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First Committee

6th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Santos Maraver(Spain)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 94 to 110 (continued)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations once more that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate closed at 6 p.m. on Monday, 12 October. I hope all delegations intending to take the floor during the general debate were able to register before the deadline.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Mexico. At the outset, the NAC would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee for this session and would like to assure you of the NAC's full cooperation and support with a view to reaching a successful conclusion to our deliberations in the exceptional circumstances in which we will be carrying out our work over the coming weeks. As we have done for the past several years, at this session of the General Assembly the NAC will present a draft resolution to the First Committee under the cluster on nuclear weapons.

The NAC is a cross-regional grouping that was established in reaction to the threat to humankind posed by the prospect of the nuclear-weapon States' continued possession of such weapons and in the belief that the only protection against that existential threat is the

total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again. Achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons remains the NAC's primary goal and a fundamentally important one as we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which demonstrated the devastating humanitarian consequences of those weapons.

We understand the importance of multilateral diplomacy in attaining that goal. Bearing in mind that we are marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we are reaffirming the Organization's very first resolution (resolution 1 (I)), which even then called for the elimination of atomic weapons from national armaments, and recognizing the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Since its establishment, the NAC has advocated for the implementation of concrete, transparent, mutually reinforcing, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament measures and for the fulfilment of obligations and commitments within the framework of the NPT. Although some progress has been achieved over this period, it is far from sufficient. We are deeply concerned about this slow progress and some States' efforts to justify it based on existing or new international security challenges. For the NAC, the global security environment is not an excuse for inaction but rather reinforces the need for urgency. What is

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lacking is not favourable conditions, but political will and determination.

We witnessed that kind of political will and determination on 7 July 2017 with the successful conclusion and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which reflected the desire of an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly for urgent action. That urgency grew from our increased understanding of the growing risks and catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a nuclear-weapon detonation, including strong gendered effects. Considering that any use of nuclear weapons would be contrary to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, including because the consequences cannot be contained within borders, any continued reliance on them in security doctrines and concepts is indefensible and fosters proliferation. We welcome the recent ratifications of the Treaty and are greatly encouraged, as we will soon reach the threshold for its entry into force.

Nuclear disarmament is a moral and ethical imperative as well as an international legal obligation. Regrettably, in spite of the growing international consensus regarding the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons, an estimated 15,000 nuclear weapons still exist. We are deeply concerned about any suggestion of a move away from adherence to the moratoriums on nuclear testing or of diminished support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. These weapons remain at the heart of the security doctrines of nuclear-weapon States and their allies. Rather than strengthening international peace and security, that state of affairs serves to weaken them, including by aggravating international tensions and conflict and jeopardizing the collective well-being of all States and peoples. We should seriously reflect on the enormous amount of resources dedicated to the maintenance, development and modernization of nuclear arsenals, which could be better utilized in pursuit of a better future, including as envisaged in the Sustainable Development Goals. That is particularly pertinent as we witness how States are dealing with loss of life and overwhelmed capacities as they confront the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Given that five decades have passed since the entry into force of the NPT, such slow progress in implementing its article VI is unacceptable and the status quo on nuclear disarmament is untenable. The NAC believes it is time for States to finally deliver on their commitment to eliminating nuclear weapons

in line with their obligations under the NPT and to safeguard future generations from the danger posed by nuclear weapons. That is the only way to maintain the Treaty's credibility.

The NAC shares a firm commitment to the NPT. It is crucial to recall that the basis for the adoption of the NPT and its indefinite extension is the grand bargain whereby the nuclear-weapon States committed legally to pursuing and achieving nuclear disarmament, in return for which the non-nuclear-weapon States committed legally to refraining from developing nuclear weapons. Any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons runs counter to the object and purpose of the NPT and threatens to erode its credibility and effectiveness.

The Action Plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was an important opportunity for putting the process towards a nuclear-weapon-free world back on track. The nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed the unequivocal undertaking made in 2000 to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, and committed to accelerating progress in that regard. The Action Plan reaffirmed the decisions taken in 1995 and 2000, including the 13 practical steps to advance the implementation of article VI of the NPT.

The NAC affirms the significant contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to nuclear disarmament efforts and the achievement of the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. It encourages nuclear-weapon States to take all measures necessary to bring into force the protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, and to review, with the aim of withdrawing, any reservations or interpretive declarations with regard to the treaties and their protocols that are contrary to the object and purpose of those treaties. In that regard, the NAC also reiterates the importance of implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East as soon as possible, while acknowledging the Secretary-General's successful organization of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, based on arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546.

The NAC once again calls for and expects the nuclear-weapon States to implement their nuclear-

disarmament commitments, both qualitative and quantitative, in a manner that enables States parties to regularly monitor progress, including through the use of a standard detailed reporting format. That will enhance confidence and trust, not only among nuclear-weapon States themselves but also between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States.

While noting with regret that the 2020 NPT Review Conference had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we emphasize the importance of holding a constructive, comprehensive and successful Review Conference that presents an opportunity for the States parties to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the current status of the Treaty. The States parties will have to confront the challenges now facing the NPT and chart a way forward together, building on the full implementation of previous obligations and commitments. It is now time that the international community translated words into concrete action backed by clear, agreed-on benchmarks and timelines. Bearing in mind the special responsibility that the nuclear-weapon States have, the NAC calls on them to agree on a path towards the full implementation of article VI and their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The implementation of article VI is a legal obligation binding on all States parties. The NAC welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is an effective legal measure that contributes to the implementation of article VI. Additional measures are still needed, however, in order to achieve its full implementation. We must uphold and preserve the NPT, and the best way to protect the NPT is to implement it.

Given that 50 years have passed since the entry into force of the NPT, the status quo on nuclear disarmament is unacceptable. The NAC believes it is time for States to deliver on their commitment to eliminating nuclear weapons in line with NPT obligations, thereby safeguarding future generations from the danger arising from the existence of nuclear weapons. That is the only way to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, an aim that must guide all future efforts. The New Agenda Coalition urges all States to seize the opportunity provided by the First Committee to advance nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Takht Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to express my warmest congratulations, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

The nature of the threats to international security has changed significantly in the last decade. With protracted conflicts causing large-scale human suffering, the international security environment unfortunately continues to deteriorate. We are seeing the use and the threat of use of force appearing in various parts of the world. Global military spending and arms competition are increasing, and the tensions of the Cold War era have returned in a world that has grown more complex. Besides the ongoing threat of weapons of mass destruction and certain States' offensive policies, new threats, including the possible weaponization of artificial intelligence, cyberspace and outer space, are emerging. In today's multipolar environment, we are seeing the erosion of the mechanisms for dialogue between great Powers that once helped to defuse tensions.

Nuclear disarmament is facing some impediments, such as a new race to modernize nuclear arms and a lack of the political will needed on the part of nuclear-weapon States to reject the option of nuclear weapons. More than 14,000 nuclear weapons, whose modernization, maintenance and deployment costs \$100 billion annually, remain in the arsenals of the nuclear-armed States, and their use would potentially have a catastrophic impact on humankind and the planet. Fifty years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and against the clear obligation of nuclear-weapon States regarding nuclear disarmament, that nominal commitment has yet to be implemented. On the eve of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we should bear in mind that upholding the integrity and credibility of the NPT depends on the full implementation of all its obligations, particularly with regard to nuclear disarmament. In that context, the United States, the largest possessor of nuclear weapons globally, continues to modernize its tremendous arsenal. The United States spent \$36 billion on its nuclear arsenal in 2019 alone and has confirmed that it has fielded the latest variant of a low-yield warhead. It

uses that arsenal to threaten non-nuclear-weapon States and irresponsibly lowers the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, its withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and its apparent unwillingness to extend the New START Treaty, have caused immense damage to international efforts on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

Supported by the United States, the Israeli regime is threatening other countries in the Middle East region with nuclear annihilation. That regime is the only regional obstacle to the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons, which was first proposed by Iran in 1974. The international community must take every opportunity to compel Israel to promptly accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party, without any preconditions, and to place all of its nuclear facilities under full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

I should also highlight another emerging threat in our region, which is Saudi Arabia's incomplete implementation of its comprehensive safeguard agreement. Saudi Arabia must rescind its current Small Quantities Protocol, as the IAEA Secretariat has requested many times. A failure to implement the IAEA safeguards could enable Saudi Arabia to hide certain nuclear activities without being subject to IAEA inspections. However, Washington has reportedly given the green light to seven United States firms to engage with Riyadh in preliminary work on nuclear power ahead of any deal, without any prior agreement for enforcing non-proliferation norms.

Iran is of the view that 75 years after the world's first use, by the United States, of nuclear weapons, we have no guarantee that such weapons will not be used again. The General Assembly should therefore adopt a binding norm affirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. That should be followed by the institution of concrete measures for the nuclear-weapon States to carry out time-bound nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, until that goal is realized, it is imperative that non-nuclear-weapon States be provided with negative security assurances and that negotiations begin in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive convention on a total ban of nuclear weapons.

Iran condemns any use of chemical weapons by anyone, at any time and under any circumstances. We

attach great importance to full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and urge the United States, as the only possessor of chemical weapons, to comply with its obligations to destroy its chemical arsenal and withdraw its reservation to the 1925 Geneva Protocol without further delay. The politicized approach of some members of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is also a matter of concern.

We are deeply concerned about the clandestine biological-weapon programmes pursued by some countries. Iran continues to strongly support upholding the authority and full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention. While the use of biological weapons is contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention, regrettably the Convention does not explicitly prohibit it. That is indeed a major legal loophole and deficiency that should be rectified.

We are alarmed by the recent attempts by the United States to establish a space force as the sixth branch of its armed forces, which is triggering an arms race and causing severe insecurity in outer space. It must be stopped. Iran supports all international efforts within the competent bodies of the United Nations, including the Conference on Disarmament, with the equal, open and transparent participation of all States based on consensus and taking due account of the concerns and interests of all States, to prevent the militarization and weaponization of outer space.

Iran strongly advocates maintaining cyberspace as an exclusively peaceful arena. Fortunately, the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security was the right choice, and we hope that its extension will build on the incomplete work of the Groups of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security.

Iran reaffirms the inherent sovereign right of any State to acquire, manufacture, import and retain conventional arms for its self-defence and legitimate security needs. It is in that context, and based on international law, that Iran has developed its home-grown defensive missile capability to deter any threats to our country. However, we are deeply concerned about the continued flow of sophisticated offensive conventional

weapons into the volatile region of the Middle East, including the Persian Gulf area. In that context, the United States is by far the world's biggest exporter of arms to the region, and Saudi Arabia has become the world's largest arms importer in the past five years, with an increase of 192 per cent compared to the period from 2009 to 2013. Arms imports by Israel also rose in the same period by 354 per cent.

Last but not least, Iran underlines the right of all States to enjoy the peaceful applications of the related technologies enshrined in disarmament instruments. We should also observe the principle of equitable geographical representation in selecting experts for any Group of Governmental Experts or fellowship programme.

In conclusion, Iran, as a penholder, will present a draft decision on missiles and hopes that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Alrowaieci (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to lead the First Committee during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your exceptional capabilities and experience will enable you to carry out your task successfully and steer the Committee in the right direction.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

The Kingdom of Bahrain underlines the pivotal role played in disarmament affairs by the United Nations and its specialized agencies with a view to achieving global stability amid the challenges facing several regions of the world. We firmly believe that establishing global security and stability cannot be achieved while nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction threaten international peace and security and certain States continue to supply various weapons to terrorist groups in flagrant violation of international law and in the service of their narrow political agendas.

Bahrain stresses its position on the renunciation of nuclear weapons as the only guarantee of their non-use by any party. We stress the importance of achieving a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and of subjecting all nuclear facilities in the region to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring and safeguards

system. We call on all States to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to place their nuclear programmes and facilities under the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards regime.

We reiterate our call to the international community on the need to adopt a unified global strategy to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction through an effective disarmament mechanism at the global and regional levels, particularly in the Middle East. We underscore the inalienable right of States to benefit from the multiple and peaceful uses of nuclear energy as long as they are in conformity with IAEA comprehensive safeguards. We must take greater advantage of the exchange of nuclear knowledge and technology between industrialized and developing countries.

In that regard, the Kingdom of Bahrain emphasizes the importance of implementing the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which is an integral part of the agreement to extend the NPT indefinitely. We also stress that the Arabian Gulf region in particular is now more than ever in urgent need of active measures aimed at achieving a region free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, given the region's global strategic importance. In that context, Bahrain shares the IAEA's concern about the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran has exceeded the limits on its stockpile of enriched uranium authorized under the nuclear agreement signed between the 5+1 group and Iran in 2015. We call on Iran to cooperate with IAEA in full transparency, subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to the Agency's monitoring system and honour its commitments to the Agency with regard to nuclear safety and security guarantees, which will reassure the Arab countries on the opposite shore of the Arabian Gulf.

We welcomed the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free from Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, held by the United Nations under the presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in November 2019 and designed to negotiate the text of a binding treaty. We hope to participate in its second session, to be held in November 2021 under the presidency of the State of Kuwait. We will also participate in the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation

of Nuclear Weapons and hope to achieve an outcome document that reflects the aspirations of all States.

The numerous and complex conflicts around the world are making it more likely that terrorist groups can get their hands on various types of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, posing a threat to international peace and security. Despite the progress made in recent years on reducing such threats, more action is still needed to limit them. In that context, we should note the importance of preventing terrorist groups from taking advantage of developments in the field of information and telecommunications, which could threaten the safety and security of vital facilities and undermine the interests of Governments and peoples.

We reiterate that outer space is a common good that should not be exploited in order to threaten international peace and security. In that context, we reaffirm the importance of respecting the relevant international legal conventions, which provide a basis for preventing the weaponization of outer space and for ensuring its use for peaceful purposes.

Finally, Mr. Chair, we would like to express our full commitment to working and cooperating with you and the rest of the Member States in order to achieve progress on all issues related to disarmament and international security.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by the representative of India.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the conference room.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election.

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

We are meeting at a moment of crisis, in health, the economy and security. A global crisis should have brought humankind together. Instead, the pandemic has revealed all the fault lines and accentuated the existing and emerging threats to international peace and security. New rivalries are emerging and old conflicts resurging. Key arms-control agreements are being undermined,

global non-proliferation norms have eroded, a qualitative and quantitative arms race is under way and emerging technologies are expanding the frontiers of warfare. Strategic competition between the big Powers, the pursuit of military dominance by some States and the unilateral use of force and intervention have gravely jeopardized international peace and security.

In our region, the aggressive policies and military posture of the largest State in South Asia, which is now ruled by a neo-fascist regime, pose an immediate and pervasive threat to international peace and security. In February 2019, India committed a blatant act of aggression against Pakistan with its fruitless aerial incursion. In subsequent exchanges, it lost two of its aircraft. As a goodwill gesture, Pakistan's Prime Minister returned the captured Indian pilot. Unfortunately, that was misconstrued as weakness, and India's posture only grew more aggressive. On 5 August 2019, India took unilateral measures to change the status of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir and brought in an additional 200,000 troops, bringing the size of its occupying army to 900,000. India has since imposed a military siege of occupied Jammu and Kashmir with the aim of annexing the occupied territory, changing its demography through illegal immigration and denying its people their right to self-determination as prescribed and upheld in Security Council resolutions. All political leaders were jailed, 13,000 young people abducted — and many tortured — peaceful protests violently put down, collective punishments imposed with the destruction of entire villages and neighbourhoods, while hundreds of innocent Kashmiri youth were murdered in extrajudicial killings.

Along the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir, Indian forces continue to resort to artillery and small-arms fire every day, targeting innocent civilians on our side. There were more than 3,000 ceasefire violations in 2019 and there have been more than 2,400 so far this year. Those daily military provocations are accompanied by repeated threats of aggression by India's political and military leaders. Pakistan has reacted with restraint to these provocations and threats, but as we demonstrated in February 2019, Pakistan will respond decisively to any Indian aggression with the full force of its capabilities.

India's aggressive posture and actions are accompanied by one of the world's largest military acquisition and development programmes, with more than \$70 billion spent last year alone on new

conventional and non-conventional weapons for land, sea, air and space. India has nuclearized the Indian Ocean, deployed anti-ballistic missiles and developed and tested debris-generating anti-satellite weapons, and it is constantly increasing the range, sophistication and diversification of all types of delivery systems and platforms. India's so-called no-first-use policy lacks credence. India's own Defence Minister cast doubt on it when he held out the threat of a pre-emptive nuclear attack against Pakistan last year. India has operationalized its cold-start doctrine of surprise attacks against Pakistan, deploying several strike-force brigades close to the border. It has outlined plans for a naval blockade and proclaimed its intention of fighting a limited war with Pakistan under what it terms the nuclear overhang.

Since the advent of Mr. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party-RSS Hindu extremist Government in 2014, India has refused to engage in any dialogue with Pakistan on either the resolution of disputes or the control of armaments and the avoidance of war. Disturbingly, India's aggressive proclivities, military belligerence and pretensions to great-Power status are being fed by those Powers that are supplying it with the latest weaponry, either to turn a profit or to serve their strategic objectives in Asia. They must know that 70 per cent of India's military capabilities are deployed against Pakistan. The net result is the exacerbation of tensions and military competition in the region and an intensification of the threat to Pakistan and to peace and security in South Asia, the Indian Ocean and beyond.

Pakistan will take all necessary measures to ensure its security and maintain full-spectrum deterrence. Peace and stability in South Asia can be achieved only through, first, the resolution of disputes between Pakistan and India, particularly the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir; secondly, the maintenance of a balance between the conventional forces of the two sides; and thirdly, reciprocal measures of nuclear and missile restraint. Pakistan's proposal for a strategic restraint regime in South Asia based on those interlocking elements remains on the table.

Pakistan remains committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Nuclear disarmament must be pursued in a comprehensive and holistic manner. To that end, it is essential to recognize and address the key motivations driving States to possess nuclear weapons. An equitable, non-discriminatory international security order can be promoted by addressing the security

concerns of all States, limiting conventional-weapon stockpiles, strengthening the non-proliferation regime through the pursuit of non-discriminatory arrangements and extending negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. Pakistan's four draft resolutions designed to promote these objectives will be circulated to the Committee and then submitted.

Pakistan reiterates its call to forge a new consensus on disarmament, one that is based on equity and aims to promote equal security for all States.

Ms. Pobee (Ghana): My delegation joins previous speakers in warmly congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We have confidence in your capable leadership and would like to assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Ghana associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Cameroon, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/75/PV.2), and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

The extraordinary situation created by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is a stark reminder of the reality of our vulnerability as a global society and of the need for enhanced multilateral and international cooperation to address the challenges of human security and international stability. It is next to impossible to achieve peace without adopting cooperative approaches to shared problems.

Unfortunately, in addition to the unprecedented global health crisis, which has had severe economic and social consequences for our world, the international security environment is saddled with protracted conflicts, the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), terrorism threats, transnational organized crime and challenges in cyberspace and outer space. Equally worrying are the attempts by some States to introduce new arms-race concepts, reinterpret their disarmament and non-proliferation obligations and create new domains for warfare in cyberspace and outer space. Such plans are at variance with the long-standing aspiration and efforts of the international community to achieve the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction and collective security and create a better world for all.

Against the background of those sobering facts, Ghana reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism and to upholding the painstakingly crafted international arms-control architecture and disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. We believe that multilateral diplomacy remains the most inclusive and sustainable path to addressing global disarmament and non-proliferation issues, preventing conflicts and achieving a safer world and a secure future.

Ghana attaches great importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the keystone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and remains committed to a balanced implementation of obligations under the Treaty's three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology. The postponement of the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has presented States parties with an opportunity to engage in further consultations to identify proposals that may lead to the possible adoption by consensus of a comprehensive, balanced outcome document in 2021. We are committed to achieving a meaningful outcome, especially under the nuclear disarmament pillar of the Treaty. A balanced outcome document would be a fitting gift to bequeath to global society on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force and the twenty-fifth anniversary of its indefinite extension. In that regard, we urge the nuclear-possessing States to take much-needed practical measures for risk reduction and to comply with their arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation commitments.

The prospect of miscalculation and the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons is real. The detonation of a single nuclear weapon would have intolerable humanitarian and environmental consequences and would open the gates to hell on earth. The only guarantee to avoid the far-reaching havoc of such weapons is to completely eliminate them. Fortunately, a prudent legal pathway towards eliminating nuclear weapons was established with the adoption in 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Ghana was among the first countries to sign that landmark treaty when it opened for signature, and our ratification process is under way. We are encouraged by the number of signatories and ratifications the Treaty has recorded so far and are hopeful that as more States join, it will enter into force sooner rather than later.

It is a matter of concern that another vital piece of the nuclear-disarmament architecture, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, remains in legal limbo more than two decades after its adoption, while its verification regime appears to be fully operational. The status quo will not be sustainable for a long period, and we therefore urgently need the remaining eight annex 2 States to ratify the Treaty without further delay in order to enable its entry into force.

The nuclear-weapon-free zones established around the world, including that created by the Treaty of Pelindaba, remain an important mechanism in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In that regard, we would like to urge all stakeholders to continue their engagement in the efforts to establish such a zone in the Middle East, in line with the outcomes of the 1995 and 2015 NPT Review Conferences.

Ghana considers the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, focused on disarmament to save humanity, disarmament that saves lives and disarmament for future generations, as an important approach for repositioning arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation issues at the centre of the United Nations and safeguarding humankind and future generations from the scourge of WMDs and other strategic weapons. International support for the implementation of the critical components outlined in the agenda is crucial and should be encouraged.

As Member States, we must be motivated to restore multilateral dialogue and rebuild the trust that continues to elude the disarmament machinery, including the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission. Total paralysis of those important platforms and other arms-control mechanisms would be detrimental to the global aspiration to eliminate nuclear weapons and achieve general and complete disarmament for current and future generations. We must therefore not allow political polarization, procedural bottlenecks and myopic interests to override the multilateral gains of the disarmament machinery.

Ghana remains concerned about the destabilizing effects, death toll and gendered impact arising from the proliferation and excess acquisition of conventional weapons. Addressing the severe socioeconomic impacts of such weapons through existing regional and international arms-control instruments will contribute to sustainable peace and development. We reiterate in

that regard the continued relevance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPOA) and its International Tracing Instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in multilateral efforts to prevent the illicit acquisition, proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons.

The third Review Conference of the UNPOA recognized for the first time the necessity of addressing the issues of ammunition and the disproportionately gendered effects of small arms and light weapons. We remain committed to substantive discussions by the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus to find innovative ways to address the problems arising from the excess accumulation of conventional ammunition.

Poorly regulated arms transfers, including their diversion, enable and accelerate conflict and armed violence around the world. We call on countries that manufacture and export arms to respect the control and exemption certificate regime for arms imports into West Africa established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials in order to reduce diversions and illicit transfers. We would once again appreciate seeing the annual resolution introduced by ECOWAS member States, "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them", being adopted by consensus.

Ghana is encouraged by the inclusive consultative process initiated by Ireland to develop a political declaration in addressing the humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We call on all stakeholders to show genuine political will regarding such innovative measures for the protection of civilians and civilian objects in armed conflict in compliance with international humanitarian law.

Outer space, which is the common heritage of humankind, is threatened by dangerous orbital debris, weaponization and the increased use of new frontier technologies that can engender warfare and conflict. This is a matter of international concern that urgently requires a renewed focus on ensuring safety in outer space for our common good.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that multilateralism remains vital to our ability to effectively address the unprecedented international security challenges prevailing in the world. We must renew our commitment to collective action in order to safeguard a secure world.

Mr. Issetov (Kazakhstan): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee, as well as the members of the Bureau on their election. We are confident that under your capable leadership the mandate of this important body will be fully and successfully executed, for which you can count on my delegation's full support at every step.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of the Kyrgyz Republic on behalf of the States parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

Kazakhstan, from the time of its independence in 1991, has been at the vanguard of ceaseless advocacy for a world free of nuclear weapons, the deadliest weapon in human history. We were the first country to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, and we voluntarily abandoned the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world. However, my region and its people continue to suffer from the horrors of four decades of nuclear tests conducted between 1949 and 1989. To facilitate the recovery from their devastating toll, we invite all Member States to support and sponsor the recurring resolution on the international cooperation and coordination of efforts aimed at the rehabilitation of the population, environmental restoration and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan. We intend to propose a draft resolution on this subject for adoption by the General Assembly once again this year.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has highlighted how crucial it is to strengthen the links between international security and economic recovery, as reflected in Kazakhstan's commitment to the principles of multilateralism. The marginalized poor and those trapped in zones of armed conflict are suffering the most from the pandemic. It has therefore become obvious that peace, disarmament, justice, sustainable development and environmental protection are required to adequately address the pandemic. In his Agenda for Disarmament, Secretary-General António Guterres has underscored disarmament as

a prerequisite for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and that requires the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

The current COVID-19 reality has underlined the importance of the United Nations system's stewardship of global approaches to combating crises, something that my country will strive to strengthen through a stable international relations system. Kazakhstan supports efforts to form a more stable international relations order and to improve multilateral cooperation. Today's realities have affirmed the central role of the United Nations and its agencies in global anti-crisis efforts. In these perilous times of geopolitical tensions and the disastrous effects of COVID-19, all nuclear-weapon States should make disarmament a priority of their international relations policies. International solidarity is no longer a choice but an obligation. The pandemic has also made the flawed logic of the leading Powers' enormous military expenditures and modernization of nuclear arms even more apparent. It is obvious that our already depleted resources, further diminished by COVID-19, should instead be spent on global public health, climate mitigation and sustainable development.

We hope the negotiations in Vienna between the United States and Russia will help restore bilateral dialogue and lead to success in extending the New START Treaty for a full five years. The expansion and diversification of nuclear weapons are alarming. Today we have hypersonic weapons, coupled with land, sea and aerial delivery systems, capable of causing irreparable damage. These are frighteningly invincible even to advanced air and missile defence systems. And the secrecy of nuclear-weapon States about their nuclear holdings and strategic warheads makes the world all the more dangerous.

Accordingly, Kazakhstan promotes confidence-building measures between Member States, as we did during our term on the Security Council in 2017 and 2018. The fact is that in the previous century such confidence-building measures were able to halt the arms race and prevent a nuclear catastrophe. Today, unfortunately, while the world expects the nuclear Powers to follow the visionary example established then, it has not been fully realized and acknowledged. We should definitely restore political trust and systemic dialogue in international affairs. Confidence-building measures remain essential to the process of developing general approaches aimed at preventing the militarization of outer space. The full and effective

implementation and universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty and other international instruments will help to promote international peace and security by reducing the human suffering caused by armed violence.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has emerged as part of our new reality owing to the lack of recent progress on disarmament. In the current circumstances, we believe that advancing it is the right path forward for the international community. We should build on the past and accelerate momentum for the speedy entry into force of the Treaty and other disarmament instruments, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Kazakhstan believes that a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing, as observed by the nuclear Powers, is not a true alternative to a legally binding document such as the CTBT, whose early entry into force is essential to the effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Kazakhstan attaches great importance to strengthening nuclear-weapon-free zones by addressing the issues and challenges they encounter. Consolidating nuclear-weapon-free zones is unquestionably a necessary step towards our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We hope that further measures to strengthen interaction between the existing zones will help to consolidate their efforts to establish new such zones, particularly in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

This year, Kazakhstan, together with its Central Asian partners, hopes to see the General Assembly support the renewal of the resolution on the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. We hope that the United States will ratify the Protocol to the Treaty providing for negative security assurances to the parties. Kazakhstan also supports the further implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We call on all the parties to the JCPOA to show responsibility and fully implement their obligations under it. We also firmly support the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and are ready to share our experience of dismantling our own nuclear testing infrastructure.

The States possessing nuclear weapons that have remained outside the NPT should accede to it as non-nuclear States without any preconditions. We believe that no State's national interests and security should come at the expense of other, peace-loving countries.

Kazakhstan was the first country to set the example of using a popular movement to force Governments to halt nuclear tests around the world. The wider involvement of young people, with their zeal and dynamism, can have a much greater impact in the future. That is a very crucial consideration, especially given the fact that this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT and heralds the need to ensure the success in 2021 of the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In his address to the General Assembly at this year's general debate (see A/75/PV.6), President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan proposed the establishment of a special multilateral body, an international agency for biological safety, based on the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and accountable to the Security Council. We are of the view that such a multilateral body would assist us in strengthening the BWC's regime.

In conclusion, the world needs strength, political determination and wisdom in order to put the interests of humankind above narrow national interests. Kazakhstan stands ready to work with others to usher in the new reality that 2020 demands.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

It is unjustifiable and unacceptable that in our fifth year of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and amid an unprecedented crisis brought on by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, we continue to spend increasing amounts of money on developing, modernizing and testing weapons of all kinds and less on promoting life, cooperation and solidarity, which we need to overcome the ravages of the pandemic. As Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of Nicaragua, has said:

“Instead of filling the planet with atomic bombs, we must fill it with medical care, work, food and education. In the face of this experience that has paralysed the world, rather than investing in more atomic bombs, which are of little use against attacks such as this, we should invest in hospitals, health centres and technology.”

Nicaragua would once again like to take this opportunity to stress to the international community the importance of continuing to advance towards general and complete disarmament, for which the elimination of nuclear weapons remains the top priority. There is no plan B to save Mother Earth from nuclear catastrophe. The only guarantee for preventing the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction and ensuring their non-proliferation is the total and absolute elimination of nuclear weapons.

We look forward to the speedy entry into force and universalization of the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which for the first time in history prohibits the existence, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, including nuclear testing. Nicaragua has ratified the Treaty, which complements the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in accordance with article VI of the NPT. We also look forward to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which is called on to play a leading role in the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Nicaragua firmly believes that through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the non-proliferation regime and international peace and security can be strengthened as an important contribution to achieving nuclear disarmament. At the regional level, we reiterate the importance of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, as well as the validity of the declaration of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States on a zone of peace in Latin America and the Caribbean. We regret the failure to implement the resolution on holding a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and urge the international community to hold such a conference as a matter of urgency.

The Government of Nicaragua supports the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed on 14 July 2015, which we believe shows that dialogue and diplomacy are the only appropriate means of resolving such problems within the framework of multilateralism. We also support the work and efforts of the Disarmament Commission, which should maintain its relevance and deliberate in depth on specific disarmament issues with the aim of making concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. Nicaragua attaches particular importance to compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons, a legally binding instrument, born of international consensus and part of the global system for non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of atomic energy.

We consider it essential to further strengthen the legal regime on outer space in order to ensure security and transparency in the conduct of space activities. In particular, we support the adoption of a treaty to prevent and prohibit the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against satellites and other space objects. In our view, the draft treaty presented by Russia and China at the Conference on Disarmament is a good basis for negotiations, which is why we will sponsor the draft resolutions on that subject presented by Russia this year, as we do every year.

Our country is committed and has taken the corresponding steps to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit arms trafficking. We have incorporated the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument into domestic legislation through our special act no. 510 on the control and regulation of firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials. Civilian and human security is one of the main strengths of Nicaragua, which has been recognized as the third least violent country in Latin America, with a homicide rate of 8 per 100,000 inhabitants. In that connection, Nicaragua has developed a series of specific policies and programmes to fight against the scourges of our times — terrorism, crime and drug, arms and human trafficking, among others. We note that international assistance and cooperation are indispensable to the successful roll-out of the Programme of Action. Security and stability are essential to the fight for the welfare and rights of our peoples. We denounce the dramatic situation we face, as all our States battle against drug trafficking, organized crime and the transit of drugs from Colombia to the United States. This tragic situation diverts and depletes the resources that should be spent on reducing poverty. We request support in resource management in order to continue fighting this cruel battle that has been imposed on us. We call for serious cooperation with Central America in the fight against drug trafficking.

We reiterate our support for the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security as a historic process and the first forum that gives all Member States the opportunity to participate

and express their views in a transparent and equal manner. We also reiterate the need for a legally binding international instrument that effectively addresses the significant legal gaps in the area of cybersecurity and, on the basis of multilateral cooperation, the growing challenges and threats we face in that domain. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of this forum on information and telecommunications technologies. The priority of the negotiating efforts on international information security at the United Nations is drafting and adopting a comprehensive list of universal norms of responsible State behaviour in the information sphere designed to prevent conflicts in cyberspace. We consider it appropriate for the Open-ended Working Group to take into account certain recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security.

We have often pointed out the stagnation of the disarmament machinery. Yet we have been unable to solve the real problem, which is the political will of some States to achieve genuine progress, especially in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Stolina (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of this year's session of the First Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau. You can count on the full support of our delegation in your efforts to steer our deliberations to a successful outcome.

We commence our deliberations in particularly challenging times. However, despite the coronavirus disease epidemic, our existing disarmament and non-proliferation challenges not only remain with us but are even more urgent considering the current circumstances. The pandemic therefore cannot be a reason to ignore unfinished business in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, even if the conditions limit our physical meetings. The Czech Republic strongly believes in the power of effective multilateralism and international cooperation. Bearing in mind the worsening global security situation in recent years, we stress the importance of upholding and strengthening the rules-based international system and of seeking multilateral solutions that will enable

us to restore dialogue and promote transparency and confidence-building at the international and regional levels.

The Czech Republic strongly supports all three pillars of the (NPT). Over the past 50 years, the NPT has proved how irreplaceable its role in the international nuclear non-proliferation architecture is in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and in the development of peaceful applications of nuclear energy. We stress the need for all parties to implement all their obligations and commitments under the NPT, and we hope that the postponed 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will result in an even more robust and effective Treaty. In our view, a gradual process of reducing nuclear arsenals, taking into account legitimate national and international security concerns, is the best approach to ensuring sustainable progress on the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. In that respect, we greatly value the role of export-control regimes, the Nuclear Security Summit and its follow-up, as well as relevant international initiatives and confidence-building measures in the area of non-proliferation, in fostering nuclear security and building trust among all parties.

It is important to reaffirm the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the safeguards system. We call on all NPT States parties that have not yet done so to ratify and bring into force their comprehensive safeguard agreements and additional protocols without any further delay. We also encourage States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so in order to support the strengthening of the international security architecture, in accordance with the NPT.

With regard to the current challenges to the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, we are convinced that an extension of the New START Treaty can put us back on the right track. At the same time, we have to acknowledge that the strategic reality has been fundamentally altered, something that must be reflected in any future strategic arms-control agreements. We have been closely following the negotiations between the Russian Federation and the United States and believe they will do their utmost to reach an understanding on expanding the scope of the Treaty to cover all nuclear warheads. It should also include those countries whose nuclear and missile arsenals have significantly

expanded. China's role as a responsible stakeholder is crucial to the effectiveness of the global system of strategic arms control.

Bearing in mind the need to preserve and further advance effective treaty-based international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, the Czech Republic would like to reiterate its firm support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. At the same time, we deeply regret that despite all the efforts of the international community, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to violate multiple Security Council resolutions.

We see a clear need to overcome the lack of tangible results in the Disarmament Commission. For the first time in history, the formal substantive part of the Commission did not take place last year due to procedural issues, while this year the entire session was cancelled because of health concerns. We cannot afford to lose any more time. The Czech Republic urges all States to make sustained efforts to ensure that the Commission can hold a successful session as soon as the health situation allows.

Mr. Trejo Blanco (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the work of the First Committee at the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, and to express our gratitude to the rest of the members of the Bureau. El Salvador appreciates the efforts of the Bureau and the Secretariat that have enabled us to hold this meeting today, and I would like to assure them of my delegation's collaboration and support in their work.

El Salvador associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Nicaragua on behalf of the member States of the Central American Integration System (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

We are holding this debate in a context of high geopolitical tensions and a growing number of global threats, which have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic. That health crisis, which continues to pose great socioeconomic and budgetary challenges, is a reminder that the way to respond to major global threats is to address them through multilateralism based on strong linkages and cooperation among all the members of this Organization.

Disarmament and international security are fundamental to the common interests of the States Members of the United Nations and of humankind

in general. If we succeed in our deliberations and in genuinely expressing our political will, we can translate that into mechanisms for saving lives, providing protection to the most vulnerable sectors and taking action to improve the lives of thousands of people in all of our countries. The First Committee has a fundamental role to play in achieving that goal and the potential to do it. We encourage the membership to maximize their use of the time available in the next few weeks in order to find innovative alternatives that can give new impetus to the disarmament architecture and the conventional arms-control system, ensure the responsible use of new technologies and address threats to international peace and security.

We must bear in mind that nuclear explosions have devastating effects and that no State or international entity is prepared to deal adequately with those catastrophic humanitarian consequences, whether caused by human failure or deliberate misuse. Mindful of that latent risk, we have made progress toward the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was one such major achievement, and 50 years after its entry into force, it remains the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. While El Salvador regrets the impossibility of holding the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons this year, we believe that this time has been a period of reflection that will facilitate the adoption of measures to maintain the ongoing relevance of this important international instrument.

We must defend and preserve the NPT, and the best way to do that is through the balanced implementation of its three pillars. We welcome progress on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, especially in all those activities that promote development. Nevertheless, we want to remind all the States parties to the Treaty that the implementation of article VI is a legal obligation that demands that we fulfil the commitment to nuclear disarmament, an aspect of the NPT on which progress remains unsatisfactory. In that regard, and with the aim of prohibiting through a legally binding instrument the only weapons of mass destruction that have not been prohibited in international law, El Salvador participated in the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and ratified all its parts on 30 January 2019. We welcome the latest countries to accede to the Treaty and encourage those that have not

yet done so to accelerate their internal processes and thereby trigger its entry into force as soon as possible.

Despite that progress, we have many challenges ahead, and the total elimination of nuclear weapons requires that we continue to focus on certain aspects. In order to step up accession to and permit the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we call on the States listed in its annex 2 to speed up their domestic efforts. We want to point out that nuclear tests are contrary to the objectives and purposes of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Furthermore, we must preserve bilateral agreements that introduce limits on nuclear weapons and facilitate their destruction. The coming months will be crucial for bilateral efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament. El Salvador encourages the nuclear Powers to hold talks to advance that objective.

El Salvador is a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and, as a member of the first densely populated area declared free of nuclear weapons, we are aware of its contribution to regional peace and security. We encourage continued good-faith dialogue to ensure success in the creation of new nuclear-weapons-free zones, particularly those agreed at previous NPT Review Conferences.

We emphasize the importance of universalizing the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention by ensuring that all States accede to them and that all States parties abide fully by all their provisions and requirements.

Conventional weapons are the most commonly used weapons worldwide, and their proliferation and misuse are a serious systemic and generalized threat to the social and economic development of many countries. It is urgent that we ensure that conventional weapons do not fall into the hands of transnational organized criminals, terrorists and non-State or unauthorized actors and that appropriate regulations are adopted to prevent weapons acquired under a legal regime from being diverted to illicit markets. We support maintaining a preventive approach to the diversion of small arms and light weapons through the implementation and strengthening of regulations and transfer control systems, while ensuring that end users are properly registered and authorized. For my country, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing

Instrument, together with the Firearms Protocol, constitute key elements for addressing the trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons. It will be vital to preserve the spirit of those instruments and maintain momentum when we hold the seventh biennial meeting of the Programme of Action next year.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) responds to the need to prevent irresponsible, unregulated arms transfers that fuel conflict, lead to human rights violations and harm national development. It is important to stress that the universalization of the ATT is a fundamental aspect of its fulfilment of its mission. Cooperation and mutual support among the various actors involved in this process are essential if we are to achieve the proper implementation of the Treaty.

We must strengthen the focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16, on the understanding that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. We encourage States that are able to allocate resources for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly programmes for capacity-building, the prevention of violence and the destruction of weapons, to do so. Allocating resources to development programmes can be a significant investment towards the ultimate goal of building a more just, peaceful and stable world.

El Salvador would like to reiterate its gratitude to international organizations, civil-society organizations, academia and other relevant actors for all their efforts to advance the disarmament and international security agenda. We once again emphasize the full, effective and equal participation of women and men as an essential factor in the promotion and achievement of sustainable peace and security over time. We will continue to support initiatives to strengthen the participation of women in all such processes.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my country's full commitment to supporting all efforts to achieve international peace, stability and security and respect for international law, including human rights, with special attention to the most vulnerable groups and sectors.

Ms. Fatima (Bangladesh): I warmly congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau on your election to lead the First Committee, and I would

like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2), and I would also like to share a few thoughts in my national capacity.

Bangladesh's commitment to general and complete disarmament is total and unwavering. It is anchored in our Constitution and in the pledge made by the father of our nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, to work for the relaxation of tension, limitation of armaments and promotion of peaceful coexistence in every part of the world. Guided by that principle, Bangladesh remains at the forefront of nations' assumption of higher obligations under all the major multilateral disarmament treaties.

Seventy-five years have elapsed since the adoption of the first resolution of the United Nations, on the recommendation of the First Committee (resolution 1 (I)). Sadly, the promise of disarmament remains elusive. Even today we continue to live in constant fear of nuclear catastrophe. We must do more to change that course. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant procedural and substantive impact on the work of the disarmament machinery, including this Committee. In the days ahead, we will need to make greater efforts to overcome that.

Bangladesh believes that the ultimate guarantee of international peace and security lies in the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To attain that overarching objective, we ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We are encouraged to see the steady progress of its ratification and call on Member States to step up so that this critical instrument may enter into force as soon as possible.

We continue to call for the realization of the commitments enshrined in other key instruments aimed at nuclear disarmament. Owing to the pandemic, the much-awaited tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had to be postponed. Member States should utilize the extra time to constructively engage with a view to producing a meaningful, tangible and substantial outcome. We must also multiply our efforts to achieve the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We share the concerns of others over the protracted impasse in the Conference

on Disarmament and hope to see a possible solution to that long-standing problem in the days ahead.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh, in her address to the General Assembly this year (see A/75/PV.12), underlined the importance of ensuring that developing countries benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Bangladesh wants to emphasize that there should be no impediments to the inalienable right of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including medical science. We also recognize that such rights come with certain responsibilities. In constructing the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Bangladesh has remained deeply committed to its responsibilities and continues to follow the highest International Atomic Energy Agency standards.

We reiterate our abiding support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and underscore the importance of upholding the credibility and integrity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Organization (OPCW). As an elected member of the Executive Council of the OPCW, we are playing our part in global efforts towards chemical disarmament. Bangladesh reiterates its full support to the Biological Weapons Convention and looks forward to cooperating on strengthening the Convention so that it can deal robustly with future challenges.

Bangladesh remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the protocols to which it is a party. Bangladesh has consistently supported the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and we call for speeding up its implementation through effective multilateral cooperation and mutual assistance.

As a State party to the Ottawa Convention, Bangladesh remains concerned about the continued use of anti-personnel mines, including by its neighbour Myanmar. We have been drawing the Committee's attention since 2017 to the use of anti-personnel mines by the Myanmar authorities against their own people, including the forcibly displaced Rohingya community, who took shelter in Bangladesh when they fled persecution. The report of the Independent International Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar (A/HRC/39/64) repeatedly mentioned Myanmar's extensive use of landmines at the border. That is one of

the issues preventing the voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya. Unfortunately, Myanmar's only response to that fact-based report continues to be outright denial. We reiterate our call to the Myanmar authorities to take the necessary urgent steps to ensure mine clearance, declare a moratorium on the production of landmines and end civilian casualties.

Rapid technological developments, including in the areas of artificial intelligence and biotechnology, continue to redefine the nature of our disarmament discourse. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) have brought immense benefits to our peoples. But our increasing dependence on digital technologies, now even more so as a result of the pandemic, has created new vulnerabilities. The growing malicious use of ICTs by both State and non-State actors is endangering international security in our highly digitized world. Such actors are even exploiting the global health crisis by targeting critical establishments necessary for mitigating the pandemic. No Government alone can tackle those challenges. Bangladesh firmly rejects the illegal or malicious use of ICTs, including social networks, for purposes that are inconsistent with the objective of maintaining international stability and security. It is therefore now more necessary than ever for the United Nations to maintain its norm-setting role for a globally accessible, free, open and secured cyberspace. Bangladesh remains steadfast in its commitment to helping to safeguard ICTs from malicious activities.

We are committed to a peaceful, safe, sustainable, open and accessible outer-space environment. With its launch of the Bangabandhu-1 satellite, Bangladesh now has an even greater stake in preventing an arms race in outer space. While trust and confidence-building measures can be useful for preventing the weaponization of outer space, there is no denying the importance of concluding a legally binding international instrument to that end. We also need to scale up our efforts to build the capacity of developing countries to contribute to the discourse and developments in the outer-space arena in an inclusive and transparent manner.

We remain committed to upholding internationally agreed disarmament norms and to strengthening the United Nations disarmament machinery. We reiterate the importance of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to give further impetus to the disarmament machinery in an evolving and complex global context.

Bangladesh also calls for increased participation of women in disarmament discourses both at the national and global levels in order to advance the women, peace and security agenda.

The pandemic has taught us that it is development, not armaments, that can ensure global peace and security. We should be able to apply that lesson in the disarmament domain. As a nation in development transition, Bangladesh has a legitimate interest in advocating for channelling the massive resources deployed for arms build-up into sustainable development priorities and sustaining peace. Unfortunately, that is not happening. Rather, last year the world saw the biggest spike in military spending in a decade. We must work to reverse that trend. This year, in the face of challenges arising from COVID-19, we need even more resources to build back better. We urge for repurposing the savings from cuts to military expenditures to address the new challenges brought about by the pandemic, particularly in the areas of education and health.

We believe that despite enormous challenges, stalemates and painfully slow progress in its work, the United Nations disarmament machinery remains the best way to chart a path forward to achieving our shared goals. To underpin our engagement in the United Nations, we should redouble our efforts to strengthen all our disarmament and arms-control regimes to ensure a safer and better world for our future generations.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by the representative of Canada.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the conference room.

Ms. Eneström (Sweden): Let me join others in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the Chair of the First Committee.

Sweden associates itself with the statement by the observer of the European Union, as well as that delivered by the representative of Iceland on behalf of the Nordic countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

We are meeting in extraordinary circumstances. The pressure put on our societies and lives by the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is immense. In the shadow of the pandemic, the global security environment has continued to deteriorate. Multilateralism remains our only chance to address our

common challenges and to ensure international peace and security. On the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, that message rings truer than ever.

New nuclear capabilities are being developed as the landmark treaties that have regulated weapons of mass destruction for decades are being undermined. Our collective goal of a world free from nuclear weapons seems further off than it has in a long time. The risk of another nuclear arms race or actual nuclear use cannot be ignored. We are at a critical juncture. This year also marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is an indisputable fact that a single nuclear explosion has catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

Through the years, many important steps and commitments have been made. They must not be left unheeded. The Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament is an important tool in our efforts. As a champion of dialogue and gender awareness, Sweden will continue to work with the United Nations, Member States and civil society to promote the Agenda. Applying a gender-based perspective to all aspects of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament will help to improve our collective work and strengthen international peace and security.

As we approach the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, much is at stake. We must not only reaffirm the continued validity of previous commitments but also make progress on every aspect of their implementation. There should be no backtracking. The Stockholm Initiative on nuclear disarmament, launched in June 2019, builds on the belief that political engagement is paramount if we are to achieve an ambitious yet realistic outcome for the Review Conference, not least in relation to article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Our initiative gathers 16 non-nuclear-weapon States, representing different geographic and security-policy perspectives but united in their desire to unlock disarmament diplomacy through constructive engagement. The Berlin ministerial declaration includes an annex with concrete proposals for stepping stones towards nuclear disarmament that could lay the groundwork for further progress down the road. The stepping stones cover areas such as minimizing the risk of conflict and the use of nuclear weapons, diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in policy and doctrine and enhancing nuclear-disarmament verification. The

document has been formally submitted as a working paper to the NPT Review Conference. We have reached out to nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States with an invitation to align themselves with our proposals and are happy to see that several countries have already chosen to support our cause.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a crucial part of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We urge all the remaining annex 2 States to take prompt steps towards ratification. Pending the Treaty's entry into force, all moratoriums on nuclear test explosions must be maintained.

With its confidence-building qualities, disarmament verification remains one of the success stories of recent years. Sweden is proud to be engaged in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the projects under the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership, as well as in the soon-to-be-established Group of Governmental Experts.

We note that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is likely to enter into force in the not-too-distant future. Due to certain shortcomings in the text, Sweden has decided against signing or seeking ratification of the Treaty in its current form. We will, however, seek to become an observer State once it enters into force.

Nuclear-weapon States carry a special responsibility. Time is running out for extending the New START Treaty, which is critical to global security. Sweden calls on the United States and Russia to promptly agree on an extension, thereby avoiding a scenario in which the world is left without any regulatory framework for strategic nuclear arsenals. Recent exploratory talks between the United States and Russia on possible future arms-control regimes will hopefully pave the way for negotiations on concrete arrangements. We would welcome China's participation in that process, as we would like to see the inclusion of more types of weapon systems, particularly non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Sweden remains strongly committed to preventing an arms race in outer space. We see a need for strengthening the normative framework and do not exclude the possibility of taking further legally binding measures in the future. Transparency and confidence-building measures have a key role to play. Given the dual-use nature of many space systems, an approach centred around responsible behaviour is of great merit. Sweden therefore welcomes draft resolution

A/C.1/75/L.45, entitled "Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours". We urge all States to refrain from harmful activities such as the intentional destruction of space objects, which would generate debris.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays an indispensable role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, promoting nuclear safety and facilitating the use of nuclear technology, including in areas such as health, food and water. Sweden was proud to serve as Chair of the Board of Governors last year. We are impressed with the way the Agency has been able to continue its work during the COVID-19 pandemic. We must also ensure that the Agency has adequate inspection tools and we should continue to work for the universalization of the additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement.

The nuclear and missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remain a major threat. The country should formalize its commitments towards denuclearization in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Sweden continues to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which contributes to regional and international peace and security, and we recently joined the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges. Iran's failure to comply with the nuclear restrictions under the JCPOA is highly troubling. We deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and its unilateral reimposition of sanctions. The joint statement of 26 August ended months of Iranian non-cooperation. It is crucial to ensure that all IAEA verification activities in Iran can now proceed without further delay and that henceforth Iran will cooperate fully and in a timely manner with the Agency.

Any use of chemical weapons is a violation of international law. It is a matter of urgency that we hold the perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria accountable. Syria's violations of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention are deeply worrying and must be condemned in the strongest terms by the international community. Sweden also condemns the attempt to assassinate the Russian politician Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned in Russia with a military chemical nerve agent. We have full confidence in Germany's handling of the case and welcome its request for technical assistance from the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical

Weapons (OPCW). We expect the Russian Federation to immediately conduct a credible and transparent investigation of the assassination attempt. We also call on the Russian authorities to cooperate fully with the OPCW in ensuring an impartial international investigation and bringing those responsible to justice. We note with great concern the attempts that have been made to discredit the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which Sweden firmly rejects. We stand steadfastly behind the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat.

We strongly support the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and look forward to more productive outcomes at the next Review Conference of the Parties. The current pandemic should be a reminder of the biological threat. We must now unite in facing the challenge.

A holistic approach to global security challenges is crucial. Illicit flows of small arms and light weapons continue to pose a threat to peace, security and sustainable development. We must ensure the continued implementation of multilateral agreements such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the International Tracing Instrument, as well as continued support for programmes addressing both the physical security and socioeconomic aspects of armed violence.

New challenges are emerging with the rapid development of technologies. It is important to find effective solutions that prevent unwanted development, and the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems is no exception. Sweden firmly believes that international humanitarian law continues to apply fully to all weapon systems and that human control over the use of force must always be upheld. Sweden supports the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is the main forum for continuing discussions on those issues. The 11 guiding principles are a welcome step that could form the basis for further progress. We should continue to seek consensus around the central elements of lethal autonomous weapon systems, not least those related to what constitutes human control.

Much will be at stake in 2021, a crucial year for multilateralism, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Although many signs point in the wrong direction, there is still time for us to begin delivering on our commitments. Sweden intends to do

its part. We call on all States to engage constructively in discussions that can lead to real progress on the ground.

Mr. Rodrigo (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka congratulates you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee, and the members of the Bureau on their election. We assure you of Sri Lanka's full cooperation and support in steering the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion.

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/75/PV.2).

We would like to thank Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly, and Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu for their valuable remarks to the Committee at the start of the session (see A/C.1/75/PV.2). We share the view expressed by President Bozkir that the Committee is passing through one of its most critical periods in constructing and sustaining the existing principles of cooperation and agreements on disarmament and arms control, as well as his concern that we cannot afford to unravel what has been painstakingly built over the past 75 years. We listened carefully to the address by the High Representative and remain concerned about the ongoing worrying trends in the realm of nuclear disarmament, which has been marked by deteriorating conditions in the global political landscape, an increasing sense of distrust, rhetoric and animosity between nuclear-weapon States and a widening chasm among Member States on how to work on our collective goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. We remain dismayed at the annulment of previously agreed agreements on arms control and disarmament and at the rollback of many common understandings and agreed benchmarks.

It was under Sri Lanka's chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement that a call was made for a special session of the General Assembly to be devoted to disarmament in 1978. At the time of the first special session, the world was spending approximately \$400 billion a year on arms. Some four decades on, global military expenditure has steadily increased. We are alarmed that total military expenditure has now exceeded \$1.9 trillion, the highest level since the end of the Cold War. Sri Lanka joins others in the call for directing some of those funds to economic and social development for the betterment of humankind.

The global coronavirus disease pandemic has shown how vulnerable the world can be to pathogens and disease and is a sharp reminder that there is a pressing need to improve global health security. As every country across the globe struggles to control and mitigate the spread of the pandemic and its socioeconomic affects, it is rather sad to realize that more funds are spent on military arsenals than are invested in human health.

Sri Lanka underscores that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an essential pillar of international peace and security and remains at the heart of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, with 191 States parties. Sri Lanka attaches the highest priority to full and immediate compliance with the implementation of the NPT and its effective promotion, and to ensuring respect for its three pillars and the need for a delicate balance among them. We strongly believe that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. Both must be pursued. However, the goal of nuclear non-proliferation should not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire and have access to nuclear material, energy and technology for peaceful purposes.

Without our concerted collective action, next year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will take place in an uncertain international environment. Although a consensus on recommendations could not be forged at the third preparatory committee for the Review Conference last year, we would like to commend the Chair's efforts to present a working paper with key recommendations. We also appreciate the work of Ambassador Syed Aidid of Malaysia in coming up with a balanced document that reflected the views of the entire NPT membership, not just the two main groups. We are of the view that the recommendations cover essential issues on which there is common ground, as well as important priority issues such as risk reduction, transparency, reporting and gender. We hope that the recommendations can serve as a guide for our collective efforts to achieve success at the Review Conference next year.

Sri Lanka strongly believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is our only guarantee against the threat of nuclear weapons. In that regard, all States have an obligation to negotiate in good faith to achieve the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon States must make progress in eliminating their stockpiles. We remain concerned about

the fact that States are now modernizing their nuclear arsenals with increasingly destructive capabilities and developing new weapons and delivery systems.

Sri Lanka seeks to advance and promote respect for the objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention and continues to call for their effective and non-discriminatory implementation. This year marked the forty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the BWC, which, with the support of 183 State parties, remains relevant and a priority for States. Sri Lanka signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993 and remains committed to delivering on its national obligations under the Convention. The relevant national authority in Sri Lanka has been reoriented, with a greater focus on security and disarmament aspects.

Sri Lanka calls for taking practical steps to establish zones free of weapons of mass destruction and for building on the nuclear-weapon-free zones that already exist, particularly in regions where such zones are not in place.

As a country that has experienced a 30-year separatist terrorist conflict, Sri Lanka is acutely aware of the devastation and destruction caused by small arms and light weapons and the illicit trade in weapons. Sri Lanka is a signatory to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and has established a national commission against the proliferation of illicit small arms to address the spread of such arms in the country. Greater steps must also be made to address all the related aspects of the problem of illicit small arms, including weapon collection and destruction, adequate legal and policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, proper stockpile management and education and awareness. We underscore that any measures relating to conventional arms control, including small arms and light weapons, must be based on ensuring that human beings are at the centre of all such efforts. In that regard, Sri Lanka looks forward to a positive outcome next year as Member States review the Programme of Action at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States, and hopes that this will provide an opportunity to examine aspects such as national target setting and recent technological developments, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report on *Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts 2020*.

We would like to commend the work of the three United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, which play an important role in assisting Member States through capacity-building and training. This year Sri Lanka took part with nine other States from the region in a baseline assessment for disarmament education with the Regional Centre in Asia based in Kathmandu. We also appreciate the Centre's assistance last year in conducting an assessment of national measures to curb illicit flows of small arms in the region.

Having initiated State-level discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems during its presidency of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in 2015, which paved the way for the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems in 2016, Sri Lanka supports the ongoing discussions within the framework of the Group of Governmental Experts and encourages the continuation of that process. In our view, the centrality of human control is fundamental. Ensuring legal clarity on the exact parameters of prohibitive and permissive limitations through the adoption of a new, legally binding instrument is the only way forward that would provide clear legal limitations on autonomous weapons systems while complementing existing norms of international humanitarian law. Sri Lanka encourages the States parties to the CCW to deepen and fast-track the discussion within the Group of Governmental Experts in order to urgently address the issues of possible development and deployment and ensure that our efforts on this very important issue are not overtaken by the fast-moving realities on the ground.

Of all the weapons that States have accumulated over the years, few are more persistent or more indiscriminate than landmines, which have devastating health and socioeconomic effects on individuals and entire communities. It has been estimated that half a million landmines were buried in the conflict area in Sri Lanka. Our Government has made mine clearance a top priority in its post-conflict development and reconciliation efforts, working closely with a number of mine-clearing non-governmental organizations and local organizations. We stand ready to share our experiences and best practices to help countries in demining tasks. To date, Sri Lanka has cleared 140 square kilometres, with 15 square kilometres remaining. While Sri Lanka had set the target of becoming mine-free by 2020 through an accelerated national strategy, various

practical constraints, including inadequate funding, have delayed the achievement of that target. We remain committed to a path of making Sri Lanka landmine-free by focusing on mine clearance, the resettlement of those affected, risk reduction and victim assistance. Sri Lanka appreciates its development partners' continued assistance in achieving those targets as soon as possible.

Sri Lanka would like to emphasize that outer space is part of the common heritage of humankind. It is our global commons and as humankind's last frontier, it needs protection. There should be equal opportunities for its exploration and utilization for peaceful purposes. There is a pressing need to ensure that outer space remains free of conflict, and it is vital that we prevent any arms race in outer space.

Mr. Gaye (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election and assures you of its full support in ensuring the proper conduct of the work of the First Committee. Unfortunately, that work is still taking place in a context where the proliferation and sophistication of weapons continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The situation is all the more worrisome as the uncertain future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iran nuclear issue, the impasse in the talks on the Korean nuclear issue and the recent termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, among other things, are daily extinguishing the few glimmers of hope we once had on disarmament issues.

Reversing those negative trends is therefore an imperative that we urgently need to address, and for that there are no alternatives to strong, sincere and productive multilateral cooperation on all arms-control and disarmament issues. That is why Senegal associates itself with the recommendations made on the subject by the representatives of Indonesia and Cameroon on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/75/PV.2), and would also like to share a few remarks on nuclear disarmament and conventional arms control.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, my delegation reaffirms its commitment not only to preserving the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, but also to ensuring the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. However, in order to make those treaties relevant and effective, it

is first and foremost incumbent on the nuclear States to agree on a more realistic and ambitious programme for reducing their arsenals, and at the same time to agree on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon countries. It should also be borne in mind that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two interdependent and equally important objectives. The complete and final disarmament we desire therefore cannot occur if nuclear States continue to modernize their arsenals and other countries circumvent existing instruments in order to acquire nuclear weapons.

In that regard, the International Atomic Energy Agency has a leading role to play in adopting effective measures to halt the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, and its authority and capacity for action should be strengthened. We should also encourage the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which is why Senegal is renewing its commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which consolidates Africa's status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and urges all States to endorse the project to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The urgency of reaching a successful outcome for those issues demands that we reject our traditional differences and unproductive deliberations, especially since we are less than a year away from a key global meeting for the future of the international disarmament agenda, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Pending significant progress in those areas, we therefore call on States to exercise more diplomacy and a greater sense of responsibility in order to preserve the gains achieved within the framework of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme, the agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation on limiting strategic offensive weapons in Europe, and the Panmunjom and Singapore declarations on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

With regard to conventional weapons, their illicit circulation continues to fuel armed conflicts and urban violence throughout the world, especially in third-world countries. This scourge demands that all Member States work to promote international instruments regulating conventional weapons. That is why Senegal signed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 3 June 2013, proceeded to its ratification on 25 September 2014 and organized a workshop to endorse a bill on the matter on 10 and

11 October 2019. Once the bill is enacted, a national checklist will be drawn up and the structures and persons responsible for its implementation upgraded and trained. Senegal encourages all countries that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the ATT. We also call on States to ensure their complete, regular and timely submission of national reports on international arms transfers under the ATT, the International Tracing Instrument and the Register of Conventional Arms. We call for the creation of an eighth category dedicated to small arms and light weapons within the Register.

With regard to the issue of small arms and light weapons, the final document of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3) has already opened up ambitious prospects, not only in terms of combating the illicit diversion, manufacture, reactivation and conversion of such weapons but also in terms of taking into account ammunition and technological developments in the arms industry. It is therefore incumbent on us to strive for the success of the next Biennial Meeting of States, which has been postponed to 2021 because of the coronavirus disease pandemic but which will be crucial to the adequate follow-up of those priorities.

Furthermore, the prevention and mitigation of the humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, through the prohibition of their manufacture, stockpiling and use, must be established as principles, in the spirit of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions. Senegal welcomes and encourages the valuable contribution of non-governmental organizations in that regard. Within the framework of the technical and financial assistance provided to the countries concerned to help them carry out their demining programmes, we believe it would also be wise to pay particular attention to ensuring the socioeconomic rehabilitation of victims.

I should not conclude without once again expressing my delegation's deep concern about the chronic impasses affecting the functioning of disarmament bodies. The Conference on Disarmament has not been able to adopt a programme of work for more than 20 years and the work of the Disarmament Commission has been paralysed since 2019, to cite just two examples. That inaction should goad us into mustering greater collective awareness, political will and concrete efforts to overcome our differences and ensure that a spirit

of consensus prevails in these important international forums where we hope to realize the ideal of a world free of the scourge of weapons.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on delegations that have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I should remind all delegations that in accordance with the decision made at the organizational meeting, the first intervention in right of reply should be limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes.

Mr. Al-Dobhany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have asked for the floor to reply to the statement by the representative of Iran and to clarify the following points.

First, the main reason behind the war in Yemen is the coup d'état of 21 September 2014, launched by the Houthi militias, supported by Iran and carried out against the country's legitimate authority, its national consensus and the outcome of a comprehensive national dialogue.

Secondly, the intervention by the coalition supporting legitimacy in Yemen and led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia took place in response to an official request from the legitimate President of Yemen for help in ending the coup and restoring the legitimate State institutions.

Thirdly, Iran's double standards are clear to all and its policies fool no one. Iran is interfering in a country of the region on a pretext of supporting the legitimate Government against terrorists while at the same time funding a coup by a terrorist group in Yemen that has risen up against the constitutional legitimacy of a country whose governing system has been based on democratic and partisan pluralism since 1990.

Fourthly, when Iran's representatives weep for the suffering of the Yemeni people they shed crocodile tears. Iran's leaders have Yemeni blood on their hands. Iran supports the Houthi militias by providing them with the missiles, mines and weapons that kill our people and cause humanitarian suffering. Those are facts corroborated by the reports of the Security Council's Panel of Experts on Yemen and by Iran's military statements.

Fifthly, instead of lamenting the humanitarian situation in Yemen and lying publicly in international forums, Iran should stop sending weapons that kill Yemenis. Throughout years of conflict in Yemen Iran has not sent even a single bottle of water to Yemen.

Mr. Asokan (India): I am taking the floor to exercise India's right of reply to Pakistan's blatant abuse of this forum today. Pakistan has made a habit of abusing the sanctity of every United Nations forum by spreading falsehoods. We expect nothing less from a nation — and certainly not in the First Committee — that encourages sectarian violence against Muslims and minorities and harbours a deep sense of insecurity and orchestrated hatred for India and our secular credentials. However, despite Pakistan's desperate efforts, the world is able to see through its deceit. It is time to hold Pakistan to account and not let it misuse United Nations platforms to spread disinformation and hatred and incite violence.

Pakistan has once again attempted and failed to present baseless fabrications about my country. As a responsible State, India strictly abides by its obligations under international treaties and needs no advice from a country that has a proven track record of illicit exports of nuclear material and technology. India's security concerns are not confined to a region and India has therefore always approached these issues in a global context. Pakistan has also made a number of futile and unsubstantiated allegations against India, including in relation to Jammu and Kashmir. These do not merit a response, as they pertain to matters internal to India.

As an epicentre of terrorism, Pakistan is the biggest destabilizing force in the world. It has spurned the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire through its sponsorship of cross-border terrorism. It has broken the principles that the United Nations stands for. While Pakistan's Permanent Representative spoke about peace and security here, his Prime Minister glorified Osama Bin Laden as a martyr. Pakistan has become the epitome of duplicity.

In contrast to India's constructive approach on disarmament matters, we all know who has blocked the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty on several occasions, including in 2009, when the Conference on Disarmament adopted a consensus programme of work. Having willingly joined the consensus on the programme of work, Pakistan soon made an absolute mockery of the world by making a complete U-turn and blocking any work in the Conference on Disarmament. All of us continue to suffer because of Pakistan's irresponsible behaviour.

The First Committee has a vast agenda dealing with global issues related to disarmament and international security. It is not a forum for addressing bilateral or

regional issues. As India has made clear on several occasions, regional security issues have no place in the First Committee's deliberations. The Committee should therefore not be distracted by Pakistan's nefarious and vicious designs and should reject its efforts to politicize the Committee's work and derail its mandate. Since I have said what I need to say, Mr. Chair, I will not take the floor again or spend any more time on this issue, out of respect for the work of the First Committee under your able guidance and leadership.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): I am taking the floor to respond to the comments we have heard from the representative of India.

The observations that my delegation made earlier might be uncomfortable for India, but they remain irrefutable facts. The extremist ideology that is pervasive in India today, along with its offensive doctrines and hegemonic pretensions, its quest for conventional and strategic military dominance, its history of aggression against its neighbours and its refusal to engage in dialogue on the resolution of disputes or confidence-building present a clear and ominous danger, not just to Pakistan but to regional and international peace and security. India's illegal actions in occupied Jammu and Kashmir in violation of Security Council resolutions, coupled with its belligerent rhetoric, have further compounded the problematic security situation in the region.

Contrary to the representative's assertion, those issues are completely relevant to the Committee's work, as they have grave implications for regional and international peace and security. The spurious claim that India's security compulsions are not limited to any geographic location or region is belied by the fact that more than 70 per cent of its military capabilities are deployed against my country. Moreover, India's senior political and military leadership has openly resorted to irresponsible rhetoric against Pakistan, reflecting a dangerous hegemonic mindset. To quote just a few examples, in April 2019, at a public rally in Rajasthan, Prime Minister Modi said that India's nuclear weapons are not for celebrating Diwali, while boasting that India had the capability to launch nuclear attacks from land, air and sea. Such reckless statements and irresponsible rhetoric have a direct bearing on matters of regional and global peace and security as well as on the discussions on nuclear arms, which the Indian leadership brandishes and threatens to use.

Furthermore, the Indian delegation's statement did not address the facts presented by my delegation regarding its destabilizing arms build-up and aggressive military policies. The international community and the vital organs of the disarmament machinery have a duty to take note of those reckless statements and the dangerous policies and doctrines that threaten regional and international peace and security.

I also want to remind the Indian delegation that Jammu and Kashmir is neither an integral part of India nor an internal matter for India. As several Security Council resolutions attest, it is an internationally recognized disputed territory whose final status is to be determined by a United Nations-sanctioned plebiscite in line with the vision and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. With more than 900,000 troops deployed there, India has imposed the densest occupation in history.

As for India's unmerited claim about its support for a fissile material cut-off treaty, after amassing tons of unsafeguarded fissile material as a so-called strategic reserve, directly aided and abetted by discriminatory waivers from the Nuclear Suppliers Group and supplier countries, India's declared position in favour of the commencement of negotiations on such a treaty is nothing more than grandstanding. Pakistan's position on a fissile material cut-off treaty is guided by its national security interests. Such a treaty should provide undiminished security for all States, as recognized by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and should contribute to the objectives of both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. Pakistan is open and constructive in its engagement in finding a solution that addresses the concerns of all the countries affected. In that regard, Pakistan has offered many proposals and ideas, both bilaterally and in the Conference on Disarmament, that India has repeatedly rejected. Pakistan reiterates its willingness to go along with negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty whose scope expressly includes existing stocks.

Finally, on the issue of cross-border terrorism, India's self-serving, groundless accusations are by now a familiar ploy for diverting the world's attention and justifying its illegal actions and destabilizing policies. The fact is that it is India that is using terrorism as an instrument of its coercive policies against every one of its neighbours and its own Muslim population, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir.

The international community does not need lectures from the representatives of a State whose leadership seeks to achieve domestic gains by jeopardizing peace and security in our region, systematically pursues an extremist, fascist agenda to the detriment of regional stability and has been engaged in brutally suppressing the legitimate struggle of the people of Kashmir for their right to self-determination for more than 70 years.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I will not delve deeply into the absurdities that the representative of Yemen expressed about Iran, which we reject as undeserving of serious consideration. I simply want to recall that nothing can justify such a breach of international human rights and international humanitarian law. Moreover, it is greatly regrettable that Yemen acknowledges that it invited another country to intervene militarily in its territory but has not asked it to stop bombing or exerting economic pressure, resulting in the most severe humanitarian crisis in history.

I also want to reflect on and clarify another issue, that of Iran's ballistic-missile programme, which a few countries, including Germany, have raised concerns about in the course of our deliberations. They have also argued that Iran's ballistic-missile launchers are inconsistent with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). In fact, our defensive posture is the result of sober geostrategic calculation and moral and religious convictions and is based on significant historical experience. During Saddam Hussein's aggression against Iran, he rained missiles on our cities. Some of them carried chemical components provided by certain Western countries, including the United States and Germany. In addition to the thousands of innocent Iranians who died, 100,000 victims are still suffering as a result of those attacks. Germany must be held accountable for its role in helping to equip Saddam with chemical weapons and commit war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Yet Iran was actively prevented from purchasing even the most rudimentary means of self-defence to at least deter the aggressor. The imposition of such restrictions on Iran by all Western countries continues. In addition to Saddam's aggression, which was effectively backed by the United States and its regional allies, Iran has been subject to American military interventions on a number of occasions over the past 40 years. During those decades, we also faced persistent threats from the United States, especially those based

on its outdated mantra that all options are on the table. We should recall that certain countries in the region have been calling on the United States to attack Iran for many years. And then there are Israel's decades of threats against Iran, most recently by threatening us with nuclear annihilation. That is definitely wishful thinking.

We have therefore learned our lessons, through having to deal with persistent restrictions in obtaining essential defensive weapons, on the one hand, and in defending our nation against continued foreign threats, on the other. We learned that no Iranian administration can leave its people defenceless in a region as volatile as the Persian Gulf. Our main responsibility is to protect our citizens. We have therefore developed our own indigenous missile defence system, which is a legitimate and lawful programme and our inherent right under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is worth mentioning that our entire defence expenditure is a fraction of that of United States clients in our neighbourhood, who race to buy hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of the most sophisticated weaponry, including long-range missiles.

With regard to the role of missiles in its defence posture, Iran's missile programme is a conventional defensive capability. Its missiles are for defensive purposes only and are an effective deterrent against foreign threats. Iran's conscious decision to focus on precision rather than range has afforded it the capability to strike back with pinpoint accuracy. Nuclear weapons do not need to be precise, but conventional weapons do. The only use that Iran has made of missiles since the beginning of the eight-year war imposed on us has been limited and measured military action in legitimate self-defence. Efforts to portray Iran's valid ballistic missiles as a regional threat are therefore deceptive and hostile.

Finally, regarding the arguments on the relationship between Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and Iran's ballistic-missile launch, the resolution only calls on Iran not to engage in any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Iran has repeatedly stated that none of its ballistic missiles have been designed to have such a capability. We respect resolution 2231 (2015) and our international commitments.

Mr. Alnahdi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to exercise our right to respond to the statements made by the representative of Iran.

Iran's statements are simply evasive. I reiterate that Iran should do as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia does to ensure transparency. We call on it to immediately and fully cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

With regard to the situation in the Middle East, including the Arabian Gulf region, if Iran wants to forge normal relations with the States of the region it must stop supporting terrorism, engaging in policies of destruction and chaos, interfering in the internal affairs of Arab countries and developing weapons of mass destruction. It must behave like a normal country and not one that sponsors terrorism.

Mr. Al-dobhany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have asked for the floor once again to reply to the representative of Iran. Unfortunately, he knows that he is lying. Everyone here knows that he is lying. He is also aware that everyone here knows that he is lying. As the Arab saying goes, he who is not does not feel shame can do whatever he wants.

Iran must stop interfering in the internal affairs of Yemen. It should function as an element of stability and peace in the region instead of playing a destructive role, and it should mobilize its resources for the welfare and development of the Iranian people.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): We reject the allegations made by Saudi Arabia and Yemen about our country and would like to remind them that it is the United Nations that has recognized the situation in Yemen as the worst ongoing humanitarian crisis in the world — that is, not Iran but the international community.

As for the absurdities expressed by the representative of Saudi Arabia regarding Iran, I should highlight the fact that in a series of fabrications and disinformation, Saudi Arabia is desperately attempting to distract attention from its long, dark record of harbouring, financing, inciting and arming the most dangerous terrorist networks, disseminating hate speech and extreme ideology, sowing the seeds of sectarian division and pursuing destabilizing, disruptive and subversive policies and practices in the region, as well as the crimes it has been committing in Yemen for more than six years, in flagrant violation of basic principles of morality and humanity and the rules of international law, particularly international humanitarian law. Saudi

Arabia has been a source of instability in the region for decades. It is a well-established fact that Saudi Arabia was the main financial supporter of the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during his eight-year aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran, in which he committed numerous crimes, including by using chemical weapons against Iranian and Iraqi citizens and cities.

With respect to Saudi Arabia's role in supporting terrorist groups, it is now quite evident that that country's Wahhabi ideology is the main source of inspiration for the world's most dangerous terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida, and that it has served as the chief financier of such groups through its petrodollars. Another vivid example of Saudi Arabia's destructive policies in the region is its almost six-year campaign of aggression, death and destruction in Yemen, where thousands of civilians, including women and children, have been killed and homes, mosques, hospitals, schools, marketplaces, diplomatic missions and even wedding and funeral ceremonies have been targeted. Its crimes have been so brutal and horrible that at one point the United Nations placed Saudi Arabia at the top of the global list of child killers, although it was later dropped from that list for what were clearly non-professional reasons.

Mr. Alnahdi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I will not repeat what I have previously said. However, I will only say that if Iran spent just one tenth of what it spends on terrorist groups to achieve development at home, its people would be enjoying prosperity.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in exercise of the right of reply.

Before we adjourn, I would like to remind all delegations that the deadline for submitting draft resolutions and decisions under all agenda items is at 4 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, 15 October. The seventh meeting of the First Committee will be held tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. sharp in this Hall, where we shall continue the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. I appeal to all delegations to be punctual so that we can proceed with our work in a timely manner.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.