



# General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

## First Committee

7<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 12 October 2021, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Hilale .....(Morocco)

*In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Mohd Nasir (Malaysia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

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

### Agenda items 92 to 107 (continued)

#### General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

**The Acting Chair:** Given the progress made in the current phase of our work, we should conclude our general debate this morning. In accordance with the decision taken yesterday (see A/C.1/76/PV.6) to proceed with the thematic discussions today, I would like to inform delegations about how I intend to proceed.

First, the Committee will exhaust the list of speakers for the general debate. Thereafter, it will listen to statements in exercise of the right of reply to statements made during the general debate. The Committee will then begin the second segment of its work, namely, the thematic discussions. There will then be an opportunity prior to the conclusion of the meeting for delegations to exercise their right of reply to statements made during the thematic discussions.

Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations that the list of speakers for the thematic discussions will close today at 6 p.m.

I would further remind delegations that I count on their cooperation to respect the time limit for statements and to speak at a reasonable speed to allow for adequate interpretation. Longer statements can be posted on the eStatements portal.

**Mr. Kpukumu** (Sierra Leone): Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Omar Hilale and the other members of the Bureau on their election to lead the work of the First Committee.

Sierra Leone aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Ghana, on behalf of the Group of African States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.2).

Achieving total and complete disarmament globally is the end goal that Sierra Leone looks forward to. We believe that ensuring effective multilateralism and the rules-based order is the way to achieve that end goal. The world has witnessed increased military spending over the past few years, which breeds mistrust and indicates that States have reverted to the arms race in preparation for military engagement. Increased military expenditure and an arms race are existential threats to global peace and security.

Sierra Leone strongly opposes the renewal of the arms race and calls on all Member States to stand together in the global fight against increased military spending and the reignition of the arms race. Any savings made on military expenditure could be used in other areas in pursuit of sustainable development.

Sierra Leone is concerned about the slow rate of progress made by the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. For us, that is a matter of grave concern. We therefore call on all Member States to remove all obstacles and challenges that negatively impact upon the resumption

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of the Conference on Disarmament so as to advance the work of the Disarmament Commission.

Sierra Leone is pleased about the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in January. However, we note that more remains to be done, especially by the nuclear-weapon States, given that less progress has been made on nuclear disarmament. Total and complete disarmament, which involves the elimination of nuclear, biological, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction is the only guarantee of global peace and security. Sierra Leone therefore welcomes the renewal of the New START Treaty and calls on all nuclear-weapon States to engage both bilaterally and multilaterally in order to eliminate nuclear weapons from their political and military strategies. Sierra Leone remains committed to the signing and ratification of the TPNW and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and looks forward to the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, which is scheduled for early next year.

Sierra Leone supports the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technologies. We also support the view that all States reserve the right to develop and use nuclear energy, which should be done with a strong focus on socioeconomic growth and development. No treaty should be used as a pretext to prevent the transfer, research or development of nuclear energy for its peaceful use by non-nuclear-weapon States.

As President of the seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Sierra Leone worked with all delegations and made outstanding progress in strengthening efforts to eradicate small arms and light weapons. Based on our experience as a post-conflict country, we fully subscribe to the view that, first, the illicit trade in, and poor management of, stockpiles of small arms and light weapons fuel armed conflicts and undermine the rule of law and respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law; and secondly, that the efficacy of the ATT as a global instrument for arms control requires a sustained, integrated and collaborative approach in addressing the problems of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, let me —

**The Acting Chair:** I am sorry, but the representative of Sierra Leone is out of time.

**Mr. Erdan (Israel):** We continue to witness a worrisome escalation in the realm of arms control. In that regard, the Middle East continues to struggle with a chronic lack of compliance with arms control norms and principles. There is an urgent need to focus on the implementation, compliance and verification of the obligations of States. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in and of itself does not provide a remedy for the unique security challenges of the region, let alone the repeated violations of the Treaty by some of its signatories. Four of the five cases of serious violations of the NPT took place in the Middle East.

The Iranian nuclear programme has reached a critical stage — a stage that demands the action of true leadership. Iran has been violating its nuclear obligations for more than two years now. Its violations with regard to enrichment, stockpiling uranium metal and research and development are now so extensive that they have completely hollowed the Iranian obligations of their essence. Inaction in the face of Iran's nuclear advances serves only to bolster Iran's resolve to continue its flagrant violations. Allowing Iran to become a threshold nuclear State puts world peace in the balance and will remain a black stain on the history of the free world.

Iran has also violated its commitments to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards under the comprehensive safeguards agreement and the additional protocol, to the extent that the Director-General of the IAEA recently stated that the Agency can no longer maintain continuity of knowledge. Moreover, four different cases of safeguards issues relating to undeclared nuclear material that have been under investigation for two years remain unresolved. All answers provided by Iran with regard to the investigation have been deemed not to be technically credible by the IAEA. Iran has also blatantly violated its obligation under annex B of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) from the outset and has continued to provide advanced and destabilizing missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles to numerous terrorist organizations under its influence, which is causing chaos and threatening all countries in the Middle East, including Israel.

The use of chemical weapons by States in the Middle East has occurred several times since the Second World War, in violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Two additional cases of Member States from

the region violating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) now need to be further investigated.

In April this year, a second report on the use of chemical weapons by Syria was published by the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Along with the first report of April 2020, the two reports attribute responsibility for four different chemical attacks on civilians carried out in 2017 and 2018 to the Syrian Government, which had acceded to the CWC and vowed to forego its entire chemical weapons programme. It is vital that the international community remain vigilant in dealing with the challenge of the non-compliance of Syria and that it continue to investigate the current abilities and activities of Syria with regard to its chemical weapons programme.

With respect to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Israel wishes to emphasize its long-stated view that the Treaty, which Israel does not support, does not create, contribute to the development of, or indicate the existence of customary law related to the subject or content of the Treaty.

Finally, initiatives such as the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction contravene the guidelines and principles of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The experiences of other regions demonstrate that any regional security framework can result only from the mutual political desire of all regional parties to engage with each other, taking into consideration the security concerns of every State and reflecting the arrangements freely arrived at by all States concerned, as stipulated in the 1999 report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (A/54/42) on guidelines and principles for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

**Mr. Blanco Conde** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate Mr. Omar Hilale and the other members of the Bureau on their election to preside over the work of the First Committee. We trust that their leadership will generate fruitful results. They can count on the support of our delegation in their efforts.

The full version of my statement will be published on the eStatements web portal.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf

of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and that made by the representative of Guatemala, on behalf of the Central American Integration System (see A/C.1/76/PV.2).

There is an increasingly urgent need to work together to tackle the existing threats to international peace and security and emerging challenges, which have been further aggravated by the coronavirus disease pandemic, all of which serves to underscore the importance of the work of the First Committee.

We wish to reaffirm the high priority that we attach to the issue of the illicit trafficking in conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Their widespread availability, excessive accumulation and misuse constitute a serious threat to international peace and security, as they foster armed violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and undermine human rights. In that respect, we are firmly committed to the international instruments that call for combating that scourge, including the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; and the Arms Trade Treaty, as tools to combat armed violence and organized crime, which have permeated the bedrock of the societies of our region. We hope to see the universalization of those instruments with a prevailing harmonization among them.

We welcome the successful conclusion of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation 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 the adoption by consensus of its outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, annex), which includes commitments by States with regard to the full participation of women in disarmament and non-proliferation processes. We also welcome the report of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816) and the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (see A/76/135), both of which seek to create rules and norms for responsible behaviour in cyberspace. We continue

to uphold our commitment and effort at the national level towards strengthening information security and promoting international cooperation, including by undertaking measures to increase cyberspace security.

We recognize the progress that has been reflected in the area of non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, despite the various measures imposed by some States that may constitute a setback to those achievements. In contrast, nuclear disarmament is the pillar that has made the least progress; we would even say that it has become stagnant. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons continues to be the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and requires the balanced implementation of its three pillars without any distinctions or preconditions, in particular the obligations contained in its article VI, as well as the recommendations that emanated from the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty, which remain in force.

The Dominican Republic is proud to be located in the region that was declared the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, as established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which has been a benchmark for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones. We therefore wish to emphasize the importance of continuing that practice in other regions, given that such zones contribute to the maintenance of peace and security and foster trust among nations. In that regard, we welcome the convening 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, and we hope that the second session will yield positive results. We also welcome the extension of the New START Treaty and the resumption of the strategic stability dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation.

Finally, we wish to reaffirm our commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and the strengthening of security infrastructures. We are committed to working constructively towards those overarching goals and to the tasks of the First Committee.

**Mr. Kassim** (Brunei Darussalam): At the outset, I wish to express my congratulations to Mr. Omar Hilale and the other members of the Bureau on their election.

We align ourselves with the statements made on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and

the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/76/PV.2).

Allow me to focus on five points. First, the total elimination of nuclear weapons is our best hope of preventing nuclear tragedies. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we maintain that the effectiveness of the Treaty relies on the commitment of States parties to implementing its obligations. It is therefore essential that all States parties renew their commitment to the NPT, and we look forward to the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, which is due to be held in 2022.

As a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we welcome its entry into force and hope that its first meeting of States parties next year will mark another important milestone. As a party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, it is regretful that the Treaty has still not entered into force, especially given that this year commemorates its twenty-fifth anniversary. We therefore call on States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

Secondly, as a State member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), we commend its contributions in advocating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We have undertaken similar efforts, including by pursuing nuclear medicine services for the Brunei Cancer Centre and providing nuclear medicine treatments for its patients. We also amended the IAEA's small quantities protocol, as a reassurance that nuclear materials in Brunei Darussalam are limited and used only for peaceful means, including in the health sector.

Thirdly, we underscore the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in ensuring a peaceful and stable region. We continue to engage in discussions with the nuclear-weapon States and to intensify the ongoing efforts of all parties with a view to resolving all outstanding issues, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty. We also maintain our support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and hope that the people of the Middle East may live in peace and in a region free of weapons of mass destruction.

Fourthly, given the advancements in information and communication technologies (ICT), all countries big and small alike face evolving cybersecurity threats



that have become more complex, with malign actors spreading disinformation and undermining a rules-based cyberspace. In that regard, Brunei Darussalam reiterates its support for efforts that promote secure, inclusive and responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, including the establishment of the new Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security for the period 2021-2025, which will build on the work of the previous Open-ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security.

At the national level, Brunei Darussalam's commitment to a rules-based cyberspace is reflected in the establishment of the Cyber Security Brunei agency in 2020. Inter alia, it aims to increase awareness of cyberthreats, especially regarding the protection of critical information infrastructure, and to enhance law enforcement capabilities. The agency was further supported this year by the establishment of a cyberdefence unit, which reflects the supportive role of our defence forces and the whole-of-Government approach of Brunei Darussalam. We have subsequently witnessed how outer space has transitioned from a domain of exploration to one of commerce and security. Brunei Darussalam is pleased to announce that it has published its 2021 defence white paper, which, inter alia, acknowledges the importance of the space domain and the way in which outer space can become increasingly contested as the reliance of nations on space technologies continues to grow. That reflects our commitment to the peaceful uses of outer space and efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

As the coronavirus disease pandemic has impacted our daily lives and continues to challenge our national, regional and global mechanisms and structures, we must remain future-ready and vigilant about the evolving security challenges and threats. We therefore remain committed to the work of the First Committee as a platform for sustained dialogue in strengthening our shared resolve for future-ready efforts that will contribute to a peaceful and prosperous world.

**The Acting Chair:** I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by Mr. Flávio Roberto Bonzanini, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting Chair:** I now give the floor to the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

**Ms. Christory** (International Committee of the Red Cross): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is grateful for the opportunity to address the First Committee at this critical juncture in multilateral disarmament efforts and international humanitarian law.

In the light of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament continues to be an urgent humanitarian imperative. The entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) sends a clear signal that any use, threat of use or possession of nuclear weapons is unacceptable in humanitarian, moral and legal terms. The ICRC is of the view that it is extremely doubtful that nuclear weapons could ever be used in accordance with international humanitarian law, given their effects on the human body and the environment. The risk of nuclear weapons being used continues to grow, and concerted efforts are urgently needed to reduce that risk.

The tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be a crucial opportunity to help reverse the disturbing trend towards a new nuclear-arms race, including by implementing long-standing risk-reduction commitments. The TPNW and the NPT are complementary and mutually strengthening instruments. We urge States to work together constructively so as to make tangible progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons, including at the first meeting of the States parties to the TPNW.

The ICRC is gravely concerned about the humanitarian impact of the unconstrained development of autonomous weapon systems. The use of those systems is currently relatively limited, but new trends point to their development and use being expanded, with reduced human supervision and capacity for intervention and deactivation. The ICRC recommends that States adopt new legally binding rules to regulate those weapon systems in order to ensure that sufficient human control and judgment are retained over the use of force. That will require prohibiting certain types of autonomous weapon systems and strictly regulating all others. States now have an opportunity

to negotiate new rules that effectively strengthen the protection of those affected by armed conflict and help safeguard humankind.

The forthcoming Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is a decisive moment that States must seize urgently. This year has been an important milestone in the international community's efforts to set limits on the use of information and communication technologies by States. The ICRC commends States on the successful conclusion both of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security. Cyberoperations during armed conflicts do not happen in a legal void or grey zone. They are subject to the established rules and principles of international humanitarian law. We call on States to deepen their study of how and when international humanitarian law imposes limits on cyberoperations during armed conflicts.

Explosive weapons with wide-area effects are ill-adapted for use in populated areas. Such use results in unacceptably high levels of civilian casualties and destruction, while also causing significant indirect effects, including by disrupting services that are essential to the survival of the civilian population. The ICRC continues to call on States and all parties to armed conflict to avoid the use of those weapons in populated areas. Explosive weapons should not be used in populated areas as a matter of policy and good practice unless sufficient mitigation measures are taken to limit their wide-area effects and consequent risk of civilian harm. We firmly support the ongoing diplomatic process led by Ireland with a view to adopting a political declaration and urge all States to work together to that end.

The ICRC continues to witness the devastating effects of other conventional weapons, such as landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. Moreover, the widespread availability of weapons prolongs conflict, triggers displacement and fuels serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The ICRC urges States to adhere to international instruments that prohibit or regulate the use of conventional weapons or establish norms for responsible arms transfers, including the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Anti-Personnel

Landmine Convention and the Arms Trade Treaty, and to faithfully implement them.

Lastly, the increasing risk of hostility in outer space is a serious humanitarian concern —

**The Acting Chair:** I am sorry, but the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross is out of time.

I now give the floor to the observer of the League of Arab States.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): The First Committee convenes this year amid significant security, health and humanitarian challenges, all of which require greater international solidarity and a stronger belief in our international multilateral system, while strengthening its ability to address those challenges. We must remain committed to achieving our shared goals set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other comprehensive regional development plans. Implementing those plans requires achieving international security in its broadest sense, as well as increased trust in implementing international obligations we have entered into under the international disarmament conventions, as emphasized by the Secretary-General in his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). The League of Arab States will continue to support the United Nations in all disarmament efforts, both in the area of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and in the area of conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons. We support all United Nations mechanisms in that context and seek to achieve their desired outcomes.

The Arab League has supported the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and sought for all its members to join it as non-nuclear States. We also supported the indefinite extension of the NPT, based on our belief in its importance and effectiveness, provided that Israel joins the treaty as a non-nuclear State and subjects all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In that context, the States parties to the NPT adopted a resolution in 1995 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which was one of the key components of the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The Arab League and its States have made tireless efforts to implement that resolution over the past 26 years, both within and outside the framework of the Treaty, in line with the

final outcome documents of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

The meeting records of the General Assembly show that the Assembly decided to convene an international conference on establishing that zone, pursuant to its decision 73/546, with the participation of all the States in the region. However, Israel continues to oppose all efforts aimed at achieving the universality of the Treaty and the balanced implementation of its three pillars. Israel also boycotted the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held in November 2019, and unfortunately continues to claim that the problem lies in the non-compliance with the provisions of the NPT, even as it remains outside the Treaty.

The League of Arab States therefore hopes that the 2022 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, to be held under the auspices of the United Nations, will adopt in its outcome document a strong message of support for all these efforts. Israel should actively participate in the work of the second session of the Middle East conference, which will be held in November. It should engage in the negotiations on establishing the Middle East zone in good faith as soon as possible. The Review Conference should also emphasize the special responsibility of the three depository States that introduced and adopted 1995 resolution on the Middle East as an integral part of the indefinite extension of the NPT. Those States were supported by other nuclear States recognized in the Treaty while they all pledged to ensure the implementation of this resolution within the international multilateral framework.

The League of Arab States aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/76/PV.2) and will support all draft resolutions and decisions to be submitted by the Arab States relating to various items on the agenda of the First Committee.

**The Acting Chair:** I now give the floor to the observer of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

**Ms. Okeke** (International Atomic Energy Agency): On behalf of the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, I wish to congratulate Mr. Omar Hilale on his election as Chair of the First Committee. I assure him of the Agency's full support for the Committee in the execution of its mandate to find viable solutions

to the many challenges facing the international security regime.

As the competent authority entrusted by the international community to verify the compliance of States with their non-proliferation obligations in order to ensure exclusively peaceful nuclear programmes, the IAEA makes a vital contribution to international peace and security. Its verification work is conducted through its safeguards system of internationally agreed legal and technical measures and by independently verifying the commitment of States not to divert nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities to nuclear weapons.

Through the early detection of any diversion of nuclear material or misuse of nuclear technology, the IAEA allays the world of potential nuclear proliferation. Remarkably, through innovative and efficient planning, the IAEA safeguards inspectors successfully managed to continue their verification activities throughout the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to the same level and degree of quality as before the outbreak of the virus, which unfortunately remains with us. The Agency also continues to provide advisory services and capacity-building activities and conduct expert missions and other work relevant to States' nuclear safety and security objectives.

I note that delegations have made several references during the course of the general debate to the important work of the IAEA, not only in the areas of nuclear safeguards, safety and security, but also in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and the way in which the Agency uniquely helps States to address their developmental challenges and priorities, including towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, I would like to provide a quick update on some recent activities.

In recognition of the important contribution that nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques make to the detection of zoonotic diseases and based on the experience of previous disease outbreaks, early on in the pandemic the Agency undertook the largest technical cooperation project in its history in order to provide emergency assistance to more than 125 countries. With the provision of extrabudgetary funding, the Agency provided States with real-time polymerase chain reaction test kits and other virus-detection equipment and related accessories and training upon request. Consequently, and to avert future pandemics, the Agency launched the Zoonotic Disease Integrated

Action (ZODIAC) initiative early on in the pandemic in order to improve capacity-building, training and laboratory support for combating zoonotic diseases. At the sixty-fifth regular session of the General Conference of the IAEA, held in September, the Director-General reported that there are already 143 ZODIAC national coordinators and 116 ZODIAC-designated national laboratories. The project is well underway.

Beyond the COVID-19 response, the Agency's main areas of work with regard to peaceful nuclear applications have been in health and nutrition, food and agriculture and safety and security. Moreover, at the upcoming 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, the Agency will highlight the role of nuclear techniques in supporting mitigation and adaptation efforts, namely, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable land-water use and the environment.

The Director-General of the IAEA is committed to creating a more gender-balanced workforce within the IAEA and the nuclear sector more broadly. Overall, women now make up 35 per cent of the professional and higher categories at the Agency. However, there is still more work to be done. I also wish to note the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, initiated in 2020, which demonstrates the dedication of the Director-General to gender parity.

In conclusion, as States parties prepare for the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, I wish to inform delegations that the IAEA remains ready to play a supportive role. Finally, I would like to remind delegations that the annual agenda item on the IAEA will be considered at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be held on Wednesday, 17 November. I hope to see all delegations there.

**The Acting Chair:** We have heard from the last speaker on the list for the general debate. The Committee has thus concluded the general debate segment of its work. One hundred and thirty-seven delegations made statements during the general debate segment, among which 33 women took the floor.

I shall now call on those speakers who have requested the floor in exercise of the right of reply to statements made during the general debate. I would like to remind delegations that the first intervention is limited to five minutes and the second intervention to three minutes.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am compelled to take the floor to reject the allegations made by the Israeli representative against my country. The dissemination of false and fabricated accusations against the countries of the region, in particular the Islamic Republic of Iran, has long been the standard practice of Israel, with the exclusive purpose of concealing its crimes and brutality against the innocent Palestinian people. Nevertheless, it is quite evident that no amount of disinformation and manufactured crises can cover up the criminal nature and expansionist and warmongering policies that the Israeli regime has pursued over the past 70 years.

In flagrant violation of international law and total disregard for all relevant United Nations resolutions, Israel continues to violate the fundamental rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and other Arabs living under its occupation. As a result, Palestinians are deprived of their lands and properties, forcibly evicted and subjected to violence, terror and intimidation. Meanwhile, any right of the Palestinians to self-determination has been negated under the title of "one Jewish State". Worse still, under the current challenging circumstances and as the international community focuses on mitigating the severe effects and consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the Israeli regime continues to exploit this period to accelerate its illegal settlement activities and annexation schemes in order to further entrench its military occupation. At the same time, the inhumane and suffocating blockade on the Gaza strip continues to deepen the severity of the humanitarian crisis and inflict misery on the Palestinian civilian population there. At the regional level, Israel's ongoing occupation of the territories of other countries and frequent encroachment on the countries of the region have seriously endangered peace and security in the region and beyond. The Israeli regime's entire history is full of aggression against its neighbours and other countries in the Middle East region. Given such a dark track record, the Israeli regime's hysteric attempts to seek international sympathy and favour by claiming that it is under threat are nothing but manipulative attempts to spread propaganda.

Israel continues to defy all international regimes governing weapons of mass destruction by refusing to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. It also continues



to seriously hamper the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Middle East, which was proposed by Iran in 1974. It is a fact that the nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime pose the most serious threat to the security of all States in the Middle East and the non-proliferation regime. Nevertheless, Israel attempts to portray Iran's conventional-weapon capabilities and its exclusively peaceful nuclear programme, which is under the most robust possible verification of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as challenges to regional stability. That is nothing but a hypocritical move to distract attention from the real danger that Israel poses to regional peace and security, in particular through its nuclear-weapon arsenals and clandestine and unsafeguarded nuclear installations and activities.

**Mr. Dandy** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take the floor to exercise our right of reply in response to the statement of the Israeli regime.

It is really ironic to hear the representative of the Israeli regime speak falsely of his regime's concern for regional peace and security in the Middle East and even in the world. It is absurd that he claims to be concerned about the expansion of terrorist organizations in the region, when we are all aware of the close and strong ties between the Israeli regime and these terrorist groups operating in my country, Syria. Israeli support for various terrorist groups in Syria, including the Al-Nusra Front, which is essentially associated with Al-Qaida in the occupied Arab Syrian Golan, is not limited to treating those terrorists in Israeli hospitals and clinics and returning them to Syria to pursue their crimes. Israel also provides logistical and military support to those terrorist groups, as evidenced by the repeated military attacks perpetrated by Israel on Syrian territories, with the aim of helping those terrorist groups maintain their control over territories and further expand in my country.

It is also absurd to hear this representative speak of Israel's commitment to establishing a safe environment in the region, especially in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, while the established truth is that Israel is not a member of any of the international agreements governing weapons of mass destruction, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Israel is the only country of the region that possesses such weapons. In that context, I should like to ask Committee members: Which country is currently building eight military-grade nuclear reactors, preparing a nuclear shelter to protect its

leaders from a possible nuclear war and making brazen declarations about possessing of nuclear weapons, included hundreds of nuclear warheads? Which country is dumping nuclear waste in the occupied territories? Which country is ranked fourth in the global trade in weapons of mass destruction? Which country declares the Gaza Strip to be a hostile entity? Which country occupies the territories of other States and establishes illegal settlements there? Which country is building separation walls and trying to alter the identity of the territories in the occupied Syrian Golan? Which country continues to breach the airspace of sovereign States and carry out military attacks against them? Of course, the answer to all of those questions is the Israeli entity, which does all the above. The representatives of the Israeli entity should therefore stop bragging about their repeated lies. They must be ashamed of repeating their disgraceful rhetoric.

Counting all the anomalies of Israel's policies and representatives at this international Organization would take five years, not five minutes. We could call on thousands of international witnesses to testify about the crimes committed by Israel. It would be appropriate if the Secretariat were to publish the report on the assassination of the Swedish peace mediator Count Bernadotte by the terrorist Yitzhak Shamir at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in 1948, as well as the United Nations reports concerning the 37 massacres perpetrated by the many Israeli settlers in the first six months of 1948. It is therefore true to say that Israel was built on a heap of Arab and Palestinian skulls.

**Mr. Bourgel** (Israel): I should like to respond to the references made to my country by the representatives of Iran and Syria.

Iran is one of the States that is accountable for the mistrust in the arms-control architecture in the Middle East. Iran has violated its commitments to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and was accused during the plenary discussions of the Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in The Hague of having violated the Convention. Iran is a case that justifies the need for a special safeguards regime beyond the additional protocol, designed for States that are caught cheating repeatedly. As mentioned in our earlier statement, that remains relevant today. I would also like to remind all delegations here that Iran is the world's main terrorism-sponsoring State and the

world's biggest proliferator of small arms and light weapons, heavy weapons, rockets, missiles and other related technologies, all in the name of promoting its radical agenda and thereby destabilizing the entire region and beyond.

For its part, Syria is yet to answer the open questions put to it by the IAEA with regard to its clandestine nuclear programme, in violation of its commitments to the NPT and safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Syria also permits Iran to establish military bases within its borders and allows a radical terrorist organization to act undisturbed on and from its land, thus serving to destabilize the region and endanger the safety of its inhabitants. Syria uses chemical weapons against its own population and citizens, including children and women, despite the fact that it is a member of the CWC. By its own hands, Syria has turned upside down the non-use norm in the area of chemical weapons.

**Mr. Dandy** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take the floor to exercise my second right of reply in response to the remarks made by the representative of the Israeli entity, who seems not to know the bloody history of his regime. The Israeli regime is the largest possessor of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, in the region. Furthermore, this regime was the first to use biological and chemical weapons in the Middle East. If the representative of the Israeli regime were to ask me to summarize for him what his regime has done from 1948 until the present, I would quote David Ben-Gurion's doctrine as follows:

"The destruction of the Palestinian community in Palestine is a prerequisite for the establishment of the State of Israel on its ruins. If we cannot eliminate the Palestinians through atrocities and expulsion, then we will do so through genocide".

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am compelled to take the floor again following the outrageous accusations directed against my country by the representative of the Israeli regime. I will not delve deeply into the absurdities of those accusations owing to the fact that they do not warrant serious consideration. I simply wish to remind all delegations present in the General Assembly Hall today that the Israeli regime has once again attempted to defend that which cannot be defended, specifically, the violation of core crimes under international law, namely, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.

Using the tribune of the United Nations, Israel continues to spin a web of lies and to deceive not only public opinion but also the international community with farcical displays that seek to prevent the criminal leaders of that regime from being tried in international courts. The remarks made by the representative of Israel are merely one aspect of a series of malign demonstrations that stem from its conspiratorial nature. Given its possession of hundreds of nuclear weapons, that Zionist regime is the greatest global threat to peace and security.

Everything we have said about the Israeli entity is based on international facts. Israel occupies Palestinian territory. For more than a half a century, it has been killing Palestinians on a daily basis. It has committed acts of aggression 17 times against its neighbours and beyond. Those are all facts. A total of 85 Security Council resolutions have been adopted against Israel, and Israel has rejected all of them. Israel does not comply with any of them. Nuclear weapons in the hands of such a regime therefore pose the greatest threat to the peace and security of the region. We have said so time and again. I believe that those are the plain facts, and we believe that it is our duty to state those facts here in the First Committee.

#### **Agenda items 92 to 107 (continued)**

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

**The Acting Chair:** The Committee will now begin the second phase of its work, namely, the thematic discussion on specific subjects on the combined clusters 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee.

I would like to remind delegations that the thematic clusters before the Committee today are as follows: "Nuclear weapons", "Other weapons of mass destruction", "Outer space (disarmament aspects)", and "Conventional weapons".

Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations that the time limit for statements during the thematic segment is five minutes when speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes for statements delivered on behalf of several delegations. We will continue to use a blinking microphone to remind

delegations when the time limit has been reached, after which microphones will be automatically disabled. Delegations wishing to exercise their right of reply to statements made during this segment will be able to do so at the end of today's meeting, in accordance with General Assembly procedure.

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

Our written statements under this cluster will be made available online.

Noting its entry into force, NAM States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons are fully committed to its implementation and look forward to the first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty, to be held in March 2022. NAM reiterates its concern about the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, as well as the lack of progress made by the nuclear-weapon States in eliminating their nuclear arsenals. NAM is concerned about the continuing modernization of, and reliance on, nuclear weapons.

NAM States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) would like to express their deep concern about the United Kingdom's nuclear-weapon policy, as contained in its 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. We call on all nuclear-weapon States to promptly implement their obligations without further delay. We also reaffirm that all efforts must be made to ensure the convening of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in a manner that contributes to a successful outcome. Pending the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, NAM demands that Israel relinquish its possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT and promptly place all of its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

NAM welcomes the convening 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 and the adoption of its final report (A/CONF.236/6). We look forward to the second session of the Conference, which will be held in November. NAM States parties to the NPT stress that the 1995 resolution and other relevant decisions on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of

nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remain valid until such a zone is established. NAM continues to emphasize that measures and initiatives aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and security must not be used as a pretext or as leverage to violate the inalienable rights of developing countries.

The use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons is reprehensible and runs completely contrary to international law. Those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. NAM States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) note that the Convention is the only comprehensive multilateral treaty that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. We wish to express our regret at the non-adoption of the report of the fourth Review Conference of the CWC owing to a lack of consensus — despite broad consultations and best efforts — and the politicization of some issues.

NAM States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention recognize that the lack of a verification system continues to pose a challenge to the effectiveness of the Convention. They call for the resumption of multilateral negotiations in order to conclude a non-discriminatory legally binding protocol that deals with all articles of the Convention. With regard to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), NAM underlines the need to ensure that any actions taken by the Security Council do not undermine existing multilateral treaties or the functions of the General Assembly. NAM stresses that the comprehensive review of resolution 1540 (2004) should strictly abide by the Charter of the United Nations as well as the relevant international legally binding instruments.

NAM underlines the need for the balanced, full and effective implementation 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 the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. NAM notes the successful conclusion of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action and the adoption of its final outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, annex), including the expedient establishment of a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons, in particular for developing countries.

NAM calls for providing the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance to clearance operations for unexploded cluster munitions. NAM States parties to the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention reiterate their commitment to the full implementation of the Maputo Action Plan. NAM States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty call for the balanced, transparent and objective implementation of the Treaty.

NAM States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols encourage other States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols. NAM is of the view that lethal autonomous weapon systems should be thoroughly deliberated and examined in the context of their compliance with international law. In recognition of the significant imbalance in the production and possession of, and trade in, conventional weapons between the industrialized and the non-aligned countries, NAM calls for a significant reduction in the production and possession of, and trade in, conventional weapons by the industrial States with a view to enhancing international and regional peace and security.

On the matter of outer space, NAM recognizes the common interests of all humankind and the inalienable legitimate sovereign rights of all States to explore and use outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes. Voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures may partially contribute to reducing mistrust and enhancing the safety of outer-space operations in the short term, but they cannot represent a substitute for a legally binding instrument. NAM continues to reaffirm the need for a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory multilateral approach to the issue of missiles in all its aspects, through multilateral negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations. Any initiative on that subject should take into account the security concerns of all States and their inherent right to the peaceful uses of space technologies.

Under clusters 1 to 4, NAM will this year submit draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.23, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament". NAM would appreciate the support of all Member States for that draft resolution.

**Mr. Aidid (Malaysia):** I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN remains concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear

weapons and the risks posed by their continued existence. ASEAN believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. ASEAN reaffirms its recognition of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We call on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitments to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty, in particular its article VI. We urge all parties to work in good faith towards the success of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force on 22 January, provides that each State party undertake never under any circumstance to develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It is a historic agreement that contributes to nuclear disarmament and complements other existing instruments. With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, ASEAN calls on the annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty in order to allow for its entry into force as soon as possible. ASEAN reiterates its commitment to preserving South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), also known as the Bangkok Treaty. ASEAN stresses the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty (2018-2022). We reaffirm our commitment to continuously engaging with the nuclear-weapon States and to intensifying the ongoing efforts of all parties in order to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty.

ASEAN maintains its unequivocal commitment to upholding the norms against the existence and use of chemical, biological and radiological weapons. All States members of ASEAN recognize that the Biological Weapons Convention constitutes a critical component of the international legal framework relating to weapons of mass destruction. ASEAN therefore reiterates its call for the resumption of multilateral negotiations in order to conclude a non-discriminatory legally binding protocol that deals with all articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner. ASEAN recognizes the Chemical Weapons Convention as one



of the most successful disarmament instruments, which completely prohibits an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. All ASEAN member States strictly abide by our international obligations under the Convention. In that regard, ASEAN invites those States that have not signed or ratified the Convention to do so as soon as possible, ASEAN reaffirms its support for the efforts of the international community to prevent terrorists and other non-State actors from acquiring such weapons of mass destruction and their means of distribution by enhancing dialogue and cooperation.

ASEAN recognizes that access to outer space is an inalienable right of all States. We believe that the exploration and use of outer space should be for exclusively peaceful purposes in the collective interest of all humankind. All activities in outer space must be conducted in accordance with international law and the principle of the non-appropriation of outer space. Given that it is incumbent upon all States to ensure that the use and exploration of outer space are for exclusively peaceful purposes, the General Assembly must play a vital role in fostering continued dialogue on current issues and challenges in that field. ASEAN recognizes the significant progress made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs in promoting international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space. Moving forward, activities in outer space should not remain the exclusive preserve of a small group of States. ASEAN encourages the strengthening of capacity-building programmes, with a particular emphasis on developing countries, in order to ensure that outer space is both in principle and in practice a common heritage of humankind to which all States can avail themselves.

ASEAN is gravely concerned about the illicit proliferation of conventional weapons throughout the world, which contributes to violence, perpetuates poverty and undermines human welfare. ASEAN reiterates that the relevant international agreements on conventional weapons should be implemented in conformity with the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, with States bearing the primary role. At the same time, ASEAN acknowledges that States have a sovereign right to acquire and manage conventional inventory for self-defence and safeguarding national security.

In conclusion, ASEAN reaffirms its strong commitment to combating the illicit trade in

conventional weapons and calls on all States to join hands to stop all illegal trading activities in order to ensure our collective security and continued development without disruption.

**Mr. Francis** (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We welcome the opportunity to speak during the thematic discussions on the combined clusters 1 to 4.

CARICOM has articulated deep concerns on numerous occasions about the continuing prevalence of illegal firearms and ammunition within the region and their role in the perpetration of acts of crime and violence. Their attendant effects, including loss of life, widespread human suffering, mental trauma and the spreading of fear and insecurity in our societies, have severely impacted our development efforts. In response, we have attached the highest priority to making our views known in all international forums that deal with those issues. We have articulated our support for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; and the Arms Trade Treaty, as they are among the primary international instruments for the control of small arms and light weapons. In that regard, we welcome the successful outcome of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which was held a few months ago.

CARICOM believes that the eighth Biennial Meeting of States, which will be convened in 2022, must build on the success of this year's meeting and address the issues of dire consequence for small island developing States such as those in the Caribbean Community. We encourage meaningful dialogue on those important issues, including by strengthening ammunitions control. In that regard, CARICOM takes note of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus (see A/76/324). We believe that States should ensure the continued relevance of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) by supporting the development of a supplementary annex to address the recent developments in the manufacturing, technology, design

and materials used in the area of small arms and light weapons, as well as the implications for the ITI.

CARICOM remains committed to the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. We acknowledge the importance of universal adherence to the Treaty and call on all Member States that are not yet a party to it to take steps to accede to it.

CARICOM would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to its development partners, such as the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS), as well as the Governments of Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany for their support in the fight against the illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons in our region through the development of a road map for implementing the Caribbean priority actions on the illicit proliferation of firearms and ammunition across the Caribbean in a sustainable manner by 2030.

The aforementioned road map consolidates the political commitment and actions identified in the Caribbean priority actions on addressing the illicit trafficking in firearms, which was adopted by CARICOM leaders in 2019. The road map is also aligned with the numerous decisions and regional strategies that are already in place and the relevant commitments assumed by all Caribbean States to prevent and combat the scourges of illicit proliferation and armed violence. In addition to promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the road map also seeks to strengthen regional efforts towards meeting relevant international obligations. It also reinforces existing strategies, such as the CARICOM crime and security strategy, and gauges their success by establishing targets and setting indicators in accordance with agreed timelines.

Although CARICOM is located in a nuclear-weapon-free zone, we are not immune from the consequences of those most dangerous weapons on Earth. In that regard, we welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in January and consider it to be an extraordinary achievement. CARICOM looks forward to engaging constructively in the first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty, which is scheduled to be held in Austria in March 2022. CARICOM welcomes the convening

of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in January 2022. Having achieved near universal membership, the Treaty is important in the discussions on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament owing to its objective of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and as a confidence-building measure among its States parties.

CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to the international frameworks relating to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. In that vein, we will continue to support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its mandate to permanently and verifiably eliminate chemical weapons. We also reaffirm our commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention. We welcome the advances made in the implementation of the relevant frameworks and conventions, in particular in the light of the current unprecedented circumstances and the ongoing developments in science and technology. CARICOM reaffirms its support for Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has highlighted the need for effective multilateral cooperation. We are of the view that the same spirit is needed to achieve the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. Protecting human lives and the maintenance of international peace and security are at the heart of our disarmament endeavours. Transnational and emerging threats may arise, and we must do all that we can to address such eventualities. In that connection, we believe that can best be achieved through —

**The Acting Chair:** I am sorry, but the representative of Trinidad and Tobago is out of time.

I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

**Ms. Tolstoi** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its States members. Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania align themselves with this statement, which summarizes the four written statements of the EU on clusters 1 to 4.

On cluster 1, “Nuclear weapons”, the EU reaffirms its unequivocal support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

as the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty, and an important element in facilitating cooperation on nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The EU reaffirms the importance of the universalization of the NPT and calls on all States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, pending their accession to adhere to its terms. The NPT has an enduring value, and its full implementation is needed now more than ever. The EU also reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

With regard to cluster 2, “Other weapons of mass destruction”, the EU believes that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery remain a grave threat to international peace and security. Although the international treaty regimes and expert control arrangements have slowed down the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, a number of States have sought or are seeking to develop such weapons, and the risk that terrorists could access those weapons, their related material or means of delivery remains real.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone — be it a State or non-State actor — anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances is a violation of international law. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons must not and will not be tolerated. Ending impunity and ensuring accountability are crucial to preserving the integrity of the established norms. We therefore denounce the Syrian Arab Republic’s continuing violation of its obligations as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force. We welcome the decision adopted by the twenty-fifth Conference of the States Parties to the CWC to suspend the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic owing to its failure to comply with the Convention.

The EU also condemns in the strongest possible terms the attempt to assassinate Alexei Navalny by poisoning him with a chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group in August 2020, as well as the use of chemical agents in the murder of the citizen of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Kim Jong-nam, in 2017 and the March 2018 chemical attack in Salisbury. The EU continues to demonstrate its

commitment to strengthening the collective efforts to ensure the accountability of the perpetrators of chemical attacks through the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. We fully engage in the international efforts to improve biosafety and biosecurity around the globe today, at a time when the coronavirus disease pandemic is testing the resilience of our societies. The international community as a whole must strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and its implementation. That necessitates keeping pace with the rapid developments that are taking place in biological sciences and biotechnology by establishing a science and technology review mechanism, inter alia. The EU also politically and financially supports the Secretary-General’s mechanism for investigating the alleged use of chemical or biological weapons. As the only independent international instrument for investigating alleged uses of bacteriological or toxin weapons, the mechanism is a key component of the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

Turning to cluster 3, “Outer space (disarmament aspects)”, the EU and its member States continue to strongly promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. We recognize outer space as a global commons to be used for the benefit of all. Many of the systems and services that are now essential for our collective well-being and security depend directly or indirectly on space.

The space environment is becoming increasingly congested, contested and competitive. Without excluding the possibility of a legally binding instrument in the future, the EU and its member States believe that voluntary measures currently constitute a pragmatic way forward, starting with norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour through an incremental and inclusive process. The EU and its member States emphasize that any future legally binding framework on space security should be effective and verifiable and should cover all relevant threats, be they Earth-to-space, space-to-space or space-to-Earth.

On cluster 4, “Conventional weapons”, the EU recalls that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its constituent protocols is an important instrument of international humanitarian law and one of the major instruments for conventional disarmament. In view of the upcoming sixth Review

Conference of the States Parties to the CCW, the EU supports efforts to universalize and strengthen the Convention and stresses the importance of compliance with all its provisions and annexed protocols. The EU welcomes the substantive contribution of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems.

The Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention is a transformative milestone for disarmament and an example of what the EU stands for, namely, a rules-based international order rooted in respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. The EU stands united in its support for the universal ban on anti-personnel mines. The EU welcomes the humanitarian achievements of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which has celebrated the tenth anniversary of its entry into force. The EU and its member States reaffirm their strong support for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The universalization and full implementation of the ATT ranks high among the priorities of the EU. We call on all States Members of the United Nations, especially the major arms-importing, arms-exporting and transit States, to ratify or accede to the ATT without further delay.

In line with its 2018 strategy, the EU strongly encourages the full implementation 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. The EU is a committed supporter of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which is one of the most important achievements of the Programme of Action —

**The Acting Chair:** I am sorry, but the observer of the European Union is out of time.

I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

**Mr. Bamyia (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*):** At the outset, I would like to express the solidarity of the Group of Arab States with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which, given the legal obligation of its States parties, constitutes a new source of customary international law

that governs disarmament and places nuclear weapons in their logical place, since possessing, using and even threatening to use them contravenes the most basic rules of international humanitarian law, in addition to their direct threat to international peace and security.

The Arab Group calls on all nuclear-weapon States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay. We emphasize that any positive decisions taken by the nuclear-weapon States will have a useful impact on the ratification of the Treaty. We also recall that the nuclear States have a special responsibility for encouraging the annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty, in particular those States or parties that have not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and continue to operate nuclear facilities that are not subject to the comprehensive safeguards system, as well as those States that carry out nuclear programmes and activities that are not declared or over which concerns have been raised as to their peaceful nature.

The Arab Group is concerned about the continuing failure to make tangible progress on nuclear disarmament and to fulfil the commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT. The nuclear-weapon States are avoiding setting any time frame for the implementation of international commitments aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Group also rejects the ongoing adoption by the nuclear States of military doctrines that authorize the use of nuclear weapons and even allow their use against non-nuclear States, as well as the efforts of some States to develop and increase their nuclear weapons.

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference means that we have an even greater responsibility to preserve the credibility and continuity of the regime established by the Treaty and to ensure the success of the tenth Review Conference by achieving clear results on the implementation of all previous commitments and enhancing the effectiveness of the Treaty.

The Group of Arab States stresses the need to take practical steps and immediate measures, in keeping with the Arab draft resolution submitted annually, entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”. We are concerned about the ongoing security threat posed by Israel’s continued refusal to accede to the NPT. Israel is the only State in the Middle East that has not acceded to the treaty and refuses to subject all



its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Arab Group reiterates the importance of implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and all other relevant resolutions adopted at subsequent Review Conferences. In that context, we welcome the convening 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 — established pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546 — held in November 2019 under the chairmanship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. We commend the positive outcome of that session, as well as the adoption of a number of important substantive and procedural resolutions, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (A/75/63). The Arab Group looks forward to the successful convening of the second session of the Conference, to be chaired by the State of Kuwait.

The Arab Group continues to support the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and works towards achieving their objectives. We condemn any use of weapons of mass destruction by anyone and under any circumstances.

The Arab Group stresses the need to keep outer space peaceful and free of conflict. Any future, legally binding international instrument aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space should therefore ban the placement of offensive or defensive weapons in outer space and any military attacks or intentional damage of objects therein. States must also be prohibited from developing or testing any weapons or techniques that have the sole purpose of carrying out armed attacks against objects in outer space. We must establish mechanisms and procedures that enable the verification of States' obligations within a multilateral framework.

The Arab Group is paying greater attention to combating the traffic in and illegal supply of small arms and light weapons, especially in the light of the catastrophic security, human and economic consequences of the unprecedented increase in the illegal supply of such weapons in the Arab region.

The Group reaffirms the legitimate right of States to fulfil their needs for conventional weapons in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, on the right to legitimate self-defence. We also categorically reject imposing any restrictions on that right. The Group welcomes the outcome document

adopted by the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation 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. We look forward to building on its recommendations at the eighth Biennial Meeting.

In conclusion, the Group welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus (see A/76/324) and the specific recommendation to establish an open-ended working group aimed at developing a comprehensive international framework for dealing with conventional munitions at the national, regional and international levels.

**Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico)** (*spoke in Spanish*): The entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the beginning of the year and the concrete steps undertaken towards convening the first meeting of its 56 States parties, plus those that will inexorably accede to the Treaty, are undoubtedly a source of encouragement. We have successfully managed to establish in international law the norm prohibiting the development, production and use of nuclear weapons, which, in addition to being illegal, are inherently immoral.

That long legal journey began with the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which deemed that,

“There is in neither customary nor conventional international law any specific authorization of the threat or use of nuclear weapons” (A/51/218, *annex, para. 105*),

to which the Court added that,

“It follows from the above-mentioned requirements that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law” (*ibid.*),

which the Court also characterized as opposable erga omnes obligations, irrespective of whether States have ratified the treaties containing those obligations.

We are among the 116 States that are part of denuclearized zones, and we do not belong to any military alliances that base their security on nuclear weapons and the doctrine of deterrence, whose threat

of total annihilation constitutes a form of terrorism against humankind and an attack on human security. The failure of deterrence is made evident by the fact that we now have nine nuclear-weapons States instead of five. And that trend has not abated. Moreover, a new military alliance has emerged in an area that is already the setting of a new arms race and global competition. Let us hope that new alliance does not violate the commitments assumed under the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty.

The various perceptions of insecurity are fuelled by the regrettable return to aggressive rhetoric and declarations about increased nuclear arsenals. At the same time, the architecture of the disarmament treaties — both those concluded among the nuclear-weapon States as well as multilateral treaties — has been eroded to an extent not seen throughout the entire Cold War. Despite the extension of the New START Treaty, the abandonment of, and withdrawal from, important treaties, such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Treaty on Open Skies, are generating heightened levels of international insecurity and undermining trust among States. Yet the nuclear-weapon States argue time and again that the complex security environment is not conducive to a world free of nuclear weapons. For how long are they going to try to deceive us?

The disarmament goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have been blatantly trampled on by the nuclear-weapon States. In the same 1996 advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice stated that,

“There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control” (*ibid.*).

It is not an obligation to provide means but rather to produce results.

At the upcoming tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, the nuclear-weapon States must inform us of the steps they intend to take to comply with article VI of the Treaty and not merely reiterate its validity, as they did at the Review Conferences in 1995, 2000 and 2010. The non-nuclear-weapon States will have to draw relevant conclusions based on the common commitment undertaken sovereignly by each State party, which, no matter —

**The Acting Chair:** I am sorry, but the representative of Mexico is out of time.

**Mr. Nugroho** (Indonesia): Indonesia associates itself with the statements delivered earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Our full statement will be made available online. Allow me to highlight our national positions.

First, with regard to concrete actions in the area of nuclear disarmament, the nuclear arms race is still very much a part of our reality. The worsening strategic environment and continuing existence of nuclear weapons are mutually reinforcing. Given their capacity for indiscriminate destruction, nuclear weapons cannot be justified. The upcoming tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2022 are therefore important platforms for reverting the trend towards nuclear weapons. Those two Treaties are complementary.

Indonesia calls on all States to take pragmatic and concrete actions to advance the implementation of the disarmament pillar of Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Indonesia stands ready to bridge the differences in order to achieve a consensus. We call on others to positively consider as a possible middle ground the working papers on stepping stones towards nuclear disarmament and nuclear risk reduction that were submitted by the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament to the NPT Review Conference. At the same time, all States parties must refrain from backtracking on their obligations and previously agreed commitments. The nuclear disarmament architecture must be strengthened, including through the immediate entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East. We also urge the nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone without delay. Indonesia continues to urge for the early establishment of a legally binding agreement on security assurances.

Secondly, on strengthening the disarmament architecture for all other weapons of mass destruction, we underscore the important role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to support

States in implementing their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Indonesia condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances and stresses the need for the remaining possessor countries to expedite the total destruction of their chemical-weapon stockpiles before the established deadlines. With respect to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), multilateral negotiations must be resumed immediately on the early establishment of a legally binding protocol that deals with all articles of the Convention. Any steps that are taken outside of the modalities of the BWC, including by establishing linkages with external instruments, would create division and hamper the effectiveness of the Convention.

Thirdly, on ensuring the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, we call on all States to synergize the various initiatives and focus on substantial issues in our deliberations in the First Committee, including by discussing responsible behaviours and norms as a step in the right direction towards the adoption of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Indonesia continues to support international cooperation for the peaceful use of outer space and is proud to be hosting the fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, which will be held next year.

Fourthly, on addressing the imminent risks of conventional weapons, we welcome the outcomes of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation 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. We also believe that the effective implementation of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention and the Oslo action plan must be pursued in order to achieve the common goal of a mine-free world by 2025. In that regard, there is also a need to enhance international cooperation and assistance, especially to build the capacities of developing countries. Indonesia also underlines the sovereign right of States to acquire conventional arms and ammunition for their self-defence and security needs. We are against the imposition of any undue restrictions or coercive measures by the arms-exporting States on the arms-importing States.

This year once again, Indonesia and its partners will submit the draft resolutions entitled, "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" (A/C.1/76/L.17)

and "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons" (A/C.1/76/L.11). We count on the support of delegations.

**Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan):** The global arms-control order is in a state of virtual demise. There are deep divisions in approaches, perspectives and priorities across the entire spectrum. That breakdown is evident in several ways. Arms races, increased weaponization and integration are in full swing across the nuclear, outer space, cyber, conventional and artificial intelligence domains. Long-standing rules and norms are being eroded through discriminatory policies. Consequently, political and military tensions, strategic asymmetries and nuclear dangers are growing. Many of those worrisome trends are manifest in South Asia, where the largest State, driven by its pursuit of regional hegemony and aided by generous supplies of conventional and non-conventional weaponry, continues to operationalize dangerous doctrines.

The nuclear domain continues to witness regression. Nuclear disarmament obligations remain largely unfulfilled. Despite the assertions of a moratorium on fissile material production and a misguided zeal for a fissile material cut-off treaty, some nuclear-weapon States are modernizing and increasing their nuclear arsenals. An effective global nuclear arms-control regime requires compliance with existing legal obligations by the nuclear-weapon States, the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention, an international instrument on negative security assurances and the pursuit of a fissile material treaty that clearly stipulates pre-existing stockpiles within its scope.

The conventions prohibiting biological and chemical weapons — the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) — have made important contributions to the goal of disarmament. Yet scientific and technological advancements have heightened the risks of the misuse of chemistry and biology by non-State actors. The sanctity of the CWC regime must be preserved. Attempts to distort the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons through political manoeuvring must be averted. The early and complete destruction of declared and abandoned chemical weapons must be ensured. Proliferation concerns should not be advanced so as to impede the peaceful uses of chemistry and biology. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) was an interim measure designed to fill a perceived gap in international law. It is time to transform it into an

international treaty, negotiated with the inclusive participation of States. The Russian proposal to negotiate an international convention on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism deserves serious consideration.

Outer space has emerged as a new realm of conflict, weaponization and an arms race. We are increasingly concerned about the threats posed by anti-satellite capabilities to regional and global stability and to the long-term sustainability of outer space. The potential integration of anti-ballistic missile systems and their components into space assets adds another worrisome dimension. The existing gaps in the Outer Space Treaty have grave security implications. Those gaps need to be plugged by concluding a treaty that comprehensively prohibits the threat or use of force against outer-space objects and the weaponization of outer space. Notwithstanding the partial value of transparency and confidence-building measures, such voluntary measures cannot be a substitute for treaty-based legal obligations.

There are also several worrisome trends on the conventional weapons horizon. Global military expenditure and the international trade in conventional arms have reached unprecedented levels. Despite the clear gains made after the end of the Cold War and the strong normative support of the General Assembly, there is a clear regression in conventional-arms control at the regional and subregional levels. South Asia bears witness to the deliberate stalling of Pakistan's long-standing proposals for a conventional balance in forces and armaments. Despite the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, huge volumes of conventional arms continue to be transferred to volatile regions, fuelling conflicts and entailing enormous human costs. The increasing interplay of advanced conventional weapons and technologies with strategic capabilities is eroding strategic stability in South Asia.

The development and potential deployment of autonomous weapons carries serious ramifications for international humanitarian law as well as regional and international peace and security. It is therefore critical that the sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons establish a robust, forward-looking and comprehensive process on lethal autonomous weapon systems.

To counter the growing challenges to the international arms-control order, concerted efforts are

needed, especially from the nuclear-weapon States. That requires the demonstration of political will, the pursuit of cooperative multilateralism and adherence to the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations —

**The Acting Chair:** I am sorry, but the representative of Pakistan is out of time.

**Ms. Orava (Finland):** In addition to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, I would like to make the following national remarks.

The postponed tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is set to convene in January 2022. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a remarkable success story. Its States parties have every reason to be proud of its success. The NPT has effectively curbed the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It provides an internationally recognized basis for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Not least, the NPT contains a legally binding commitment to pursue nuclear disarmament in good faith.

Although we recognize the success of the NPT, it is obvious that further progress needs to be made, especially on nuclear disarmament. While the total number of nuclear weapons today is significantly lower than during the bad old days of the Cold War, that downward trend is under threat from the intensifying great-Power competition and increased reliance on nuclear weapons in the security policies of States. While all nuclear-weapon possessors must participate in nuclear arms control and disarmament, the overwhelmingly biggest nuclear-weapon States — Russia and the United States — need to continue to spearhead nuclear disarmament. Let me be clear about our position: all nuclear-weapon possessors need to commit themselves to nuclear disarmament and accelerate their action towards that end. Finland expects enhanced commitments to be undertaken on nuclear disarmament at the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

Nuclear proliferation is a menace that plagues all nations and peoples. There is absolutely no need for more countries — let alone any non-State actor — to possess nuclear weapons. The illegal nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes of North Korea pose an urgent risk to international peace and security. We urge North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and dismantle its nuclear-weapons programme completely



and in a verifiable and irreversible manner. That would be a fresh starting point for improved security and prosperity for the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Maintaining the integrity of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency based on the NPT is essential. With that in mind, we call on Iran to cooperate fully and immediately with the Agency. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a key milestone in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and Finland strongly supports the intensive diplomatic efforts within its Joint Commission. It is crucial that negotiations resume in view of the possible return of the United States to the JCPOA and the prospect of Iran's return to its full implementation, including its transparency measures.

Nuclear weapons pose a risk to every nation. A nuclear-weapon detonation would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. It is in our common interest to reduce the risks of any use of nuclear weapons, whether intentional or unintentional. Nuclear risk reduction includes a wide range of measures, from political declarations to technical crisis communication arrangements. Nuclear risk reduction is no substitute for nuclear disarmament, but it can certainly advance it. In our view, international cooperation and agreements on nuclear risk reduction can help close pathways to nuclear use. We welcome the increased interest in, and actions on, nuclear risk reduction. Finland actively contributes to finding and building common ground within the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative. Reducing nuclear risks deserves a major place in the deliberations and outcomes of the forthcoming NPT Review Conference.

Advancing nuclear disarmament and reaching nuclear zero requires determined political will, as well as serious negotiations that take into account the security concerns of all nations. Moving forward and not backtracking are more important than knowing the exact time of arrival. In the meantime, let us make sure that nuclear weapons are never used again. As has been stated by so many speakers in this Hall before me, nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

**Mr. Zellenrath** (Netherlands): I would like to highlight several issues pertaining to nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, outer space and conventional weapons.

First, in order to uphold and strengthen the existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, we need to prevent any further postponement of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and urge for the commitment of all States to the three pillars of the Treaty. We emphasize the importance of risk reduction and crisis management and support the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The nuclear-weapon States share a special responsibility for implementing their obligations under article VI of the NPT.

In that light, the Netherlands welcomes the extension of the New START Treaty and the renewed strategic stability dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation. The Netherlands supports various initiatives on nuclear disarmament, including the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. We call for greater transparency and reporting on nuclear arsenals and for inclusive dialogue on nuclear doctrines.

Fundamental to the nuclear non-proliferation regime is the universal application of the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We call on Iran to refrain from further escalation measures and to return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We condemn the recent repeated missile tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its growing nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes, which are in violation of Security Council resolutions.

Secondly, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) are two indispensable instruments that are required to create an international community that is more resilient against, and better prepared for, biological and chemical threats. The world has witnessed the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, including in the attacks on Sergei Skripal and Alexei Navalny, as well as in Syria. Member States consequently imposed sanctions on Syria at the previous Conference of States Parties to the CWC, as

Syria's delaying tactics to comply with the Convention are no longer accepted.

The Netherlands has also joined a group of 45 countries that have invoked article IX, paragraph 2 of the CWC, demanding that the Russian Federation clarify the circumstances under which the attack on Mr. Navalny in 2020 took place. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is an essential institute to redress any violations of the Convention and to hold accountable those responsible for chemical attacks.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has illustrated that biological threats also pose serious widespread security risks that impact the mental and physical health of citizens, infrastructure and economies. Biotechnological advancements will only increase those risks. Each State Member of the United Nations must take responsibility for strengthening the BTWC and increasing preparedness for, and resilience against, health security threats, which would serve national interests and global solidarity. We are all as strong as the weakest link.

Thirdly, the Netherlands believes that promoting awareness and transparency and strengthening international cooperation on space security are crucial. Further efforts to create confidence-building measures and to establish norms, rules and principles of space behaviour can serve as a first step towards reaching legally binding agreements. We therefore continue to support the draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom entitled, "Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours" (A/C.1/76/L.52).

Lastly, the Netherlands continues to call on all States and actors that are parties to armed conflict, such as in Yemen, to adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In our joint efforts to prevent violations, all States should thoroughly and transparently review their arms sales and exports.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons has made important progress on lethal autonomous weapon systems within the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. To build on the 11 guiding principles adopted in 2019, the GGE should prepare substantial recommendations for the sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the

Convention. We share the common understanding among States parties that humans must have some form of control over autonomous weapons in order to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The Netherlands therefore continues to advocate further elaboration on the concept of meaningful human control.

In conclusion, we call on States that remain outside of the key treaties to accede to them without delay and urge States parties to comply with the relevant conventions and their pivotal institutions. Multilateral cooperation within those forums is essential to our collective pursuit of a safer world.

A longer written statement on each cluster will be uploaded to the e-deleGATE portal.

**Mr. Bandiya (Nigeria):** Nuclear weapons represent a grave existential threat to humankind. My delegation therefore calls for renewed efforts to resolve the current impasse in achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all their aspects. In that regard, Nigeria welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January and reiterates its firm belief that the Treaty will contribute to furthering the global objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. My delegation looks forward to the first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty, scheduled to be held in March 2022.

Nigeria believes that the Biological Weapons Convention represents an important component of the international legal architecture with regard to weapons of mass destruction. My delegation also notes with satisfaction the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

The exploration and use of outer space and other celestial bodies should be for peaceful purposes and carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development. Nigeria reaffirms its support for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We also support the legitimate concerns that the existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter the further militarization of outer space and prevent its weaponization. My delegation further stresses the need to consolidate and reinforce the existing regimes and enhance their effectiveness through the creation of a

legally binding treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Today the dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, are witnessed all around us. From Africa to the Middle East, across Europe, to the Americas and Asia, the carnage has become phenomenal and unprecedented, in particular the immense bloodshed foisted on innocent populations by terrorists and other criminal elements. My delegation therefore calls on all States, in particular the major arms-producing States, to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is restricted to Governments or entities duly authorized by them.

Nigeria remains committed to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. My delegation supported the adoption of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/234 B, on 2 April 2013. Our commitment is further demonstrated by our signing and ratification of relevant international, regional and subregional instruments, such as the ATT and the Programme of Action, as well as our establishing and upholding of robust partnerships with the African Union, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and other relevant organizations.

In addition, a national centre for the control of small arms and light weapons has been set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The centre has been involved in activities geared towards stemming the tide of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. My country has also established a framework for collaborating with civil society organizations in order to sustain wider stakeholder participation.

Nigeria continues to support and advance the cause of regional and subregional initiatives, such as the 2000 Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons; the 2004 Sirte Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy; the 2006 Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials of the Economic Community of West African States; the African Union's Agenda 2063; the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative; and other

relevant initiatives aimed at addressing the threat of the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons in Africa.

The full text of my statement will be circulated via the eStatements web portal.

**Mr. Sarzhanov** (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan's priorities in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain consistent and steadfast. Since becoming an independent country, we have acted determinedly to rid our country of those dangerous and inhumane weapons. For that reason, my country is acknowledged as a prominent advocate of a world free of nuclear weapons. Our stance is based on the fact that those weapons no longer serve as an asset for our security, but instead present a real threat to global peace and stability.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force in January. As a State party to the TPNW, Kazakhstan is convinced that nuclear security can be sustainable only when it is universal and non-discriminatory. We therefore urge all Member States to accede to the Treaty, which represents a new reality and makes nuclear weapons illegal. The entry into force of the TPNW and the extension of the New START Treaty this year give us good reason for cautious optimism. At the same time, we are all aware that as long as nuclear weapons exist there can be no absolute guarantee of their non-use or that we will all be safe. Disarmament and confidence-building are two sides of the same coin and must reinforce each other.

The increasing levels of mistrust among global and regional actors is leading to the erosion of the current security and arms-control architecture and giving rise to a renewed arms race. Last century we managed to avoid a nuclear catastrophe and a devastating arms race. Today we must follow the same visionary example. Our survival requires increased political trust and consistent dialogue in order to generate positive processes. Only confidence-building measures can generate adequate solutions to the current complex issues, such as the preservation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. History shows that such tensions can be settled only by political means and through mutual respect in the face of sometimes contradictory concerns. Reliance on nuclear arsenals can never ensure strategic security and can only prompt asymmetric responses, thereby crossing the line of no return from which we cannot retrace our steps.

The future of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must not be jeopardized. The implementation of its article VI and the decisions of its previous Review Conferences are critical to achieving our ultimate goals. Finally, it is time that we overcome the threat of nuclear tests and nuclear weapons and seek new horizons of peace, progress and prosperity for all.

**Ms. Stoeva** (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union. I will highlight a few points of particular importance to my country.

It is imperative that we join efforts to ensure a successful outcome of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That would demonstrate our determination and ability to maintain a pragmatic and constructive spirit in order to advance our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons and provide for the responsible use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in line with the highest international safety, security and non-proliferation standards. We stress the key importance of the safeguards mechanism of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the implementation of the NPT and call for the universalization of the IAEA additional protocol.

Bulgaria remains committed to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons and believes that objective is best pursued through adopting a progressive approach and undertaking realistic steps that move us towards verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament in a safe and secure manner, in accordance with article VI of the NPT.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is one of the necessary building blocks in the construction of a world without nuclear weapons. Twenty-five years after the opening for signature of the Treaty, the efforts of the international community are still required for its entry into force. Once in force, the CTBT will provide a legally binding global ban on nuclear explosions of any kind. We therefore call on all States that have not yet done so, especially those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, to sign and ratify the CTBT without any further delay.

The conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty remains among our top priorities in the field of nuclear disarmament. We share the view on the necessity of commencing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible, given that it is the issue

with the highest maturity for negotiations or working towards negotiations. The work done by the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group is a proof of that.

Achieving progress in the area of conventional weapons is of equal importance. Bulgaria is firmly committed to the principles and objectives of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols, which provide an effective multilateral platform for responding to the current and future development of weapons technologies. We actively participate in the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems with a view to developing and adopting an effective and comprehensive normative and operational framework to control the production, use and transfer of such weapons systems. We hope that the sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the CCW will duly address the remaining challenges, including by reaching tangible results in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems.

We welcome the successful outcomes of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation 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 the seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) this year, which demonstrated the effectiveness of multilateralism in finding solutions to major international problems, such as preventing the diversion, illicit trade and unauthorized use of conventional arms. The ATT in particular is an excellent example of how the application of common standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms can contribute to security and stability on a global scale. We strongly support its universalization and full implementation and call on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty.

We cannot have truly effective measures against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons without controlling both the supply and stockpiles of ammunition. We welcome the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus (see A/76/324), established pursuant to resolution 72/55, and look forward to carrying out the next steps towards establishing a new global framework that addresses the existing gaps in the life cycle of ammunition management.



**Mr. Gaye** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal endorses the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Ghana, respectively, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/76/PV.2), and would like to make the following additional remarks.

With regard to nuclear weapons, my delegation reaffirms its commitment to the principle of complete, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament as an essential condition for peace and the survival of humankind. Achieving such an ideal requires first and foremost that the nuclear-weapon States fully comply with their legal obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It also requires a ban on nuclear testing and on the production of fissile material for military purposes. My delegation therefore urges all States that have not yet signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in particular those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, to do so without further delay. Equally important are the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament towards a multilateral, non-discriminatory and verifiable treaty that prohibits the production of fissile material for military purposes.

The universalization of nuclear-weapon-free zones is also a *sine qua non* for nuclear disarmament. My country therefore renews its traditional support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and welcomes the convening of the first session of the Conference on that subject. It is also imperative that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures take into account the inalienable right of each State to develop, research, manufacture and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination or impediments.

Turning to other weapons of mass destruction, Senegal reiterates its support for the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, which constitute important pillars of the international legal architecture relating to weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, the lack of a verification system continues to pose a challenge to the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention. It is therefore urgent to resume multilateral negotiations with a view to concluding a non-discriminatory and legally binding protocol on all aspects of the Convention, including with regard to verification.

We believe that outer space must remain a common good free from all weapons of mass destruction and must therefore be explored and exploited for exclusively peaceful purposes for the benefit of all humankind. For that reason, negotiations on outer space must follow a multilateral, non-discriminatory approach, but also and above all take into account the interests and views of all Member States. In that regard, we believe that preventing an arms race in outer space requires both voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures, as well as a legally binding multilateral instrument.

In respect of conventional arms, the Arms Trade Treaty, 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 Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as other relevant instruments, must be implemented in an objective, balanced and appropriate manner that protects the interests of all States, including their right to self-defence and security. In that regard, it is particularly important to ensure that arms transfers be exclusively limited to Governments and duly authorized entities. Hence the need to ensure the complete, regular and timely submission of various national reports on international arms transfers in order to strengthen confidence and transparency with respect to arms matters.

We welcome the recommendations of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation 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 call for their full implementation, in particular with a view to taking into account the impact of technological developments in the marking of small arms and light weapons, but also and above all with a view to bolstering international cooperation and assistance in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

Finally, on anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, my delegation remains convinced that the only way to protect the world from those devices, which indiscriminately sow death, is to ensure their complete prohibition and elimination in the spirit of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions.

**Ms. Andjongo** (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation deplores the resurgence of an arms race at a time when everything points to the relevance of a disarmament race and urges countries to start reducing their stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in order to ensure the security of current and future generations, given that security guarantees are essential in the face of peril.

My delegation, which believes that disarmament should be directly linked to the maintenance of international peace and security and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, calls on the international community to redouble its efforts so as to avoid the repetition of past tragedies. Lasting peace and security cannot be achieved by continuing to possess weapons of mass destruction. My delegation therefore calls for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of such weapons. That is all the more necessary today, as it would be a dire tragedy for terrorists to get their hands on such weapons. My country believes that we must respect and further strengthen the international legal regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Cameroon is concerned that outer space, a common good of humankind, has become the site of renewed military activity. My delegation calls for transparency in space activities and believes that trust among States plays a major role in that regard. Cameroon believes that the debate on transparency and confidence-building measures should not overshadow the debate on a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. We call on the international community to underscore the importance of respecting disarmament agreements and the existing legal regime concerning outer space. We call on the Committee to set concrete objectives on transparency and confidence-building measures relating to outer-space activities, which provide the best opportunity to rapidly improve the security and sustainability of outer space and secure wider support.

Cameroon calls for a significant reduction in the illicit trafficking in arms, which reflects the importance of arms control in promoting peace and security. In order to find lasting and coherent solutions that focus on the issue of controlling small arms, which are genuine weapons of mass destruction, Cameroon is in favour of strengthening the institutional capacities of States in order to prevent violence, terrorism and crime.

In that regard, disarmament education, which promotes a culture of peace and non-violence, is of particular importance. My country believes that emphasis must be placed on raising awareness on disarmament issues and focusing on approaches to reduce and eradicate violent conflict by encouraging efforts to promote national and international security.

For Cameroon, the good-faith implementation by all States of the various legal and political instruments adopted at the global and regional levels with a view to curbing the proliferation of small arms and their munitions is an international security imperative. Simply put, achieving the noble goals of peace and development that are enshrined in the Charter of our Organization is dependent on the implementation of the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT); 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 Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, *inter alia*.

My delegation therefore calls for greater solidarity, transparency and sincerity in the implementation of the various instruments governing the circulation of conventional arms. Moreover, given that transparency is one of the fundamental pillars of the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Cameroon invites States to fulfil their treaty obligations in that area, in particular by submitting reports such as those stipulated in article 13 of the ATT. In that regard, my country requests that all related assistance be provided to States and organizations that do not have expertise on the subject.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to our multilateral and bilateral partners who continue to support Cameroon and Central Africa in the implementation of the relevant international and regional instruments in the field.

**Mr. Khaldi** (Algeria): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of Arab States and that to be delivered by the Group of African States (see A/C.1/76/PV.8) and would like to reaffirm the following principled positions in its national capacity.

First, in respect of nuclear disarmament, Algeria remains fully committed to all the provisions of the

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and continues to call for its full and urgent implementation, as well as the full, non-discriminatory and balanced implementation of its three pillars. The upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT is a timely opportunity to carry out a comprehensive review and assessment of the current status of the Treaty, the implementation of legal obligations and the fulfilment of previous commitments undertaken within its framework.

Algeria welcomes the recent entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in January. Having actively participated in the process of its elaboration and adoption, Algeria is pleased to be among the first countries to have signed the Treaty and remains confident that that instrument constitutes a key milestone towards delegitimizing nuclear weapons. In the same vein, Algeria reiterates the need to materialize the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) at the earliest opportunity and calls on all parties, in particular the eight remaining annex 2 countries, to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. In its capacity as co-Chair of the Article XIV Conference of the CTBT from 2019 to 2021, Algeria has spared no effort to work for the achievement of the entry into force of the CTBT and will continue to do so.

Moreover, Algeria supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones all over the world as a concrete step towards the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that respect, we welcome the convening 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, which was held in 2019. We call on all invited parties to constructively participate in its second session, to be held in November this year. My delegation also stresses the urgent need for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances for all non-nuclear-weapon States and calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Turning to other weapons of mass destruction, Algeria remains convinced that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention constitute relevant components of the international legal architecture and calls for their effective implementation. In that regard, Algeria recalls that the full, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the CWC,

in particular economic and technical development through international cooperation, is fundamental to the achievement of its objective. In the meantime, Algeria reaffirms the need to respect the principles enshrined in the CWC and calls on its States parties to avoid the polarization of the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, while at the same time encouraging them to continue to work constructively in the interest of reaching consensus.

On outer space, Algeria stresses the importance of the prevention of an arms race in outer space through establishing a legally binding instrument that complements the international legal framework in a manner that allows for the equal exploration of outer space based on the principles of non-appropriation and the peaceful uses of outer space, in conformity with the five United Nations treaties governing space activities.

Regarding conventional weapons, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to be a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the world, particularly in Africa. In that respect, Algeria remains committed to 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 actively calls for its full implementation in a balanced and comprehensive manner. In that regard, we welcome the successful conclusion of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which was held in July, and the adoption of its outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, annex), including the expedient establishment of a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons, in particular for developing countries.

The rapid technological development and possible use of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) in armed conflict is deeply alarming. Algeria therefore supports the continuation of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems with a strengthened mandate in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and stresses the urgent need to pursue a legally binding instrument on LAWS so as to address the humanitarian and international security challenges posed by emerging technologies in the area of LAWS.

The full version of my statement will be made available online.

**Mr. Molla** (Bangladesh): The coronavirus disease pandemic has transformed nearly every aspect of our world, including by creating a devastating impact on human life and the economy. However, the pandemic failed to slow down global spending on nuclear weapons. Despite the enormous need for resources to deal with the current global health crisis, \$72.6 billion was spent on the upkeep of nuclear weapons in 2020. That is an astounding figure.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries under this thematic cluster. Allow me to share some specific thoughts in my national capacity.

First, Bangladesh's position on nuclear weapons is unambiguously clear. As a State party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we hope that the first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty, to be held in March 2022, will be an important milestone towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. We believe that investment in nuclear weapons can neither ensure nor guarantee global peace and security. We call on all nuclear-weapon States to implement their treaty obligations without any delay. We reaffirm that all efforts must be made to produce a meaningful, tangible and sustainable outcome at the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is scheduled to be held in early 2022. We call for increased investment in researching nuclear technology and exploring the potential gains of the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the benefit of humankind.

Secondly, Bangladesh condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. We believe that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable in a transparent manner. As part of our commitment, we enacted the Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act in 2006, formulated the enrolment rules in 2010 and subsequently established the Bangladesh National Authority for the Chemical Weapons Convention. We also remain resolute in fulfilling the provisions of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Member States must redouble their efforts to eliminate all categories of chemical

weapons in their entirety and prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction.

Thirdly, as a State party to the Outer Space Treaty, we ardently support the fundamental premise of the Treaty, namely, that outer space should be explored and used for the benefit of all humankind. We therefore believe that States, regardless of their level of capacity in space science research and technology, ought to be able to bring forward their perspectives and concerns when defining the future rules for outer space. Following the launch of our Bangabandhu-1 satellite, Bangladesh now has a much greater stake in ensuring the safe, secure and sustainable use of outer space. We reiterate our call for a universal, non-discriminatory and international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We urge the major space actors to play a critical role in making outer space safe and sustainable for human endeavour.

Fourthly, Bangladesh underlines the need for the balanced, full and effective implementation 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 the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. In that regard, we take note of the successful conclusion of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action. As a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty, we firmly believe that every State must have the sovereign right to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their components for security-related requirements and self-defence. We also reaffirm our commitment to fulfilling our obligations under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols, to which we are a party.

Finally, global military expenditure stood at approximately \$2 trillion in 2020, despite the economic toil of the pandemic. Imagine what we could have achieved with that amount of money in the field of development, in particular in the fight against poverty. Let us make the right choice to be on the right side of history.

**Mr. Montalvo Sosa** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and calls on all States to sign and ratify it. We support the ongoing



process in the lead up to the first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty, which is scheduled to be held in March 2022. In addition to representing an existential challenge, the existence of nuclear weapons is preventing the consolidation of a more democratic world order and denying us a culture of peace, diplomacy and a sense of preserving humankind. My country believes that a change in the approach of the security doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States and those countries where nuclear weapons are stationed, as well as those that are under so-called nuclear protection, is essential for a peaceful world.

Along with Malaysia and 15 other countries, Ecuador marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by adopting a joint statement that highlighted the ongoing challenges. The best way to celebrate its fifty-second anniversary next year would be the effective implementation of the Treaty by the nuclear-weapon States. We reject any contemplation, planning or development of nuclear tests. We support the work of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its liaison office in New York. We are very close to reaching the point of every country in my region having ratified the Treaty, which would make Latin America and the Caribbean an exporter of peace and stability. We urge the international community to join efforts to ensure the early entry into force of the Treaty.

The Ecuadorian Constitution prohibits the development, production, possession, marketing, import, transport, storage and use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as highly toxic persistent organic pollutants, internationally prohibited agrochemicals, harmful experimental biological technologies and agents and genetically modified organisms that harm human health or threaten food security or ecosystems, as well as the introduction of nuclear residues and toxic waste into our national territory. We therefore call for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction without further delay.

Owing to its geographical location, Ecuador is the country that is located closest to space. We value the exclusively peaceful use of outer space and continue to oppose its lawlessness, militarization and, in particular, the placement of weapons or any war material outside the atmosphere.

Ecuador advocates an international system based on norms and the sovereign equality of States.

Norms of voluntary behaviour are important but only complementary. A conflict in space would have devastating consequences for humankind, which is why we wish to reaffirm our belief in the need for a legally binding instrument that preserves the peaceful nature of space as the common heritage of humankind.

My country shares and resolutely supports the objectives 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. We support the outcome of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action and remain committed to its implementation, taking into account that the main victims of such weapons are women and girls, both in and outside conflict situations.

We must put an end to all investment in companies that manufacture cluster munitions, as they are particularly cruel weapons that particularly affect the most vulnerable groups. We also condemn the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We reiterate Ecuador's commitment to the permanent implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. We also condemn the increasing use and upgrading of armed unmanned aerial vehicles. Ecuador is a country of peace and therefore supports all efforts aimed at —

**The Acting Chair:** I am sorry, but the representative of Ecuador is out of time.

We have heard from the last speaker in the thematic discussion for this meeting.

I shall now call on speakers who have requested the floor in exercise of the right of reply to statements made during the thematic discussion. I would like to remind delegations that the first intervention is limited to five minutes and the second intervention to three minutes.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I take the floor to respond to a number of unsubstantiated and baseless accusations made by the observer of the European Union (EU) and the delegation of the Netherlands, in its national capacity, in connection with the situation surrounding the so-called Navalny case. It seems that some colleagues believe that a lie repeated several times over can somehow magically become true. We hasten to disappoint them: a lie will always remain a lie. The truth remains that

the countries of the EU and NATO are persistently imposing on the world a fictional tale of the so-called poisoning of Mr. Navalny with a toxic chemical agent, while cynically and deliberately staying silent on the fact that everything possible was done in the Russian Federation to save the life of the Russian blogger and to arrange his unhindered and prompt delivery to Germany in line with the request of his spouse.

The Russian Federation was transparent from the outset. Russian doctors provided their German colleagues with all of the data they had collected concerning the patient's state of health and were prepared to continue to work together in the interest of his speedy recovery. Instead of mutual cooperation and joint work to establish the truth in what happened, we did not receive any meaningful response — it all came down to runaround formal replies. Russia has repeatedly expressed its views on the Navalny case in great detail and has provided a fact-based assessment of the situation and a chronology of the sequence of events that are open and available to all.

We have also repeatedly pointed out several inconsistencies and discrepancies in the actions and statements relating to the health of the Russian blogger, especially on the part of certain countries that seem to have a particular interest in the case. Anyone can see those inconsistencies for themselves if they read the materials and documents comprising the official correspondence between the Russian Federation and Germany, France, Sweden and the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Technical Secretariat, which are available on the Organization's website as materials of the ninety-eighth session of the OPCW Executive Council. Those documents provide the necessary answers to the questions raised by the delegation of the Netherlands.

We would also like to refresh the memories of our colleagues by recalling that it was Russia that proposed including in the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) Schedules of Chemicals all chemicals that, based on the results of research undertaken at Western laboratories, received the designation "Novichok". However, the countries of the EU and NATO prevented that from happening by refusing to publicize the formulas of

those substances. The same group of countries is now making every effort in the Navalny case to ensure that the toxic chemical allegedly discovered by the Bundeswehr laboratory is not included in the Schedules of Chemicals, under the extremely absurd pretext that they believe there to be proliferation risks.

With regard to the request submitted on 6 October under article IX of the CWC, we expect that within the deadline established by the Convention, that is, by 16 October, we will receive substantive responses from Germany, France and Sweden, without which it will not be possible to confirm or definitively refute the purported crime in the Navalny case.

We call on the countries of the EU and NATO to stop making unsubstantiated accusations against good-faith States parties to the CWC and to cease their falsification of facts in order to promote their own political interests. Responsibility must be shown to ensure the future of the OPCW and, as a result, the maintenance of international peace and security. For its part, the Russian Federation will continue to seek the truth in the Navalny case.

**The Acting Chair:** We have heard the last speaker for this meeting.

I should like to once again remind delegations that the list of speakers for the thematic discussion will close at 6 p.m. today. I would also like to remind all delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions under all agenda items is Thursday, 14 October, at noon.

The Committee has two meetings scheduled for tomorrow, when we will continue the thematic discussion on the combined clusters 1, 2, 3 and 4. The President of the General Assembly will address the Committee at the start of the meeting in the afternoon. The Committee will also hear a pre-recorded video statement from the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/280, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

*The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.*