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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Hilale(Morocco)

In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Milanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda items 92 to 107 (continued)

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

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now continue its thematic discussion on specific subjects on the combined clusters 1 to 4, and the introduction and consideration of the draft resolutions and draft decisions submitted under the agenda items allocated to the Committee. I would like to remind members that the combined thematic clusters before the Committee today are “Nuclear weapons”, “Other weapons of mass destruction”, “Outer space (disarmament aspects)” and “Conventional weapons”.

Before I open the floor, I would like to remind 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 on behalf of several delegations. Delegations wishing to exercise their right of reply will be able to do so at the end of this afternoon’s meeting, in accordance with General Assembly procedure.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): The Group of African States supports the principle of complete nuclear disarmament as a prerequisite for maintaining

international peace and security. The Group insists that achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons should be the overall objective of the United Nations. Regrettably, the slow pace of progress of the nuclear-weapon States in accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their legal obligations and undertakings under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the various relevant agreed outcomes of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains worrisome. The Group therefore insists that the nuclear-weapon States implement all the agreed measures and undertakings in the context of the Treaty.

The Group reiterates its deep concern about the lack of implementation of the commitments and obligations of the 1995 NPT Review Conference resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We welcome the successful outcome of the first session of the United Nations Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/75/63. The Group calls on all States and organizations invited to the Conference to participate constructively, actively and in good faith as a practical step towards implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and creating an equitable, sustainable and non-discriminatory security architecture in the region. The African Group affirms the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones across the world to the overall objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

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The African Group welcomes multilateral efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological weapons, and in that context will continue to cooperate with the relevant intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, in particular the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, and to provide untiring support for relevant multilateral treaties such as the NPT and the Biological Weapons Convention.

The Group also underscores the importance of continued respect for the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and stresses the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in that regard through technical support and cooperation, as well as maximizing the use of science and technology for socioeconomic development.

Furthermore, the Group underscores the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and wishes to reiterate the importance of achieving its universal adherence, while taking into consideration the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States. The African Group calls on nuclear-weapon States and those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty that have yet to accede to the CTBT or to sign and ratify it to do so without further delay.

The role of space technology has become pervasive today. Never before have information, communications, banking, navigation and even political and strategic decision-making been so dependent on space-based technologies. For that reason, outer space and celestial bodies must continue to be regarded and safeguarded as the common heritage of mankind. The African Group therefore emphasizes how urgent it is to ensure that our planet, including outer space, is free of nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction and indeed all kinds of weapons, as their presence constitutes an existential threat to global peace and the future survival of humankind. To that end, the Group stresses that outer space, as a common heritage of all humankind, must be explored and used exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all mankind in a spirit of cooperation, as well as for all States, irrespective of their social, economic or scientific development.

The African Group would like to recall the 2016 adoption of the African Space Policy and Strategy, which we regard as an important policy framework for realizing an African outer space programme within the framework of Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU). We would also like to remind the Committee of the establishment of the African Space Agency and to reiterate that the immense potential of space technology and applications should be equally beneficial to all Member States. In that context, we call on the United Nations to promote equal and non-discriminatory access to outer space for all nations. The Group also stresses the importance of the international legal framework that enables 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, in particular the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

The illicit trade, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, remain an issue of concern. In that regard, the African Group attaches great importance to the central role 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 of the International Tracing Instrument as crucial multilateral instruments dedicated to fighting the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and tackling their multifaceted effects, which pose a threat to international peace and security.

The Group recognizes the extensive work done to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons of 2000, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol on the Establishment of the AU Peace and Security Council, the solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy adopted in Sirte, the Nairobi Protocol, the Southern African Development Community Protocol, the Convention of the Economic Community of West African States on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Material, efforts in the framework of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States and the Arab

Maghreb Union, the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative and other subregional initiatives.

The Group reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms, their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Group also stresses that arms transfers to unauthorized recipients fuel conflicts and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and urges all States to refrain from and prohibit arms transfers to any recipient without the authorization of the competent national authorities of the importing States.

Mr. September (South Africa): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand and my own country, South Africa.

As mentioned in the general debate, the NAC will again present its draft resolution entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments". The NAC firmly believes that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. We are committed to a nuclear-weapon-free world and to actively contributing to the achievement of that goal. The draft resolution therefore addresses a number of nuclear disarmament issues on which progress is essential to the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Given the lack of progress in the implementation of long-standing nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments, the NAC is obliged to continue focusing on the fulfilment of existing obligations. Much of the text is therefore unchanged from previous NAC resolutions. The draft resolution reiterates that each article of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is binding on States parties at all times and in all circumstances, and that all States parties should be held fully accountable for strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty. It calls on all States parties to comply fully with all decisions, resolutions and commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The NAC will continue to work for the universalization of the NPT and the full implementation of its obligations, in particular in the areas of nuclear disarmament and

subsequent commitments agreed to at its Review Conferences. The draft resolution highlights our call to nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their disarmament obligations without further delay. It also emphasizes the importance of the NPT review process and the need to evaluate compliance with existing obligations and develop new measures.

The NAC presents specific recommendations for improving transparency, measurability and accountability for compliance during the current review cycle. The draft resolution reiterates our deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, including where gender is concerned, and recommends that measures be taken to increase awareness of those effects, including through disarmament education.

The draft resolution calls on the nuclear-weapon States to take all steps necessary to accelerate the fulfilment of their commitments, and urges them to decrease the operational readiness of their nuclear-weapon systems. It also urges them to reduce the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies, pending their total elimination. It highlights concerns related to the rising tensions in international relations and the increased prominence that some States are giving nuclear weapons in their security doctrines. It also encourages further steps by all nuclear-weapon States to ensure the irreversible removal of all fissile material that each nuclear-weapon State has designated as no longer required for military purposes. It calls on all States to support, within the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the development of appropriate nuclear disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding verification arrangements.

It also emphasizes the importance of the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and the formulation of a treaty to establish such a zone on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by all the States of the region. The NAC is encouraged by the outcomes 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 successfully convened in 2019.

The draft resolution urges India, Israel and Pakistan to accede promptly to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon

States without conditions, and to place all their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. It also urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, among other things, to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and return to the NPT as soon as possible. The draft resolution urges all States to work together to overcome the obstacles within the international disarmament machinery that inhibit efforts to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament in a multilateral context. It urges Member States to pursue multilateral negotiations, in good faith and without delay, on effective measures for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world, in keeping with the spirit and purposes of General Assembly resolution 1(I) and article VI of the NPT. In that regard, the NAC was particularly pleased to be able to welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January and urges all States to join the Treaty. We look forward to the first meeting of the States parties to the Treaty and call on Member States to continue to support efforts to identify, elaborate, negotiate and implement further effective legally binding measures for nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, we encourage all States to show their commitment to nuclear disarmament by supporting the draft resolution.

Since our draft resolution seeks to uphold previous commitments and obligations that were agreed to by consensus, the NAC believes that the resolution is drafted in a manner that all States should be able to support. We are confident that as we move towards the tenth Review Conference, all delegations will want to join us in signalling a strong wish to see the full implementation of the NPT and make progress towards the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mrs. Nadeau (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat not only to our planet but to humankind as a whole. Canada believes that the common and unyielding goal of all member States should continue to be the adoption of a gradual approach to reducing the number of such weapons and ensuring their total and irreversible elimination. The worrisome trend of States seeking to diversify and build up their nuclear arsenals must end. If we are to make any significant progress in the area of nuclear disarmament, we must maintain and strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture that our predecessors have so painstakingly constructed.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons lies at the heart of that architecture. Canada works with its partners to develop specific proposals and ideas for strengthening its implementation, primarily by participating in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament. Those two cross-regional groups are composed of non-nuclear-weapon States with diverse backgrounds that come together to agree on ways to achieve nuclear disarmament. Their work is a testament to the urgency we attach to our common goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. We believe that their contributions will set in motion the positive momentum needed to ensure a truly productive Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We would also like to take advantage of opportunities created by recent developments such as the five-year extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the beginning of a strategic dialogue between the Russian Federation and the United States and the affirmation by some nuclear-weapon States that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Those positive trends open up new possibilities that can steer us along the road to disarmament. Decision-makers must fully comprehend the risks associated with nuclear weapons and acknowledge that arms control enhances security and predictability.

(*spoke in English*)

When faced with the threat of nuclear weapons, we should focus our efforts on achieving individual steps, many of which are already well established and widely agreed on. They will lead us to our nuclear disarmament goal, while building trust and confidence along the way. We should endeavour to advance disarmament and non-proliferation and reinforce a global architecture in the sincere hope of leaving a safer and more secure world in the hands of the next generation. Long-standing objectives that Canada has advocated for, such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, are achievable steps, but they require political will on the part of all States. Expanding our expertise and knowledge regarding nuclear disarmament verification, such as through the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, is another step that contributes to a more conducive and trusting environment for disarmament.

Further efforts on nuclear risk reduction are urgently required to secure a path forward. While the steps to nuclear disarmament are largely understood, it is in their implementation that we stumble. Canada truly believes that some of the most intractable issues of our time can be dislodged by increasing inclusivity and diversity in the field of nuclear disarmament. Having a diversity of perspectives will lead to more ideas and creativity and, ultimately, to lasting progress on disarmament initiatives. For that reason, Canada is committed to empowering young people to become the next generation of disarmament and non-proliferation leaders. Canada also believes that the equal, full and meaningful participation of women in all disarmament discussions and decision-making processes is critical to achieving sustainable outcomes and finding solutions that work for everyone.

Let me conclude by stating that we live in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. That reality comes with great challenges, but also great opportunities for cooperation. Let us seize them.

Mr. Al-Taie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my country's delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Palestine, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/76/PV.7).

The international arena is witnessing increasingly complex security developments that should prompt us to work seriously and quickly to universalize the various conventions and treaties on the issue of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Universalization should be a top priority for the international community in its efforts to achieve a world free of weapons capable of destroying both people and the environment.

Iraq reiterates the importance of adhering to the full and balanced implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in accordance with its provisions, taking into account areas where the Treaty's focus on disarmament, at the expense of non-proliferation, creates a clear imbalance. The Treaty's provisions constitute the motivation for States to accede to it. In that respect, Iraq emphasizes the importance of working to overcome the challenges that the Treaty encountered in 2015 at that year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, so as to be able to arrive at an

outcome document that addresses the concerns of all countries at the tenth Review Conference, to be held early next year.

Iraq would like to remind the Committee that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, considered the fourth pillar of the NPT, has yet to be implemented, despite the two and a half decades that have passed since then. We must therefore work diligently to support and ensure the success of efforts to that end. That includes convening a second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Iraq believes that outer space is a common heritage of humankind that should be explored and used exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit and in the interests of all countries without exception. We therefore call for tireless efforts to ensure the non-militarization of outer space and prevent an arms race there. We also support all international initiatives to conclude a legally binding instrument banning the weaponization of outer space.

The catastrophic consequences of developments in the area of conventional weapons are no less serious than those in that of weapons of mass destruction. We must all shoulder our responsibilities and make more concerted efforts internationally to prevent such problems. The uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their illicit trade remain sources of concern and danger that threaten the security and stability of countries and their communities, with disastrous negative effects on civilians and the military alike. In that context, Iraq welcomed the outcome document adopted by consensus at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, annex).

Mines and explosive remnants of war have had long-term social, economic and environmental effects in Iraq. The international community should therefore assist Iraq with its continuing national demining programme for removing mines and explosive devices. Iraq needs its support in developing and increasing its efficiency through the establishment of partnerships between international organizations and local organizations, so as to build our national capacity to address the remaining mine contamination as we update our national standards in line with international

standards. In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank all who have helped Iraq with mine clearance. I want to emphasize that Iraq is still in dire need to international support through the expansion of national and foreign teams to perform scanning and removal work and build our national capacities while helping and rehabilitating the victims.

Mr. Al-Kuwari (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to you, Mr. Chair, for your efforts and those of the participating delegations in the work of the First Committee.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons, is a source of major concern to the international community. The increasing proliferation of such weapons has the potential to cause more possible incidents and attacks, with serious consequences for humankind and future generations. Furthermore, the continued development of such weapons and the threat of their use heighten international tensions and destabilize international peace and security.

International efforts in the area of general and complete disarmament and non-proliferation are a cornerstone of the establishment of peaceful and safe societies. Collective international efforts in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have led to conventions and treaties that prohibit and criminalize the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, my country's delegation underscores the importance of upholding all such relevant international conventions and treaties, including those related to the prohibition of nuclear testing and the development of nuclear arsenals and other lethal weapons.

If we are to make progress towards implementing disarmament treaties and concluding binding conventions, multilateralism is the only way to reach common ground on achieving the international community's objectives in the area of international peace and security while respecting the sovereignty, unity and independence of States. The delay in establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction will not help us achieve peace and security in the region. In that context, Qatar reiterates its support for the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in accordance

with General Assembly decision 73/546 at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 29 November to 3 December. We hope that all the States of the region will cooperate to ensure a successful conference presided over by our sister State of Kuwait, which will serve to strengthen international and regional peace and security.

Qatar will spare no effort to develop national legislation on weapons of mass destruction that is commensurate with our commitments and in line with the conventions we have signed and ratified. My country also supports all the activities that promote the implementation and understanding of those treaties and conventions. In that regard, the Qatari National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons held a webinar in February on the Chemical Weapons Convention and the management of chemical safety and security for Member States in Asia, in cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons through the Doha Regional Centre for Training on the Conventions on Weapons of Mass Destruction. The webinar reviewed the safety practices in place at the chemical facilities and the peaceful applications of chemical security. On 15 and 16 February, the Committee held its tenth annual awareness workshop on the conventions on weapons of mass destruction with the participation of high school students in Qatar, in cooperation with our Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The workshop included sessions on the conventions related to weapons of mass destruction, as well as nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. They also addressed the role of international organizations in this regard, in addition to discussions of Qatar's efforts to implement the conventions on weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reiterates the importance of international cooperation in the quest to eliminate nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and to promote non-proliferation. We emphasize our firm commitment to fulfilling our nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation obligations, and we will continue to work with the members of the international community for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka): Please allow me to make some remarks on cluster 3, "Outer space (disarmament aspects)". Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, known as the father of rocketry, who was inspired by the fiction of Jules Verne, developed insights into space travel. He

remarked that the Earth is the cradle of humankind, but that mankind cannot stay in the cradle forever. Since time immemorial, humankind has looked at the stars and heavens above and wondered about the objects in the night sky. With the turn of the new century, States have executed policies to control space for military operations. Ballistic missiles play an important role in many national security programmes. The development of defensive systems contributes to the global arms race. It has therefore come to be accepted that space warfare is inevitable. What the legal situation might be in this rather uncertain area in a situation of potential conflict is anybody's guess. There is a serious lack of clarity, which leads to heightened threats to global security.

Sri Lanka would like to stress that outer space is part of the common heritage of all humankind. It is not the exclusive realm of some nor should it be the realm of an elite few. Space is our global commons. To borrow a phrase from pop culture and the realm of science fiction, and with apologies to Gene Roddenberry, who gave us *Star Trek*, space remains, as he put it, the final frontier, the place to boldly go where no man has gone before, as popularized by the television show. That frontier needs protection and preservation. All States must have equal opportunities for access to outer space for exploration and for its utilization for peaceful purposes for the collective benefit of all humankind and all our countries.

It is crucial to ensure that outer space remains free of conflict or escalation and to prevent any militarization or weaponization of space. We reiterate that any regulation of outer space should be designed to improve the outer-space environment for the use of all States and should in no way limit their full utilization of outer-space activities, applications and exploration. That is the essence of the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, which reflects the determination of States to make outer space a common good for all humankind. We must strive for greater cooperation to ensure a governance framework that encourages innovation and the long-term sustainability of outer-space activities.

The interconnected nature of space affairs has its advantages and disadvantages. If properly managed, States' reliance on their outer-space capabilities for civil and military applications will be important for the security of the planet. However, for the same reason,

States can become vulnerable to multiple threats. The weaponization of outer space is a global security threat in the light of the growing numbers of anti-satellite weapons, satellite jamming devices, cyberthreats and laser weapons. As the space capabilities of individual countries grow, the possibility of an arms race is correspondingly greater. Although collective security helps States to work together, individual States may seek to enhance their capabilities and compete with one another. It is therefore possible that national security and global security may not be in harmony. That is demonstrably evident in the continuing weaponization of the space domain and the growing arms race in outer space. That scenario therefore calls for an international regime with regulatory oversight over such activity so that effective steps can be taken to discourage the trend.

It is for those reasons that for close to four decades Sri Lanka and Egypt have been proud to jointly present an annual resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". This year Sri Lanka is privileged to be introducing draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.3, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We hope that as in previous years it will continue to enjoy the Committee's wide support. The draft resolution has only technical updates, and we look forward to continued support for its adoption.

Mr. Elhomosany (Egypt): Egypt aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), and Palestine, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/76/PV.7), and earlier in this meeting by the representative of Ghana, on behalf of the Group of African States, and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

Rising tensions at the global level, coupled with rapid technological developments, have created some of the highest levels of risks of the intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons that the world has seen since the Cold War era. We need to improve this situation immediately to restore trust and faith in the current regime. As a first step, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should reaffirm the validity of all previous commitments. We hope that the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty will be a step in the right direction.

The decades-long stalemate in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, as well

as countless similar resolutions, is eroding the credibility and sustainability of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and of multilateral norms and the rule of law at the international level. In that regard, we believe that the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which successfully convened its first session in November 2019, represents an important opportunity for the United Nations to take meaningful practical steps in that direction through an institutional, inclusive and consensus-based process. We look forward to the second session of the Conference in November. We also count on the continued support of all Member States for the draft resolution that Egypt submits annually on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which until 2017 was adopted by consensus, and for the draft resolution we submit on behalf of the League of Arab States, entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East”.

Outer space is a shared heritage owned equally by all the peoples of the world and a common asset for humankind. There is a clear need for a legally binding instrument that would complement the existing international legal framework by preventing an arms race in outer space and filling the existing legal gaps in that area. Such an instrument should prohibit the placement of any weapons in outer space as well as armed attacks on satellites or any other outer-space assets, intentional harmful interference that interrupts the normal functioning of outer-space assets and the development of weapons that are specifically designed for attacking outer-space assets. Egypt and Sri Lanka have once more submitted their joint annual draft resolution entitled “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”. We count on the support of all member States for that important resolution.

We welcome the adoption of the outcome document of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, annex). We look forward to convening the eighth Biennial Meeting, in 2022, to elaborate on issues related to the diversion of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized recipients and to implement the conclusions of the seventh Biennial Meeting, especially with regard to establishing the

fellowship programme proposed by NAM to offer training to developing countries.

The Middle East and Africa are dealing with severe threats in the form of increasing illicit flows and intentional transfers of small arms and light weapons to terrorists and illegal armed groups. Some argue that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) would have been the solution for stopping all illegal flows of conventional arms. In that regard, we emphasize that the ATT has various shortcomings, especially its lack of clear definitions and criteria, that largely undermine its potential effectiveness. We call on the States parties to the ATT to ensure that its implementation is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, without any infringement on the right of States to fulfil their national security and self-defence needs.

Ms. Man Yan Eng (Singapore): Singapore aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Malaysia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/76/PV.7), and we would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

One of the core missions of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. Disarmament and non-proliferation are therefore a critical part of our work at the United Nations. The international community must work collectively to achieve tangible progress on the disarmament agenda, without impinging on the sovereign right of States to self-defence and responsible law enforcement. That balance must be struck to ensure a safe and secure future for all. In that regard, I will make three points.

First, we welcome recent positive steps taken by nuclear-weapon States, particularly those with the largest nuclear arsenals, to continue dialogue and strengthen mutual trust in order to advance the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. That includes the five-year extension from 2021 to 2026 of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and Russia, and the bilateral strategic stability dialogue on nuclear arms control and risk reduction measures. However, although nuclear weapons have not been used in the past 76 years, progress on nuclear disarmament remains slow, and the risks of nuclear proliferation continue in many regions. It is therefore important not only that States renew their commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the upcoming tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, but that they also commit to fulfilling their obligations under the NPT. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to redouble their efforts to reduce their nuclear arsenals and end any qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and testing. The international community must also work for the universalization of the NPT and find a way to bring in nuclear-weapon-possessing States that fall outside the ambit of the NPT and disarmament discussions.

At the same time, Singapore supports the inalienable right to the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, as provided for under the NPT. We reaffirm the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in maintaining nuclear safety and security and call on Member States to continue supporting the IAEA in its efforts to discharge its mandate effectively.

Secondly, it is imperative that the international community continue its efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As one of the world's busiest trans-shipment hubs, Singapore takes its responsibility seriously in that regard. We are committed to complying fully with all relevant Security Council resolutions and have in place a robust export-control regime, which we regularly review to ensure that it is up to date. Singapore also contributes actively to multilateral initiatives, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). This year, Singapore will host the PSI Deep Sabre exercise for the fourth time, contributing to building capacity in our region to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We also look forward to the comprehensive review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which was postponed due to the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Thirdly, States must fulfil their international legal obligations to curb the illicit trade in and indiscriminate use of conventional weapons. Singapore welcomes and supports the outcomes achieved at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Singapore is a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty and is working towards its ratification. We are committed to the Treaty's objective of preventing the illicit trade in conventional arms.

Singapore supports international initiatives against the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and conventional weapons. We recognize the impact that such weapons can have on innocent civilians and support the relevant United Nations resolutions and international initiatives under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Consequently, Singapore has imposed an indefinite moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Singapore's commitment to working constructively with the international community to foster greater collaboration and open dialogue for a safer and better future for all.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is one of the foundations of today's world order. We hope that at the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons we will be able to arrive at generally acceptable solutions for strengthening the NPT regime. While we share the noble goal of a nuclear-free world and we understand the views of those who advocate for eliminating nuclear weapons as soon as possible, progress in nuclear disarmament can be achieved only by consensus and through gradual, phased reductions in the context of article VI of the NPT, while preserving a strategic balance in accordance with the principle of individual security.

We consider attempts to impose an immediate ban on nuclear weapons misguided and counterproductive. They create deep divisions and undermine the NPT. We firmly believe that a nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought. Russia complies fully with its arms-control agreements. Our achievements in nuclear arms reduction under our agreements with the United States are well known. The extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty laid the groundwork for dialogue with the United States on future arms control, taking into account all the factors relating to strategic stability, including both nuclear and non-nuclear offensive and defensive weapons capable of strategic tasks. We are ready to undertake intensive efforts based on mutual consideration of our interests.

The problems left in the wake of the expired Treaty on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces related to non-nuclear global strike weapons are still unresolved. Besides that, we must also end the practice of shared nuclear missions, which runs counter to the NPT, refraining from basing nuclear weapons outside individual national territories while dismantling the related infrastructure.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a critical instrument in the area of nuclear non-proliferation, and we fully abide by its provisions. We call on all annex 2 States to ratify it without further delay.

We have strictly adhered to our obligations under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. A verification mechanism would help to ensure the full implementation of its provisions by all States parties. We hope to see specific proposals adopted for improving the implementation of the Convention at the upcoming meeting of States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Review Conference of the States parties to the Convention. We believe that Russia's initiatives are timely in that regard. In order to start work on ensuring the effective use of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, Russia has submitted a draft resolution to the First Committee, and we call on members for their support and sponsorship.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a key instrument for chemical disarmament and non-proliferation. Russia has consistently called for the Convention to be strengthened. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has found itself in an extremely difficult situation, since a body where all decisions were made by consensus has ended up divided, owing to politicization, the dilution of its mandate and a failure to adhere to the provisions of the CWC.

Member States should pay particular attention to the attitude of some countries that view outer space as an arena for military action, based on their unilateral policies on the placement of weapons in outer space, which increases the likelihood that force will be used against outer-space objects, with the aim of achieving military domination to the detriment of all other current or potential participants in space activities. In that regard, it is vital to ensure that the prevention of an arms race in outer space becomes an unequivocal norm

of Member States' national policies and a generally accepted international principle. We have to reaffirm the shared understanding that no weapons of any kind should be placed in outer space. We also need a ban on the threat or use of force against outer-space objects. We have consistently advocated for launching negotiations for an international legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space and preserve it for peaceful purposes. We will be submitting draft resolutions to the First Committee on "No first placement of weapons in outer space", "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race" and "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities". We hope that Russia's draft resolutions will garner support and sponsorship.

Mr. Vu (Viet Nam): My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Malaysia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.7).

Viet Nam reaffirms its consistent policy supporting the common efforts of the international community in the areas of non-proliferation and disarmament with the aim of the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global regime for nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. States parties should uphold their obligations under the NPT and renew their commitment to further contributing to the realization of its long-term goals by strengthening non-proliferation measures, moving forward on disarmament negotiation and promoting international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Efforts should be made to ensure the success of the upcoming tenth Review Conference of the States parties to the NPT and the effective implementation of the NPT in the next cycle. We call on members that have not done so, in particular the States listed in annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a historic agreement with an important contribution to the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Viet Nam was proud to be the tenth country to ratify the Treaty, which entered into force on 22 January. We stand ready to engage with others for the success of the

upcoming first meeting of States parties to the Treaty next March.

My delegation continues to call for universal adherence to international legal instruments with regard to other weapons of mass destruction. We support the full and effective implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We welcome the progress that has been made in eliminating chemical-weapon stockpiles under the CWC and support the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its close cooperation with and assistance to States parties.

Conventional weapons deserve further attention from the international community. States have the legitimate right to manufacture, trade and retain conventional arms for their national defence and security needs. At the same time, States bear the primary responsibility for addressing issues related to conventional weapons. We remain deeply concerned about the threat posed to civilian and peacekeeping personnel by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, which have had serious and lasting humanitarian, social and economic consequences for the populations of more than 60 countries. Last April, under Viet Nam's presidency, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2021/8) on mine action, which encourages Member States, the United Nations system and other relevant organizations and institutions to enhance their support, including through sharing best practices and providing technical and financial assistance to the countries affected.

It is the right and in the common interests of all countries to explore and use outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes, in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant treaties. We call on further regional and international cooperation to promote confidence-building measures and a culture of peace and friendship among all peoples and nations for the better use of outer space for peace, security and development.

The Acting Chair: I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by the representative of Austria.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the Conference Room.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Islamic Republic of Iran associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.7). We will submit separate statements on each cluster at a later date.

Global nuclear disarmament remains one of the most long-standing goals of the United Nations. Today, international security is threatened by the existence of almost 14,000 nuclear weapons, with well-founded long-term plans to not only modernize but also strengthen the arsenals of nuclear-weapon States and by extension the nuclear arms race. Reliance on nuclear deterrence has persisted as an element in the security policies of all nuclear-weapon States, most recently as set out in the 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy of the United Kingdom. And yet no nuclear disarmament negotiations are under way, despite those States' clear legal obligation under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Furthermore, the withdrawal of the United States from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty spelled an end to the commitment to eliminating an entire class of nuclear missiles. Similarly, its withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its unwillingness to return to it have caused immense damage to international efforts on nuclear disarmament. In the same vein, the Israeli regime's nuclear weapons are the main obstacle to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We reiterate our call to the international community to compel Israel to dismantle its nuclear arsenal, promptly accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party, without any preconditions, and place all of its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Iran is among the countries with the highest record of accessions to the international instruments banning weapons of mass destruction. Some 24 years after the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the use or threat of use of chemical weapons is still a matter of great concern to the international community. In addition, the destruction of chemical weapons, as well as the universality of the CWC, is yet to be realized. The United States, as the only possessor of chemical weapons, has not only failed to meet the final extended deadline of April 2012 for the destruction of its chemical stockpile but has also sought to postpone

the fulfilment of its obligations until 2023. We urge the United States to use its full capacity to complete the destruction of its chemical-weapon stockpiles as soon as possible before the scheduled deadline.

With regard to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the most effective approach to strengthening it is through a resumption of the negotiations on a legally binding protocol for the Convention. We therefore call on the United States to withdraw its objection to their resumption. The Israeli regime's continuing non-adherence to the BWC and CWC is a major obstacle to their universality and a danger to regional security.

Preventing an arms race in outer space could end a severe threat to international peace and security. To that end, further measures, including a legally binding instrument with appropriate and effective verification provisions, should be developed in a timely manner by the Conference on Disarmament. We are deeply concerned about the increasing threat of the weaponization of outer space. The United States has already established a Space Force whose budget for this year is more than \$17 billion and will increase by 13 per cent the next year. We reject the United States' illegal sanctions on the Iranian Space Agency.

Iran reaffirms the sovereign and inherent right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. However, in regions such as the Middle East, the overproduction, massive transfer and excessive accumulation of such weapons have given rise to regional and international security concerns. Israel is the largest recipient of United States arms aid in the region. Using such weapons leads to the commission of various crimes and causes destabilization and insecurity, which must be stopped.

Last but not least, regrettably, the outcome document of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, annex) contains provisions, including the establishment of an open-ended expert group, that are not consistent with the Biennial Meeting's mandate.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): Hungary associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/76/PV.7). I will

therefore make only a few brief remarks from our national perspective.

In the nuclear field, the most important task ahead of us is to ensure a balanced, comprehensive and successful outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by making tangible progress on all three pillars. With regard to nuclear disarmament, Hungary shares the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. However, in our view there are no shortcuts in that area. Only a progressive approach that engages nuclear-weapon States and consists of gradual and concrete practical steps will provide us with an appropriate platform. Such an inclusive, incremental approach encompasses the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and advancing nuclear disarmament verification, along with risk reduction and transparency and confidence-building measures. Hungary contributes to those efforts as a member of the second Group of Governmental Experts to further consider nuclear disarmament verification issues and by participating in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiatives.

With regard to the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, Hungary supports the complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We also support efforts aimed at ensuring the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. We believe that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains the best available way to achieve that goal. As a country with an expanding peaceful nuclear programme, Hungary recognizes that all States parties have an inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which also helps us to meet our ambitious environmental goals. We firmly believe that nuclear safety and security sustain the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and contribute to maintaining its positive public perception. We therefore currently serve as convener of the Nuclear Security Control Group and will host the next plenary meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and in any circumstances cannot be tolerated. The re-emergence of chemical weapons is one of the world's most serious threats to international peace and security. It therefore has to be dealt with firmly and collectively, which is a prerequisite for strengthening

the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We fully support the activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to that end.

In our statement at the general debate (see A/C.1/76/PV.6) we drew attention to the importance of a positive outcome to the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We trust that States parties will be motivated by the heightened tensions caused by the pandemic and succeed in overcoming the existing stalemate. The adoption once again by consensus of this year's draft resolution on the BWC, which contains all the technical updates, would send a positive signal to the Review Conference. Hungary is also a strong supporter of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, the only independent international instrument in this field. As a clear manifestation of our support, the Hungarian National Biosafety Laboratory has been part of the roster of laboratories offered to the Mechanism since 2014.

In our view, the peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of all, in line with the applicable international treaties, is increasingly essential to many aspects of our daily life. At the same time, activities related to outer space also have important security implications that need to be addressed. The prevention of an arms race in outer space is key in that respect. However, once again, only an incremental and inclusive approach to this issue will work, with voluntary measures as the first step.

Mrs. Uprety (Nepal): Nepal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.7).

It has long been realized that nuclear weapons and their proliferation undermine peace, security and development. However, the accumulation and augmentation of nuclear weapons have grown exponentially, to a level that poses an existential threat to humankind that will not diminish until we eliminate nuclear weapons from the Earth. Today's race to modernize nuclear arsenals demonstrate our inability rather than our ability to make peace and build confidence. Nepal calls on all nuclear-weapon States to fully abide by their legal obligations regarding the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner.

The Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, should resume its negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We look forward to the convening of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Nepal welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation. We continue to call for the strengthening of the NPT, Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and TPNW regimes. Nepal strongly supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We believe in the inalienable right of all parties to the NPT to the peaceful production and use of nuclear energy, while adhering to their legal obligation to submit to effective supervision and verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

As a State party to the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Nepal unequivocally supports the general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical weapons. The BWC needs a verification mechanism to address the threat of proliferation. Nepal does not produce, possess or transfer weapons of mass destruction of any kind. We need a high level of cooperation to prevent WMDs from falling into the hands of non-State actors, particularly terrorists. The implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and other relevant instruments remains critical in that regard.

Outer space is the common heritage of humankind and should be used peacefully and sustainably for the wider benefit of humankind. Nepal reiterates its firm rejection of the weaponization of outer space.

Nepal supports the complete elimination of cluster munitions and of permission for the legal and ethical use of lethal autonomous weapon systems. We underscore the need for the balanced and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty as well as 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 Tracing Instrument.

In conclusion, we underline the need for an enhanced level of international cooperation for an effective disarmament architecture. We call on Member States to abandon any kind of arms competition and resort to productive dialogue to advance the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to give a brief statement covering clusters 1 to 4 of the thematic debate. My delegation will submit full written statements on each of those clusters, to be included in the compendium.

The United Kingdom will continue to work for the preservation and strengthening of effective nuclear arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation measures, while taking into account the prevailing security environment. The United Kingdom remains firmly committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to a successful Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty in January 2022. The NPT provides the only credible framework for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, while preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons and sharing the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. The United Kingdom will not support, sign or ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and we do not accept any argument that it contributes to the development of customary international law.

We continue to be committed to our collective long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We will continue to play a leading role in practical work towards achieving that goal, developing nuclear disarmament verification measures, working for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, pressing for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament and working internationally to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict.

The United Kingdom also remains committed to upholding the complete ban on chemical and biological weapons. We strongly support the continued independence of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons and cannot support proposals that would undermine it. The United Kingdom also supports the impartial and expert work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The confirmed use of a Novichok nerve agent in Russia against Alexei Navalny is a grave concern. Independent mechanisms have also attributed responsibility for

several chemical-weapon attacks to the Al-Assad regime in Syria. We urge Syria to take the steps set out by the OPCW Executive Council. The coronavirus disease pandemic has demonstrated the importance of a robust global biosecurity regime, of which the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is an indispensable part. We urge States parties to seize the opportunity presented by the forthcoming ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention to work together to strengthen the Convention's implementation. Under the United Kingdom's presidency, the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction is optimizing international programmes to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The United Kingdom backs the strengthened implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The prevention of an arms race in outer space remains a key objective for the preservation of international peace and security. To achieve it, we need to consider not only the capabilities that could fuel an arms race, but also the behaviours, actions, activities and omissions that could lead to escalation and conflict. The Secretary-General's report (A/76/77), pursuant to resolution 75/36, contains important considerations in that regard and we thank those who submitted their views. In line with the report's recommendation that Member States should decide on an inclusive process to take those issues forward, the United Kingdom is pleased to introduce a new draft resolution on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours to establish an open-ended working group. We warmly welcome the valuable support of Member States for this approach to preventing an arms race in outer space and maintaining space as a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable environment for the benefit of all.

The United Kingdom is deeply committed to the humanitarian aims of the conventional disarmament conventions. We are proud to work with partners to support work to clear cluster bombs, mines and explosive remnants of war across the globe, and to stem the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. That commitment is underscored by our assumption of the presidency of the tenth meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, in which capacity we have the honour to introduce the annual resolution on the implementation of the Convention. Building on the successful outcome of the second Review Conference,

we will pursue the universalization of the Convention, explore alternative financing options for the clearance of cluster munitions and start work on delivering on the Lausanne Action Plan.

We are also focused on working within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to establish a normative and operational framework on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems, while focusing on the potential challenges to international humanitarian law.

Mr. Andersen (Norway): The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime and has served global security well for more than 50 years. We must make every effort to ensure that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty will strengthen it. Norway participates in the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament. We hope that all States parties to the NPT will be able to support the recommendations from the Initiative to the NPT Review Conference.

Norway gives high priority to work on developing credible multilateral solutions to verify future nuclear disarmament. In 2019, resolution 74/50 on nuclear disarmament verification, which called for a new group of governmental experts, was adopted with the support of 178 Member States. This year, together with partners, we are submitting a draft decision on nuclear disarmament verification to keep the topic on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. The draft decision also reflects the limitations that the coronavirus disease has placed on the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to further consider nuclear disarmament verification issues. The two meetings planned for 2021 will be held in 2022, and the two meetings originally planned for 2022 will subsequently be held in 2023. We hope all States will support that decision.

Norway also remains fully committed to the continuing work of the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership and the International Partnership for Disarmament Verification. In the lead up to the tenth Review Conference of the NPT, Norway would also like to draw attention to nuclear disarmament irreversibility. Our aim is to start an international dialogue to better understand and identify requirements for irreversibility.

Norway continues to advocate for the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban

Treaty and the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The comprehensive safeguards agreements and the Additional Protocol constitute the global verification standard, enabling the International Atomic Energy Agency to monitor and evaluate compliance with obligations under the NPT.

A dialogue on arms control and strategic stability is key to global security. The dialogue among the five permanent members of the Security Council is vital to the further implementation of the NPT. We welcome the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the fact that the United States and Russia have embarked on an integrated bilateral strategic stability dialogue. We also welcome the transparency of the United States on the issue of stockpiles. Norway continues to call for the full and equal participation of women in all disarmament and non-proliferation forums.

Norway condemns in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons. In the face of documented violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Norway is part of a cross-regional group of countries willing to use the available instruments of the Convention to address the violations. Norway sees no need for Member States to initiate a procedure to update the guidelines for the use of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

Mines and cluster munitions are inhumane weapons that must be ruled out by all. Small arms, light weapons and ammunition fuel conflict and crime. Their trade must be controlled. We urge States that are not party to the Arms Trade Treaty, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Convention on Cluster Munitions to make accession a priority. We welcome the possibility of a prompt adoption of a political declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and hope for a strong outcome on lethal autonomous weapon systems at the Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Norway's full statement on nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons will be uploaded to eStatements and the homepage of the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations.

Mr. Kunjara Na Ayudhya (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Malaysia, on behalf of

the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/76/PV.7).

Thailand's long-standing history of support for the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction is based on our strong belief that the existence of those weapons poses a fundamental danger to our collective security and that their use has intolerable human and material consequences. Nuclear weapons are inhumane, and it is inconceivable that their use could ever be justified under any circumstances. Nuclear disarmament is not only a legal obligation but a moral and ethical imperative.

Member States are therefore sending a clear message that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to guarantee an end to their use or threat of use. That has been well reflected in the swift entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). As we plan for the first meeting of States parties to the Treaty in Vienna next spring, we encourage all Member States, parties and non-parties alike, to participate in the meeting. Thailand strongly believes that both the TPNW and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are complementary and collectively contribute to our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We call on the States parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the full implementation of the Treaty, particularly its article VI, and encourage all parties to work in good faith towards the success of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

At the same time, Thailand considers universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty vitally important and urges the annex 2 States to join the Treaty without delay. Thailand also attaches great importance to promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and supports the important work of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

As a depositary State of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone or Bangkok Treaty, Thailand reiterates its commitment to preserving South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Bangkok Treaty. We call on all nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the Treaty's protocol as soon as possible. We also continue to support ongoing efforts to establish such zones in the Middle East.

With regard to the issue of biological and chemical weapons, cooperation within the Biological Weapons

Convention (BWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention frameworks remains a key element in addressing the non-proliferation of such weapons. Thailand fully supports strengthening the BWC with a legally binding verification protocol and commends the good work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, particularly during the pandemic.

With respect to conventional weapons, Thailand fully supports the strengthening of full and effective control of such weapons, as they are inextricably linked not only to problems of international peace and security but also to sustainable-development and humanitarian issues. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a central framework that continues to guide Thailand's efforts to respond to the illicit trade in and diversion of small arms and light weapons. We welcome the adoption of the outcome document of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, annex), and we continue to uphold the Arms Trade Treaty. We are currently working to ratify the Treaty.

Another priority area for Thailand is the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Thailand has made every effort in the area of mine-clearance operations, in line with its obligations under the Convention and the Oslo Action Plan. To date, we have cleared and released more than 95 per cent of our contaminated areas. This year, we are honoured to serve as Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance of the Mine Ban Convention.

We recognize that outer space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, which demands our concerted action to prevent it from becoming another arena for an arms race.

In conclusion, Thailand would like to affirm its unwavering commitment to the work of the First Committee, and we stand ready to strengthen constructive partnerships with all parties.

Mr. Paschalis (South Africa): South Africa associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.7), and earlier today by the representatives of Ghana, on behalf of the Group of African States, and South Africa, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Nuclear weapons are inhumane, and it is inconceivable that their use under any circumstances could ever be consistent with international law, particularly international humanitarian law. Nuclear disarmament is not only a legal obligation but an ethical imperative. Our delegation has the honour to once again submit the draft resolution on ethical imperatives for a world without nuclear weapons, which we hope will again receive wide support.

South Africa welcomed the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) earlier this year. The Treaty bans the only category of weapons of mass destruction not yet subject to a global prohibition and does so with a pronounced humanitarian approach. The doors to that Treaty remain open and we encourage all States that have not done so to ratify the TPNW and join the community of nations committed to a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We look forward to a successful Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, which builds on the continued validity of the outcomes of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences and is aimed at accelerating the implementation of the Treaty's provisions under all three pillars. Modernization programmes, stockpile increases and a continued reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines undermine article VI of the NPT. Concrete progress on the solemn undertakings towards nuclear disarmament is essential to the success of the tenth Review Conference. The goals of the NPT can never be achieved if the Treaty is seen as a means to protect the security interests of a few States at the expense of humankind at large.

South Africa remains committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention, our obligations as a State party to the Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We remain concerned about the continued polarization of OPCW policymaking organs and the frequent adoption of decisions by vote rather than by consensus, as was the practice in the past. We condemn any use of chemical weapons, and it is imperative that States be held accountable for any non-compliance with their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. We underline the importance of capacity-building and international cooperation for the benefit of States

through the transfer of technology, knowledge, material and equipment for peaceful purposes.

The Biological Weapons Convention forms an essential part of the multilateral system that addresses biological threats. We welcome the work done in the lead-up to the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, which represents an important opportunity to strengthen the Convention and its balanced implementation. We note the substantive proposals, as most recently presented at the Meeting of Experts, which we hope will receive consideration at the Meeting of States Parties and the Review Conference itself. The Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons is a technical independent mechanism created by the General Assembly and accessible by each Member State. South Africa does not find the current technical guidelines and procedures to be wanting, but will not stand in the way of the process based on article 103 of the guidelines that would allow members to present modifications in a coordinated manner for consideration by the Secretary-General.

Despite the pandemic, we are pleased that some degree of progress has been achieved during the seventh Review Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. South Africa participated in the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, whose work included substantive proposals for a comprehensive General Assembly framework to support the safe, secure and sustainable through-life management of ammunition —

The Acting Chair: The speaker's time has expired.

Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania): Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on clusters 1 to 4 on behalf of the European Union (EU) (see A/C.1/76/PV.7). In our national capacity, I would like to add the following remarks.

Conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, significantly affect the contemporary security environment. We are dealing with numerous challenges involving conventional weapons posed by State and

non-State actors all across the globe. Illicit arms trafficking, international terrorism, the proliferation of arms and ammunition and uncontrolled flows of small arms and light weapons undermine rule-of-law principles, prevent successful conflict resolution and impede social and economic development. Lithuania supports the development and implementation of international rules to ensure a responsible arms trade and emphasizes the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in the context of global arms control. We call on all countries, especially major arms producers and exporters, to become States parties to the ATT.

We are looking forward to the upcoming sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its successful outcome. Lithuania supports efforts to universalize and strengthen the CCW and stresses the importance of compliance with all its provisions and annex protocols. It will be in our interests to ensure that the discussions on the various new and disruptive technologies related to conventional weapons, including lethal autonomous weapon systems, remain within the CCW framework, which brings together major stakeholders and the relevant technical, military, legal and, preferably, ethical expertise.

We reiterate the significance of existing regional conventional arms-control arrangements that contribute to European security and stability by increasing transparency, predictability and risk reduction. However, those agreements are not an aim in themselves; they should be implemented by all participating States faithfully and in full. Yet this year, Zapad-2021, the major military exercises conducted by our neighbours the Russian Federation and Belarus, once again demonstrated a lack of transparency on the part of both countries. The reported numbers of participants did not correspond to the reality on the ground, while military observers were not invited in accordance with the Vienna Document. We call on Russia and Belarus to act in a predictable and transparent manner, in line with their international commitments. We strongly support an initiative to launch negotiations on modernizing the Vienna Document. It would be a significant positive step in restoring trust and predictability in Europe.

The flow of weaponry into the parts of Ukraine controlled by the Russian Federation continues. The militarization of the Crimean peninsula and transfers of weapon systems, including nuclear-capable aircraft and missiles, weapons and ammunition, are one of our

greatest concerns. The presence of Russian troops and military equipment in Crimea undermines the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and the security and stability of neighbouring countries and the region. We call on the Russian Federation to honour its international commitments, cease its support to illegal armed groups in eastern Ukraine and stop the flow of weaponry and equipment into the sovereign territory of Ukraine. The full implementation of the Minsk agreements remains of utmost importance for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In addition, Russian military presence in Georgia continues, together with increased military exercises and infrastructure reinforcements. The ongoing violations of freedom of movement, including through the active pursuit of the so-called borderization process — the protracted closure of the crossing points of administrative boundary lines for more than a year — continue to have a severe impact on the security, safety and well-being of the local population. All those steps violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, are contrary to the principles of international law and commitments undertaken by Russia, including in the EU-mediated 2008 ceasefire agreement and its implementing measures, and must be reversed. The ongoing aggression against both Ukraine and Georgia must remain high on the agenda of the international community.

A lack of trust, transparency and predictability in military activities can pose a serious challenge to regional and global security. Indeed, arms control can serve as a helpful tool for confidence-building only if all parties live up to their obligations and commitments, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Mr. Eberhardt (United States of America): The United States will continue to take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons, while ensuring that the strategic deterrence of the United States remains safe, secure and effective and that the extended deterrence commitments made by the United States to our allies remain strong and credible. We will head off costly arms races and re-establish our credibility as a leader in arms control. That is why, in its first days, the Biden-Harris Administration worked with Russia to extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty for the maximum period possible, ensuring that its limits, transparency and verification mechanisms provide predictability and a firm foundation while we seek

additional arms-control measures with Russia. To that end, we embarked on a strategic stability dialogue with Russia to lay the groundwork for such measures.

At the same time, the People's Republic of China is building a nuclear arsenal that is larger and more diverse than the minimum deterrence it has touted for decades. The rapid build-up has become more difficult to hide and highlights how China is deviating from decades of nuclear strategy based on minimum deterrence. Those advances highlight why it is in everyone's interest that nuclear Powers talk to one another directly about reducing nuclear dangers and avoiding miscalculation. We encourage Beijing to engage with us on practical measures to reduce the risks of destabilizing arms races and conflict.

Turning to the topic of chemical and biological weapons, the use of chemical weapons anywhere, anytime by anyone is unacceptable. The poisoning of Alexei Navalny was an intolerable act and one that the United States and all responsible nations have condemned in the strongest terms. To that end, the United States and 44 other sponsors presented questions to the Russian Federation at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) last week, under article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We urge Russia to answer the questions submitted fully and provide a full accounting for the heinous use of a Novichok nerve agent within its borders. Similarly, we must hold the Syrian Arab Republic accountable for the continued flouting of its obligations under the CWC and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). In that regard, in April the OPCW took decisive action to adopt a decision to suspend certain rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the CWC. There must be consequences for the use of chemical weapons. The United States reaffirms its full support for the OPCW.

Preventing future outbreaks, whether natural, accidental or deliberate in origin, is crucial. The United States hopes that States can break the two-decade deadlock over strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) at the 2022 Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention. We will propose that States parties adopt measures to strengthen the BWC immediately and simultaneously take steps to intensively explore measures to strengthen implementation and promote compliance. Those steps cannot wait. The pandemic has taught us that we do not know how much time we have.

On the subject of outer space, the United States believes there is a common interest in maintaining peace and security in outer space for the benefit of all. The Administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance clearly states that we will explore and use outer space for the benefit of humankind and ensure the safety, stability and security of outer-space activities. At the same time, we take note of the desire of all countries to maintain space as a peaceful and sustainable environment, while reducing threats to space systems and operations and preventing conflict from occurring in outer space. However, we recognize that space remains a domain of competition and we must take steps to reduce uncertainty and manage the risk that competition will lead to conflict.

To effectively address those threats and risks, we need to move beyond a singular focus on the prevention of an arms race in space towards an expanded approach that takes into account threats from ground-based systems. To that end, the Administration believes that we must promote shared norms on space. That is why the United States supports the United Kingdom's draft resolution on reducing space threats and why we will vote against Russia's cynical draft resolution on no first placement.

Lastly, the United States is resolute in its support for the women and peace and security agenda, and we rely on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes about peace and security at all levels, free from threat or violence. Our full statements on clusters 1 through 4 will be posted in the compendium.

Ms. Hill (Australia): Today we are at a pivotal moment in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Myriad challenges and tensions prevail, and the risks posed by nuclear weapons remain unacceptably high.

The upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) presents a critical opportunity to advance the Treaty's important objectives. It is an opportunity to focus on areas of convergence where real progress can be made, and we should all seize it with the urgency that it merits. Australia looks forward to playing its part in delivering substantive outcomes at the Review Conference. As a founding member of the cross-regional Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we are committed to promoting practical measures on each pillar of the NPT — measures that will

constitute progressive steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. We commend to States parties the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative's landing zone paper, which sets out those measures in more detail.

Australia continues to advocate for proposals to strengthen the NPT review process, enhance transparency on nuclear arsenals, promote risk reduction, develop nuclear disarmament verification measures and ensure nuclear safety, security and safeguards, while enabling access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In our region, we have been active in advancing discussion on risk reduction, co-chairing the Association of Southeast Nations Regional Forum Risk Reduction Workshop, alongside the Philippines, in 2020. We welcome initiatives aimed at enhancing constructive dialogue in the NPT context, including the Stockholm Initiative Stepping Stones Approach and the Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative. Australia also welcomes the contribution of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to those discussions, including on risk reduction, which Australia has been proud to support. As a near-universal instrument, the NPT is a pact that unites us. It provides a framework for generating an environment where all countries, nuclear and non-nuclear, can see themselves as more secure without nuclear weapons than with them. Ensuring a positive outcome at the next Review Conference is in the interests of us all. Australia also remains a committed supporter of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and of efforts to see the start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Australia has been calling on Russia since August 2020 to fully explain how Alexei Navalny came to be poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent. That is why we joined 44 other States parties at the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on 5 October in submitting questions to the Russian Federation under article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention. All States parties to the Convention have an obligation to prevent chemical-weapon incidents on their territories. We call on the Russian Federation to engage in good faith. It is in the interests of all States parties that all incidences of the use of chemical weapons are thoroughly investigated.

Australia supports the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Each year, our global economy and the way of life are becoming more and more dependent

on this critical infrastructure, so it is incumbent on all nations to work together to ensure that it is not threatened by a conflict in outer space. While there have been proposals made to ban the placement of weapons in space, the dual-use nature of many space objects and the challenge of verification mean that the idea is unworkable. We are encouraged by States that are adopting transparency and confidence-building measures to help prevent miscalculation. It is States' actions that can be more readily verified. To that end, Australia welcomes the Secretary-General's report on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours (A/76/77). We are keen to see the conversation continue, and through the United Kingdom's draft resolution we strongly support the establishment of an open-ended working group to further this discussion.

Mr. Czepelak (Poland): Poland fully associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/76/PV.7). However, I would also like to highlight some issues in our national capacity.

First, I would like to reiterate the hope that the situation will allow for holding of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as soon as possible. As the international community, we are obliged to do our utmost to strengthen, universalize and implement the provisions of the Treaty. That determines Poland's efforts as a member of the NPT Bureau and Chair of its Main Committee II with a view to achieving a successful outcome of the Conference. And Poland's membership of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) underpins its support for the Agency's efforts.

Poland remains concerned about the state of the global arms-control system. Today the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) remains the only non-conventional arms-control mechanism in place since the Russian Federation's long-lasting non-compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty brought about its demise. We regard the extension of the New START as a positive step. The ongoing bilateral strategic stability dialogue between the United States and Russia should lay the groundwork for future talks in that regard, and we are in favour of extending the dialogue to include China. Furthermore, the international community has continued to face security threats evolving in many regions of the

world. The complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains an absolute imperative and priority. With regard to another regional issue with an impact on global security, we note with concern the steps that Iran has taken that violate its obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as highlighted in IAEA reports. We hope that Iran will return to JCPOA negotiations in Vienna without any further delay, and that the parties will finally reach consensus on reactivating the JCPOA.

In the debate on other weapons of mass destruction, Poland has traditionally attached great importance to issues related to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). As the representative of Poland and a current member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), I stress time and again that any use of chemical weapons must be properly investigated and the perpetrators held accountable. We need the entire international community to convey a strong and unambiguous message of support for the CWC, the leading role of the OPCW and the efforts of its Director-General. This year's draft resolution on the implementation of the CWC, which Poland traditionally introduces to the Committee, offers an opportunity for that. Poland has been conducting an open, inclusive and transparent process with regard to the draft resolution, starting with early informal consultations at The Hague and follow-up discussions in New York. I am grateful to all who participated in the discussions. This year we once again had to deal with the fundamentally divergent views of Member States. As sole sponsor, Poland has done its utmost to provide both factual and actual texts. Building on the ongoing work of the OPCW, including the relevant decisions of the Executive Council and Conference of States Parties, we worked to produce a balanced reflection of the issues critical to the CWC's implementation. I hope our efforts will be taken into consideration and that the Assembly will accept the text of the draft resolution.

Mr. Tiahoun (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made today by the representative of Ghana, on behalf of the Group of African States, and that made yesterday by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.7). I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons poses a threat to peace, security and stability in many regions of the world. Such weapons fuel numerous conflicts and transregional criminal organizations and terrorist groups, and have resulted in thousands of deaths, mass population displacements and a growing terrorist threat. They pose a direct threat to the stability of States and hinder their socioeconomic development. They are a genuine source of concern for Burkina Faso, which has been living with the threat of terrorism for a number of years.

Several terrorist groups pose a serious threat to the security of States in the Lake Chad basin and even beyond. The impact of the crisis in Libya has created a complex security situation with damaging effects on its neighbours, including Burkina Faso. Attacks and abductions perpetrated by terrorists throughout most of Burkina Faso have inflicted immense suffering on the people and resulted in an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. To date, more than 1.3 million people have been displaced within their own countries. The terrorist attacks have an adverse impact on the economy of the countries concerned and on their social cohesion. In addition to conventional weapons, terrorist groups are increasingly using improvised explosive devices in their attacks, which is a problem for a number of States and the reason why my country considers it important to review the issue under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. In addition, the consequences of the use of anti-personnel mines are many and varied. Like others, my country calls for universalizing the Ottawa Convention and implores all States and institutions to unite their efforts to assist countries that are dealing with mines. As with anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions continue to prevent people from accessing and using large swathes of usable land in several regions of the world, hindering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the areas of food security, education and women's empowerment, to name only a few. We therefore also call for the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

I want to commend the determination and political will of States that have underscored the effectiveness of multilateral efforts in achieving our shared arms-control objectives and a considerable reduction in the number of conflicts, as well as ensuring peace and strengthening collective security. Burkina Faso therefore welcomes the holding of the seventh Conference of States Parties

to the Arms Trade Treaty, which has opted to focus on the regulation of arms transfers and the fight against trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as well as on the prevention of the diversion of conventional weapons. We call on all actors, especially States themselves, to shoulder their responsibility and commit to the full implementation and universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty.

My delegation welcomes the tireless efforts of Member States to prioritize multilateralism in order to control arms transfers. We also call on the various actors to ensure greater responsibility in transferring conventional weapons, in line with the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty. For its part, Burkina Faso has ratified the major legally binding international and community-related instruments on firearms, including the Convention of the Economic Community of West African States on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Arms Trade Treaty.

While underscoring the need to promote the legitimate and responsible use of conventional weapons, I would like to reiterate the commitment of Burkina Faso to working hand in hand with the international community in order to achieve a world free from the dangers linked to conventional weapons of all kinds.

Mr. Leite Novaes (Brazil): Brazil aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

The very concept of weapons of mass destruction shocks the conscience of humankind. Their mere existence challenges international humanitarian law and their use or threat of use anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances cannot be tolerated. After successive postponements, we look forward to the holding of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in January next year. To the extent possible, Brazil supports holding a full-fledged Conference, so that States can have meaningful discussions that at the very least will enable us to reaffirm our past commitments relating to nuclear disarmament while agreeing on forward-looking concrete steps.

The entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons gives us renewed hope in the struggle for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The Treaty complements and reinforces the NPT, representing an evolutionary leap for the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

It is regrettable that 25 years after its opening for signing, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is not yet in force. While we celebrate the recent accessions to the Treaty, we insist on the need for those annex 2 countries that have not yet signed and ratified the CTBT to do so without delay.

In our region, we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials — a landmark for the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime that is an example to the world of an instrument for building trust and verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Furthermore, Brazil takes pride in being party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a permanently inhabited area. We believe that the strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the creation of new zones on the basis of agreements freely arrived at by States in the region concerned will be a crucial step towards our common goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. This year, together with Indonesia, New Zealand and South Africa, Brazil will present the biennial resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. We look forward to the continued support of all States in this important endeavour.

Brazil is an uncompromising supporter of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention is the gold standard for multilateral regimes on weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), having established a comprehensive, legally binding and non-discriminatory ban on such weapons, with a full-fledged and effective verification mechanism. Brazil supports a strong transparent and independent Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The persistence of the pandemic makes us reflect on the devastating effects that the hypothetical weaponization of biological agents could have on human life. Biological weapons are the least regulated WMDs. Brazil looks forward to the ninth Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, when we hope that States can restart negotiations on

strengthening the Convention, including through a verification protocol.

Brazil attaches great importance to issues related to stability in outer space. As a developing country that has space capabilities, it is in Brazil's interests to ensure that space remains peaceful, stable, safe and accessible to all nations. Brazil's position has been guided by its support for the applicability of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law, to activities in outer space. Those principles have guided Brazil's participation in the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities, as well as our chairship of the successful sixty-second session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Brazil also chaired the Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which addressed substantive elements for international legally binding instruments on the subject.

With regard to discussions held in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Brazil's position on the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems is well known. Brazil believes that the Group should offer a clear recommendation to the Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW on providing the Group with a negotiating mandate. In the next cycle, the Group's work should focus on defining prohibitions, regulations and other appropriate measures to ensure that the use of lethal autonomous weapon systems abides by international humanitarian law and other applicable international norms. It is imperative that the Group of Governmental Experts' recommendation acknowledge the essential need for retaining human control in the use of force. There is no way to bind the development of any use of autonomous weapon systems to international law other than —

The Acting Chair: The speaker's time has expired.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): We continue to view the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Ukraine supports all three pillars of the NPT, that is, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The long-awaited tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty is an

important opportunity for all States parties to reaffirm their existing commitments, as well as for finding commonalities on achieving progress on some of the most pressing issues. In that regard, we will continue to promote the implementation of the practical steps and actions contained in the 2010 Action Plan.

Ukraine is a major contributor to international peace and security. We voluntarily surrendered the world's third largest nuclear-weapon arsenal in exchange for security assurances, provided in writing by Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States in the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances of 1994. Almost 20 years later, the Russian Federation launched what was by its scale a terrifying armed aggression against Ukraine, the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as certain areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. Despite the calls by the guarantor States for holding consultations in accordance with the Budapest Memorandum's article 6, which provides that Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Russian Federation will consult in the event of a situation arising that raises a question concerning the commitments in the Memorandum, Russia ignored all of them by declaring that it saw no reason for any discussion. In the light of that, Ukraine is seeking the adoption of an international agreement to replace the Budapest Memorandum and provide direct, reliable guarantees of peace and security.

Ukraine supports the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and strictly adheres to the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the attack on Mr. Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned in Russia by a military chemical nerve agent of the Novichok group. The use of Novichok has been confirmed by independent laboratories in Germany, France and Sweden, as well as two OPCW-designated laboratories. Ukraine also firmly denounces the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic. In that regard, we fully support the work of the OPCW's Declaration Assessment Team, and its Fact-Finding Mission and Investigation and Identification Team, in investigating the use of chemical weapons in Syria and identifying the perpetrators of such attacks. We reiterate that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, whether State or non-State actors, anywhere, under any circumstances is a violation of international law and that the perpetrators must be held accountable.

Ukraine attaches great significance to the Biological Weapons Convention as an invaluable tool in the area of the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), especially now, as my country is facing the ruinous consequences of Russia's acts of aggression, which have had an especially negative impact on Ukraine's biosafety and biosecurity. Ukraine recognizes the crucial role of international export-control regimes in preventing the proliferation of WMDs, in particular the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Australia Group, and reaffirms the importance of the Zangger Committee for the implementation of non-proliferation obligations under paragraph 2 of article III of the NPT.

We stress the importance of maintaining a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and ensuring the peaceful use of outer space. In that regard, Ukraine continues to promote transparency and confidence-building measures, adherence to the applicable international law and the development of norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours for preventing an arms race in outer space. We strongly support the establishment of an open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, as proposed in the updated draft resolution on the subject submitted to the First Committee by the United Kingdom.

Ukraine recognizes the important role of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, as well as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The Russian Federation has been continuing its destabilizing transfer to our territory of conventional weapons of various kinds, including small arms and light weapons, through the section of the Ukraine-Russia border not controlled by the Government of Ukraine, which poses a threat to European security. Various areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions remain full of explosive remnants of war that have caused severe casualties among civilians.

Mr. Wu Jianjun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation will submit to the Secretariat thematic statements on nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons and security in outer space. I would also like to emphasize the following points.

First, China has a firm nuclear strategy of self-defence and supports the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons, with the object

of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. Since the first day of its possession of nuclear weapons China has pledged to refrain from being the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and has promised unconditionally to refrain from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and in nuclear-weapon-free zones.

China keeps its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security. That policy has never changed and will not change. In its pursuit of absolute military superiority, the United States continues to hype the issue of major Power competition, strengthen its military alliances, make major investments in upgrading its nuclear trinity, lower the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons and constantly develop and deploy a global anti-missile system, which undermines our global strategic balance and stability. As the country that has conducted the most nuclear tests in the world and made the largest investment in modernizing its nuclear arsenals, the United States should fulfil its special and primary responsibility in the area of nuclear disarmament and make further substantial reductions in its nuclear-weapon arsenal to create conditions that will enable other countries to join the nuclear disarmament process.

Secondly, China is concerned about recent negative developments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear security and urges the relevant countries to revoke the erroneous decisions they have made in that regard. The cooperation on nuclear-powered submarines between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia is contrary to the spirit of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Such moves are likely provoke arms races and exacerbate regional tensions. The double standards of the United States and the United Kingdom on the issue of nuclear cooperation will inevitably have a negative impact on the political and diplomatic settlement of regional non-proliferation hotspot issues. The international community has every reason to question whether Australia is serious about fulfilling its nuclear non-proliferation commitments. China urges the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia to faithfully fulfil their international nuclear non-proliferation obligations and do more to contribute to regional peace, stability and development.

The disposal of contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident bears on global marine ecology and public health. Japan should heed

the call of the international community and properly address its major concerns.

Thirdly, China is committed to maintaining the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and calls on the international community to advance global governance on biosecurity. The Foreign Ministers of China and Russia recently released a joint statement on strengthening the BWC that fully demonstrated both countries' strong determination and responsible attitude in preserving global biosecurity and upholding multilateralism. We urge the international community to work for substantive outcomes at the Review Conference of States Parties to the BWC to be held next year.

Fourthly, China will submit to the First Committee a draft resolution on promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security in order to effectively guarantee the right of all countries to peaceful uses. The draft resolution aims to promote addressing the relationship between non-proliferation and peaceful uses in a more balanced manner and to facilitate a more comprehensive and balanced implementation of the BWC, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the NPT. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the countries that have expressed support for the draft resolution and confirmed their sponsorship of it. We hope that all countries will actively support it and become sponsors of the text.

Fifthly, China advocates for the peaceful use of outer space and calls for preventing its weaponization as well as any possibility of an arms race in order to ensure that outer space cannot become another battlefield. The current circumstances demand urgently that we launch negotiations on a legally binding instrument for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, for which voluntary measures should not be a substitute. Meanwhile, a technical expert group could be established in the Conference on Disarmament for in-depth discussions on technical issues, including definition, scope and verification, with a view to preparing for formal negotiations. The draft treaty proposed by China and Russia on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space provides a good basis in that regard. We are open to further discussions with all parties to improve the draft treaty.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We align ourselves with the statement made by the

representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.7).

There is an urgent need to abide by the legally binding commitments that make up the disarmament and arms-control architecture. The goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons becomes harder when the United States, the country that makes the largest investments in such weapons, maintains an aggressive nuclear doctrine and continues to upgrade and expand its arsenals while violating the letter and spirit of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We support the universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). As a State party to the NPT and the CTBT and a member of the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region and the first region to be called a zone of peace, we maintain that nuclear disarmament should remain our chief disarmament priority. With that purpose in mind, we will participate in the Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW and the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

We support the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We welcome the fourth Conference of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and Mongolia. We reiterate our full support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed to with Iran, and reject the United States' withdrawal from the agreement. Cuba calls on States to refrain from actions that could further exacerbate the tense situation on the Korean peninsula. We strongly condemn the unjust unilateral sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Only through dialogue and negotiations can we achieve a lasting political solution to the situation on the peninsula that takes into account the legitimate concerns of all stakeholders.

We support the full, non-discriminatory and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We also call for strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention through a legally binding protocol and for an end to politicization, selectivity and bias in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We condemn unilateral coercive measures that hinder States' socioeconomic development and violate the relevant international instruments by restricting

the use for peaceful purposes of nuclear energy and the trade in material, equipment and technology for chemical and biological activities.

We call for the lifting of the United States' economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba, which limits international cooperation and the right to development. We strictly adhere to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the related Protocols to which we are party. We reiterate our commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the outcome document of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1, annex). There is an urgent need to put an end to illegal arms transfers and diversions to unauthorized non-State actors, which are the main drivers of illicit trafficking. We must consider the socioeconomic reasons for this scourge, including through cooperation and assistance to States that request it.

We must respect the right of all States to acquire and possess weapons for their legitimate self-defence and security needs. Lethal autonomous weapons should be banned as soon as possible. We need to regulate the use of weapons with some autonomy, especially military drones. We urge for a binding multilateral agreement to prevent and ban the placement of weapons in outer space and reject any use of space technology that is detrimental to individual nations' security.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/76/PV.7).

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. At the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Ireland expects tangible progress across all three pillars, with a focus on disarmament, where progress is unacceptably slow. Article VI and past consensus outcomes provide a framework for achieving a world without nuclear weapons and must be honoured and fully implemented.

The entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a landmark moment for nuclear disarmament. We look forward to an open and inclusive first Meeting of States Parties in 2022, setting out concrete plans for the full implementation

of the Treaty's humanitarian-centred objectives. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which has established a strong global norm against nuclear testing. The Treaty's entry into force is essential and Ireland calls on the eight remaining annex 2 States to join without delay or preconditions.

Ireland supports the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We were encouraged by the adoption of a political declaration at the 2019 Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction and hope further progress can be made at its next session later this year.

Ireland strongly supports the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and urges all sides to return to Vienna to conclude talks and return to the full and effective implementation of the agreement.

Ireland is seriously concerned about the ongoing nuclear and ballistic-missile-related activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Ireland urges it to abandon such activities in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Ireland is committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and its peaceful use on an equitable, mutually acceptable basis for all. Ireland stresses the importance of conducting space activities in accordance with international law.

We consider that strengthening the international non-proliferation regime is key, and we recognize that export-control regimes are central to countering the spread and use of weapons of mass destruction. Ireland reaffirms its support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). We are committed to a successful outcome at the Meeting of States Parties to the BWC and the ninth Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention. Ireland is fully committed to upholding the international prohibition against chemical weapons and to holding those responsible for their use accountable.

Addressing the far-reaching effects of explosive weapons in populated areas is a priority for Ireland. We are leading a diplomatic process in Geneva to formulate a political declaration on that critical issue. We have made good progress and are determined to finalize a

declaration that will bring about positive and lasting behavioural change. Ireland unequivocally supports the comprehensive prohibition against anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, and we welcomed the adoption of the Lausanne Action Plan by the second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Ireland also welcomes measures taken by the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We look forward to the implementation of the decision at the ATT Conference of States Parties to undertake a mapping of synergies with complementary instruments.

At the upcoming Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Ireland will support the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols. We will seek progress on mines other than anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices and on the continued applicability and relevance of Protocol III, with particular regard for the reported use of air-delivered incendiary weapons, as well as to bolster the implementation of Protocol V. The CCW must remain responsive to emerging challenges. We remain concerned about the considerable ethic ethical, moral and legal dilemmas posed by autonomous weapon systems. Systems that do not incorporate human control must not be developed, deployed or used. Ireland is engaged with the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and committed to achieving an ambitious outcome.

The Acting Chair: I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by the representative of India.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the Conference Room.

The Acting Chair: I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by the representative of France.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the Conference Room.

Ms. Uaiene (Mozambique): Mozambique aligns itself with the statements made yesterday by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.7), and earlier

today by the representative of Ghana, on behalf of the Group of African States, and wishes to add its national perspective on the topic of conventional weapons.

Mozambique recognizes and supports the importance of the common global disarmament agenda, which is the cornerstone of the promotion of peace and security, human rights and sustainable development as a better platform for achieving our shared 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The position of Mozambique is based on its Constitution, which among other things defends the principle of the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the general and complete disarmament of all States and the transformation of the Indian Ocean as a peaceful denuclearized zone.

Mozambique integrates the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects into its policies at the national and regional levels. As part of its strategy to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, the Government of Mozambique regularly conducts public awareness campaigns, seminars and workshops to share and socialize the Government's measures and strategies on the issue.

Mozambique aligns itself with a multilateral approach to integrated action against transnational organized crime through the strengthening of regional cooperation and the exchange of information in order to better prevent and combat the trafficking of small arms and light weapons. In that context, Mozambique is a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization, INTERPOL and the regional continental mechanism adopted to strengthen and coordinate all actions on the matter. Controlling the transfer of arms is one of my Government's highest priorities. Mozambique therefore supports initiatives aimed at promoting transparency in the transfer and production process of small arms and light weapons.

The Republic of Mozambique became a party to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) following its ratification in 2018, through which we have contributed to its universalization and to enhancing international peace and security efforts. We welcome the ATT secretariat's approval of the \$100,000 Small Arms and Explosives Management System project, which will contribute to the operationalization of four models for the central

database of the Mozambique police, including the management of firearms and ammunition. That project has been implemented since October 2020.

At the regional level, during the forty-first Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, held under Mozambique's chairship, the Government of Mozambique signed an agreement amending the SADC Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Material. The amendment to the SADC Protocol aims to extend the scope of the Protocol to include conventional weapons so as to harmonize it with international conventions and other legal instruments dealing with firearms, ammunition and other related material. Based on the rise in terrorism and organized crime in southern Africa, particularly Mozambique, we believe that despite the international measures designed to control conventional weapons we need to articulate a common strategy and conduct joint inspections among regional security forces in order to deal with this dangerous challenge.

As a result of the long demining process in Mozambique, we have achieved significant results, and in 2013 our country was formally declared free of anti-personnel mines.

In conclusion, Mozambique reiterates its commitment to all international measures aimed at reinforcing global arms-control frameworks and the Arms Trade Treaty in particular. We appeal to all Member States to strictly observe the tenets of general and complete disarmament so that we can build the peaceful and prosperous world we want. The full text of our statement will be made available online.

Mr. In Chol Kim (Democratic Republic of Korea): The peaceful and safe world that humankind aspires to is a denuclearized world that presupposes the total elimination of nuclear weapons. When nuclear weapons were first used, 76 years ago, the world clearly witnessed catastrophic damage and still remembers it. Preventing a recurrence of such a nuclear calamity is a historic mission and duty with which our generation has been entrusted for the prosperity and happiness of coming generations. However, in today's reality, the threat of use of nuclear weapons continues, with a nuclear arms race in full swing against the aspirations and efforts of humankind to build a world free of nuclear weapons.

With more than \$700 billion in military expenditures every year, the United States is hell-bent

on developing state-of-the-art hardware, including hypersonic missiles, long-range, precision-guided weapons, new-generation intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear strategic bombers. It also violates non-proliferation obligations by exporting nuclear technologies to its allies. Its recent decision to transfer the technology to enable Australia to build a nuclear-powered submarine is an extremely dangerous act, destroying the strategic balance of the Asia-Pacific region and likely to trigger an arms race. Furthermore, in recent years multilateral and bilateral disarmament treaties that helped to promote nuclear disarmament and confidence-building for several decades have one after another been abrogated or reduced to mere names, to the great disappointment of the international community. With the largest nuclear arsenal in the world, and as the only country to have used nuclear weapons, the United States should take the lead in the area of global disarmament with practical steps for reducing the number of nuclear weapons, and should assume a special responsibility for international peace and security.

A number of countries believe that the United States is hostile to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea because it possesses nuclear weapons. That is a misunderstanding. In fact, the United States has antagonized and threatened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear weapons for several decades. It has left us with no option but to follow the arduous road to building up a self-defence deterrent. Our war deterrent stockpile does not target specific States or forces or seek supremacy, but merely serves our self-defence purposes. By the word "deterrent", we mean our right to self-defence in order to prevent a war of aggression against us and safeguard the sovereignty of our State. On our own initiative, we are further strengthening our war deterrent to cope with the ever-deteriorating security environment on the Korean peninsula. The activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in exercise of its right to self-defence pose no threats, and its rightful build-up of its national defence capabilities is in no way harmful to the security of its neighbours. Every measure taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to strengthen its national defence capabilities is a justified activity designed to proactively counter any threat to the security environment of the Korean peninsula and the region and to safeguard the security of our State and its people.

As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will not misuse its nuclear weapons unless aggressive hostile forces attempt to use their nuclear weapons against it. We sincerely abide by our nuclear non-proliferation obligations, committed to before the international community. In future, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will contribute actively to the international community's efforts to firmly defend peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in the rest of the world. The full text of our statement will be made available online.

Mrs. Hofírková (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/76/PV.7).

Today, more than ever before, it is vital that all States fully implement their commitments and obligations in order to preserve international peace, security and stability. Nuclear weapons remain a reality. In our view, any efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament must adequately reflect the realities of the international security environment. Since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the best tool for achieving a world without nuclear weapons, we must ensure its universal application and promote its full implementation. The rescheduled Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty will offer us an opportunity to reaffirm our commitments. The International Atomic Energy Agency has a central role in the implementation of the NPT, and we also encourage States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so.

We appreciate and support the five-year extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation. We welcome the renewed United States-Russia strategic stability dialogue and hope it will lead to a new and comprehensive arms-control agreement that will reflect the fundamentally altered strategic reality and cover all nuclear warheads, as well as new carrier systems. A future strategic arms-control framework should also include countries that have significantly expanded their nuclear and missile arsenals. China's role as a responsible stakeholder is crucial.

In recent years, we have witnessed serious violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention in several places around the globe. The Czech Republic firmly condemns

all such acts and calls on the States concerned to fully cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and comply with their obligations under the Convention. The Czech Republic reiterates its full support to the OPCW, stresses its confidence in the impartiality and professionalism of the Technical Secretariat and its staff and commends its tireless efforts to fulfil its mandate, despite many challenges.

As a newly appointed member of the Management Committee of the Arms Trade Treaty, the Czech Republic continues to support the process of universalizing and fully implementing this unique mechanism. We call on States parties to fulfil their obligations. To support national implementation, we remain ready to contribute to the Treaty's Voluntary Trust Fund.

The Czech Republic reiterates its strong support for the goals of both the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We have a long-standing tradition of supporting mine action, including in Jordan, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine, among other countries.

In the light of its upcoming Review Conference, the Czech Republic continues to support the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We appreciate the work related to emerging technologies in lethal autonomous weapon systems, as it is in our common interest to avoid scenarios in which technological advances could undermine international law.

The Czech Republic supports the idea of preventing an arms race in outer space. However, we believe that there are many issues that should be carefully examined. We would need to arrive at a common definition of a space weapon, as in theory any object with manoeuvring capabilities could be used for offensive purposes.

The Acting Chair: We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. The Committee will reconvene this afternoon at 3 p.m. in the General Assembly Hall, to first hear a statement by the President of the General Assembly before continuing the thematic discussion under the combined clusters of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, outer space (disarmament aspects) and conventional weapons.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.