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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Hilale(Morocco)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 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 Chair (*spoke in French*): I apologize for the late start to today's meeting, owing to the fact that the Bureau's work took longer than expected. I assure the Committee that there was no problem, but our discussion was an important one, especially in the wake of the plenary meeting of the General Committee. In that regard, the members of the Bureau will inform the various groups about last Friday's meeting with the President of the Assembly and about the decisions that were taken in that regard.

This morning the Committee will continue its thematic discussion, beginning with clusters 5 to 7, "Other disarmament measures and international security", "Regional disarmament and security" and "Disarmament machinery".

I would like to remind delegations taking the floor to kindly respect the time limits for statements of five minutes when speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of groups of delegations. Since two Committee meetings are scheduled for today, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, delegations will be able to exercise their right of reply at the end of today's second meeting.

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM). Written submissions under clusters 5 to 7 are available online.

NAM is concerned about the illegal and malicious use of new information and communications technologies (ICTs) and firmly condemns and rejects it. We further reiterate the need to prevent cyberspace from becoming a theatre of military operations. NAM calls for intensifying efforts to safeguard cyberspace from becoming an arena of conflict and instead ensuring its exclusively peaceful uses, which can enable us to fully realize the potential of ICTs. The development of any international legal framework to address such issues should be pursued within the United Nations, with the active and equal participation of all States. We also take note of the conclusions of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security in its 2013 and 2015 reports and note the conclusions of the Open-ended Working Group on cybersecurity as the first inclusive mechanism in this area. We welcome the consensus-based adoption of its outcome document (see A/75/816). NAM affirms the inalienable right of States to the development and use of ICTs for peaceful purposes and condemns their misuse, including through the Internet and social media, with the aim of inciting or committing acts of terrorism.

NAM emphasizes the importance of observing environmental norms in the preparation and implementation of disarmament and arms-limitation agreements. We reaffirm that international

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disarmament forums, should take environmental norms into account. We stress the importance of reducing military expenditures in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments and urge all States to devote resources made available through that approach to addressing new challenges related to the eradication of diseases that afflict humankind, including the coronavirus disease pandemic.

NAM believes that the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, are important measures in the work of achieving nuclear disarmament. It is essential that nuclear-weapon States provide every State in all of the nuclear-weapon-free zones with unconditional assurances regarding the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them under any circumstances. We call on all nuclear-weapon States to ratify the protocols related to all the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, withdraw any reservations and respect the denuclearized status of those zones.

We urge States to conclude agreements establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where they do not exist, in accordance with the provisions of the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and the principles and guidelines adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1999. NAM emphasizes the importance of United Nations activities at the regional level to increasing the stability and security of its Member States, which could be promoted in a substantive manner by the maintenance and revitalization of the three Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament.

With regard to the "Disarmament machinery" cluster, NAM believes that the main difficulty lies in the lack of political will on the part of some States for achieving progress, particularly on disarmament measures. We reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and reiterate our call to the CD to agree by consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, without any further delay. NAM strongly rejects the politicization of the work of the CD and calls on all Member States to fully respect its rules of procedure and agreed methods of work.

NAM underlines the importance of the Disarmament Commission and calls on States to agree on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We hope that the Commission will hold a substantive session as soon as possible. NAM underscores the importance of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as it would offer an opportunity to review the most critical aspects of the disarmament process. It would also mobilize the international community and public opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and of the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

NAM is deeply concerned about the inadequate representation of its member countries in the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. We request the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to take steps to ensure equitable representation in the Office. We call for transparency and the strict application of the principle of equitable geographical representation, in particular in the composition of groups of governmental experts in the field of disarmament.

Under these clusters, NAM will be submitting draft resolutions on, first, "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control"; secondly, "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation"; thirdly, "The relationship between disarmament and development"; fourthly, "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace"; fifthly, "United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament"; and sixthly, "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". NAM would appreciate the support of all Member States.

Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We align ourselves with the statement just delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

CARICOM remains committed to contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security by implementing our international obligations through action at the national and regional levels. With security as the fourth pillar of our regional integration process,

CARICOM seeks to implement practical and innovative approaches, and to collaborate with other Member States and institutions to combat our region's multidimensional and complex security threats. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has heightened the awareness of the absolute necessity for more collaborative partnerships. No one Member State is capable of managing the ever-growing threats to peace and security on its own. International partnerships are an essential means of developing capacity and strengthening frameworks to combat that scourge. We reiterate the need for continued partnerships with Member States, the United Nations system, United Nations agencies and other relevant stakeholders. To that end, CARICOM welcomes the decision to establish an INTERPOL Caribbean Liaison Office, which will provide a platform for strengthening the region's operational capability, while providing unique and tailored support to CARICOM and the wider Caribbean, with hands-on access to more effective ways of tackling crime.

The Caribbean Community has emphasized the need to advance measures to eliminate crime and violence, in particular against women and girls. Lockdowns and stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a disturbing increase in domestic armed violence. In the context of a regional response, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) has conducted reviews of small-arms laws with domestic violence provisions in 22 Latin American and Caribbean States and concluded with recommendations to restrict the ability of convicted perpetrators of domestic violence to acquire or renew firearms licences. Furthermore, as part of its project on women and disarmament, UNLIREC will use those conclusions as a basis for developing online courses on the prevention of domestic armed violence.

We continue to highlight the significant role played by the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) in ensuring continuity and effectiveness in the region's actions and responses to the challenges posed to security in the region, as well as the implementation of the Regional Management Framework for Crime and Security. In that regard, the advance passenger information system developed by CARICOM IMPACS continues to provide officials with pre-arrival and -departure manifest data on all passengers and crew members of an aircraft or vessel at every port of entry. Similarly, the CARICOM

advance cargo information system, developed in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, has been established to enable CARICOM member States to conduct cargo profiling.

With regard to information and communications technology, CARICOM continues to implement new measures to address current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on security and disarmament measures. Within that context, in the strategic plan for the Caribbean Community cybercrime is listed as an obstacle and a threat to social and sustained economic development in the region. We are cognizant that as developments in science and technology continue to transform our daily interactions, we must remain vigilant in understanding new and emerging weapons technologies. We also encourage Member States to implement the norms, rules and principles for responsible behaviour in order to increased stability and security in cyberspace. In that regard, CARICOM welcomes the adoption by consensus of the final report of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816) and the consensus final report of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in the context of international security (see A/76/135). Their success is a clear signal that Member States are working collaboratively and in our collective best interests on matters related to information technology and its impact on security and disarmament. CARICOM also looks ahead to the Open-ended Working Group 2021-2025, scheduled to begin later this year, and we pledge our continued support.

While the CARICOM region per se is not directly affected by armed conflict, we face tremendous challenges related to armed violence in our countries. As a result, significant resources are diverted away from development to address threats to security. Inevitably, the repurposing of already limited resources often has a negative impact on social, educational and infrastructural development and creates an untenable burden for countries already suffering from debt overload and highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

CARICOM attaches importance to the United Nations disarmament machinery and the work of related mechanisms under its purview, including the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee. The growing sense of instability and unease in the area of

international security and cooperation manifested within the disarmament machinery reinforces the need for innovative approaches, enhanced dialogue, transparency and a redoubling of commitment on the part of all members of the international community.

In conclusion, CARICOM values the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament and appreciates its work in promoting a greater understanding of the functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery and the other institutions working in international security —

The Chair: I am sorry, but the speaker's time has expired.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): This statement is delivered on behalf of the Group of Francophone Ambassadors, representing the member and observer States of the International Organization of la Francophonie.

Our countries would like to reaffirm their robust commitment to multilingualism as a vector for respect for linguistic diversity. In our multilateral forums, multilingualism fosters harmonious communication, promotes inclusivity and facilitates the meaningful participation of all in the work process without discrimination. It upholds and supports the values we promote in our organizations. Nonetheless, the health crisis we are currently dealing with has been an obstacle to ensuring the systematic use of multilingualism. But while considerable effort has been made for more than a year to hold meetings as we have always done, albeit in hybrid or virtual formats, we want to emphasize that such initiatives should not be to the detriment of multilingualism.

The six working languages are required in all formal meetings, virtual and in-person alike. However, in recent years, because of recurring cash-flow issues, multilingualism has at times been disregarded during formal meetings on conventions or treaty bodies to compensate for the non-payment of assessed contributions. Cuts have been made in regular budgets earmarked for interpretation and translation. We deeply deplore those decisions. Under no circumstances should financial issues obstruct the proper functioning of multilingualism.

The Group would like to reaffirm its keen interest in the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, which was launched here at the General

Assembly during its first special session devoted to disarmament. As recalled in resolution A/73/73, thanks to the assistance provided by the Programme, several civil servants in Member States now hold key leadership positions in the area of disarmament in their countries' Administrations. However, we call for the Fellowship Programme to benefit from multilingualism in the future. The fact is that 43 years after its inception, the Fellowship Programme remains available only in English. Opening up the Programme to multilingualism will provide greater opportunities.

Ms. Sulaiman (Brunei Darussalam): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

We too align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier today on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

With regard to other disarmament measures and international security, the pervasive and constantly evolving nature of cyberthreats requires coordinated expertise from multiple stakeholders across various domains and across borders. To that end, ASEAN established a Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee last year to promote cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation to strengthen cybersecurity in the region. The Committee also welcomed the proposal to develop a regional action plan on the implementation of the norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in order to facilitate the participation of ASEAN member States in the implementation of the 11 voluntary non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies.

The sixth ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity, held in October, highlighted the importance of taking practical steps to enhance the cybersecurity of our region and the urgent need to protect critical national and cross-border information infrastructure. In addition, the fifteenth ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) adopted a concept paper on the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence to promote cooperation on cybersecurity and information. ASEAN will continue coordinating capacity-building programmes to help its members implement the norms of the 2015 Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace and to level up the region's cybercapabilities as a whole. That common goal drives the work of the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity

Centre of Excellence in Singapore and the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre in Thailand. ASEAN also recognizes the need to develop voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace on a basis of consensus. The United Nations must continue to play a central role in discussions on cybersecurity, which should remain open and inclusive. ASEAN welcomes the consensus reports of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816) and the sixth iteration of the Group of Governmental Experts (see A/76/135). ASEAN is pleased that Ambassador Burhan Gafoor of Singapore was elected Chair of the Open-ended Working Group for the period from 2021 to 2025.

With regard to regional disarmament, ASEAN reiterates its commitment to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. We also reaffirm our adherence to the fundamental principles and purposes enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in upholding a rules-based regional order anchored in international law. That includes collectively underscoring the importance of strengthening international and regional cooperation in nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, we advance our efforts through collaboration between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), through various initiatives, including the implementation of a project using nuclear technology for controlling plastic pollution in South-East Asia in order to address global plastic pollution.

We also welcome the finalization of an ASEAN protocol for emergency response preparedness to a nuclear or radiological emergency by the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) this year. It was jointly developed by ASEANTOM and the IAEA to strengthen coordination among ASEAN member States for preparing and responding to nuclear or radiological emergencies in ASEAN countries or elsewhere that could have an impact on the region in the areas of information-sharing, assessment, support for decision-making and public communication. We also note with satisfaction that the ASEAN Regional Forum has continued to progress as a key multilateral platform for dialogue and consultation on regional, political and security issues of common interest and concern.

Given the continuing threats we are seeing to international security, it is more necessary than ever before to preserve and strengthen the nature, role and purpose of the various forums under the United Nations disarmament machinery. ASEAN is of the firm view that global disarmament and non-proliferation issues can be best addressed through multilateralism. Furthermore, ASEAN recognizes that disarmament and non-proliferation issues cut across political, security, economic and sociocultural aspects. In particular, ASEAN would like to emphasize the following points.

First, we encourage all Member States to work constructively to resolve outstanding issues and look forward to the substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which has been postponed for the past three years.

Secondly, we continue to advocate for the enlargement of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament and for its increased interaction with relevant stakeholders so as to bring a fresh perspective to the body.

Thirdly, we welcome further coordination and cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and on curbing the illicit proliferation of conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons.

Fourthly, we also reaffirm our support for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in promoting regional disarmament priorities, bridging needs and fostering cooperation in our region.

In conclusion, ASEAN reaffirms its commitment to being ready for any future security challenges and to enhancing its cooperation with the international community in advancing its shared goals of a world that is free of nuclear weapons and in possession of a peaceful, secure and resilient cyberspace.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

Mr. Nagan (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its member States strongly promote a global open, free, stable and secure cyberspace, in which international law, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, fully applies and supports social, political and economic development. The landscape of cyberthreats continues to evolve and, sadly, cyberspace is increasingly misused to conduct malicious cyberactivities, which the EU strongly condemns. We welcome the adoption of the reports of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816) and of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security (see A/76/135). The reports reaffirm the framework for responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technology (ICTs), including the applicability of international law in cyberspace and the 11 norms of responsible State behaviour.

We welcome the draft resolution submitted jointly by the United States and the Russian Federation. The draft resolution welcomes the consensus reports and calls on States to be guided by them in their use of ICTs. In doing so, it reaffirms that international law generally and the Charter of the United Nations in particular are applicable and essential to maintaining peace and stability and promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment.

The EU and its member States will engage constructively in the new Open-ended Working Group on cybersecurity. At the same time, the EU believes that there is a need for more action-oriented work and for ensuring that the normative framework developed on a basis of consensus is implemented. That is why, in 2020, the EU and its member States were among a diverse cross-regional group, including 53 States Members of the United Nations, proposing to establish a programme of action to advance responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in order to take forward that work. The programme of action would offer a permanent, inclusive, action-oriented mechanism within the United Nations to take the framework forward and concretely support States' capacity to implement their commitments under the agreed framework, including through the sharing of best practices, dialogue between the relevant experts and capacity-building.

The situation in Afghanistan is a major challenge for the international community as a whole. The denial

of the rights of women and girls is of particular concern. We reiterate that every effort must be made to ensure that the Taliban ceases all direct and indirect ties with international terrorism and to prevent Afghanistan from serving as a base for hosting and financing terrorism or exporting it to other countries. As a matter of high priority, the EU will initiate a regional political platform for cooperation with Afghanistan's direct neighbours.

The EU strongly condemns the clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation through its acts of aggression in eastern Ukraine and its illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which we will not recognize. The large build-up of Russian military forces on Ukraine's borders and in the illegally annexed Crimea in April this year has further increased tensions in the region. We reiterate our strong support for the Minsk agreements and the efforts of both the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The EU reiterates its support for the three mutually reinforcing forums of the disarmament machinery, the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the Disarmament Commission. The international community bears a collective responsibility to respect their integrity and ensure that they remain relevant and achieve results in line with their agreed mandates. In the context of the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease, we are grateful for the continued support of the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament affairs. We believe that the First Committee should focus on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and current major challenges to our collective security, and identify concrete measures to address them. Consideration should be given to reviewing First Committee practices and working methods, including instituting more biennial and triennial resolutions.

The CD remains the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body and its continued relevance in negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties and formulating other instruments and norms, such as guidelines and codes of conduct, is of the utmost importance for the EU. The EU's long-standing priority in the CD is an immediate start to negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. We support the start of these long-overdue negotiations

in accordance with document CD/1299 and its mandate, and call on all States to contribute to facilitating them.

The EU expresses its concern about the continued stalemate in the Disarmament Commission. We cannot allow yet another platform of the disarmament machinery to fall victim to issues that are not related to its substantive work.

In conclusion, we greatly value the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) as a stand-alone autonomous institution of the disarmament machinery producing high-quality research and implementing initiatives that can help to move disarmament processes forward. In that regard, we appreciate UNIDIR's substantive contributions at various disarmament forums, as demonstrated by the continued substantive funding of the UNIDIR strategic plan by the EU and its member States.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the observer of the State of Palestine.

Mr. Bamyá (State of Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by noting that the Group of Arab States aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group expresses its concern about the increased use of information and communications technology for disruptive activities that destabilize international peace and security, including activities by terrorist and criminal organizations. The Arab Group emphasizes the need for continued efforts at the United Nations to develop binding norms for responsible State behaviour in that vital field. The Arab Group stresses the importance of supporting international cooperation to promote the security of information and communications technologies in a manner that strengthens States and their defence capabilities against any disruptive attacks, as underscored by several reports of various groups of governmental experts.

The Arab Group also welcomes the consensus-based outcome document (see A/75/816) of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established by General Assembly resolution 73/27, and we look forward to the start of meetings in December of the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies established by Assembly resolution 75/240.

The Arab Group would like to recall several General Assembly resolutions, the outcomes of successive special sessions devoted to disarmament, and various recommendations of the Disarmament Commission adopted by consensus. They clearly note the relationship between disarmament and maintaining international peace and security, as well as between disarmament and achieving sustainable development, in addition to noting a number of United Nations resolutions and documents concerning the centrality of disarmament and curbing arms proliferation at the regional level.

The Middle East may be one of the regions of the world most in need of promoting efforts in the areas of disarmament and curbing arms proliferation in order to build confidence, achieve peace and security and establish a stable foundation for sustainable development. The Arab Group calls on the three States that sponsored the Middle East resolution adopted at the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995, which is an integral part of the indefinite extension package of the NPT, to assume their responsibilities for implementing the 1995 Middle East resolution and subsequent relevant resolutions.

We also want to emphasize our insistence on the need to make every effort to establish a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction so as to increase the opportunities for peace, security and stability in one of the regions of the world that suffers most from conflicts and instability. In that context, the Arab Group welcomed 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, held pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546 in November 2019 under the presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. We welcomed its success in achieving a positive outcome and adopting a number of important substantive and procedural resolutions, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report (A/75/63). The Arab Group also looks forward to a successful second session, to be held under the presidency of Kuwait from 29 November to 3 December. We call on all the parties invited to the Conference to engage in good faith and negotiate a legally binding convention that promotes regional and international peace and security.

The Arab Group is deeply concerned about Israel's continued refusal to accede to the NPT. It is the only

State in the Middle East that has not acceded to the Treaty and that refuses to subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Our efforts to achieve universality for the NPT are an integral part of our principled commitment to nuclear disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons. That is the ultimate priority of disarmament and international security, in line with the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978.

The Arab Group would once again like to remind the Committee that the United Nations disarmament activities and machinery are based solely on those special sessions and can be amended only through a fourth special session of the General Assembly. We underscore the need to enable the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to play its role as the only negotiation forum specifically established to negotiate disarmament treaties. We emphasize that the current stalemate in the CD does not necessarily reflect a lack of Conference mechanisms but rather a lack of political will on the part of certain States. We therefore stress the importance of activating the role of CD in implementing its negotiation mandate, especially regarding nuclear disarmament. We believe that the items on its draft agenda are aligned with internationally agreed objectives and priorities. We cannot prioritize any of those items before agreeing on operational steps to eliminate nuclear weapons, or focus on imposing new non-proliferation commitments at the expense of nuclear disarmament in a manner that leads to a greater imbalance between the commitments of nuclear States in the area of nuclear disarmament and the commitments of non-nuclear States in the area of non-proliferation.

In conclusion, the Arab Group stresses the importance of holding Disarmament Commission meetings in the coming year. We call on all the relevant parties to refrain from repeating the developments of 2019 that regrettably impeded the holding of meetings —

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I am sorry, but the speaker's time has expired.

Mr. Zellenrath (Netherlands): I would like to highlight several matters regarding cyber- and new technologies, as well as the disarmament machinery.

In the light of rapid developments in the area of technologies, the Netherlands would like to emphasize the importance of their responsible use. Together, we need to ensure an international framework that

guarantees international stability and peace. Only international law can be the starting point for such a framework, and existing security arrangements that guide technology transfers for peaceful uses are an important and tested element of that. The Netherlands rejects any action aimed at undermining that important non-proliferation instrument.

We welcome the consensus reports of both the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816) and of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security (see A/76/135), which reaffirm the normative framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. International law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, is applicable and essential to maintaining peace and stability and promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful information and communications technology (ICT) environment.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms apply online and offline. We consider the references in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to international humanitarian law in the context of States' use of ICTs very valuable. We take a positive view of the developments regarding the joint draft resolution put forward by the United States and the Russian Federation, which welcomes the two reports and calls on States to be guided by them in their use of ICTs, and we also look forward to the commencement of the work of the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies and plan to participate actively in its discussions. To complement the new Open-ended Working Group process, we consider it urgent to advance the implementation of the normative framework through the programme of action, which would provide an inclusive, transparent, regular and action-oriented framework.

The ongoing coronavirus disease pandemic has had a profound impact on the disarmament machinery. Important meetings, such as review conferences and meetings of States parties, were postponed, and the text of resolutions was often only technically updated rather than substantively improved. We commend the six Presidents of the 2021 session of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on their close cooperation and coordination, aimed at providing continuity for the

2021 session. It is encouraging to note that the six Presidents of the 2022 session intend to continue that close cooperation. However, less encouraging was the fact that despite the coordinated efforts by successive Presidents, the CD was unable to agree in 2021 on the organization of its substantive work. Once again, the Netherlands calls on all Conference member States to focus on the substance of the CD's agenda. We point to our 2019 working paper, "Back to Basics — the Programme of Work", which offers a pragmatic way to commence substantive work in the CD as soon as possible.

Gender and diversity remain important topics for the Netherlands. The equal and full participation of women in deliberations and decision-making is essential to our pursuit of disarmament, peace and security. The fact that we could not agree this year on a simple technical amendment to make the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament gender-neutral shows the work that remains to be done in that area.

In conclusion, the Netherlands notes with concern the growing polarization within disarmament forums, including this year's session of the First Committee. We are alarmed about the introduction of a number of new draft resolutions at this year's session of the First Committee that seem to weaken disarmament structures and institutions. The Netherlands cannot and will not support any effort aimed at weakening or putting in question the impartiality of the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical, Bacteriological (Biological) or Toxin Weapons. On the contrary, we need a pragmatic approach to moving the disarmament agenda forward as best we can, including by continuing our preparations for the meetings that have been postponed.

Addressing the concerns raised by cyberthreats and new technologies while not hindering their peaceful uses is a collective challenge for the international community. Constructive multilateralism will enable us to find inclusive, creative and innovative solutions to the challenges that we face. We must all show our international commitment by honouring our disarmament treaties, financial commitments and disarmament institutions.

A longer written statement for each cluster will be available on the eStatements portal.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not agreed

on, adopted or implemented its programme of work in more than 25 years. That is five times longer than the worst period of paralysis of the Security Council, resulting from the crisis on the Korean peninsula during the Cold War. Now, in our times, in an extremely creative show of pretence, the CD keeps delegations in Geneva busy but its work does not fulfil its mandate. Just as the President of France recently said, although he was referring to NATO, the CD appears to be brain dead and its members keep it on life support, instead of letting nature do its work and building it a sepulchre to honour its past achievements.

There are several reasons for the ineffectiveness of the CD's working methods. They include the monthly rotation of the presidency, which never has time to achieve results; the practice of negotiating ad nauseam a programme of work that is never adopted, and the lack of civil-society participation, which is still not in line with United Nations practice. This year the CD was unable even to complete a technical and linguistic update of its rules of procedure to make it gender-neutral. And to top it all off, all decisions, substantive and procedural alike, are taken using the arbitrary rule of consensus, one of the worst practices of contemporary multilateralism. Consensus should be an aspiration, but when it cannot be achieved, the golden rule of democracy is taking a vote. Several key multilateral agreements, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, were adopted by vote. When the CD was paralysed by the dictatorship of consensus, we submitted the text of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was negotiated in Geneva, to the General Assembly and it was adopted.

Furthermore, every year that the CD is engaged in informal discussions, it usurps the functions of the Disarmament Commission. As if that were not enough, the Disarmament Commission was unable to agree on recommendations between 1999 and 2017. Inexplicably, it has not held a meeting since 2018. The narrative that explains why we are complicit in such pretence is that the paralysis is related to the current complex international security situation. However, if so, how do we explain the work of other forums that produce results, including binding outcomes, and that are composed of the same States represented in the CD? Is this a case of schizophrenia? No, it is pretence and deceit; there is no other word for it.

Nevertheless, the States that are genuinely committed to the disarmament cause have been able to find alternatives. Outside the CD, we have been able to successfully conclude four multilateral treaties on weapons — the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Arms Trade Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, all of which are in force. There is still time for us to avoid what occurred in Geneva in the 1930s, when the World Disarmament Conference of the League of Nations pretended to be engaged in negotiations even as a world war was in the making. For that reason, we call on the First Committee to weigh in on the need to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament or another mechanism to reimagine the institutional design of forums that have shown their inability to meet the public's demands in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Fiallo Karolys (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador rejects the increasing use and upgrading of unmanned aerial vehicles and lethal autonomous weapon systems. The international community, in its various regional and international forums, should continue to delve deeply into their implications for international law and international human rights law. The militarization of artificial intelligence poses challenges for international security, transparency, control, proportionality and accountability. Merely regulating the trade in such weapons is not sufficient. We must move towards negotiating a binding instrument for the regulation and even prohibition of such weapons, if necessary. Autonomous weapons without considerable or sufficient human control should be banned.

Ecuador supports the responsible and peaceful use of information and communications technology. Nothing should remain outside of the realm of international law, especially international humanitarian law and international human rights law. This year, 2021, was a milestone in the area of cybersecurity thanks to the substantive results obtained in March by the first Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the consensus reached in May by the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible state behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security.

To a great extent the threats we face today are transnational, and the only way to counter them in physical and virtual spaces is through international

dialogue. In that regard, if a Member State is not safe, no State is safe. We need greater international cooperation to reduce the asymmetries in our capacities to implement the rules of responsible State behaviour. Preserving and promoting the responsible use of information and communications technology is key to ensuring stability and security in cyberspace. The existing norms must be strengthened, while taking rapid technological advances into account.

Beyond cybersecurity, we would like to highlight cyberdiplomacy in this year's session. We acknowledge the efforts of the United States and Russia to jointly submit a single draft resolution on the issue designed to strengthen the foundations for future work. Ecuador has already become a sponsor of the draft resolution and would like to emphasize the responsible message it sends to the world about the fact that we are moving towards stronger multilateralism in that area. Ecuador will also take part in the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, chaired by Singapore.

We acknowledge the effective role of civil society in the progress made to date and support its continued participation in this area. We also recognize the ongoing support of organizations led by women and their key support in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Lastly, at the global level, we must resolve the issue of the obsolete parts of the disarmament machinery of the United Nations, which the Committee, sadly, raises year after year. It was eloquently explained by the previous speaker. During the 2019 session, my delegation deplored the fact that because of time constraints, it appears that the goal in the First Committee is to adopt a programme of work and engage in debates without really listening to one another. In 2020, on the other hand, we noted with regret that the pandemic made it impossible to conduct in-person thematic debates and that we were forced to submit written statements. Today we welcome the resumption of thematic debates in the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly in 2021. The time limits have forced delegations to make their statements succinct and listen to one another as closely as possible. Ecuador proposes that we take advantage of the progress made in recent years and make genuine efforts to revitalize the working methods of the First Committee.

Mr. Akhmetov (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan strongly opposes the existence of chemical and biological weapons and reiterates that their use constitutes a crime against humanity. The catastrophic consequences of their use should be prevented by eliminating them completely, and the issue should be addressed transparently and in accordance with international law. We reaffirm that the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are vital international legal instruments. They guide us in our struggle to achieve the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction by providing strict and effective international controls.

Turning to the issue of regional disarmament, Kazakhstan continues to support the important goal of achieving a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We hope that a second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction will be convened in the near future.

Our country is committed to the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and one of its central requirements, which is the creation of an effective system of export controls. The standards we have developed nationally comply with the strictest international requirements, and we will continue to improve them.

Kazakhstan reaffirms the fundamental importance of the BWC and intends to continue working with all the relevant parties to achieve the Convention's goals. During the previous General Assembly session, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan proposed the establishment of an international agency for biological safety (see A/75/PV.6) whose activities would be guided by the BWC. The concept note distributed in June by the Permanent Missions of Kazakhstan to the United Nations in Geneva and New York offers an overall vision of the mandate, objectives and functions of such an agency. The document was discussed during the Meeting of Experts of the BWC in September and we have received positive and supportive feedback from delegations that believe that the concept note is a good basis for further discussions.

As a way forward, if conditions permit, we propose the convening of a scientific conference next year to explore ways to further implement our proposal. In our view, the conference should have two objectives — first,

to establish a dialogue among all stakeholders to achieve mutual understanding and develop an atmosphere of trust and confidence, and secondly, to discuss various approaches to creating the agency. During the ninth Review Conference of States Parties to the BWC next year, we will update our collective vision for the future agency based on the outcomes and feedback from international partners. We are open to discussion and ready to listen to everyone. We will continue to work in a constructive, transparent and gradual manner. We will adhere to consensus-based decisions and foster dialogue among BWC States parties.

Mr. Lagardien (South Africa): South Africa has supported the various strands of work and rich consensus outcomes on information and communications technology (ICT) in the context of peace and security that have been achieved in the General Assembly. My delegation therefore welcomes the integrated draft resolution entitled “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies”, and we thank the sponsors for their work in that regard.

It is important to unite behind a single process, and we look forward to the work of the second Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, serving as an all-inclusive single track to consider how the international community can best seize the opportunities presented by ICTs, while addressing threats to international peace and security in cyberspace. With the ICT field continually and rapidly evolving, it is unlikely that we will ever reach the point of having a complete and sustainable response to opportunities and threats. Implementation must therefore be a priority, and that also requires capacity-building and assistance.

We share the frustration and concerns about the inaction in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in 2021, which did not meet the expectations of an end to its protracted impasse. South Africa remains committed to a functioning CD mandate to negotiate multilateral disarmament instruments. It is regrettable that in the 25 years since South Africa's admission to the Conference the CD has not discharged its basic mandate, with the exception of the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Its inability to deliver on its responsibility as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum ranks high among the

serious challenges facing international disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control efforts. We therefore urgently need to attend to the current state of affairs in the CD. We can no longer engage in repeating the past activities that have failed to bring the Conference closer to an agreement on its programme of work. They have rather distracted the CD from the imperative of reaching consensus on a programme of work, as well as of starting negotiations to turn it into a deliberative body, as opposed to a negotiating forum, while creating the illusion that substantive work is being done. We have said many times before that the continued impasse is not sustainable. It also diminishes the credibility of the Conference and will increasingly affect its relevance and stature.

South Africa further regrets that the Disarmament Commission was again unable to conduct substantive work in 2021. As a deliberative body in the disarmament machinery, the Commission is uniquely placed to find much-needed common ground. We welcome the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and commend the Institute for its quality independent research and timely discussions on issues within the field of disarmament. The current geopolitical environment requires innovative perspectives of this kind and enhanced dialogue that can respond to our collective security concerns.

My delegation joins the call to ensure the equal engagement and meaningful participation of women across multiple disarmament forums. Prioritizing a gender perspective in disarmament and international discussions expands our knowledge and understanding of the challenges involved, with a view to making greater progress on disarmament.

We still believe that the disarmament machinery plays an essential part in achieving the world envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations, and in the current environment it remains essential to ensure that the components of the disarmament machinery can fulfil their respective mandates. Despite the deadlocks in the CD and the Disarmament Commission, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was nevertheless negotiated and adopted in the General Assembly. We also note that the open-ended working group mechanism is increasingly being used to take key issues forward, and we support the fact that these groups are inclusive, transparent and consensus-based. Despite our continued support for the disarmament machinery, we have to recognize that both of these negotiating and deliberative

arenas — the Assembly and the open-ended working groups — have created the space needed to give effect to the aspirations of a majority of States that have long been frustrated elsewhere in the procedurally and often politically deadlocked disarmament machinery.

Mr. Khaldi (Algeria): Algeria remains deeply committed to consolidating stability and security beyond its borders, while working closely with its neighbours for a better future for all peoples of the region. The Sahel is particularly plagued by the dangerous phenomenon of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which has exacerbated the already fragile security situation in many countries. In our view, that calls for a multidimensional response based on a security track and a political process, in order to address the root causes of the crisis. In that regard, my country supports the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process in that country, which has led to a ceasefire and, most recently, the adoption of a plan of action for the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries. At the end of August Algeria also helped to support the peace process in Libya by holding a ministerial meeting of Libya's neighbours at which they renewed their commitment to stabilizing the country.

My country has also demonstrated the same commitment in Mali by providing support in our capacity as Chair of the Follow-up Committee on the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process, aimed at ensuring a successful transition based on inclusiveness and ownership.

The Algerian delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region (A/76/89), which contains the perspectives of various Member States on ways and means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Member States that contributed to the implementation of resolution 75/86. As in previous years, and in line with its Mediterranean policy, based on the principles of cooperation, good neighbourliness and mutual respect, Algeria has the honour to submit to the First Committee and the General Assembly draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.37, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region". The Algerian delegation is counting on the sponsorship and support of all Member States for its adoption by consensus this year, hopefully.

Algeria shares the concerns of other Member States about the evolving threats emanating from the manipulation of information and digital technologies with malicious intent and from cyberattacks on critical infrastructure. We condemn the use of spy software against officials, citizens and journalists around the world. Algeria believes that such dangerous and illegal practices contribute enormously to undermining trust and confidence among States. In that context, Algeria welcomes the successful conclusion in March and adoption by consensus of the final report (see A/75/816) of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established pursuant to resolution 73/27. We are also ready to work constructively with all Member States for the success of the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (2021-2025), established pursuant to resolution 75/240.

Regrettably, the United Nations disarmament machinery is being eroded. The Conference on Disarmament still suffer from the lack of political will that is the major reason for its unfortunate deadlock. We therefore urge all States members of the Conference to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. Algeria is also gravely concerned about the inability of the Disarmament Commission to convene its organizational and substantive sessions for three consecutive years, and hopes that by both addressing the underlying issues and avoiding the politicization of its work, the Commission will hold its substantive sessions in 2022 in a formal setting so as to fulfil its mandate.

Finally, my delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier today by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

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

Mr. Molla (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today under this combined cluster by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Rapid technological development, including artificial intelligence, biotechnology and other emerging technologies, continues to redefine the

nature of our disarmament discourse. Information and communications technology (ICT) has brought immense benefits to our people. Yet more than ever before, as a result of their dual-use nature, which can be both constructive and destructive, emerging technologies have brought controversies to the fore. Our increasing dependence on digital technologies, which the pandemic has emphasized, has created new vulnerabilities. Ill-doers have exploited even the ongoing global health crisis by targeting the critical establishment necessary for mitigating the pandemic.

Bangladesh firmly rejects the malicious use of ICTs, including social networks, for purposes that are inconsistent with the maintenance of international stability and security. We firmly believe that no Government can address those challenges alone. On that note, Bangladesh reiterates the need for the United Nations to continue its norm-setting role for a globally accessible free, open and secure cyberspace, which is now more necessary than ever. In that regard, we take note of the consensus reports of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816) and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security (see A/76/135).

Bangladesh stresses the importance of adhering to the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular abiding by the principle of sovereignty and sovereign equality, refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations and adhering to the principles of peaceful coexistence between countries. In that regard, confidence-building measures are critically important for maintaining a safe and secure cyber ecosystem. Bangladesh remains steadfast in contributing to safeguarding ICTs from malicious activities.

Bangladesh also stresses the importance of mainstreaming and preserving the relevant norms of international law in the implementation of disarmament and arms-control measures. We add our voice to the need for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as an interim measure, through the nuclear-weapon States' ratification of the related protocols to all treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, in order to maintain sustainable peace, security and stability around the world. We believe that peaceful dialogue and diplomacy remain the best options for building

a sound regional security architecture. Enhanced regional cooperation, including for transparency and confidence-building measures, remains critical to creating the conditions conducive to sustained and meaningful dialogue on disarmament and security issues. Bangladesh has unconditionally opted to remain a non-nuclear-weapon State, a position based on our constitutional obligation to general and complete disarmament. Nuclear weapons have no place in our security posture. Instead, Bangladesh works to advance the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in the areas of agriculture, health and power generation.

Bangladesh remains an ardent proponent of multilateralism in the pursuit of general and complete disarmament. We continue to emphasize the need for reinvigorating the United Nations disarmament machinery to add further impetus to intergovernmental negotiations on the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We remain deeply concerned about the protracted impasse in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) due to the lack of consensus on a programme of work over the past two decades. We reiterate our call on the CD to agree by consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without any further delay.

Bangladesh highlights the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the deliberative body in the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. We also appreciate the contribution of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to expanding the horizon of our knowledge and expertise on disarmament. We remain committed to upholding internationally agreed disarmament norms and strengthening the United Nations disarmament machinery to ensure a safer and better world for our future generations.

Ms. Roth (Canada): Canada would like to address two issues consequential to the maintenance of international peace and security — responsible State behaviour in cyberspace and due consideration for a gender perspective in disarmament matters. Those issues intersect with everything we do in the First Committee, yet their effects are underemphasized.

A framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace is a prerequisite for long-term international peace and security. Canada therefore welcomes the recent consensus reports of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on advancing responsible State

behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security (see A/76/135) and the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816). Through the 2015 report of the Group of Governmental Experts (see A/70/174), the international community agreed by consensus on a set of comprehensive voluntary norms to guide what States can and cannot do online, which were reinforced in the aforementioned 2021 consensus reports. The applicability of international law in cyberspace was also agreed to by the GGE in 2013 and 2015 and reaffirmed in the 2021 reports. Canada believes that the agreed norms and international law are sufficient to guide States' behaviour in cyberspace. However, we recognize that more work is needed to implement those existing agreed norms and for States to explain how they see international law applying in cyberspace.

Practical confidence-building measures and capacity-building are two key elements of the framework for responsible State behaviour. Canada is active in both areas. For example, since 2015, Canada has committed more than \$27 million to cyber capacity-building projects. We work with various organizations to promote an open and secure Internet. Furthermore, Canada is a sponsor of the proposal for a programme of action supported by more than 50 States. Once created, the programme of action could play an important role in guiding the implementation of the framework for responsible State behaviour. We hope that it will provide an inclusive forum to enable Member States, the private sector, civil society and academia to contribute to implementing that framework.

(spoke in French)

Lastly, securing an open Internet requires investing in gender equality and understanding the gender impact on cybersecurity issues. We welcome the fact that the Open-ended Working Group acknowledges the importance of the meaningful participation of women in cyberspace decision-making. I should point out that Canada has funded research on gender issues in the area of cybersecurity that is available to all States on the Open-ended Working Group online portal. Canada also proudly supports the Women in Cyber Fellowship programme, which has enabled more than 30 women diplomats to participate in Open-ended Working Group negotiations. We look forward to building on that programme in upcoming United Nations cyberspace efforts.

Beyond striving for inclusivity in cyberspace, it is crucial to acknowledge and integrate the gender dimension in our broader work in the areas of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. By better understanding the gender impact of weaponry and closing the ongoing gender gap in the area of disarmament, we can create effective, lasting initiatives that help to address the world's most pressing security threats. Canada continues to urge States to collect and share age-and-gender-disaggregated data on the impact of weapons in order to help Governments create informed policies that prevent violence and meet the needs of victims effectively. Canada welcomes increased gender representation in security-specific forums, such as the steady increase in women's participation in the First and Third Committees. However, the gender imbalance remains. Important voices and perspectives are absent from the table and are needed for the development of effective non-proliferation disarmament mechanisms. We must close the gender gap in order to ensure effective and sustainable initiatives and the creation of an inclusive, peaceful and prosperous world. Canada will continue to work with all stakeholders to advocate gender mainstreaming in all aspects of international security.

Mr. Al-Taie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are one of the main pillars of our efforts to build trust at the regional level, and a step towards strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes in order to achieve the ultimate goal of creating a safe world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Iraq would like to remind the Committee that the 1995 Middle East resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which is the fourth pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is still unimplemented more than two and a half decades after its adoption. In that context, Iraq warns against any continuing delays in implementing that resolution, which will undermine both the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, damage the credibility of the NPT and complicate the issues related to its universality. We therefore need to see serious work done to support and ensure the success of the implementation efforts,

including the holding of the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, with the goal of establishing such a zone, steps that constitute a balanced approach to supporting international and United Nations efforts in that regard. Iraq calls on the United Nations and the three NPT depositary States to shoulder their responsibility and implement the 1995 Middle East resolution and the subsequent relevant resolutions by supporting the ongoing efforts to that end.

In that context, Iraq once again calls on the international community to bring pressure to bear on the Israeli entity to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Iraq reiterates the pivotal role of the multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiation forum on disarmament, and the Disarmament Commission, the sole multilateral deliberative body on disarmament issues at the United Nations. We also emphasize the need for Member States to demonstrate the flexibility and political will necessary to achieving concrete progress in the area of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and to ending the stalemate in these multilateral forums.

Mr. Hegazy (Egypt): Egypt aligns itself with the statements made earlier today by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and would like to add some remarks.

In the area of cybersecurity and the possible malicious use of information and communications technologies (ICT) as a means of warfare, meaningful progress towards the establishment of a reliable regime, based on agreed rules, has been stalled for more than a decade. We welcome the conclusion of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established pursuant to resolution 73/27, and the adoption by consensus of its outcome document (see A/75/816). We look forward to the first session of the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (2021-2025), established

pursuant to resolution 75/240, and to continuing our constructive dialogue and formulation of rules and principles on States' uses of ICTs.

Building on international law and recommendations that have already been endorsed by the United Nations, with a view to addressing growing threats and existing gaps, the Open-ended Working Group has seen many creative ideas and constructive proposals, including on the future of regular institutional dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations. One proposal is for the establishment of a United Nations programme of action as a mechanism for following up on the implementation of agreed norms and considering the possible development of additional norms, pending an agreement on the launch of negotiations on a legally binding instrument. That proposal to establish a programme of action on cybersecurity seeks to encourage greater concerted global efforts for an inclusive United Nations platform that is action-oriented and can be developed to complement and work in concert with other relevant United Nations processes. We look forward to further elaborating the proposal openly and inclusively, primarily within the new Open-ended Working Group and with the participation of all stakeholders.

The Middle East remains one of the most volatile regions in the world. The situation there continues to worsen, with the unprecedented spread of conflicts, proxy wars, terrorism and sectarian violence. Today, in 2021, we need to recognize that peace and security cannot be achieved in the Middle East through deterrence and the accumulation of weaponry. What is needed is engagement on the establishment of an equitable security architecture designed to achieve collective and collaborative security for all the States and peoples of the region. 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 under the presidency of Jordan and managed to achieve several important outcomes, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/75/63, represents a key 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, to be held in November under the presidency of Kuwait.

The failure of the Conference on Disarmament to adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme

of work for more than 24 years should be rectified immediately. We believe that can be achieved only by launching negotiations on the verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons, with specific benchmarks and timelines. We also need similar efforts to revitalize the Disarmament Commission and enable it to adopt recommendations on nuclear disarmament. Egypt is also seriously disappointed with the Disarmament Commission's inability to convene formal sessions in 2019 and 2020, and we consider that to be another very alarming indication of the threats facing the disarmament machinery.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Regional security is being tested by daunting challenges. Tensions are increasing, armed confrontations are growing, old conflicts are festering and new ones emerging. The only way to normalize such situations is through direct dialogue between all involved based on the norms and principles of international law and in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Resorting to the threat or use of force in addressing regional issues is unacceptable, as is interfering in conflicts where such interventions have not been approved by the Security Council. However, what is needed is collective concerted efforts founded on the authority of the United Nations. One of the key factors in maintaining and reinforcing regional and subregional security is the conclusion of agreements on refraining from destabilizing military activity and on advancing arms control and disarmament. The global trend of deteriorating security is also affecting Europe. Key arms-control agreements and confidence-building mechanisms are being undermined. The NATO countries are increasing their military capacity and activity on Russia's borders. It is clear that as long as NATO maintains its policy of deterrence on Russia, cooperation and dialogue with it will be difficult.

In the circumstances, we need to take steps to improve the situation. The focus should be on the implementation in good faith of existing agreements, including the Vienna Document. Additional voluntary transparency measures would be helpful. We propose reaching an agreement on de-escalation measures, including the reciprocal reduction of military activity along the borders between the Russian Federation and NATO members and the improvement of mechanisms for avoiding incidents and preventing dangerous military activities. One important confidence-building

measure aimed at reducing military tensions would be a structured dialogue on security issues in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's region, which would help to foster conditions conducive to discussing key European security and arms-control issues. Russia is ready to engage constructively in those areas.

We continue to support the resolution of regional security issues through political and diplomatic avenues, including arms-control and disarmament agreements. Ensuring international information security is one of the most difficult issues on the United Nations negotiations track where national security interests are concerned. Despite States' divergent positions, that made the adoption by consensus this year of the final reports of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816) and of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security (see A/76/135) all the more significant. It has enabled Russia and the United States to submit a joint draft resolution to the First Committee on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and on advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies. The draft resolution reflects the positive results in the Open-ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts, which will provide a foundation for the further efforts of the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (2021-2025). We urge everyone to support it.

The consensus adoption of the draft resolution would be a logical expression of Member States' intention to restore a single-track format for the negotiation process. The United Nations was assigned a leadership role in addressing issues related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation as well as international peace and security. The work of building new arms-control regimes and strengthening existing ones should be addressed through existing conventions and instruments.

Mr. Vu (Viet Nam): My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered earlier today by the representatives of Brunei Darussalam, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

(ASEAN), and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

General and complete disarmament is the international community's ultimate goal in its efforts to ensure a world of peace, security and development. Regarding the deliberations on clusters 5 through 7, my delegation would like to emphasize the following points.

First, developments in the area of information and communications technologies (ICT) contribute to progress and to regional and international cooperation for development. However, there are growing concerns about trends in the malicious use of ICTs and their negative impact on national security, the social order and regional and international peace and security. It is the primary responsibility of States to govern, manage and formulate rules and norms for responsible behaviour in cyberspace for their people and their jurisdictions in order to address those issues.

At the global and regional levels, there should be common agreements on responsible behaviour in cyberspace, and that behaviour must be in accordance with international law. Regional and international cooperation should be further strengthened in that regard, including through support for developing countries, with a view to building a safe, secure and reliable cyberspace ensuring peace, security and development for all. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of all Member States and other related stakeholders in promoting the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security, including the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (2021-2025).

Secondly, the observance of environmental norms in drafting and implementing agreements on disarmament and arms control is an important objective that the United Nations system and related disarmament forums have been committed to since 1995. My delegation calls for further efforts to ensure the effective implementation of related United Nations resolutions, including resolution 75/53, which was adopted without a vote last year. International environmental norms have been strengthened by the recent entry into force of

the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, with its provisions on environmental remediation.

Thirdly, regional disarmament remains a key part of global disarmament. We need to further strengthen cooperation between regional and subregional organizations and the United Nations to enhance its effectiveness. ASEAN continues to uphold its commitment to preserving the region of South-East Asia as a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

Fourthly, my delegation recognizes the important role of the multilateral disarmament machinery in the global disarmament effort and the contribution it makes to achieving that goal. However, in sharing our concerns about the recent slow progress in this area, we urge for greater political will and commitment to improving the disarmament machinery's effectiveness. We need a major effort in order to further dialogue and negotiations in good faith, as well as to support the work of the multilateral disarmament bodies, including the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

Last but not least, Viet Nam supports the international community's common efforts on the issue of disarmament. We reaffirm our commitment to strictly implementing its obligations under international disarmament treaties to which we are party. We will join hands to address regional and international issues, including non-proliferation and disarmament. We stand ready to continue within our capacity to promote international peace, security and development.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): 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): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We will submit separate statements on each cluster at a later date.

Security and stability in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf subregion are of the utmost importance for the region and beyond. Iran has steadily supported

these public goods and offered a number of proposals to strengthen security in the region. We stand by those initiatives, which have evolved to respond to the region's specific needs.

In 1985, our first proposal became the foundation of paragraphs 5 and 8 of Security Council resolution 598 (1986). Regrettably, and despite our consistent follow-up, those paragraphs remain unimplemented. Our region has since been the scene of several wars, massive foreign military build-up, the ensuing nightmare of extremism and terrorism and dangerous accumulations of highly sophisticated weaponry, as well as aggression and power projections by various actors. In fact, three flawed concepts — the purchase of security from others, the possession of security at the expense of insecurity for other neighbouring countries and the establishment of regional hegemony — have all had catastrophic consequences. The military presence of the United States in the region, 7,600 miles from its own shores, culminated in President Trump's cowardly assassination of General Qasem Soleimani, Da'esh's chief enemy. Unsurprisingly, the United States is the number-one arms seller to some countries of the region. The Israeli regime relies on military aid from the United States, as well as the aggressive military establishment it has created and which is a chronic source of insecurity in the region and beyond.

Iran supports information and communications technologies as humankind's common heritage, which should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The irresponsible use of such technology by State or non-State actors, including terrorist groups, clearly poses serious threats to the world's security and stability. The United States has not only started militarizing cyberspace, but it has also begun carrying out multiple cyberattacks. The Israeli regime has also launched many cyberattacks on Iran. Both countries should be held accountable. In that regard, we hope that the establishment of the new, inclusive Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, based on resolution 75/240, with a clear mandate and under the auspices of the United Nations, will accommodate the concerns of the whole membership. That can be realized by settling unresolved issues from the previous Open-ended Working Group, developing further international legal norms and rules and, ultimately, a legally binding instrument.

Iran reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is our sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body and its role and mandate should be strengthened, especially by ensuring a resumption of its substantive work. The major problem of the United Nations disarmament machinery, in particular the CD, is a lack of genuine political will on the part of certain nuclear-weapon States and their advocates, as they are unwilling to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work to address all issues on an equal footing. We emphasize the vital importance and continued validity of the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and strongly support the start of negotiations in the CD on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon convention as soon as possible.

Regrettably, the current cycle of the Disarmament Commission has been subjected to a politicized approach. In addition, the frequent and continued negative votes of the United States and Israel in the First Committee not only damage the treasured practice of consensus-based decision-making in the Committee, but they also prove their malevolent approach to disarmament. Furthermore, the arbitrary compliance reports of the United States on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements undermine the authority of the relevant instruments.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to make a brief statement on clusters 5 to 7 of the thematic debate. My delegation will submit full written statements on each of those clusters to be included in the compendium.

There is no question that 2021 has been yet another challenging year for the multilateral disarmament machinery. The ongoing restrictions due to the coronavirus disease pandemic have disrupted the work of vital forums. The United Kingdom would like to this opportunity to place on record its deep thanks and appreciation for the work of all office holders, secretariats and implementation support units, technicians, interpreters and others for their superb efforts to keep our work going to the extent possible in these extraordinary circumstances.

The failure to make progress on our vital work within the Conference on Disarmament cannot, however, be blamed on the pandemic. Once again, despite the tireless

work of the six presidencies that have sought creative proposals to move our work forward, a small number of States have again prevented the Conference from adopting a programme of work. And we regret that the Conference was unable to agree to a simple linguistic change to its rules of procedure in order to render them gender-neutral. It was also deeply concerning that five Member States' applications to participate in the work of the Conference as observers were blocked for bilateral political reasons unconnected with the work of the Conference. The legitimacy of the Conference rests on its being transparent to the rest of the membership of the United Nations, and we strongly urge the two States concerned to reconsider their position on the matter in the 2022 session. As for the Disarmament Commission, the United Kingdom continues to support the efforts of Australia to get the Commission back to work. The work of the Disarmament Commission has been held up by an issue that has no relevance to its work for far too long.

In 2021, the United Kingdom was pleased to join the consensus on the reports of both the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816) and the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security (see A/76/135). The reports added valuable layers of additional understanding to the consensus framework, while demonstrating the value of regular institutional dialogue on the topic. We call on all Member States to support the adoption of the GGE report, as they did the report of the Open-ended Working Group, to complete that valuable work. Looking ahead to the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies, we must give ourselves the best possible chance to make progress. Substantive dialogue ensures that all views are heard and lays the ground for genuine progress. It should always be our first step. Bringing people together remains our goal.

The situation in several regions gives cause for concern. Instability in the Middle East and beyond is exacerbated by Iran's systematic non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action commitments. Iran must reverse all measures that are inconsistent with the agreement and return to full compliance without delay.

Eight chemical-weapon attacks in Syria have been attributed to the Al-Assad regime by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Joint Investigative Mechanism. We urge Syria to meet its obligations. Against that backdrop, the United Kingdom continues to support the creation of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by all the countries of the region.

In Asia, the United Kingdom remains concerned about the repeated launches of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and calls for that country's complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. Given the potential for a nuclear crisis in South Asia, we also encourage India and Pakistan to engage in dialogue.

In Europe, our own region, Russia has undermined peace and security through its pattern of aggressive and destabilizing behaviour against its neighbours, the use of Novichok nerve agents and the deployment of a missile system prohibited under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. We support the ongoing United States-Russia strategic stability dialogue to start a new era of arms control.

Mr. Vachananda (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier today by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Brunei Darussalam, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

We would like to speak on a subject of great importance to us, which is cybersecurity. Information and communications technologies (ICT) are intrinsically linked to every aspect of our lives. While their impact on global affairs continues to grow, cybersecurity threats are not just a danger to international peace and security but to humankind. As we have seen during the pandemic, it is important to protect our critical infrastructure and information infrastructure, particularly health-care facilities, against malicious cyberactivity. We therefore need to pay urgent attention to ensuring that everyone can safely and fairly enjoy the benefits of ICTs. We believe that the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security and the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International

Security complement each other and present essential platforms for strengthening cooperation and engaging in the area of cybersecurity. In particular, Thailand welcomes the adoption by consensus of the report of the Open-ended Working Group (see A/75/816), which elaborates further on the voluntary non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour.

We fully adhere to those norms and believe that assistance through capacity-building is key to enabling States with different capacity levels to uphold them effectively. Thailand therefore urges those in a position to do so to provide capacity-building in a transparent manner. Nonetheless, as divergent views remain, the best approach is a flexible one, with the aim of forging mutual understanding and paving the way forward for the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies. Thailand will give its full support to the Open-ended Working Group, which is scheduled to hold its first substantive meeting in December.

We stress the importance of strengthening multilateral cooperation to keep pace with the rapidly evolving security landscape, including developments in cyberspace. We believe that confidence-building measures are crucial tools for promoting trust and preventing conflict. For its part, Thailand will continue to work with ASEAN member States to establish such measures at the regional level and encourage that on a global scale. In that connection, we reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations disarmament machinery. We encourage synergy between the General Assembly and the Security Council on the issues of non-proliferation and disarmament, and support revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission.

We would also like to emphasize the importance of the equal participation of women in the disarmament machinery. In addition, Thailand recognizes the important role of regional organizations in forging trust and cooperation. To that end, ASEAN will continue to uphold a rules-based regional order and strengthen engagement within the region and with its external partners. We reaffirm our support for the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, as well as the innovative work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

In conclusion, Thailand remains supportive of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, which

provides useful guidance on promoting disarmament, including an emphasis on effective partnerships. It is crucial that we view the issues of disarmament in a holistic manner and prioritize shared responsibility as a matter of extreme urgency.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We support the statement made earlier today by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Cuba reiterates its commitment to general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. We attach great importance to regional and subregional initiatives in that area, including the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The nuclear-weapon Powers should withdraw their reservations and interpretive declarations regarding the treaties establishing such zones. The United States is the only nuclear-weapon State that has not ratified the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga or Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Pelindaba and that maintains interpretive declarations regarding Additional Protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

We also support the adoption of other disarmament and international security measures. We need legally binding instruments banning the militarization of outer space and cyberspace, as well as agreements banning lethal autonomous weapons and regulating partially autonomous weapons and military attack drones, in order to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention and provide effective security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States. It is vital that we preserve multilateralism as the basic principle of disarmament and arms-control negotiations.

We should resume negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on condition that such negotiations are not politicized and are based on respect for its working methods and rules of procedure. A broad, comprehensive and balanced programme of work should be agreed on without further delay. We will work to that end during our presidency of the Conference in March 2022. We encourage the Disarmament Commission to make substantive recommendations on its agenda items, particularly with respect to nuclear disarmament.

We would like to express our commitment to the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (2021-2025). We reiterate our concern about the cyberstrategy of the United States, which since 2018

has authorized the use of offensive cyberweapons and operations, including the possibility of preventive cyberattacks, to deter its adversaries. We reject the notion of the use of force as a legitimate response to a cyberattack, as well as the hostile use of telecommunications for the stated or covert purpose of subverting the legal and political order of States or of committing or abetting acts of terrorism. We condemn the use of new information technologies and other digital platforms to promote false information about life in Cuba, to destabilize or discredit it or to justify a policy based on regime change, a strategy outlined in manuals on unconventional warfare for which the Government of the United States earmarks millions of dollars. We reject the Cuba Internet Task Force, which is in violation of agreed international norms in this area.

We demand an immediate end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba, which limits the Cuban people's access to information and communications technologies and their use and enjoyment of them for their well-being.

Let us demonstrate a genuine desire to save present and future generations from the scourge of war.

Ms. Hill (Australia): We all benefit from an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace. Besides the many benefits we enjoy, we also have a responsibility to work together to manage the complex international security challenges in cyberspace. Australia is committed to fulfilling its role in meeting those challenges. We are pleased to have contributed to the recent consensus reports of both the 2021 Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security (see A/76/135) and the 2021 Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816). Building on past consensus reports, those outcomes cumulatively reaffirm the framework for responsible State behaviour with four mutually reinforcing pillars — international law, voluntary non-binding norms, confidence-building measures and coordinated capacity-building.

Australia welcomes the joint draft resolution put forward by the United States and the Russian Federation. It recognizes the reports of both recently concluded cyberprocesses and calls on States to be guided by their recommendations. It represents a further step,

as consensus builds on consensus, towards progress in the discussions promoting international peace and security in cyberspace under the auspices of the First Committee. In particular, the report of the Group of Governmental Experts represents a significant step forward, providing clarity on what responsible State behaviour in cyberspace looks like and affording in-depth practical guidance for all States to support them in implementing their international commitments.

Member States continue to highlight the importance of regular institutionalized meetings under the auspices of the United Nations that are inclusive, transparent, democratic and consensus-based. Australia is confident that the proposal for a programme of action to advance responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technology in the context of international security has the potential to become the action-oriented mechanism we need to ensure that all countries understand their international commitments and obligations and have the capacity and tools to implement them. It will provide a permanent forum for both practical action and ongoing discussion on cyberissues. We hope that all countries and interested stakeholders will engage to shape a programme of action that serves us all. The first session of the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (2021-2025) is fast approaching. Australia urges all countries to work to preserve the *acquis* from the Open-ended Working Group and the previous GGEs as we embark on a new Working Group that we hope will deepen our understanding of how international law and the agreed norms of responsible State behaviour apply in cyberspace.

The progress made in building a shared understanding in the context of cyberspace shows that the multilateral system can make progress in addressing issues such as emerging technologies. In that context, Australia welcomes the advances made in the discussions on autonomous weapons systems. The Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems continues to articulate expanding areas of agreement and to narrow in on key differences. We look forward to the continued exchange and firmly believe that the process can deliver substantive and meaningful outcomes.

Finally, this year, Australia is again submitting a technical draft decision on the Disarmament Commission to establish meeting dates and

arrangements for an organizational session in 2022. We urge all members to support the draft decision so that we can work towards a productive and substantive session of the Disarmament Commission in 2022.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today on behalf of the European Union.

The First Committee is an important component of the disarmament machinery and helps to set the agenda for future progress on key issues. We welcome the improvements in its working methods but are concerned about the fact that proceedings are often marked by significant divergences and procedural matters that can restrict the time available to address substantive issues.

We should also work to increase the diversity of voices in disarmament forums. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women and men across all parts of the disarmament machinery must become the norm. We know that a diversity of voices results in more efficient and effective policies. Integrating disarmament considerations into the women and peace and security agenda must be a top priority. This is also the first full review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to integrate gender perspectives throughout, and Ireland will continue to champion the diversity of voices across all three pillars of the NPT. We are proud to co-chair the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group in Geneva, and will keep working to integrate gender perspectives and gender-sensitive approaches across all areas of disarmament.

Ireland also continues to champion the broad engagement and participation of members of civil society across disarmament. Their knowledge and expertise are essential to ensuring that the disarmament machinery remains connected to emerging issues. Inclusiveness must be at the forefront of our approach to the disarmament machinery. Ireland strongly encourages a proactive approach to promoting the participation of youth in disarmament, as demonstrated at our Security Council presidency event in September, held to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We were pleased to be briefed by a member of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization Youth Group.

Through the negotiation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the CTBT, the Conference on

Disarmament (CD) demonstrated its ability to negotiate multilateral disarmament instruments. It must do so again. It is unacceptable that the CD has failed to make progress on any substantive work or even agree on a programme of work for more than 20 years. That stagnation undermines its credibility and is not sustainable. The work of the Disarmament Commission must also resume urgently. We were deeply disappointed that the Commission was again unable to hold formal substantive deliberations this year. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that it too is revitalized.

Ireland recognizes the invaluable contribution of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to our work via its research on disarmament and international security over the past four decades. We reiterate the need to provide it with a more stable and sustainable financial basis. Sustainable funding is critical to a properly functioning disarmament machinery. We stress the need for all States to pay their assessed contributions, in full and on time.

The reprehensible cyberattacks on medical and health-care facilities and other critical infrastructure throughout the pandemic have underlined our growing dependence on information and communications technology and further highlighted the need to build cyber resilience. Malicious cyberactivities endanger lives, erode trust, destabilize societies and escalate the risk of conflict. The United Nations is the pre-eminent forum for addressing that global challenge. We welcome the continued discussions on cyber in the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and will continue to work to ensure an open, free and secure global cyberspace.

We remain determined in our belief that disarmament is a key driver of peace and security around the world. The disarmament machinery and its various instruments cannot function properly without the willingness of Member States to compromise and engage constructively. A fully functioning disarmament machinery will bring us closer to achieving a peaceful and more secure future.

Mr. Leite Novaes (Brazil): The pandemic has exacerbated the fundamental role that information and communication technologies (ICT) play in all areas of contemporary human life. In a context of restricted movement and social distancing, ICTs were essential to preventing the collapse of our societies while ensuring

the minimum functioning of economies, health-care systems and educational networks. Brazil is a developing country that understands the emergence of new technologies as an opportunity for socioeconomic progress. However, we do not turn a blind eye to their possible malicious uses. The rapid evolution of ICTs compels us to update the concept of threats, develop new patterns of responsible State behaviour and adapt existing normative frameworks to this new reality in order to overcome today's challenges and curb the emergence of conflicts.

The General Assembly has been discussing cybersecurity issues in the context of international security for a little more than two decades. During that time, we have witnessed the adoption of four consensus-based reports by Groups of Governmental Experts (GGE), two of them chaired by Brazilian experts, and one Open-ended Working Group report (see A/75/816), also consensus-based. Together those documents form an *acquis*, a common body of understandings and voluntary norms, rules and principles that have helped to guide States' use of ICTs. One of the greatest contributions of that *acquis* to the maintenance of international peace and security is the assertion that international law, including international humanitarian law, is applicable to cyberspace. In our voluntary national contribution to the official compendium of the most recent Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security, we reaffirmed Brazil's firm belief that in using ICTs, States must comply with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The submission of a common draft resolution on ICTs during the current session of the First Committee, after years of polarization, is proof that with political will, we can overcome apparent differences and work together for the common good. Brazil is proud to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.13, which we hope will be adopted by consensus. Similarly, we look forward to the start of the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (2021-2025), which should build on the existing *acquis* and lead to concrete outcomes on a basis of transparent and balanced working methods.

On another note, I would like to draw attention to the draft resolution that Brazil and Argentina submitted

last week, entitled “Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials”. This year marks the Agency’s thirtieth anniversary. In the past three decades, the Agency has proved to be an innovative and highly successful model for the implementation of nuclear safeguards — a landmark for the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime and an example to the world of an instrument for building trust and verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The purpose of the draft resolution is not only to commemorate that important milestone in the history of the Agency, but also to highlight the wealth of experience and lessons learned in the process of creating and operating the Agency and the verification model that underpins it.

In 1994, Brazil, Argentina, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) signed what came to be known as the quadripartite agreement, which ensured that the physical monitoring of nuclear activities in both Brazil and Argentina, as mandated by article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, is conducted by both Agencies. Based on the principle of neighbours watching neighbours, the verification arrangement is supported by the Brazilian-Argentine Agency’s independent status, advanced technical capabilities and highly qualified personnel. Its inspections are carried out jointly with IAEA full-scope safeguards. We trust that the Agency will continue to be a success story and a source of inspiration and good practices in the field of non-proliferation, thereby contributing to the greater goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Dvali (Georgia): The excessive militarization of regions torn by war and conflict represents a major threat to regional and global peace and security. In that regard, I would like to bring to the Committee’s attention the current situation in the Black Sea region, which has been particularly exposed to a threatening wave of militarization, in flagrant violation of all international rules and standards. Since the start of its military aggression against Georgia and Ukraine, Russia has used a combination of military and political tools to compromise the sovereignty of its neighbours. Russia’s recent massive military build-up in and around Ukraine, destabilizing activities in the Black Sea and increased military presence in the South Caucasus significantly undermine the security of the wider Black Sea region and have serious global implications.

The Committee is well aware that for more than a decade, the two Russian-occupied regions of Georgia — Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia — have been subjected to continuing militarization. Russia’s two full-fledged military bases in those regions, with more than 10,000 troops, are heavily armed and equipped with modern, sophisticated offensive military equipment. Russia’s military vessels and reconnaissance planes are constantly moving in the vicinity of the upper section of Georgia’s territorial waters, and Russian unmanned aerial vehicles and military helicopters frequently violate airspace under the control of the Georgian Government. In addition, Russia does not allow any international control mechanisms to enter the occupied regions of Georgia, which further compromises the regional security environment, since there is no international verification of the processes and illegal activities on the ground. Moreover, as part of its hybrid aggression tactics against Georgia, Russia has carried out massive cyberattacks on Georgia’s public and private institutions, an issue that has been discussed in the Security Council and other forums, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The ongoing occupation, excessive militarization and regular military drills in the occupied regions of Georgia violate the fundamental norms of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act, as well as Russia’s own obligations under the European Union-mediated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008. They are nothing but a continued pattern of creeping annexation of Georgian territories. The recent judgment of the European Court of Human Rights clearly establishes Russia’s legal responsibility for violating international law and human rights during the August 2008 war and in the period of its continued occupation of Georgian regions. The Court’s judgment is yet another unequivocal attestation to the Russian Federation’s illegal occupation of internationally recognized territories of Georgia.

The continued occupation, excessive militarization and reckless behaviour in the occupied territories of Georgia and Ukraine are not confined to the boundaries of our region but have wider implications for global security. We therefore believe that they represent a major challenge for the international community that should be addressed with a resolute and consistent strategic response and enhanced international engagement.

Ms. Fitri (Indonesia): Indonesia associates itself with the statements made earlier today by representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Brunei Darussalam, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The full version of our statement will be available online.

Allow me to highlight our national positions. First, we believe it is essential to pursue norms, principles, rules and legally binding frameworks in cyberspace. While advances in information and communications technology (ICT) have brought tremendous opportunities, emerging threats and risks in cyberspace are also increasing, owing to the misuse of ICTs and the irresponsible behaviour of State and non-State actors. Moreover, cyberattacks aimed at critical infrastructure can have humanitarian consequences. Indonesia continues to advocate for mutual cooperation, best practices and capacity-building to help enable an effective normative framework on cybersecurity that could ultimately be adopted universally as we engage in all forums on the issue. We welcome the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security, and hope that they will reinforce each other as we embark on the next iteration, particularly the upcoming session of the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies.

Indonesia also supports a peaceful, secure and resilient regional cyberspace that serves to enable economic progress and enhance regional connectivity for better living standards for all. In that regard, Indonesia acknowledges the ongoing cooperation and coordination among ASEAN member States and its partners within its regional frameworks in promoting confidence-building measures, capacity-building and the implementation of voluntary and non-binding norms.

Secondly, we must continue to support regional disarmament efforts as one of the essential elements of the global disarmament architecture. Indonesia remains committed to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the Bangkok Treaty. Along with other ASEAN member States, we will continue our ongoing consultations with the nuclear-weapon States and redouble our efforts to resolve outstanding issues.

We urge nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the Protocol to the Treaty as soon as possible.

Indonesia is concerned about the increased presence of power projection assets in our region, in particular that of AUKUS, the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. We call on our ASEAN partners to refrain from any action that is inconsistent with the objectives of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, the ASEAN Charter and the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the spirit and objective of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

It is also essential to achieve a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. All the parties should exercise the utmost restraint, work to settle their differences by peaceful means and implement their overarching obligations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Our goal is lasting peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond.

Thirdly, it is essential to work for the continuance of the disarmament machinery and therefore to ensure that non-substantive matters do not hamper it. Indonesia remains concerned about the failure for three consecutive years to convene a substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. A non-substantive issue has greatly eroded the disarmament machinery. All States should redouble their efforts to ensure that the Commission can hold a substantive session. Indonesia also underlines the lack of good faith, political will and trust among the members of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We call on Member States to make a greater effort in that regard. We urge the CD to immediately agree on a programme of work, which is vital to facilitating its substantive work. We also call on all States to work collectively to strengthen gender perspectives within the area of disarmament, which will help to improve the functioning of our disarmament architecture.

Indonesia would also like to acknowledge the instrumental role of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in assisting Member States. We will continue to support its work.

This year, Indonesia, together with its partners, submitted a draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. We count on the support of the members of the First Committee in that regard.

Mr. Li Sui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China will submit written statements on the thematic clusters “Other disarmament measures and international security” and “Disarmament machinery”. We would like to emphasize the following points.

First, we should be safeguarding the right of all States to the peaceful uses of science and technology, as well as promoting universal security and common development. Today the world is witnessing a new wave of revolutionary science and technology, leading to the rapid development of emerging technologies. The questions of how to find a better balance between sustainable development and security, non-proliferation and peaceful uses and how to guarantee the legitimate right of all States to the peaceful uses of science and technology for the well-being of humankind are the common challenge facing the international community.

China supports the central role of the United Nations in inclusive and transparent discussions in which the views of all Member States, in particular developing countries, should be fully considered and solutions serving the common interests of the entire international community explored. In that context, China has submitted a draft resolution to the First Committee entitled “Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security”. It reaffirms the international consensus on non-proliferation, highlights the importance of safeguarding the legitimate rights of all States to peaceful uses and urges all Member States, without prejudice to their non-proliferation obligations, to take concrete measures to promote international cooperation on peaceful uses. We believe it will be conducive to a more comprehensive and balanced implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. It will also help to promote the peaceful use of science and technology and international cooperation in various areas and enhance dialogue among the members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australia Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement, and other countries. China engaged in broad consultations with all States on the draft resolution and took their views and suggestions into full consideration. We hope that additional States will support and sponsor the text.

Secondly, we should jointly advance global governance and international rule-making for a peaceful and secure cyberspace. Cybersecurity risks

and challenges have become increasingly prominent. A small number of countries have been pursuing a strategy of deterrence while introducing military alliances and ideological divisions into cyberspace. One State in particular has been abusing the concept of national security in order to suppress leading foreign companies and fragment the global supply chain, which creates obstacles to global digital cooperation and development. We believe that all involved should remain firmly committed to maintaining peace and security and opposed to an arms race in cyberspace. All States should be able to derive equal benefit from digital development opportunities.

The task facing us now is that of formulating rules and norms that are acceptable to all States and parties. China has consistently advocated for dialogue and cooperation on cyberspace. We proposed a global initiative on data security and launched with the League of Arab States the China-League of Arab States Cooperation Initiative on Data Security. We engaged constructively in the processes of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security, and are ready to work with all parties on an outcome for the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (2021-2025), in a bid to establish a new digital governance order that reflects the will and interests of a majority of States.

Thirdly, we must maintain the authority of the multilateral disarmament machinery, including the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the Disarmament Commission, and ensure that they play their vital role. The international security landscape is undergoing complex and profound changes and the multilateral disarmament process is under dual attack from the novel coronavirus disease and political issues. The international community must firmly uphold genuine multilateralism, reject political prejudices and strengthen mutual political trust. In addition, innovative approaches and methodologies should be adopted to inject new impetus into multilateral disarmament mechanisms.

While addressing the CD in June via a pre-recorded video statement, Mr. Wang Yi, China’s State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, called on all

countries to maintain global strategic stability, fully abide by international arms-control treaties, help to resolve non-proliferation issues via political and diplomatic means and improve security governance in emerging arenas.

The 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.

Ms. Song Da Hee (Republic of Korea): One aspect of information and communications technology (ICT) focuses on how to integrate the virtual and physical space around us. Since the start of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the use of ICTs has become central to our daily lives. Against that backdrop, the behaviour of some State and non-State actors in cyberspace has complicated the international security landscape. The Republic of Korea believes that international cooperation is essential to realizing the goal of ensuring an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace. In that regard, we welcomed the successful conclusions of the first Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the sixth Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security and the adoption of their consensus-based reports (see A/75/816 and A/76/135). My delegation will continue to participate actively in the Open-ended Working Group and looks forward to constructively building on the progress of the previous Groups.

Secondly, given the existing gaps in their interpretation with regard to cyberspace, we believe that it is imperative for each State to faithfully uphold the voluntary non-binding norms agreed on by Member States through the consensus-based reports of the GGE and the Open-ended Working Group. In particular, we believe that the principle of due diligence has played a crucial role in ensuring an open and secure cyberspace, and call on Member States to collaborate in clarifying and concretizing the relevant norms.

Thirdly, we would like to emphasize the importance of confidence-building measures between States and capacity-building for developing States. Threats in cyberspace are difficult to perceive and address in a timely and accurate manner. Without proper confidence-building measures, misunderstandings and

miscalculations could lead to major risks of conflict between States. Furthermore, without adequate capacity-building, States lacking cyber-related capacities could become havens for malicious actors. With that in mind, we are actively engaged in efforts in this area, including through our co-chairship of the Association of Southeast Nations Regional Forum's Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies.

Fourthly, the Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to contributing to the international community's efforts regarding cyberspace, both through deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group and through its sponsorship of and participation in the programme of action for advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace.

It is more important than ever to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the only disarmament negotiating body of the United Nations, continues to serve the membership. Although we could not agree on a programme of work, it is commendable that we have been able to continue to take stock of our thematic discussions on the seven agenda items and other related issues over the past nine months. With regard to the efforts to adopt a programme of work for the 2021 session of the CD, my delegation continues to support the six-plus-two format adopted by this year's six Presidents of the Conference. The likelihood of its success will be readily apparent if the CD can make progress in implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons while considering initiatives outside the CD, such as the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The Republic of Korea stands ready to work with all Member States committed to proceeding with disarmament issues and revitalizing the CD's work.

Regrettably, the Disarmament Commission, the sole multilateral disarmament deliberative body for submitting recommendations to the General Assembly, has been unable to convene a substantive session for the past three years. The Republic of Korea remains committed to working closely with all Member States to ensure that the Commission resumes its work.

My delegation strongly believes that engagement with the young generation can lead to valuable contributions to the work of reviving the disarmament machinery. In that regard, the Government of the

Republic of Korea has proudly championed and supported various youth outreach and empowerment initiatives in the field of disarmament. In 2021, the Republic of Korea made a \$1 billion voluntary contribution to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and other partners to further strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives and activities, focusing on young people's engagement.

Another example of our focused efforts is the Republic of Korea-United Nations Youth Forum on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, held in June, at which the Seoul Youth Declaration on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation was adopted by youth representatives from 22 countries. In that connection, we have submitted a second youth disarmament and non-proliferation draft resolution to the First Committee, for which we serve as a penholder. We were proud of the consensus-based adoption of resolution 74/64 at the seventy-fourth session. We will count on the continued support of the Committee and would like to take this opportunity to invite all Member States to sponsor the draft resolution. We look forward to furthering the discourse on the active participation of the younger generation in the area of disarmament on the occasion of the upcoming tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We stand ready to cooperate with all Member States and the Secretariat in furthering our work.

Ms. Lõhmus (Estonia): Estonia aligns itself with the statement made earlier today on behalf of the European Union, and we would like to add a few points on cybersecurity issues in our national capacity.

Estonia considers efforts to prevent and manage threats to international peace and security emanating from the malicious use of cyberspace to be vital. Over the past decade, Member States have developed an effective normative framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. This spring, the successful consensus outcomes in the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security and the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security delivered a powerful reaffirmation of that framework, including the applicability of international law in cyberspace and the 11 norms of responsible State behaviour. Their reports (see A/75/816 and A/76/135)

represent a significant global success and emphasize that Member States can reach a consensus on issues that are increasingly pertinent to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Building awareness of the malicious use of cyberspace and its potential impact was also the reason Estonia brought cybersecurity to the attention of the Security Council in June by organizing the first-ever open debate on the issue (see S/2021/621). The debate provided an opportunity to highlight the important work done over the past decade in the First Committee and the need to comply with the rules of responsible State behaviour, on which we all agreed. We believe firmly that existing international law, including the Charter of the United Nations in its entirety, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, provides comprehensive guidance for State behaviour in cyberspace. Deepening the understanding of how international law applies in cyberspace continues to be crucial. In that regard, we underline the value of the official compendium of the GGE report, which features voluntary national contributions on international law. We continue to encourage States to publish their views and are eager to see further exchanges on the topic.

Estonia looks forward to engaging constructively in upcoming discussions in the new Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (2021-2025), while closely adhering to and building on the consensus we have already achieved. At the same time, we see notable merit in the establishment of a permanent, action-based and inclusive platform that is specifically dedicated to implementing our acquis and supporting capacity-building efforts. Estonia, together with 53 States, therefore supports the establishment of a programme of action for advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. As the number of sophisticated cyber incidents grows, it is clear that we need to work even more closely with the private sector and civil society. We deem it essential to include the voice of the multi-stakeholder community prominently in those endeavours.

For Estonia, cyber capacity-building, guided by the normative framework, continues to be a key priority in our international cooperation. The most recent reports of the Group of Governmental Experts and the Open-ended Working Group recommended a number of practical actions that would significantly increase cyber resilience and confidence. For example,

establishing a computer emergency response team in each country or assigning points of contact could directly enhance cooperation and help to prevent and respond to incidents.

Estonia stresses its commitment to promoting stability and conflict prevention in cyberspace and looks forward to working together with other States in a way that supports consensus, advances common

understanding and ensures the maintenance of an open, free and secure cyberspace.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): We have exhausted the time allocated for this morning's meeting. We will continue the thematic debate this afternoon in this Conference Room.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.