control regimes is an essential part of ensuring that the best possible standards are applied to sensitive technology transfers. Throughout its 31-year history, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) has significantly reduced the ability of proliferators to acquire the technology, information and means to develop WMD missile-delivery systems.

Ireland, together with Iceland, was pleased to co-chair the MTCR for a 12-month period in 2017 and 2018. A successful plenary was hosted in Dublin last October during which partners conducted a thorough review and evaluation of the regime's activities. In the public statement following the plenary, all MTCR partners appealed to all States to support the non-proliferation aims of the Regime by observing its guidelines and establishing appropriate national legislation and law enforcement mechanisms.

Throughout their tenure, the co-Chairs conducted an ambitious and far-reaching strategic outreach programme to non-MTCR countries to highlight the role played by the MTCR. The outreach focused on

advancing the Regime's profile and ensuring that as many States as possible adhere to the best-practice guidelines on export controls of missile technology.

Ireland is also a strong supporter of The Hague Code of Conduct, which has many complementarities with the MTCR. The Hague Code of Conduct has delivered concrete results as the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument in that arena. We welcome recent adherents to the Code and call on all States parties to adhere to it without further delay.

Ireland continues to support the important goal of achieving a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by States in the region. We are keen for work on that issue to develop and grow, with the involvement of all stakeholders from the region.

In 2018, we were pleased to support a civil-society event on the margins of the NPT Preparatory Committee, and we look forward to continuing our engagement. Progress on that issue is vital to a successful and productive outcome to the 2020 NPT review cycle. We believe that renewed effort must be made by the co-conveners, in conjunction with the States of the region, on concrete measures for regaining momentum on that essential aspect of the NPT.

A stalled process will lead to frustration, which will serve only to deepen divisions further. Progress on the commitments that we have already made on important common goals, without additional conditionality, will contribute to peace and security for us today and future generations. It will ensure that we can live in a world free from the spectre of WMDs.

**Mr. Takamizawa (Japan):** Japan is striving for arms control, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in order to achieve a safe and peaceful world. Nuclear, chemical and biological weapons constitute a serious threat to international security. Furthermore, the use of chemical and biological weapons by State and non-State actors is of growing concern. The use of those weapons cannot be allowed under any circumstance, and Japan believes that the following actions should be faithfully pursued.

Last year marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Although progress has been made under the Convention, the

continuous use of chemical weapons in recent years has become a serious and urgent issue. The use of chemical weapons is a grave violation of international law and an immediate threat to the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The international community should be united in condemning the use of chemical weapons and perpetrators should be identified and held accountable.

In that regard, Japan welcomes and fully supports the decision taken at the fourth special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention that the OPCW will work to develop a tool to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons. Japan looks forward to working closely with other States parties to put the decision into action. It is essential to strengthen efforts to accelerate the implementation of national measures, which serve as a fundamental tool for preventing the re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons. Moreover, the increased threat posed by non-State actors, including terrorists, is becoming an imminent issue. We must prevent, without fail, chemical weapons and toxic chemicals from falling into the wrong hands.

Japan also deems it essential to continue our work towards the universalization of the CWC. For our part, we have provided expertise and technical assistance to facilitate non-member States joining the Convention. We encourage the remaining non-member States to reconsider their position or to facilitate their respective internal processes for early accession.

Japan takes its obligations under the CWC seriously, as we have invested a significant amount of human and financial resources into fulfilling one of our obligations, which is to destroy the abandoned chemical weapons in China. It is accurate to say that the abandoned chemical-weapons project entails various challenges and uncertainties, but we have been making consistent progress.

For instance, approximately 51,000 of the 63,000 abandoned chemical weapons recovered have been destroyed. Let me also stress that progress has been made possible only with the valuable on-site joint efforts with China, in which we each bear respective responsibilities. I would like to underline that without such bilateral constructive cooperation and close coordination, that unprecedented, difficult project could not have been carried out. Japan reaffirms its commitment to continue all possible efforts to advance that project.

Along with the CWC, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has also played a vital role for international peace and security. Japan remains aligned with States parties and fully commits itself to strengthening the BWC. In that regard, Japan welcomes that the intersessional programme was agreed to during the meeting of States parties held last December and the meetings of experts held successfully in August. We look forward to further progress in future meetings.

Japan continues to stress the importance of collaboration with international organizations, as well as the promotion of confidence-building measures and the national implementation of the BWC in order to reinforce it. To that end, Japan intends to implement a project to organize related workshops and seminars with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the BWC Implementation Support Unit. In that one-and-a-half year project, we are aiming to strengthen national and international capacity to prepare for and respond to the deliberate use of biological weapons and to promote the BWC national implementation in the South-East Asia and Pacific region.

We believe that the efforts and cooperation of all stakeholders to build a common understanding and take effective action is key to reinforce the CWC and BWC regime. Japan will continue to contribute in that regard.

**Mr. Beerworth (Germany):** Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union on this cluster (see A/C.1/73/PV.14).

With regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), we are witnessing a crucial time. On the one hand, the completion of the destruction in Germany of Libya's remaining chemical-weapons precursors and the completion by Iraq of the destruction of its chemical -weapons remnants underscore that the Convention is a truly successful and relevant multilateral non-proliferation, arms-control and disarmament treaty.

On the other hand, the core of the Chemical Weapons Convention — the non-use provision — has increasingly come under strain in recent times, with the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq and incidents in Malaysia and the United Kingdom. States parties have to stand firm to avoid an erosion of the Convention.

We remain deeply concerned about the situation in Syria. The Syrian regime continues to defy its obligations as a State party to the Convention by

employing chemical weapons against its own population and failing to clarify the gaps and inconsistencies in its initial declaration. Syria must once and for all refrain from using chemical weapons, fully declare its chemical weapons programme and completely and verifiably destroy existing stockpiles. We express our ongoing strong support for the OPCW and its Syria mission and we support the early and full implementation of the June decision of the special session of the Conference of the States Parties. The attribution arrangements for Syria are an important step in ensuring that there is no impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

It is not just a question of bringing perpetrators to justice. It is a question of the CWC's credibility and strength. Likewise, there cannot be impunity for those responsible for the malicious use of a military-grade nerve agent in Salisbury earlier this year that ultimately resulted in the tragic death of a British citizen. It is high time that Russia contribute constructively to clarifying the remaining open questions.

The OPCW is an independent and impartial guardian of the CWC. Germany strongly condemns the malign cyberoperation targeting the OPCW that was successfully disrupted by the Dutch authorities. There can be no doubt that we need to ensure the Convention's future credibility. In order to do so, we need a strong OPCW that is free from interference. There is much reason to be proud of the CWC. Let us join forces to keep it the world's most successful multilateral disarmament regime.

Upholding the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) as a major pillar of the international weapon-of-mass-destruction (WMD) arms-control and non-proliferation architecture is of great relevance in a globalized world. Rapid developments in the field of biotechnology and the life sciences need to be carefully monitored in view of their dual use potential. Cases of alleged attempts of bioterrorism demonstrated the necessity for adequate national implementation measures.

Germany therefore welcomes the successful start of the intersessional work programme with the Meetings of Experts held in August. At the same time, however, we are deeply concerned about the Convention's financial situation as a result of late or non-payment of contributions. It is of the utmost importance for all

States parties to live up to their financial obligations. They also need to agree on measures to establish a sustainable and predictable financial basis for the BWC.

**Mr. Thapa** (Nepal): Nepal aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.14).

Nepal is a staunch supporter of the disarmament and non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Their existence poses an existential threat to humankind. Nepal reaffirms its principled position that universal peace and security can be ensured only through the time-bound, general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. Nepal is free of all types of WMDs and their delivery systems. It neither manufactures, imports or exports any weapon of mass destruction, nor does it intend to do so. Nepal is committed to implementing all disarmament-related international treaties, conventions and programmes of action to which it is a party.

The use of weapons of mass destruction, by whomsoever, in whatever circumstances, against innocent civilians is deplorable. It is a crime against humanity. The perpetrators should be held accountable. As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), Nepal has carefully regulated the cross-border movement of chemical goods. Its existing domestic legal mechanisms have successfully administered the import and export of dual-use chemicals.

Nepal is satisfied with the effectiveness of the operation and verification mechanism of the CWC and its promotion of the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. We also hope that the fourth Review of the CWC, to be held next month, will be an important opportunity to further strengthen the Convention.

There is an urgent need for a universal, non-discriminatory and legally binding mechanism to tackle the issue of biological threats. Moreover, the lack of verification mechanisms has hampered the effective implementation of the Convention. Nepal recognizes the importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for adopting a legally binding protocol dealing with all aspects of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner. My delegation also underscores the need to prevent the



emergence of new types of WMDs through effective international measures.

Despite their unwavering commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, some least developed countries still lack adequate technical and financial resources, as well as the enforcement capability to comply with the provisions of different disarmament-related treaties and resolutions. Others are unable to fulfil their periodic reporting obligations due to a lack of capacity. Building their capacities to enable them to fully implement those treaties and conventions would greatly strengthen the international mechanism against WMDs. That fact underscores the importance of international cooperation and support.

Nepal therefore calls for the promotion of international cooperation for strengthening the institutional capacity of the least developed countries to support disarmament and non-proliferation. International cooperation is also required to promote the peaceful use of dual-use materials for the benefit of the humanity, in accordance with the provisions of the CWC and the BTWC.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Nepal's unflinching commitment to the general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction.

**The Chair:** I give the floor to the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.59.

**Mr. Hwang (France)** (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.14). I would like to add some additional comments in my national capacity. The full version is available at this meeting and will also be made available online.

The question of other weapons of mass destruction is of great importance to my country. The fight against the proliferation of nuclear, ballistic, chemical and biological weapons is at the heart of our concerns. With North Korea, the international community is facing the most serious proliferation crisis of the twenty-first century. We commend the ongoing diplomatic efforts that have enabled us to reduce tensions.

Nevertheless, North Korea is still pursuing its nuclear and ballistic programme, which continues to be a threat to international peace and security and, thus, affects us all. North Korea's nuclear programme is inextricably linked to its ballistic-missile programme. Its development poses a serious threat, which attests

to the regime's efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon capable of reaching Asia and Oceania, as well as North America and Europe.

North Korea also has a chemical programme and very probably used the nerve agent VX against one of its nationals in Malaysia in February 2017. France hopes that the North Korea will take concrete and verifiable measures towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of its illegal nuclear, ballistic, chemical and biological programmes.

On Iran, the Vienna agreement, signed on 14 July 2015 and endorsed by Council resolution 2231 (2015), is a robust agreement that strengthens the non-proliferation regime. The agreement, including all of its provisions, must continue to be implemented in a rigorous and transparent manner. There is no credible and effective alternative. Resolution 2231 (2015), which endorses the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, must be fully respected. In that regard, France is very concerned about the sustained pace of development of the Iranian ballistic-missile programme.

Since 2013, when chemical weapons resurfaced in Syria and were used repeatedly by the Syrian regime, we have been horrified to witness their re-emergence in other contexts. First, Da'esh used mustard gas. They were then used in Malaysia in February 2017, and several individuals in Britain were exposed in 2018 to a military-grade chemical agent of the kind developed by Russia.

In the absence of sanctions, it is important that measures be implemented. I therefore welcome the decision adopted at the special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention convened by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on 27 June. The decision provides for the necessary strengthening of the OPCW's resources and instruments, especially through the creation of a new investigation and attribution mechanism for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

There is no other option but to reinforce the OPCW and fully enable it to determine those responsible for perpetrating chemical attacks. I also welcome the adoption on 15 October by the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union of a new, autonomous European sanctions regime on the non-proliferation of chemical weapons and toxic substances.

The International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, launched in Paris on 23 January, is another response to the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the impunity of those who use them. The Partnership, with its 39 member States, has published the names of hundreds of people involved in using and developing such weapons or in transferring sensitive substances and materials to Syria. France believes that draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.20, on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, should reflect those concerns, as well as the overarching priorities of the chemical-weapons non-proliferation regime.

Resolution 1540 (2004) and the Security Council Committee that bears the same name are today essential tools, whose capabilities should be enhanced. The threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism is still present. In particular, France believes that the security of nuclear and radioactive materials, in particular radioactive sources, is a priority. That was the aim of France's initiative, which resulted in the joint statement adopted at the last Nuclear Security Summit. The statement is now open to all States members of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Furthermore, this year, France and Germany will again jointly submit a biennial draft resolution (A/C.1/73/L.59) on the security of radioactive sources to the First Committee.

Lastly, the issue of the delivery systems of weapons of mass destruction is also key. The spread of technologies indeed has the potential to create new threats to peace. Iranian ballistic-missile launches are destabilizing and do not comply with the provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). We urgently need to step up our efforts to strengthen multilateral arrangements, including The Hague Code of Conduct, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Proliferation Security Initiative.

The full text of my statement is available online.

**Mr. Abbani** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we align ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, Morocco and Egypt on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of African States and the League of Arab States, respectively (see A/C.1/73/PV.14), on this agenda item.

The complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction of all kinds is a priority for the international community in order to ensure universal accession to treaties on such weapons. In particular, It is important

to strengthen international peace, security and stability and build a world free of such weapons and the threats they pose. My delegation wishes to underscore the following points.

First, we are satisfied with the results achieved under the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is an international instrument that, on the one hand, bans all categories of weapons of mass destruction and, on the other hand, seeks to improve the peaceful uses of nuclear power. In that regard, Algeria calls upon the countries concerned to eliminate their weapons stockpiles, in line with the agreed timetables.

Secondly, Algeria fully rejects the use of such weapons by anyone for any reason.

Thirdly, my country hopes for greater international cooperation in the area of chemical activities conducted for peaceful purposes, in particular with respect to removing obstacles and facilitating the transfer of technology and chemical materials to developing countries for the purposes of strengthening their economies.

Fourthly, we stress the importance of full respect for compliance with all provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention in an effort to achieve the stated goals. We also hope for an international legally binding mechanism to accompany the Convention to ensure the full, balanced non-discriminatory implementation of all its provisions. We hope for an oversight mechanism to provide follow-up.

Fifthly, it is important to prevent the emergence of new kinds of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems by strengthening the role of the Conference on Disarmament so that it can adopt recommendations on the possible holding of negotiations on any new kinds of weapons of mass destruction identified, such as radiological and phosphorus weapons.

Sixthly, my country supports all efforts and initiatives taken by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) to step up cooperation and coordination to that end. My country also supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world in order to strengthen the international non-proliferation and disarmament system, whose aim is to ensure international and regional peace and security.

In that regard, my country again stresses the importance of support for the decisions proposed by the Arab Group with respect to holding a negotiating conference in 2019 to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. That would be a very important practical step for strengthening peace, security, stability throughout the region and the world.

**Mr. Khan (Pakistan):** Pakistan aligns 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.14).

The conventions prohibiting biological and chemical weapons — the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention — are important pillars of the international security architecture. They have made significant contributions to the goal of general and complete disarmament by comprehensively outlawing two entire categories of weapons of mass destruction.

We value the BWC's contribution to global security and its potential for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of life sciences. Our priorities under the Convention include its universalization, the effective and balanced implementation of all its articles, in particular article X, and the institutional strengthening of the Convention. Pakistan is in the process of further strengthening the legislative, regulatory and administrative frameworks to regulate life sciences and to enhance biosafety and biosecurity regulations. Our export controls on biological agents and toxins meet the highest international standards.

Pakistan participated actively in the eighth Review Conference of the States parties to the BWC in 2016, including in our capacity as Vice-President and Friend of the Chair on the Future Intersessional Programme and the Implementation Support Unit. The eighth Review Conference comprehensively reviewed all articles of the Convention and arrived at important conclusions. Although we were disappointed that consensus could not be reached on an intersessional programme, we are pleased to note that it was subsequently agreed at the 2017 meeting of BWC States parties. We participated in the first round of the five Meetings of Experts held in Geneva in August. We will continue to remain engaged with the BWC process and support the effective implementation of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner, including its

institutional strengthening. Pakistan believes that the most credible and sustainable method of strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a legally binding protocol that deals with all articles of the Convention and includes appropriate verification provisions. The Secretary-General's mechanism is an important operational tool for investigation. However, neither that mechanism nor the voluntary confidence-building measures can substitute the need for a dedicated verification mechanism for the Convention.

Pakistan remains committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and continues to actively and constructively participate in the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We firmly believe in preserving the effectiveness, objectivity and credibility of the OPCW and its verification regime. Distortions in the OPCW's mandate that could render it susceptible to political manoeuvring must be avoided. Pakistan condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and in any circumstances. Those responsible for such acts must be identified and held accountable.

The OPCW's role in dealing with cases of the use of chemical weapons must be in strict accordance with the Convention, which unambiguously defines the role of the Technical Secretariat. Extending the Secretariat's remit to include attribution is inconsistent with the technical nature of its work. It is for the States parties to consider issues of attribution in the light of the technical findings of the Secretariat.

The OPCW should be strengthened to deal with the ongoing and future challenges within the confines of the CWC, while according priority to the complete destruction of both declared and abandoned chemical weapons. The fourth Review Conference offers the best platform to adopt policies that will keep the Convention relevant and strong in future. We hope that the practice of decision-making by consensus on CWC-related issues at both the General Assembly and the OPCW will be restored.

We attach high priority to CWC provisions relating to international cooperation and assistance, as well as peaceful uses of chemistry. Pakistan continues to regularly conduct CWC-related regional and international courses and events. Last year, Pakistan organized a series of workshops and advanced courses

focusing on chemical safety and security and industrial best practices.

Together with the threat of the use of chemical and biological weapons by States, their use by non-State actors must also be effectively addressed. Pakistan has taken a series of measures in that regard. Our comprehensive reports to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) provide a detailed matrix on all those procedures, mechanisms and legislation, as well as on their enforcement. We also support the Russian proposal for the elaboration of an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism in the Conference on Disarmament. As a mainstream partner in global non-proliferation efforts, Pakistan has also instituted a strong national export-control regime that is harmonized with the relevant international regimes, including that of the Australia Group.

**Ms. Higgie** (New Zealand): I welcome the opportunity of today's debate to reiterate New Zealand's firm support for the provisions of international humanitarian law and for our commitment not to permit impunity for those who breach it. We reaffirm the importance of full compliance with the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We urge all countries that have not acceded to the CWC — South Sudan, Israel, Egypt and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — to do so as a real priority.

Any breach of international humanitarian law is unacceptable, but it is particularly abhorrent when it involves weapons so clearly incapable of distinguishing between civilians and combatants as chemical weapons, which have been the subject of such long-standing efforts to abolish them since their usage in the First World War. The international community's comprehensive prohibition against them has been in place now for some decades. Any use of chemical weapons is a very clear violation of the CWC. In the words of the Secretary-General's *Securing our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*, "Each and every use of a chemical weapon is an international crime".

It is disappointing in the extreme that despite that status of international criminality, we, as a community of nations, have had to witness their ongoing use in recent times. A recently issued report by the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW records 143 instances of the alleged use of chemical weapons

in Syria from 1 December 2015 to 8 October 2018 and 17 cases in 2018 alone. We have also seen highly disturbing instances of the use of extremely lethal chemical agents as instruments of assassination. New Zealand has condemned those instances of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom. We will continue to condemn any such use, anytime and anywhere, as we look to uphold that fundamental obligation of international humanitarian law.

While it has been pleasing to see how robustly much of the international community has defended the core principles of the CWC, any complacency on our part could contribute to an erosion of that commitment. New Zealand remains deeply concerned about the impunity with which perpetrators have carried out those attacks and our participation in the new International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons underlines our commitment to hold to account any individual, group or Government daring to use chemical weapons.

In that regard, we will continue to support effective methods to identify those who use chemical weapons and we welcome the OPCW's recent decision to develop a universal attribution capability. However, 2018 will stand as a difficult year for the OPCW and for those who seek to further its work in eliminating chemical weapons.

We support the proposals that the Secretary-General has made in his Agenda for Disarmament with regard to chemical and biological weapons. We acknowledge the need to guard against any possible attempt to undermine the success of the century-long effort to outlaw those weapons. The OPCW must be properly supported and equipped for future tasks, and New Zealand looks forward to engaging in the fourth CWC Review Conference next month to that end. In the meantime, we hope to see very widespread support in the Committee for the adoption of the draft resolution (A/C.1/73/L.20) put forward this year on chemical weapons.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of Poland to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/PV.20.

**Mr. Kawałowski** (Poland): At the outset, let me stress that Poland fully associates itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.14). I would also like to make



some additional remarks particularly important for my capital.

In the debate on other weapons of mass destruction, Poland traditionally attaches great attention to issues related to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We remain strongly committed to the idea of a world free of chemical weapons and support the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are looking forward to the forthcoming CWC Review Conference and stand ready to actively and constructively contribute to its final, hopefully successful, result. Such support and commitment on the part of the international community are even more important this year, taking into account the fundamental challenges that we face today with regard to the Convention.

With the continual use of chemical weapons around the world in recent months, in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom, the CWC bedrock — the complete prohibition of chemical weapons — is being fundamentally challenged, raising questions about the CWC's integrity, the OPCW's credibility and, more broadly, the future of both. Consensus has been broken at the OPCW, and we remain a long way from rebuilding it.

That situation, however, cannot be used as an excuse for inaction. Such an understanding clearly underpinned the initiative of many States parties across all regions, including Poland, to convene the special session of the Conference of the States parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in June, as well the adoption of the decision addressing the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons in a comprehensive manner. That will send a clear message to perpetrators of chemical weapons use — the international community will not tolerate their unacceptable acts, and those responsible will be held to account.

In that demanding context, Poland, as in previous years, will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/PV.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction". That was clearly identified as a priority for the Polish delegation during this General Assembly session by the President of the Republic of Poland, His Excellency Mr. Andrzej Duda, during the Security Council's thematic debate on the non-proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction, on 26 September (see S/PV.8362).

The key goal of the draft resolution is to provide the strong and unambiguous support of the whole international community for the integrity of the CWC and the role and efforts of the OPCW. That is the only way to ensure the credibility of the Organization in the face of current and future threats and challenges, in particular to uphold fundamental norms envisaged by the Convention. It is a good opportunity to express support for the Director-General of the OPCW and his continual efforts to strengthen the chemical non-proliferation and disarmament regime in those demanding circumstances. In that regard, Poland conducted an open and transparent process with the draft resolution, starting with the early broad consultations in The Hague and two follow-up rounds of discussion in New York. We would like to express our gratitude to all the delegations for their participation in those discussions.

This year, Poland was confronted with fundamentally divergent views among Member States that were contradictory and mutually excluding. Finding middle ground proved to be even more challenging than in the past. Poland, as the sole sponsor of the aforementioned draft resolution, has done its utmost to provide both a factual and an up-to-date text. Building upon the ongoing work at the OPCW, we reflected in a balanced manner issues that are critical for the implementation of the CWC, but we also remained frank when it came to the key challenge to the Convention.

Poland hopes that its efforts will be taken into account and that the text of the draft resolution will therefore be adopted by the Assembly.

**Mr. Sidharta** (Indonesia): Indonesia 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.14).

All weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), with their massive and indiscriminate destructive capacity, are immoral tools. They should have no place in a civilized world. Just as we stand against nuclear weapons, we must all clearly stand against chemical and biological weapons. Indonesia stresses that we must abide by both the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and considers those instruments as essential components of the international security architecture. Indonesia is deeply

concerned that chemical weapons remain a threat to mankind. We condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, Indonesia is firmly committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

Last year, the Indonesian Government established the national authority of the CWC, which is working to plan, enforce, observe and evaluate the use of chemical substances for peaceful purposes. In addition, it is undertaking an enhancement in cooperation with international organizations and the States parties to the CWC, in particular regarding assistance and cooperation, which are among the most important elements of the Convention.

The realization of the objectives and purposes of the Convention hinges on the commitment of its States parties to implement all of its provisions. All States parties to the CWC should therefore fulfil their obligations, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, without further delay. Indonesia also calls upon all States not party to the Convention to join without delay or precondition, with a view to achieving its universality. Furthermore, a world free of chemical weapons can be achieved not only through universality but also through the full compliance and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention by the States parties.

My delegation is pleased that the 2017 Meeting of States Parties to the BWC successfully reached consensus on an intersessional programme from 2018 to 2020. We take note with interest of the outcome of the 2018 BWC meeting of experts, held in August in Geneva. Indonesia believes that those meetings of experts can contribute significantly to a more substantial understanding of each of the issues and a deepening of technical knowledge to strengthen the Convention. We hope that those efforts will contribute to strengthening the Convention with a view to resuming the multilateral negotiations for a legally binding protocol dealing with all articles of the Convention, including the verification regime, a concern shared by a majority of States parties.

Another key area of the BWC that needs strengthening is international cooperation and assistance and exchanges in toxins, biological agent

equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. In that regard, the provision of article X of the Convention must be strictly followed. We also have to ensure that all initiatives to strengthen the BWC must be pursued on BWC-based agreed modalities. Any steps outside of the BWC's own modalities and the establishment of linkages with external instruments would create unnecessary divisions among the BWC membership. That would hamper the effectiveness of the Convention.

To conclude, my delegation would like to share its concern over the financial situation of the Convention. We encourage all States parties to find a permanent solution to the financial challenges faced by the Convention. Indonesia looks forward to participating in the forthcoming meeting of the States parties in December and hopes that it will produce a positive outcome towards a successful review conference in 2021.

**Mr. Al-Khalifa** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation would like once again to extend our thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, and to all the delegations participating in the work of the Committee.

We associate ourselves with the statements made by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the League of Arab States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.14).

The international community seeks in earnest to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), because their possession is of concern to all and subjects the inhabitants of our planet to the threat of their use, particularly in view of the prevalence of armed conflicts and the possibility that non-State armed groups could possess and use WMDs.

The State of Qatar believes in a world of security, peace and stability that is free of WMDs. We underscore that possessing and developing WMDs constitute a flagrant violation of our collective legal and moral obligation to promote security and peace. That is a commitment made by Member States to eliminate WMDs and establish a safe and prosperous world.

My country's delegation expresses once again its concern about the threat of terrorist groups possessing WMDs and the serious consequences of that situation for international peace and security. In that regard,

we reaffirm the importance of intensifying our joint efforts to prevent such terrorist and extremist groups from acquiring those weapons, in line with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which acknowledges that nuclear, chemical and biological weapons are a threat to international peace and security and calls upon Member States to refrain from supporting non-State actors in possessing, manufacturing, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

In accordance with its policy regarding disarmament and fighting terrorism, the State of Qatar continues to work with our international partners and meet our international legal obligations relating to the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons and nuclear weapons, in line with the fact that the State of Qatar is party to relevant international conventions.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons considers the possession and use of chemical weapons as a gross violation of international law and legal and humanitarian standards. That international binding instrument represents the legal basis for the entire international community to condemn and reject the work of any party using those weapons. That would also require criminal accountability — the perpetrators must not enjoy impunity.

Accordingly, any use of chemical weapons anywhere in the world and under any circumstances is a serious threat to the non-proliferation regime that the world has worked for decades to establish. For that reason, the international community has rejected and condemned the repeated use of such lethal weapons with impunity in Syria, as documented in various United Nations reports.

The use of toxic substances as a weapon of war is a war crime and a crime against humanity. The international community has rejected those horrific crimes through the creation by the General Assembly in March 2011 of 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.

In order to fulfil its international commitments to conventions on weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the State of Qatar issued law number 16 of 2013 on the prohibition of chemical weapons and law number 4 of 2016 on the prohibition of biological weapons. We have worked to increase awareness of the threats of chemical

weapons and to address them. The Doha Regional Center for the Training on Weapons of Mass Destruction has trained specialists from 39 States members of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It has also held 27 training programmes, in cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Concerning nuclear weapons, my country's delegation reaffirms the importance of continued efforts to free the Middle East region of nuclear weapons and fulfil the commitments made under the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the 2010 action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference in order to maintain international peace and security. Given the importance of that topic to the achievement of security and stability in the region and the world, the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the League of Arab States submitted a draft decision (A/C.1/73/L.22) on the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs.

In conclusion, it is the collective responsibility of Member States to get rid of WMDs and ensure that no more of them are developed, as well as to firmly address any threat of their use by any party.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9.

**Mr. Molnar** (Hungary): I have asked for the floor to briefly introduce a draft resolution (A/C.1/73/L.9) on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and Their Destruction (BTWC), a fundamental pillar of the international community's efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Hungary has submitted the draft resolution following the practice of previous years, on the basis of extensive open-ended informal consultations.

In addition to technical updates, this year's draft resolution reflects the progress made on the universalization of the BTWC and the decisions taken by the 2017 meeting of States parties concerning the intersessional process for the period before the next Review Conference, as well as the serious financial situation of the Convention, which requires urgent action by States parties.

Hungary wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the BTWC draft resolution. I would like to take this opportunity to thank member States for the flexibility they have shown during the three rounds of informal consultations and express the hope that the draft resolution will again be adopted by consensus, as has been the case each year to date.

**Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine):** I congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee during this session.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.14). We also align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the International Partnership against the Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons to be delivered by the representative of France.

Ukraine would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Ukraine supports all international, regional and national efforts to achieve our common goal — a world free of chemical weapons. That goal is undeniably under serious threat, however, since the use of chemical weapons is on the rise. Ukraine is gravely concerned about the continued use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, as documented by the Fact-finding Mission in its many reports.

Ukraine stands firm in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, be it State or non-State actors, anywhere and under any circumstances, and expresses its conviction that perpetrators must be held accountable. The incident in Salisbury is another example of a violation of international law and of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We offer the United Kingdom our full sympathy and support. Such acts cannot be left unanswered as they not only undermine a basic sense of justice but will also lead to the erosion of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime and therefore undermine global security.

In June 2018, the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, by an overwhelming majority, adopted a decision that confirms the authority of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons not only to investigate whether or not chemical weapons were used but also to determine who was responsible for such use. Ukraine

fully supports the decision, which is a substantial step towards accountability and justice. We should not allow acts involving the use of chemical-weapons to become normal. We hope that the norm against such use will be restored and upheld.

As a State party to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Ukraine continuously stresses the important role of that indispensable instrument in the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We also consider the Convention as the proper multilateral basis for developing international cooperation in the field of biosafety and biosecurity, including the scientific and technological cluster.

Ukraine has substantial scientific and industrial potential in the biological field. In that regard, we attach particular importance to the development of international cooperation in the area of biosafety and biosecurity. Ukraine has authored several working papers within the negotiating forums of the BWC, most recently related to awareness-raising, education and outreach.

We have also organized several workshops on BWC implementation, the most recent of which, on the theme “Implications of developments in science and technology for the Biological Weapons Convention”, was held on 21 and 22 September last year in Kyiv, with the participation of Eastern European and Central Asian countries. The event was held in the context of the implementation of European Union Council decision 2016/51 in support of the BWC, within the framework of the European Union Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The proper implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and other related resolutions is another priority matter for Ukraine. We consider resolution 1540 (2004) to be an important tool for addressing the evolving risk of non-State actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Outreach activity should be an indispensable part of promoting the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and Ukraine contributes to that process.

In particular, an international workshop on the theme “Promoting the effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in the context of evolving proliferation risks and challenges” was held on 2 and 3 November last year in Kyiv. That event, jointly organized by the Government of Ukraine in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the



Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, was an excellent opportunity for deepening practical, operational and enforcement cooperation among States and international and regional organizations to address current challenges and threats to the non-proliferation regime.

**The Chair:** In accordance with the decision taken earlier today, the Committee will now take up the cluster “Outer space (disarmament aspects)”.

**Mr. Sidharta** (Indonesia): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

NAM recognizes the common interest of all humankind in, and the inalienable and legitimate sovereign right of all States to, the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes; reconfirms its position of opposing and rejecting any act that denies or violates that interest and right; and emphasizes that the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including a ban on the deployment or use of weapons therein, would avert grave danger to international peace and security.

NAM further emphasizes the paramount importance of strict compliance with existing arms-limitation and disarmament agreements relevant to outer space, including bilateral agreements, and with the existing legal regime concerning the use of outer space.

NAM also emphasizes the urgent need for the commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament, inter alia, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, taking note of the joint Russian-Chinese initiative of a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat of or use of force against outer space objects, which was submitted to the Conference on Disarmament on 12 February 2008 and in 2014. In NAM’s view, that initiative is a constructive contribution to the work of the Conference and provides a good basis for further discussions towards adopting an international legally binding instrument.

In that context, NAM notes the adoption of resolution 72/27, on no first placement of weapons in outer space with a view to ensuring the exclusive peaceful use of outer space. NAM also welcomes the adoption of resolution 72/250, on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which calls for the establishment of a United

Nations Group of Governmental Experts to consider and make recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including, inter alia, on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space.

NAM further urges all member States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. NAM calls for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

We continue to be concerned about the indicative implication of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic-missile (ABM) defence systems and the threat of weaponization of outer space, which have, inter alia, contributed to the further erosion of an international climate conducive to the strengthening of international security.

The abrogation of the ABM Treaty brought new challenges to international peace and stability and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. NAM remains seriously concerned about the negative security consequences of the deployment of a strategic missile defence system, which could trigger an arms race and lead to the further development of advanced missile systems and an increase in the number of nuclear weapons.

NAM continues to reaffirm the need for a universal comprehensive and non-discriminatory multilateral approach towards the issue of missiles in all its aspects, negotiated multilaterally within the United Nations. Any initiative on that subject should take into account the security concerns of all States and their inherent right to peaceful uses of space technologies.

**Mr. Hassan** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express the support of the League of Arab States for the statement just made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab League believes in the importance of ensuring that outer space is preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes and of banning all kinds of weapons or armed conflicts in outer space. Existing international

conventions have played a positive role in promoting the peaceful use of outer space and governing activities therein. However, such conventions must be updated to reflect the most recent developments by a number of States and their proclamation that they have built capacity either to deploy weapons in outer space or to wage an armed attack against satellites and assets in outer space. We would like to underscore that Arab priorities in that regard are based on the following principles.

First, outer space is the common property and general legacy of humankind. Therefore, all activities in outer space must be codified within the United Nations in order to secure the principles of inclusiveness, universality and the use of international consensus in that vital realm. A binding international instrument will be required to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Secondly, any attempt to govern activities in outer space must be geared towards preserving the interest of all States and should not prevent States from exercising their inherent right to use outer space for legitimate peaceful purposes that are unrelated to armaments.

Thirdly, the Arab League emphasizes the need to ensure that outer space remains a peaceful realm, free from conflict. Therefore, the desired legally binding international instrument to prevent arms race in outer space should ban the deployment of weapons — whether offensive or defensive — in outer space, and should also ban any armed attack against objects in outer space or any actions that would deliberately damage them. It should also ban the development or testing of weapons or technologies whose sole purpose is to wage armed attacks against objects in outer space, while establishing mechanisms and taking steps to verify the fulfilment of those obligations in a multilateral context.

Fourthly, we would like to affirm the importance of promoting international cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space and of seeking to integrate developing States within the system of States using and benefiting from space applications and activities.

To that end, the Arab League welcomes the formation of the Group of Governmental Experts on achieving substantial elements of a binding legal instrument on the prohibition of an arms race in outer space, in accordance with resolution 72/250. The Arab League hopes that the work of the Group of Governmental Experts will lead to launching negotiations as soon as possible in that regard.

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

The current global disarmament discourse encompasses efforts to maintain outer space as a domain of peace and security. In view of inter-State tensions and the emerging threats to the international rules-based order, ASEAN reaffirms the imperative of preventing an arms race in outer space. ASEAN welcomes the establishment and commencement of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on this subject, of which one ASEAN member State — Malaysia — is currently a member.

ASEAN reaffirms the importance of the GGE's mandate, as set out in resolution 72/250, for formulating recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument on preventing an arms race in outer space. That includes, *inter alia*, the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. We hope that the efforts of the Group of Governmental Experts will be transparent and inclusive, and we look forward to the two-day open-ended intersessional informal consultative meeting to be held in New York in 2019.

We also look forward to engaging the Group of Governmental Experts in dialogue on issues such as how principles of international law, including those drawn from the Charter of the United Nations, may apply to the conduct of States in outer space. Such nuanced questions are sure to assume increasing practical relevance given the rapid development and deployment of new space technologies.

In line with its abiding faith in multilateral cooperation, ASEAN remains committed to advancing the work of relevant bodies, such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. As it is incumbent upon all States to ensure that the use and exploration of outer space are exclusively peaceful, the General Assembly also plays a vital role in fostering continued dialogue on current issues and challenges in that field.

In that connection, we should consider holding meetings on an *ad hoc* basis, such as those held in the First and Fourth Committees during the seventieth

session of the General Assembly, to maintain the momentum achieved to date. Indeed, United Nations-led mechanisms constitute the most suitable avenue for deliberations on space-related challenges. We need to maintain broad support for the conduct of substantive discussions in that regard in order to prevent institutional deadlock, which has afflicted certain multilateral platforms in the disarmament context.

As recognized by the international community in resolution 72/56, confidence-building measures play a critical role in preventing an arms race in outer space. On that note, ASEAN will continue to support initiatives of that nature, through platforms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, which currently comprises 27 participants from across the Asia-Pacific region. To date, three ASEAN Regional Forum space security workshops have been convened, and we will examine the possibility of organizing similar initiatives in the future.

Those programmes present opportunities to bring together policymakers and experts from official delegations and the security and space communities in order to enable a better understanding of each other's perspectives and priorities with regard to activities in outer space. Cultivating such institutional links is crucial for preventing misconceptions and conflict, particularly in the era of the instantaneous dissemination of information.

Such official engagement should be complemented by initiatives involving academics, non-governmental organizations and civil society, which will enrich our understanding of challenges and the development of solutions. Reaching out to private sector entities is also crucial in view of those actors' current and potential activities in outer space.

The world has witnessed much change since the advent of the space age some six decades ago. The international community has benefited from enhancements in the telecommunications and financial sectors that have been made possible by space-based technology. Moving forward, activities in outer space should not remain the exclusive preserve of a small group of States. ASEAN encourages the strengthening of capacity-building programmes, with particular emphasis on developing countries, to ensure that outer space is, both in principle and practice, a truly global commons from which all States may benefit.

In the interest of time, the full text will be uploaded to the e-Delegates portal. I will end with my conclusion. As with other rapidly evolving fields, there will be considerable challenges in reaching convergence vis-à-vis interests and perspectives regarding disarmament in outer space. As we navigate the complexities at hand, ASEAN stands ready to engage with all parties in moving the agenda forward.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

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

The European Union and its member States continue to promote the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. The EU recognizes outer space as a global common good to be used for the benefit of all. Strengthening the safety, security, sustainability and peaceful nature of outer space activities is best achieved through international cooperation.

The EU and its member States are increasingly engaged in outer space. We have developed strong and unique space capacities and industry that have allowed us to take part in major space endeavours. The EU, its member States and the European Space Agency together have the second largest budget for space in the world. Our technology and expertise make the European Union a heavyweight in global space markets, while both the EU space flagship programmes Galileo and Copernicus have made impressive progress recently.

Space is a responsibility as well as a global commons and therefore requires global governance. We believe that the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and other international space law as developed within the United Nations framework will remain the cornerstone of global governance of outer space and that the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and its subcommittees are the main forum for inclusive dialogue and international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful

purposes, international space law and space policy issues.

We underline the importance of the COPUOS high-level segment on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which was held in Vienna in June. We appreciate the related draft resolution proposed for adoption by the General Assembly at its current session. The EU and its member States will actively support the development of the Space2030 agenda within COPUOS.

We continue to stress the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) to enhance the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. Efforts to pursue political commitments such as codes of conduct through a comprehensive approach, as a complement to existing international law, remain relevant. They were endorsed by the Group of Governmental Experts on TCBMs in outer space, which was set up by the Secretary-General in 2010. We will continue to promote the principles of responsible behaviour in outer space, in the framework of the United Nations and other appropriate multilateral forums.

The EU and its member States remain strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Preventing an arms race in outer space and preventing outer space from becoming another area of conflict are essential for strengthening international security and stability and safeguarding the long-term use of the space environment for peaceful purposes.

We remain concerned about the continued development of all anti-satellite weapons and capabilities, including terrestrially based weapons and capabilities, and underline the importance of addressing such developments promptly and as part of international efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space. We maintain reservations regarding the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects. We reiterate our view that a new legally binding instrument would need to be comprehensive, effective and verifiable.

We are also concerned that the initiative entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space” does not adequately respond to the objective of strengthening trust and confidence among States and is instead increasing the risk of conflict in space. Notably, that initiative does not address the difficult issue of precisely

defining what a weapon in outer space is, a defect that could easily lead a State to mistakenly assess that another State had placed weapons in outer space.

Operators are starting to launch constellations composed of hundreds or thousands of satellites, which will lead to an increase of the risk of collisions and the eventual congestion of orbits due to the resulting debris. New technologies of space surveillance and tracking, active space debris removal or service satellites in orbit could play an important role in ensuring the sustainable use of space.

We therefore underline the need to foster increased international cooperation, establish standards of responsible behaviour and sustainable use across the full range of space activities, strengthen commitments to non-interference in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, facilitate equitable access to outer space and increase the transparency of outer space activities. We continue to believe that there could be value in agreeing a non-legally-binding instrument, potentially to be negotiated within the framework of the United Nations, as a way to deliver those objectives, without excluding the possibility that a voluntary instrument may one day result in new legally binding norms.

In particular, such a political commitment could build upon the work of COPUOS undertaken so far on the guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and could be complementary to any guidelines agreed on by COPOUS in a follow-up process. It could contribute to responsible behaviour and constitute a transparency and confidence-building measure in outer space by creating a voluntary mechanism for the notification of operations, such as scheduled manoeuvres that could pose a risk to life or property on the ground or to the safe flight of the space objects of other States.

**Ms. Poblete** (United States of America): In October 2017, as the First Committee was considering the Russian Federation’s resolution on no first placement of weapons in outer space (resolution 72/27), the Russian Ministry of Defence deployed a space object that it claimed was a space apparatus inspector, but the spacecraft’s behaviour was inconsistent with anything seen before, including other Russian satellite inspection activities.

The United States is concerned about what appears to be the very abnormal behaviour of that so-called space apparatus inspector. We do not know for certain



what it is and there is no way to verify its mission. That is a troubling development, particularly when considered in concert with statements by Russia's Space Troops Commander, which highlighted that,

“Assimilat[ing] new prototypes of weapons [into] Space Forces' military units [is a] main task facing the Aerospace Forces Space Troops”.

It is also concerning, in the light of statements by senior Russian military officials, that Russia's space troops have taken delivery of a combat-laser system. Furthermore, Russia claims to be developing missiles that can be launched from an aircraft mid-flight to destroy American satellites. For the United States, those developments are yet further proof that Russian military actions do not match their diplomatic rhetoric.

The drafters of the resolution on no first placement of weapons in outer space and the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space are developing capabilities that are designed to attack satellites in space — the very thing that they claim to seek to prohibit. All nations must take concrete steps to strengthen the safety, stability and sustainability of space.

The draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the resolution on no first placement of weapons in outer space are not the right mechanisms for achieving those goals. They are fundamentally flawed proposals advanced by a country that has routinely violated its international non-proliferation, arms-control and disarmament obligations. That is why the United States continues to urge countries not to support the façade of Russia's Potemkin resolution and instead to vote against it.

Hollow and hypocritical efforts are not the answer. The United States continues to support the First Committee resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. Moreover, we have forums such as the Disarmament Commission and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in which we can make real progress on those issues.

While the United States would prefer that the space domain remain free of conflict, it will prepare itself to meet and overcome any challenge that may arise. As Vice-President Pence recently noted, our adversaries have transformed space into a war-fighting domain already, but the United States will not shrink from

that challenge. Since the start of the space age six decades ago, the United States has led efforts in the United Nations to establish and uphold the principle that all nations have the right to explore and use space for peaceful purposes and to unfettered access and freedom to operate in space.

In keeping with that principle, the United States believes that “peaceful purposes” allows for outer space to be used for national and homeland security activities. The United States Government is reinvigorating its leadership in space activities through the National Space Council, which is chaired by the Vice President. The Council's open and transparent discussions of the United States National Space Strategy and Space Force, including a meeting being held today in Washington, D.C., highlight America's commitment both to lead in outer space with clarity of intent and to cooperate with other nations based on shared interests.

The United States National Space Strategy also seeks to foster conducive international environments through bilateral and multilateral engagements. As part of those efforts to strengthen stability in outer space, the United States will continue to pursue bilateral and multilateral transparency and confidence-building measures to encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, outer space.

In conclusion, the United States looks forward to continuing to engage constructively and pragmatically with other States Members of the United Nations in order to strengthen the safety, stability and sustainability of outer space activities. The draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the resolution on no first placement of weapons in outer space are not the right mechanisms to achieve those desired shared goals.

**Mrs. Dallafior** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The peaceful use of outer space provides many benefits to humankind — relating to crisis management, climate change, resource management and space applications — that contribute in particular to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Space activities, however, are not without their risks, including not only the risk of collisions caused by space debris but also the risk of interference or attacks and the possibility of armed conflict in space. All those threats could potentially jeopardize the peaceful use of outer space.

In order to avoid such developments, Switzerland believes that international norms for ensuring space security, as well as the safety and long-term viability of space activities, must be strengthened, and my country supports the message conveyed in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. There is an urgent need to preserve peace in space. In that regard, Switzerland is pleased to note the progress that has been made this year in the following four areas.

First, subsidiary body 3 of the Conference on Disarmament concretely considered substantive issues relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Such discussions contribute to strengthening mutual understanding among States. We hope that they will also contribute to laying the foundation for the development of new instruments — whether legally or politically binding — aimed at the prevention of an arms race in outer space. For its part, Switzerland remains ready to enter into negotiations on the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects or other instruments.

Secondly, the Group of Governmental Experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space held its first meeting in August in Geneva. The participation of the main space Powers is encouraging, and we hope that the work will produce positive results. Switzerland looks forward to seeing the interim results, which will be presented to the States Members of the United Nations in January 2019.

Thirdly, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has started to address the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures for space activities. We hope that the Commission will continue its efforts on the issue.

Fourthly, within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities completed its work plan in June. It finalized nine supplementary guidelines in addition to the 12 adopted in 2016. That very positive result would not have been possible without the goodwill of all States involved. Switzerland encourages COPUOS to pursue its efforts to strengthen the safety and sustainability of space activities.

In addition, Switzerland supports the proposal discussed within the Fourth Committee that a new joint meeting be organized in 2019 between the First and

Fourth Committees on matters related to the security, safety and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space.

We welcome the progress made this year in those various bodies. However, much remains to be done to develop and agree on the norms needed to guarantee security in space. We believe it is important that the First Committee play a unifying role on the issue within the disarmament machinery. Efforts are needed to make progress on substantive issues, work in a more consensus-based manner and respond through concrete measures to the challenges that have been identified. In particular, the draft resolutions of this cluster should be developed in such a way as to facilitate the broadest possible support.

**The Chair:** Before proceeding further, I have been informed by the Secretariat that an additional panel meeting will take place tomorrow at 3 p.m. in Conference Room 2 in order to exhaust the list of speakers for the thematic discussions. I am sorry about that but tomorrow we will have a full day.

*(spoke in French)*

I shall now call on those representatives wishing to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five minutes.

**Mr. Kang Myong Chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise the right of reply in response to the comments made by the representative of France.

My delegation totally rejects the groundless allegations of the French representative, who stated that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to develop weapons of mass destruction. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has taken a number of steps this year to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, including by discontinuing nuclear and intercontinental ballistic-missile tests, and it recently agreed to further denuclearization measures.

The international community, with the exception of the French regime, welcomes the initiatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a significant contribution to international nuclear-disarmament efforts. Instead of welcoming such positive developments on the Korean peninsula, the French representative is making provocative and groundless allegations. It is ridiculous that a country that possesses

a large arsenal of nuclear weapons is pointing the finger at a country that is committed to denuclearization.

Is the French representative saying that nuclear weapons are safe and good when they are in his country's hands but threatening and bad when they are in the hands of others? That discriminatory logic was overlooked 50 years ago, but it will not be accepted today. I would like to advise the French representative to follow the example of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and declare itself a nuclear-weapon-free country. If France has no intention of doing that, I kindly advise the representative of the French regime to be quiet.

Lastly, the French representative's allegations of the Republic's use of chemical weapons are absolutely groundless. I totally reject the vicious comments made by the representative of the French regime.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country reiterates in the strongest terms its condemnation and absolute rejection of any use of chemical weapons or weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) of any kind because that would constitute a crime against humanity and would be unjustifiable.

The Special Coordinator of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic, Ms. Sigrid Kaag, confirmed in her June 2014 report to the Security Council that Syria had honoured its obligations as a result of joining the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; that all chemical materials had been handed over to the OPCW; that the chemical programme had been terminated; and that the chemical materials had been destroyed aboard United States vessels in the Mediterranean Sea, as recognized by OPCW. In addition, the last two chemical-weapons production facilities were also destroyed recently. My country has therefore honoured its obligations to destroy all 27 chemical-weapon production sites. Ms. Nakamitsu also confirmed that fact in her most recent briefing to the Security Council on 9 October.

Some delegations have mentioned the reports of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, which failed to honour its mandate, as we have noted previously. From its inception, that Mechanism was linked to the intelligence services of States that sponsor terrorism in my country. If the Mechanism had been an honourable one, its work would have persisted. I invite those who continue to talk about that issue to

provide information founded on facts rather than unfounded statements.

My country rejects all the allegations made today by certain delegations hostile to it, which turn a blind eye to the terrorist sponsors and terrorist crimes committed in Syria and the region. I advise the representative of Switzerland, before accusing other countries, to let her country conduct investigations into the various violations of Security Council resolutions, in particular those related to anti-terrorism. Furthermore, I advise her to investigate what happened on Swiss territory in 2011. According to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, Switzerland's has an additional responsibility compared to other Member States, as Switzerland hosts the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva.

The Canadian delegation should be the last one to talk about violations, since Canada contributed funds, scientists, materials and expertise to producing the world's first nuclear weapon, not to mention its violations related to other WMDs. In addition, Canada has provided expertise concerning chemical weapons to terrorist groups in Syria. We would like to ask Canada whether it participated in the decision that led to the first atomic bomb being dropped on Japan, and whether it still possesses nuclear weapons as a result of its partnership with Britain and the United States in the clandestine Manhattan Project, which eventually led to the production of nuclear weapons. We also congratulate Canada on its decision to host the White Helmet terrorists who were sent to it by Israel. We hope they have a good time in Canada.

With respect to what the representative of Germany has said, his country violates the treaties on WMDs, especially the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), because there are nuclear weapons on German soil and, as far as we know, Germany is not a nuclear-weapon State. In that regard, Germany is also violating the NPT by providing Israel with Dolphin submarines capable of launching rockets with nuclear warheads.

Although Germany has joined the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, it has failed to comply with its obligations under those Conventions. The German authorities must open impartial investigations into that issue.

**Mr. Hwang** (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to exercise my right of reply to address the remarks

delivered by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As I have already mentioned, we commend the diplomatic efforts under way between the two Koreas in the form of the convening of three summits which led to a de-escalation of tensions. That is a positive development that we must encourage.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that North Korea is pursuing its ballistic nuclear weapons programme, a programme that continues to pose a threat to international peace and security and is a concern to us all.

France expects North Korea to adopt tangible and verifiable measures to achieve a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of its illegal nuclear, ballistic and chemical programmes.

**The Chair:** The next meeting of the Committee will take place tomorrow morning, Wednesday, 24 October,

at 10 a.m. in this Conference Room. The Committee will first hear a briefing by the President of the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It will then resume consideration of the cluster "Other weapons of mass destruction". Afterwards, it will continue its discussions on the cluster "Outer space (disarmament aspects)" to exhaust the list of speakers under that cluster, after which it will listen to statements under the "Conventional weapons" cluster.

At noon tomorrow, in accordance with the decision taken today, the Committee will begin hearing statements under the "Conventional weapons" cluster.

*The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.*