



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

First Committee

12th meeting

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New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Hilale(Morocco)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 92 to 107 (continued)

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

The Chair (*spoke in French*): The First Committee will today continue to hear statements on combined clusters 5, 6 and 7 — respectively, “Other disarmament measures and international security”, “Regional disarmament and security” and “Disarmament machinery”).

Ms. Bentégeat (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of 53 countries that co-sponsored the proposal for a United Nations programme of action on cybersecurity, as well as on behalf of the European Union.

For more than 20 years, since resolution 53/70 noted, for the first time, that information and communications technologies (ICTs) could be utilized in a manner contrary to the objective of the maintenance of international stability and security, States have been participating in thorough discussions at the United Nations in order to analyse and overcome the challenges posed by their malicious use in the context of international security.

Those invaluable multilateral efforts are reflected in the work of six consecutive Groups of Governmental Experts created since 2003, and the Open-ended Working Group established pursuant to resolution

73/27. The reports of the 2010, 2013 and 2015 Groups of Governmental Experts, approved by the relevant General Assembly resolutions, enabled us to reach a shared understanding of the current and emerging threats linked to the use of ICTs and to elaborate a framework for responsible State behaviour based on international law, norms, rules and principles, as well as as recommended confidence-building measures for enhancing capacities and cooperation.

We welcome the outcomes of 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) and the 2021 Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (see A/76/135), whose final consensus-based reports reaffirm that framework and add their thoughts on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous groups. Those results advance our common efforts under the auspices of the United Nations and reflect the ongoing commitment of States to the agreed framework. While keeping in mind that additional rules could be developed in time, we believe that this framework offers a solid foundation to advance cooperation and improve stability and security in cyberspace.

We welcome further engagement and dialogue among all States within the new Open-ended Working Group, established pursuant to resolution 75/240. In the face of increasing threats to international peace and security posed by malicious ICT activities, we call on the international community to follow-up on its long-

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standing and consensus-based work on these issues through concrete commitments.

In recent years, despite the outstanding progress made in our discussions, ICT-related threats to international peace and security have continued to grow, even as the current pandemic has increased our collective reliance on ICTs. As each report has noted, in turn, incidents caused by ICT-related malicious activities carried out by States and non-State entities have increased and have become more sophisticated and serious. Attacks on critical infrastructure, which could have devastating social, economic and humanitarian consequences, are increasingly worrisome. As more States and non-State entities develop ICT capacities, the risk of misunderstandings and escalation could lead to heightened international instability.

Meanwhile, our capacity to address these challenges continues to vary significantly by country. Our collective ability to ensure security and stability in cyberspace depends upon the ability of each State to develop its own capacities and to effectively implement its commitments.

We therefore support the proposal for a United Nations programme of action to establish a permanent, inclusive and action-oriented instrument to advance concrete cooperation against the misuse of ICTs. The main objective of that proposal is to facilitate the implementation of the agreed framework for responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs. To that end, the programme of action would support tailored capacity-building actions, based on an assessment by States of their needs, develop exchanges of best practices and experiences among relevant experts and foster a substantial multi-stakeholder dialogue with civil society, academia and private actors, since they also have a responsibility to contribute to the fight against ICT-related malicious activities.

The programme of action could be developed in a complementary and coordinated manner with other relevant processes within the United Nations framework. The bulk of its work would be focused on the implementation of the agreed framework, based on the work of previous Groups of Governmental Experts and the Open-ended Working Group. Its open-ended mandate could be used to support the implementation of any future agreement on the use of ICTs in the context of international security.

We welcome the fact that the proposal has been noted in this year's consensus reports of the 2019-2021 Open-ended Working Group and the 2019-2021 Group of Governmental Experts. As recommended in those reports, we intend to further develop that proposal, taking into account the views and concerns of all States. To that end, inclusive and open consultations could take place within the new Open-ended Working Group established pursuant to resolution 75/240. Informal consultations will also take place in other venues and forums, which could also provide an opportunity to hear the views of non-governmental organizations.

We will continue to engage with all States and the stakeholders concerned to develop a proposal that effectively strengthens international peace and security in cyberspace and allows everyone to enjoy the benefits of ICTs.

Mrs. Hofírková (Czech Republic): Regional stability is key to our pursuit of global security, prosperity and peace. It requires understanding and respect among neighbours committed to common rules of behaviour. We support the establishment of regional and subregional confidence-building measures as an important tool to build trust, enhance transparency and prevent conflict. With that conviction, the Czech Republic has been strongly advocating for the important role of regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. For instance, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has done important work in that area. However, the successful involvement of regional organizations is possible only when there is trust among all parties. Regrettably, the current security environment in Europe is characterized by a lack of trust caused by efforts by certain countries to erode previously accepted norms.

To respond to the challenges with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation, we need a well-functioning and efficient disarmament machinery. We continue to support the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament, which currently comprises only 65 members. We therefore call for the early appointment of a special coordinator to lead substantive consultations on the expansion of the membership.

We stress the important role that the United Nations Disarmament Commission is designed to play as a deliberative body of the General Assembly on disarmament matters. We support the efforts to revitalize it, improve its working methods and enable

more constructive, inclusive and focused deliberations that would enable all parties to reach consensus.

The ongoing process of digitalization offers tremendous opportunities for economic and human development. However, our growing reliance on cyberspace also increases dependencies, risks and vulnerabilities in the context of international security. In that context, the Czech Republic welcomes the recent adoption 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 of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (see A/76/135) as important positive milestones, which reinforce the existing United Nations framework of 11 norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace.

We have every hope that the First Committee will build upon that positive momentum, endorse both reports and move forward in implementing the agreed framework on the basis of consensus. In that regard, we also wish to express our appreciation to both penholders of the traditional draft resolution (A/C.1/76/L.13) under the agenda item “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security”.

In order to make that framework effective, the Czech Republic strongly believes that our next steps at the United Nations level should focus on supporting all States in their ability to implement the agreed framework. Thematically, the Czech Republic places great emphasis on protecting critical infrastructure from information and telecommunications threats. Cyberattacks against critical infrastructure can potentially have devastating humanitarian consequences by impairing the delivery of essential services, such as health care, water, food and energy, to our citizens. In our view, the protection of critical infrastructure and supporting practically oriented capacity-building are two areas on which there is a broad consensus among the United Nations membership.

While the Czech Republic does not preclude the possibility of developing additional norms over time, including in the new Open-ended Working Group, we strongly believe that we need to establish a permanent and action-oriented United Nations mechanism to support the implementation of the normative framework

through practical and results-oriented work, including in the area of capacity-building. We believe that the proposal put forward by Egypt and France to establish a United Nations programme of action for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, which is currently co-sponsored by a diverse group of Member States from all regions, could offer a permanent platform where all relevant stakeholders could contribute their expertise to support its universal implementation. The Czech Republic looks forward to discussing such proposals in an inclusive and transparent manner.

Mr. Hallgren (Sweden): During this First Committee session, we have heard numerous representatives express concern over the state of international affairs. The deteriorating security environment, together with the increased polarization and lack of trust among States, is evident. The continued erosion of respect for international law, multilateralism and a rules-based international order has had a negative impact on the global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture — an essential foundation for our common security.

Major global challenges can successfully be addressed only by working together in partnership with others. Multilateralism and multilateral cooperation have a central place in such efforts, and the United Nations should remain at its core. The international community has a collective responsibility to ensure the continued functioning, relevance and integrity of the disarmament machinery. Any attempts, including within the First Committee, to undermine international bodies must be met with a strong and collective response. Sweden calls on all States to uphold international norms, implement their obligations and commitments and work towards restoring dialogue and confidence-building measures.

A holistic approach to global security challenges is important. The Secretary-General's *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament* aims to do just that — to put disarmament and non-proliferation in a wider perspective that is better adapted to today's complex, international security environment. That message is reinforced in his recent report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). The connection made with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals can help break silos and put our common issues in a broader context.

Sweden is a champion of both the promotion of dialogue for nuclear disarmament and the full and effective participation of women in decision-making processes and multilateral disarmament platforms. In that context, we continue our efforts to pave the way for common ground ahead of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, not least through the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament.

In line with the Swedish feminist foreign policy, it is our strong conviction that the full and equal participation of women and men is essential in all aspects of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Applying a gender-equality lens to our collective work will help improve its functioning and strengthen international peace and security, while also making it more durable.

We are encouraged by the increase in the number of resolutions that include a gender perspective. In that regard, we welcome the active role and concrete steps adopted by the United Nations, such as providing gender-disaggregated data and promoting meaningful and equal participation and gender perspectives in our disarmament activities and policies. The activities and high-quality reports of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research as a stand-alone, autonomous institution are also much appreciated.

Despite our best efforts, States cannot achieve all that they set out to do alone. Representatives of civil society, academia and industry are all part of an important pillar of the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Those representatives help raise awareness, provide ideas and push our work towards meaningful action that contributes to movement in the right direction towards a more peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. We must not let the pandemic become a pretext for restricting their continued participation. Dialogue and cooperation with civil society are central both inside and outside the United Nations. States share a common responsibility to do what they can to curb the shrinkage of civil society space.

Mr. Tchalare (Togo) (*spoke in French*): The United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament are important institutions of the United Nations system. Their contribution to peace has stood the test of time, which is illustrated by the wide range of activities carried out by the various regional centres. In that regard, Togo appreciates the reports of the Secretary-

General on the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, in particular the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), which my country has the honour and privilege of hosting.

The prevailing political context on the African continent poses enormous security challenges, which States are overcoming as best they can with the support of UNREC. Unfortunately, those challenges have become more acute owing to the use by some individuals and groups of certain categories of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, as well as the threat posed by access to heavy weapons and, more broadly, the increasing sophistication of criminal activities.

Furthermore, in accordance with its mandate as provided in resolution 40/151 G, UNREC has carried out noteworthy work in the area of regional disarmament, which involves providing technical support for State initiatives to implement critical measures related to peace and arms control.

In that regard, based on the principle that in the absence of peace it is impossible to achieve harmonious and sustainable development, the Centre's support for the African Union Commission remains critical for the implementation of its Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly for realizing the ambitious goal of silencing the guns by 2030 and reducing violence in all its forms throughout the world.

UNREC support remains key to the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel through the provision of technical assistance to step up the fight against the illicit circulation of small arms. With regard to Togo, the implementation of the project entitled "Technical assistance for physical security and stockpile management, marking and destruction of small arms and light weapons and related ammunitions in Togo" is to be commended.

The project, which was launched in Lomé in 2018, is being implemented by the United Nations Office For Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, with the financial support of the Government of Japan. It will enable experience to be acquired in combating small arms and light weapons in Togo and the strengthening of the work of the Togolese Government in that area.

The United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament are primarily faced with financial challenges. For that reason, Togo echoes the call of the Secretary-General for Member States and contributors to make greater efforts in enabling the Centres to strengthen their operational capacities to meet the ever-increasing needs of our countries. In that regard, we call on Member States to continue their support for the annual draft resolution (A/C.1/76/L.15) submitted on behalf of the African countries, which, while recalling the central role of UNREC in the framework of regional disarmament, urgently appeals to States to honour their pledges so that it can carry out its activities.

In conclusion, we hope to see the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa overcome the significant challenges facing it, with the support of all Member States and partners.

Mr. Choffat (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Scientific and technological developments represent great potential for disarmament and international security. They provide new tools — for example, to strengthen dialogue, promote verification and improve crisis management.

The same technologies also create new challenges with regard to international security and stability. Switzerland places emphasis on the search for multilateral solutions to such challenges and supports activities devoted to achieving that goal in the context of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and the agenda of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

With regard to autonomous weapons systems, new rules and measures should be developed to avoid systems that would be unable to comply with international humanitarian law. Other autonomous weapon systems that in principle could be used in accordance with international humanitarian law should be regulated, including by defining the type and degree of human control required, depending on the specific context.

We hope that the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems will be able to reach such an agreement and that the sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will send a strong message on deterring the development and use of autonomous weapon systems that fail to comply with the norms of international humanitarian law. We also hope that the Review Conference will adopt

a clear new mandate for the Group of Governmental Experts to develop a robust normative, operational and comprehensive framework that ensures compliance with international law while taking into account ethical considerations.

The current normative framework ensures a free, open and secure cyberspace. International law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, is applicable and must be upheld. In addition, the 11 voluntary norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace and other confidence-building measures contribute to the stability of cyberspace.

Switzerland welcomes the recent adoption by consensus of the reports of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816) and the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/76/135), which complement and confirm the centrality of that framework. Switzerland will continue to engage accordingly within the new Open-ended Working Group.

Our shared priority must be the implementation of that framework. Together with more than 50 other States, Switzerland advocates the creation of a United Nations programme of action to establish a permanent, inclusive and action-oriented instrument to advance implementation, capacity-building and meaningful cooperation to counter the misuse of information and communications technologies.

Switzerland stresses the essential need for all States to comply with their respective non-proliferation, arms-control and disarmament obligations. We will once again support the draft resolution put forward by the United States of America on that matter (A/C.1/76/L.16), based on our belief that agreements and obligations require full compliance in order to be viable and effective.

Switzerland also stresses the importance of export-control regimes for international peace and security, as well as the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), Security Council embargoes and conventional non-proliferation treaty obligations. We cannot therefore support counterproductive proposals that risk undermining those regimes and their legitimacy.

Given the challenges to be overcome in the field of disarmament, we need an effective disarmament machinery that we can rely on. In that regard, we must stress our serious concern regarding the situation at the Conference on Disarmament, which has been unable to engage in negotiations since 1996. In addition, requests this year from five States Members of the United Nations to participate as observers in the activities of the Conference were denied — a development we regret, especially since the Conference has been unable to agree on any enlargement of its membership since 1999.

We deplore the fact that the Conference on Disarmament failed to agree on a simple technical update of its rules of procedure to reflect the fact that women and men alike can participate in its work on an equal footing. In the light of those developments, we are increasingly convinced that renewed efforts are required to review the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament and overcome the prevailing stalemate.

Mr. Yakut (Turkey): Given the ongoing challenges to the international disarmament and arms-control architecture, effective multilateralism must be our compass for the way forward. In our efforts to ensure collective security, we need more than ever to utilize our tool box efficiently. In that regard, protecting the integrity and enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery needs to be our common priority.

Turkey underscores its strong support for the three complementary and mutually reinforcing pillars of the disarmament machinery: the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

The First Committee remains a significant component of the machinery and a valuable platform for considering disarmament and non-proliferation issues. We are pleased with the improved working methods adopted this year as we adapt to changes in the global epidemiological situation. We hope that when we meet here next year, conditions will be much better.

We appreciate the efforts to introduce draft resolutions to the Committee as a valuable practice. However, we must also refrain from unnecessary duplication. Our collective goal must be to preserve the Committee as a relevant and efficient forum for our deliberations.

As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament has been at the centre of efforts to ensure international security since its inception. Doubts have been expressed about the ability of the Conference on Disarmament to exercise its negotiating mandate. We are confident that the Conference on Disarmament possesses the necessary mandate, rules of procedure and membership composition to deliver on its duties. We need political will to recommence its primary task — to negotiate legally binding international treaties.

Although it was not possible to reach a consensus on its programme of work, thematic discussions were held on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament in 2021. In view of the pressing global disarmament issues, it is high time to overcome polarization and realize the full potential of the Conference on Disarmament. In the period ahead, what is needed most is to create an atmosphere of trust and flexibility and show political will to reach consensus on a programme of work in the 2022 session of the Conference. We also hope the draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament (A/C.1/76/L.48) will be adopted by consensus this year.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is another important pillar of the disarmament machinery. We hope that in 2022 the Disarmament Commission will resume its role as the sole specialized deliberative subsidiary body of the General Assembly for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues. We reiterate our support for efforts to increase the effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission and realize its full potential.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate Turkey's readiness to contribute to the work of all the components of the disarmament machinery in a constructive spirit. I also wish to stress that it is our common responsibility to ensure a robust disarmament machinery to address our common challenges.

Mr. Eberhardt (United States of America): Under the cluster "Other disarmament measures and international security", specifically with regard to cybersecurity, the First Committee has had a remarkable and somewhat unexpected year. After several years of non-consensus draft resolutions, Member States came together to reach consensus on the report of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in

the Context of International Security (see A/75/816), and a few months later the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security produced an in-depth consensus report of its own (see A/76/135). Those reports complement one another and build upon existing United Nations consensus. This year, the United States worked with Russia to develop a combined draft resolution (A/C.1/76/L.13) that welcomes those two reports and calls on States to be guided in their actions by them. The draft resolution also urges States to continue to build on the growing body of consensus work in future processes. We urge all States to join the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.13.

Turning to other disarmament measures, the United States has engaged in a number of initiatives designed to cooperatively improve the environment for addressing future nuclear disarmament. The Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) initiative brings together a geographically and politically diverse group of States, with and without nuclear weapons, to facilitate further progress on nuclear disarmament by identifying ways to overcome aspects of the security environment that impede such progress.

The CEND initiative continues to be a unique and valuable forum for States to develop practical recommendations designed to point the way to real and sustainable progress on disarmament. The United States recognizes that arms control itself can—and should—contribute to improving the security environment. Another such effort, the International Partnership for Nuclear-Disarmament Verification, brings together States, with and without nuclear weapons, under a cooperative framework to advance understanding of the complex challenges involved in the verification of nuclear disarmament. The Partnership and the CEND initiative are both prime examples of United States-supported effective measures that help create the environment for future nuclear disarmament and are an important demonstration of our commitment to Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Turning to issues of regional disarmament, the United States remains prepared to engage in diplomacy with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea towards our objective of the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Our offer remains to meet without

preconditions. Our policy represents a calibrated, practical approach that is open to and will explore diplomacy with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to make tangible progress that increases the security of the United States, our allies and our deployed forces. The commitments of the United States to the defence of the Republic of Korea and Japan remain ironclad.

Regarding Iran, we will continue our sincere efforts towards a mutual return to compliance with commitments pursuant to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The United States, our allies and partners have been steadfast in pursuing a path of meaningful diplomacy with Iran. We have made it clear that, if Iran commits to a mutual return to compliance, the United States is prepared to provide sanctions relief in accordance with the terms of the deal.

However, we have also made it clear that Iran's continued nuclear escalations are unconstructive and inconsistent with its stated goal of returning to mutual compliance with the JCPOA and will not provide Iran any negotiating leverage. That only raises the importance of robust verification, which remains the foundation of any lasting agreement, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a central role in implementing that.

We are deeply troubled by Iran's failure to live up to its joint statement commitments arising from Director General Grossi's September trip to Tehran, in particular its refusal to allow IAEA inspectors to reinstall monitoring equipment at Karaj. In addition, we continue to urge Iran to cooperate with the IAEA to resolve outstanding safeguards questions about possible undeclared nuclear material and activities.

Lastly, with regard to the cluster "Disarmament machinery", in her opening remarks at the Conference on Disarmament Undersecretary Bonnie Jenkins highlighted the importance the United States places on expanding diversity. We are resolute in our support for the women and peace and security agenda, and we routinely push for the meaningful role of women in peace and security processes. In that regard, we regret the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to take even the modest step of making its rules of procedure gender neutral. That is a sad statement on the ability of the Conference on Disarmament to work effectively.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Last September marked almost 20 years since

armed drones were first used outside armed conflict situations. The use of drones has now become routine for many State and non-State actors alike, including in the fight against terrorism. While inter-State cooperation is necessary in tackling threats from non-State actors, it is imperative that such efforts comply with international human rights law and international law. That commitment was reaffirmed at the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as reflected in resolution 75/291, which stresses our obligation to comply with human rights and international law in implementing the Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Costa Rica supports calls for more regular reporting on the use of drones to relevant United Nations bodies, including the Human Rights Council, in order to develop and implement robust standards for transparency, oversight and accountability in the use of armed drones; undertake effective measures to control the proliferation of drones through multilateral arms-export-control regimes or under international treaties; and engage in open discussion on the challenges targeted killings by drone pose to international law, among other things, as called for by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in her report of last year on the use of armed drones for targeted killings (A/HRC/44/38).

Costa Rica also expresses its concern regarding the increasing use of drones for counter-terrorism purposes, including domestic law enforcement. Such measures should be undertaken only when necessary, in proportion to risk and in full compliance with the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to privacy, in domestic law enforcement settings.

Costa Rica notes the increasing focus in the work of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact on the use of drone technology and urges that all capacity-building and technical assistance efforts, including those of the United Nations, integrate a human rights due diligence policy. Costa Rica calls for the development of international standards and regulations on the use of lethal violence with drones in order to ensure compliance with international legal principles, better protect civilians in armed conflict and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

It has been an important year for multilateral efforts seeking to advance international peace and security in cyberspace under the auspices of the United

Nations. However, after 23 years of discussions in this area, Costa Rica believes that it is time to establish a permanent forum to consider those matters. It is also urgent to create mechanisms to implement existing norms and ensure accountability.

In conclusion, Costa Rica also recognizes the human rights impact of international cyberoperations and urges States to refrain from using cybersecurity-related laws, policies and practices as a pretext for violating human rights and fundamental freedoms. Costa Rica calls for recognition of the differentiated impact of cyberoperations on marginalized people, women and girls and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. That impact should be recognized at the Security Council's open debate on women and peace and security to be held on Thursday, 21 October, as well as in the Secretary-General's report on that topic. Ensuring women's active and effective participation and leadership in cybersecurity remains a work in progress.

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): Poland fully associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/76/PV.11). Let me highlight some issues in my national capacity.

Poland remains committed to the existing regional security architecture founded on conventional arms-control regimes as well as confidence- and security-building measures. Regrettably, the current security environment in the region is characterized by the lack of trust caused by blatant violations of international law.

We believe that a comprehensive and cooperative concept of security, with an emphasis on conventional arms control, constitutes an important element of European security.

We regret Russia's suspension of its participation in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty and its continued violation of the Open Skies Treaty, as well as its ultimate withdrawal from that agreement in June 2021. It is regrettable that the Vienna Document is being circumvented, such as during the large-scale Zapad 2021 military exercise or the military build-up along Ukrainian border this spring. We are disappointed that modernization of the Vienna Document has not taken place for many years due to the Russian veto.

Our efforts are aimed at strengthening and updating the existing arrangements. Poland is one of the 34

co-sponsors of the joint proposal for the modernization of the Vienna Document. We spare no effort to engage in the structured dialogue process.

Regional conflicts in Eastern Europe and in the South Caucasus remain a primary source of risk and instability for the entire region. In January 2022, Poland will assume the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and is ready to step up efforts to advance the process of resolving the conflicts in the OSCE area. We are well aware, however, that we will not alter the reality on the ground as long as violence is used as a political tool.

One of the most extreme examples of the recent challenges to European security is the Russian aggression against Ukraine. That conflict has already led to the death of more than 13,000 people. Resolving the Russia-Ukraine conflict remains an indispensable step towards re-establishing European security, which must be done with full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including the Crimean peninsula and the city of Sevastopol.

We are also concerned with the developments taking place in Belarus. The heightened level of common activities by the Belarussian and Russian armed forces, operating in close proximity to Belarus's borders with Poland and Lithuania, was matched with aggressive rhetoric. We also condemn the Belarussian regime's instrumentalization of migrants to advance political goals. That hybrid attack, which seeks to destabilize Europe, is unacceptable and must stop immediately. We call on Belarus to stop using migratory pressure against the borders of the European Union.

Poland also strongly supports all efforts to bring about the process of settling the deadlocked conflicts in Georgia and Moldova.

We are convinced that lasting peace on the Korean peninsula can be achieved only through peaceful means. We remain strongly of the view that the complete denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must remain a top priority for the entire international community.

On a similar note, we are convinced it is in our common interests to stabilize the situation in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. We hope that Iran will return to the negotiations on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in Vienna without any further delay

and that the parties will finally reach consensus on the reactivation of the JCPOA.

The military and security situation in Afghanistan remains worrisome. Further developments must be subject to close international attention. We need to prevent the creation of safe havens for terrorists. We need to remain vigilant in relation to uncontrolled migration flows, such as that being orchestrated at the European Union's eastern border.

Apart from the threats of a kinetic nature, including in the energy sector and on climate, we now also face a dynamic increase of threats to cybersecurity. There are no magical forces in cyberspace; people, institutions and, ultimately, States stand behind all those activities. At the same time, we are all involved in multilateral processes — in the First Committee, in the Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, in exploring a programme of action and in the Ad Hoc Group of the Third Committee. We call on all partners, whether governmental or multistakeholders, to combine efforts towards building a safe and friendly cyberspace.

Mr. Heredia (Philippines): The Philippines aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Brunei Darussalam, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.11).

The speed at which the security landscape is shifting poses challenges to the international community. Our disarmament machinery and cooperation cannot afford to fall behind, and we need to have an agenda of action to move forward.

Transnational cybercrimes have far-reaching implications for the peace and security of States and our individual citizens. We therefore support national and international efforts to combat such acts and commend the complementary work and close coordination between 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.

The Philippines welcomes recent developments concerning international cooperation in the field of

information and telecommunications in the context of international security and advancing responsible State behaviour.

As a gender champion, the Philippines believes in mainstreaming gender issues in the disarmament process. Peace and security can be achieved only when women have meaningful participation and leadership.

We advocate stronger collaboration with partner States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations and research institutions to pursue common initiatives. We acknowledge the role of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in promoting independent and incisive analysis, dialogue and engagement on complex matters of disarmament and international security.

While there have been concerns over the enhanced security partnerships in our region, the dynamics and wide geographic scope of the Asia-Pacific region require flexible multilateral groupings that work and that maintain and support a stable rules-based regional security architecture, with ASEAN playing an essential role. We view recent developments in the context of the primacy of commitments in the ASEAN space and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

It is necessary now more than ever to preserve and strengthen the nature, role and purpose of the various forums under the United Nations disarmament machinery. For the past three years, the substantive sessions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission have been unduly subjected to a combination of organizational, procedural and political issues. We hope that all those issues will soon be resolved so that the important work of the Commission can finally resume.

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

As we end our thematic discussions, we recognize that our work in the First Committee has just begun. The issues we have in front of us may be daunting, but we are confident that as an international community we can make the choice to forge a more peaceful way forward.

Mrs. Balázs (Hungary): Since this is the first time I take the floor this year in the First Committee, let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chair,

upon your election and assure you of my delegation's full support.

Hungary associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/76/PV.11). Therefore, I will make only a few remarks from our national perspective.

Hungary attaches particular importance to cybersecurity. As early as 2012, as part of the London process, Hungary hosted the second Global Conference on Cyberspace. The Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in his capacity as the Chair of the OSCE Informal Working Group on Cybersecurity since 2017, has actively supported close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations 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 since their establishment. We also actively participated in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts and the Open-ended Working Group.

We welcome not only the conclusion of work and the adoption of consensus final reports of the Group of Governmental Experts (see A/76/135) and the Open-ended Working Group (see A/75/816) but also the decision this year by the Russian Federation and the United States to submit a joint draft resolution (A/C.1/76/L.13) on that topic in the First Committee. We see such cooperation as tangible proof of the two countries' will for a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace — something that we support wholeheartedly.

Regarding the disarmament machinery, Hungary reiterates its support for all three of its pillars: the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral disarmament body entrusted with the task of negotiating disarmament treaties. That is why it is a huge disappointment to see it struggle with its work. For decades, not only could the Conference on Disarmament not begin negotiations on a new disarmament treaty but, it has not even been able to adopt its own programme of work. We are convinced that the reasons for that impasse are not of a procedural, but rather a political,

nature, and our collective efforts are needed to save that important piece of the disarmament machinery from fading into total irrelevance.

Hungary remains committed to finding a way out of the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament. Let it start its work on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, which is the next logical step towards the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We understand the different views of Member States but feel that it is high time to make way for that long-overdue treaty.

My country strongly believes that the United Nations Disarmament Commission can also make an important contribution to the disarmament and non-proliferation work of the United Nations. We welcome the possible solution for the procedural problems that for a two-year lapse kept the Commission from resuming its work. We sincerely hope that the pandemic will not stall its session again in 2022. We also trust that this year we can again adopt the draft decision on the next session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (A/C.1/76/L.33) by consensus. In that regard, we highly appreciate the work of the Secretariat and of Australia as the former Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and sponsor of the draft decision.

High-quality education is also a key requirement for making tangible progress in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. As a former Disarmament Fellow, I believe that the Disarmament Fellowship Programme is a vital tool for new and soon-to-be disarmament experts to start their professional education. We also support the early inclusion and participation of young people in the work of the disarmament machinery as their perspective brings fresh views to the matter.

Mrs. Bentégeat (France) (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/76/PV.11) and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

The civilian and military uses of technology and the cybersphere represent opportunities but also risks and challenges that are linked in particular with the growing offensive capacities of States in that area. Therefore, strengthening strategic stability and international security in cyberspace must constitute a priority for Governments as well as for businesses and

citizens, who are often the primary victims of malicious acts in cyberspace.

France has invested heavily in promoting security and stability in cyberspace, including through the call made in Paris in November 2018 for a safe, stable and open cyberspace.

France welcomes the outcomes reached by 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, which this year were able to agree on final reports (see A/75/816 and A/76/135, respectively) that reaffirm, among other things, the applicability of the normative framework for the responsible behaviour of States based on existing international law and standards of responsible behaviour.

The culmination of those two processes by consensus generates positive momentum that we must build on to further advance constructive consensus-based efforts. In that regard, France welcomes the introduction by the United States of America and Russia of a joint draft resolution (A/C.1/76/L.13).

While continued dialogue is necessary and useful, it is also urgent that we take action to support the implementation of existing commitments and tangibly strengthen security and stability in cyberspace. That is why France, together with more than 50 other States, supports the establishment of a programme of action, which would imply an inclusive standing body within the United Nations that is dedicated to implementing agreed international norms through State capacity-building, the exchange of good practices and dialogue with all other stakeholders. It is now time that we work on a long-term constructive, coordinated and inclusive option to enable the continuation of the work achieved to date on the application of norms and the development of capacity-building initiatives.

France firmly believes in the central importance of international cooperation and assistance, in particular in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. France participates in that regard at the national level as well as in the context of the European Union.

At the European level, like other European Union member States France strongly supports the

implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures appropriate to the geostrategic situation of the region and is actively engaged in dialogue on their strengthening, including under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The failure to adopt a programme of work at the Conference on Disarmament has persisted for too many years. We must collectively strengthen our efforts to get the most out of this platform, which is the sole multilateral body tasked with negotiating universal disarmament treaties. We regret the denial in early 2021 of observer status for five countries, which is a setback for multilateralism.

It is also regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament was not able to reach a consensus this year on the proposed technical updates to its rules of procedure to ensure their neutrality in terms of gender equality. France is determined to continue its efforts for the greater involvement of women in multilateral decision-making processes.

France remains deeply concerned by the financial difficulties that have hampered disarmament instruments for several years. We condemn the liquidity shortfalls due to the contributors in arrears and recall that the payment of national contributions is an obligation that helps ensure the operational continuity of our collective efforts on peace and disarmament.

We also recall that multilingualism must not be allowed to become collateral damage as a result of those financial difficulties. Multilingualism is not an optional extra but the very guarantee of effective multilateralism.

Finally, France would like to recall its commitment to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and its work, which must be supported by stable financial backing.

Ms. Gohiwar Aryal (Nepal): Nepal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.11).

In this interconnected and interdependent world, not only our progress and prosperity but also our peace and security are interwoven. In this global village, we are all equally safe and equally vulnerable, despite the accumulation of a seemingly impregnable stock of conventional and nuclear arsenals.

Unprecedented advances in chemistry, biology, physics and information technology have propelled human civilization to new heights. But at the same time, they pose new threats to international peace and security. Cyberattacks and cyberterrorism have become a real problem with the contemporary increase in cybercrime.

On the one hand, we need to ensure open and accessible information and communications technologies (ICTs) to narrow the digital divide and utilize ICTs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. On the other hand, we need to ensure global cooperation to develop and implement a robust regulatory framework to govern modern technologies, including ICTs, for peace and security.

My delegation takes note of this year's 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). We hope that the current Open-ended Working Group will be an effective platform to develop comprehensive governance principles and mechanisms for the use of ICTs for the advancement of humankind in peace and prosperity.

Most of our disarmament machinery has suffered from polarization and parochial interests. Nepal calls on the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament-negotiating forum of the international community, to show strong political will to forge understanding and move forward. We also look forward to the convening of substantive sessions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Nepal believes that regional disarmament mechanisms and processes promote dialogue and confidence at the regional and subregional levels and reinforce global peace and security. In that spirit, Nepal supports the work of the United Nations regional centres and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Nepal encourages all three regional centres — in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America — to engage meaningfully with both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders for the promotion of dialogue and confidence-building measures in their regions.

We encourage the engagement of women, young people and non-governmental organizations in disarmament efforts.

As host of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal is committed to supporting the work of the Centre. We acknowledge the contribution of the Centre to promoting the universalization and implementation of multilateral non-proliferation and arms-control instruments.

We are happy to note that, despite the limitations imposed by the coronavirus-disease pandemic, the Centre continued its activities virtually, with an increasing number of women and youth participants. We reiterate our call on the Member States of the region to identify their areas of interest and engage with the Centre towards disarmament and non-proliferation goals. Nepal calls on the countries and non-governmental organizations in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to enable it as a vehicle to achieve the General Assembly's mandate.

In conclusion, allow me to mention that Nepal has submitted draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.18 on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for the consideration of the First Committee. We are confident that, as in previous years, we will have the valuable support of all delegations for its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): Technology has emerged as a critical enabler in the arena of arms. It continues to serve as a force multiplier for a range of old and new weapons. New technologies are imparting new levels of sophistication to existing weapons and their means of delivery. Integration between and among conventional and non-conventional arms is gaining pace.

The existing norms, rules and regulations continue to be outpaced by the introduction of new and emerging technologies for various types of weapons, in both outer space and in cyberspace. The increasing salience of technology in the realm of arms has also posed several challenges to the resilience of international law and the machinery for controlling their spread, development, deployment and use.

New technologies afford new means of war, and therefore heightened risks and threats. New types of weapons will arguably reduce or eliminate the danger of human casualties for user States. Those troubling

developments will also increase the propensity of their use and enhance the prospects of symmetric and asymmetric responses. The net result will be the lowering of the threshold for resorting to armed conflict. Progress towards arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation will inevitably be further impeded.

Within the arms-control landscape, the absence of normative progress on lethal autonomous weapons systems and cyberweapons represents substantial risks. Faced with the possibility of being overwhelmed by lethal autonomous weapons systems, States possessing weapon-of-mass-destruction capabilities will be reluctant to give them up. On the other hand, other States will feel obliged to acquire them. The growing range of harms that cyberweapons can inflict, coupled with the challenges of anonymity and attribution, underscore the urgency of progress on a commensurate legal and normative international arms-control framework.

The consequences arising from the development, deployment and use of those new categories of weapons, together with their integration into existing arms and means of delivery, are evidently dangerous for regional and global peace, security and stability. Even as the pace of new weapon technologies remains inevitable, it is both urgent and essential to develop commensurate norms, rules and laws to control and regulate them in all their dimensions. The risks and dangers are too grave to be ignored.

In crafting global arms-control responses to those new challenges, it is vital to anchor them in foundational and already agreed principles and norms. The General Assembly, at its first special session on disarmament, held in 1978, set forth an internationally agreed cardinal principle to control and regulate arms. Resolution S-10/2 clearly stipulates, in paragraph 29, that

“the adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage”.

The international community has long recognized that international peace and security is dependent on stability at the regional and subregional levels. The Charter of the United Nations, resolution S-10/2, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the First Committee in its resolutions — all have repeatedly

reaffirmed the need for the simultaneous pursuit of regional and global approaches.

I would like to draw attention to three additional principles and guidelines in that regard: the preservation of balance in the defence capability of States at the lowest level of armaments and military forces; the special responsibility of militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities in promoting agreements for regional security; and the principle of undiminished security for all. Pakistan has continued to advance those principles and to propose bilateral or regional initiatives that build confidence, reduce risks and conform to the cardinal principle of equal and undiminished security for all. Those proposals are enshrined in the draft resolutions submitted by Pakistan to the Committee. We look forward to the continued support of Member States for their adoption.

The multilateral disarmament machinery has remained paralysed for more than two decades. That impasse is both a cause and a consequence of competing strategic priorities, the perpetuation of military advantages and the pursuit of discriminatory policies by some. A departure from long-held principles has eluded consensus on the start of negotiations on any issue on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Solutions to the impasse in the disarmament machinery rest with the respective constituents of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Ms. Quintero Correa (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Information and communications technologies are remarkable vehicles for economic and social development, but their malicious use may also represent a threat to societal coexistence and international peace and security. It is essential that we focus our efforts to maintain a cyberspace that is free, open, safe, trustworthy, universally accessible and peaceful — a cyberspace that will help us realize the aims of the United Nations.

We therefore welcome the successful conclusion of 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 and the adoption by consensus of their reports (see A/75/816 and A/76/135, respectively).

In both cases, their work built on earlier efforts over the past 20 years, and their recommendations were based on extensive consideration of the issues by experts and consensus reached in the General Assembly. The reports adopted this year represent gains that build on previous efforts. While there are differences of opinion on those matters, there are also many points of convergence.

The most important thing is that we share a common aim: to maintain an open, safe, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace. In our view, that is evident in the joint submission by Russia and the United States of draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.13, which we support and co-sponsor. Colombia will continue participating constructively in the discussions on that matter in the new Open-ended Working Group.

We also wish to stress the need to proceed with multilateral dialogue on the responsible behaviour of States and to continue working to operationalize the consensus on that issue. As co-sponsors of the programme of action, we believe it should be a permanent, inclusive and action-oriented tool devoted to advancing specific operational cooperation in that area. We also see it as a platform for continuing discussions on further developments in the face of growing threats and challenges.

Finally, we would like to stress in that regard the importance of working in close coordination with the full range of stakeholders, civil society, academia and the private sector, as well as of ensuring the support of regional organizations.

We must make multilateral forums more dynamic and effective in general, in particular when it comes to the bodies of the disarmament machinery. The deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament for more than two decades now means we are unequipped with the regulations and normative framework necessary to face the rapid development of artificial intelligence and other technologies being used in the design and development of new types of weapons.

We reiterate the relevance of international law in general and international humanitarian law in particular. Nonetheless, as we have stated on previous occasions, such a normative vacuum translates into greater risk and vulnerability for civilian populations and greater difficulty in determining accountability.

We stress the need to revitalize the disarmament machinery and its forums for debate and negotiation, strengthening the collective political commitment to ensure that they are operational and function effectively. It is essential that we work together in a positive spirit in those forums as we consider the issues on the disarmament agenda that are key to international peace and security.

For Colombia, upholding gender equality and diversity are unwavering commitments of the utmost importance. We firmly believe that those commitments represent essential prerequisites for attaining prosperous, fair and sustainable societies.

Finally, we reiterate the importance of preserving existing legal instruments in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, as well as of strengthening the established regimes in those spheres.

Mr. Bushra (Ethiopia): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/76/PV.11).

The malicious use of new and emerging information and communications technologies (ICTs) poses a serious threat to global peace and security. There is a need to address it and its harmful effects in an urgent and timely manner. We need to enhance our collective efforts to protect cyberspace and promote its peaceful uses in order to sustain our hard-earned gains and benefit fully from the industry in order to ensure peace and security and achieve sustainable development.

Ethiopia appreciates the conclusion of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (see A/76/135) and the adoption by consensus of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/75/816).

Ethiopia also joins others in condemning the misapplication of ICTs, including the Internet and social media, by terrorist groups to instigate conflicts and spread misinformation and disinformation to hoodwink the general public.

It is the firm view of Ethiopia that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is vital to ensure nuclear disarmament. Africa remains a nuclear-free region under the Pelindaba Treaty, which has been ratified

by 41 States, enabling the continent to enhance its contribution to the maintenance of regional and global peace and security while using its resources to address pressing development needs.

Ethiopia also supports the outcomes of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and believes that the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an opportunity to deliver on the commitment to a world free from nuclear weapons.

Agreeing on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament is a must if we are to make progress on the substantive work of the Conference. It should also be underlined that the Conference on Disarmament is the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament.

In the same vein, it is our sincere hope that the United Nations Disarmament Commission will hold a substantive session soon and make substantive recommendations. We must commit resolutely to ensuring that the multilateral disarmament machinery works and delivers on its responsibilities.

Mr. Fiallo Karolys (Ecuador), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

In conclusion, while my delegation reaffirms its utmost commitment to discharge all its treaty obligations under this cluster, it wishes to express its support for and co-sponsorship of draft resolutions A/C.1/76/L.42, on the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.6, on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, and draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.55, on promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security.

Mr. Nadarajah (Malaysia): Malaysia aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/76/PV.11).

Malaysia considers cybersecurity as one of its major national security challenges. The incorporation of cybersecurity into Malaysia's digital initiatives is vital to support its goal to become a truly digital nation through the delivery of state-of-the-art cybersecurity solutions.

With that in mind, Malaysia launched the Cybersecurity Strategy 2020-2024, which outlines five strategic pillars as guiding principles to enhance its national cybersecurity management. It covers a wide scope of areas in cyberspace, from governance and legislation to research and development, education and global collaboration. Realizing the risks to, and the importance of protecting, critical national information infrastructure, Malaysia has formulated a national cybersecurity policy to regulate the network information systems of critical sectors of the country. Malaysia underscores the importance of continued cooperation between countries to effectively address cybersecurity challenges, with the end goals of increasing our collective cyberresilience, enhancing national security and driving economic growth.

Malaysia firmly believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones are essential for enhancing global and regional peace and security. Those instruments strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and promote the necessary conditions for regional development and stability.

As a founding member of ASEAN and a State party to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Malaysia underlines the significance of such zones and treaties in the pursuit of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Malaysia strongly reaffirms the paramount importance of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as the disarmament and non-proliferation instrument in the ASEAN region.

We therefore need to urgently resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, pertaining to the signing and ratifying the Protocol to the Treaty as soon as possible. That is in line with the aspirations of the ASEAN leaders as enshrined in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025. To that end and as a way forward, ASEAN member States should begin open and constructive dialogues with the nuclear-weapon States to bridge their concerns and reservations, as annually agreed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers.

Malaysia believes that the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction will enhance global and regional peace and strengthen the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction among all countries of the region. In that regard,

Malaysia welcomes the convening of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in November 2019 and hopes that more progress will be made during the second session of the Conference.

Malaysia looks forward to the convening as soon as possible, at a date to be agreed, of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, which is vital for promoting coordination and convergence in the implementation of the provisions of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and strengthening the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Malaysia reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy as the only sustainable mechanism for addressing disarmament and international security issues. Malaysia reiterates the importance of strengthening the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

The First Committee is the realization of the international community's faith in multilateral approaches towards the goal of general and complete disarmament in maintaining peace and security at the national, regional and international levels.

Malaysia reiterates that the Conference on Disarmament needs to regain its viability as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.

The Chair returned to the Chair.

Malaysia reaffirms the relevance and importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized and deliberative body in the multilateral disarmament machinery. Malaysia expresses regret at the inability of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to hold its substantive sessions for three consecutive years, from 2019 to 2021. We hope that the United Nations Disarmament Commission will be able to commence its work next year and make substantive recommendations on its agenda.

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

Monsignor Charters (Holy See): In order for the international community to rely less on force as a means to resolve issues between States, the effective functioning of the disarmament machinery is essential.

There is also a need to focus on how regional issues and new technologies impact our efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, reduce the role of conventional weapons and maintain outer space for peaceful purposes.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission last held an informal session in 2019 and has been prevented from meeting for the past two years due to the outbreak of the pandemic and other issues of a technical nature. It remains the hope of my delegation that the Commission will be convened in person next spring so that all Member States and observers may be able to participate fully in its deliberations.

The Conference on Disarmament should similarly be supported by all States Members of the United Nations so that it may overcome struggles to achieve consensus on further disarmament measures, such as the fissile material-cut-off treaty. Since all States have committed to moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, it is unacceptable and contradictory that any State increase its fissile material for weapons purposes.

Many delegations have addressed the risks posed by the misuse of the ever-evolving information and communications technologies (ICTs) in cyberspace and in daily life. Indeed, those risks need urgent attention. The imperative of building and maintaining international peace, security and cooperation in the ICT environment has never been so clear.

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) expressed the shared concern that harmful ICT incidents were increasing in frequency and sophistication and constantly evolving and diversifying. Increasing connectivity and reliance on ICTs without accompanying measures to ensure ICT security can bring about unintended risks, making societies more vulnerable to malicious ICT activities. Despite the invaluable benefits of ICTs for humankind, their malicious use can have significant and far-reaching negative impacts.

The eleventh report (S/2021/582) of the Secretary-General on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) praises the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015) as a success of multilateral diplomacy and nuclear non-proliferation and notes that it continues to enjoy the full support of the broader international community. The complete restoration of the JCPOA to fully operational

status is the logical next step and is a key part of efforts to preclude conflict in the Middle East, particularly the risk of further nuclear proliferation.

Prudence similarly demands that Member States revive the quest for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Opportunities for States of the region to work together in an inclusive manner to strengthen that effort should be pursued.

On the Korean peninsula, the Holy See earnestly hopes that negative rhetoric and unilateral measures may give way to the resumption of genuine diplomatic efforts to address the nuclear-weapon programme in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and related issues involving that country and the Republic of Korea, as well as those involving the United States. Bringing the state of war there to an end would provide for a redirection of diplomacy to address current problems.

It is incumbent upon Member States to redouble their efforts to achieve progress across the entire range of arms-control and disarmament issues. That requires the prompt resolution of procedural impasses and the substance of the issues under consideration. The Holy See delegation pledges its support for such redoubled efforts.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I shall now call on those delegations that have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): During today's meeting of the First Committee, we repeatedly heard accusations against Russia, and we gave an exhaustive response to those accusations. However, we have seen that our failed accusers continue to ignore our position and that their main aim is to maintain that negative perception of Russia. More likely than not, that is being done to distract the attention of the international community from their own ignoble acts and their recent political and diplomatic mistakes and miscalculations.

Those unfounded and baseless accusations are of no concern to us in and of themselves. We are well used to such practices and have repeatedly stated our readiness to have an open discussion on any subject that is of concern to our partners. It is another matter that our opponents, based on their statements, do not seem to have any interest in a direct and open dialogue, and therefore do everything they can to avoid it. The problem is not the accusations but what underlies them,

which is a distorted and fictional picture of the world that is detached from reality.

I note that my colleagues from Ukraine and Georgia and the countries that sympathize with them label the free and voluntary choice of the residents of Crimea to join Russia as an annexation, while they label the sliding of the Kyiv authorities into radical nationalism and blatant trampling on the rights of the Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine as the victory of democracy and a manifestation of humanism.

At first, the authorities cynically called the fratricidal conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk a counter-terrorism operation. Equally cynically, they now call it a war against the aggressor, although it is clear that there is an internal conflict in south-eastern Ukraine, the only parties to which are citizens of Ukraine themselves. The humanitarian assistance from Russia for the residents of south-eastern Ukraine is labelled a treacherous invasion and aggression. Russia's legitimate measures to defend its territorial integrity and its citizens in Crimea, the areas of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and along the Russia-NATO contact line are described as a destabilizing military action that threatens almost the entire world.

The formation of an independent Abkhazia and South Ossetia is described as seizing the territory of Georgia. The legitimate presence of Russian military contingents in those republics and their noble mission to ensure security and a fragile stability in the adjacent subregion is described as a destabilizing factor.

The list of similar incorrect assessments could go on indefinitely. With such a worldview in the minds of our partners and their conviction that they are entirely justified and right, we can hardly expect any constructive dialogue on such urgent issues, which are the basis for those anti-Russian attacks.

We call on the authorities of Ukraine and Georgia and our Western partners to stop believing in the distorted reality that they have created with their own hands and to look at the problems that exist, impartially, soberly and objectively, because that is the only thing that will enable all of us together to engage in the dialogue we all need to find solutions to the problems that exist, which risk becoming permanent sore points in international relations.

Mr. In Chol Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation takes the floor in exercise of

the right of reply in response to the statements made by the representative of the United States of America.

The hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the underlying cause of all issues arising on the Korean peninsula. Since the very day the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was founded, the United States has not recognized our sovereignty, treating us as an enemy State and openly showing its hostility towards the socialist system chosen by our people.

The hostile policy of the United States is conspicuously based on military threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. For the past several decades, the United States has staged all sorts of war games every year in and around the Korean peninsula and in Korean waters that mobilize massive armed forces, including United States troops based in South Korea. Furthermore, it has threatened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through military demonstrations of an intimidating nature, while deploying numerous armaments to South Korea from time to time.

Reality proves that only a substantial deterrent — not words — can ensure peace and security on the Korean peninsula and that it is essential for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to build up a force powerful enough to fully contain the external threats to us.

The key to establishing a new relationship between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States lies in the latter withdrawing its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States remains utterly unchanged in its imposition of military threats against, and pursuit of, a hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United States employs smarter ways and methods of doing so, as proven by the deals over the past eight months since the emergence of its new Administration. It touts diplomatic engagement and dialogue without preconditions, but that is no more than a petty trick to deceive the international community and hide its hostile acts while extending the hostile policy pursued by successive United States Administrations. Recently, the United States has frequently sent signals that it is not hostile to our State, but its behaviour provides us with no reason to believe them.

The United States continues generating regional tension with its ill-judged acts. What is clear is that the unstable situation in the region of the Korean peninsula cannot be easily resolved due to the United States. If the current Administration seeks to address the issue of the Korean peninsula through recourse to anachronistic methods of calculation, as is currently the case, the result will be the same as it was in the past.

We have already clarified that we will counter the United States on the principle of power-for-power and goodwill-for-goodwill. The United States of America now has two options. One is to contribute to the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula and the world by withdrawing its anachronistic and hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a bold and integrated manner. The current United States Administration should translate its policy of no-hostility into practical actions. It should also remove its double standards towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

If the United States genuinely seeks peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula, it should take the first step towards giving up its hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by stopping permanently its joint military exercises and the deployment of all kinds of strategic weapons, which are aimed at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in and around the Korean peninsula.

The withdrawal by the United States of its double standards and hostile policy is a top priority for stabilizing the situation and ensuring peace on the Korean peninsula. In the same vein, we urge the United Kingdom and Poland to drop their Cold War mentality in pursuit of hostility and double-dealing acts against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my right to reply against the unacceptable statements made by some representatives, including the representative of the United States, against Iran. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was a comprehensive plan of action that was carefully negotiated and concluded between Iran and the E3/EU+3 as a final solution for the artificial crisis created over Iran's peaceful nuclear programme.

The JCPOA's unanimous endorsement by resolution 2231 (2015) is a multiparty agreement based on reciprocity. Its scope, provisions and time frames are based on a delicate negotiated and multilaterally

accepted balance that cannot be altered, renegotiated or widened.

We are aware of the fact that the JCPOA is not, and was not intended to be, a catch-all agreement that resolves every issue of contention. By all accounts, the deal was working exactly as intended until former President Trump's withdrawal.

Iran remained in full compliance with its commitments, even one year after the United States exit. But in response to the reimposition of sanctions by the United States, Iran had to take measures, time and again, that were consistent with the provisions of the JCPOA, including paragraphs 26 and 36, which allow Iran to do so.

It is regrettable that the officials of the current United States Administration, while having criticized former President Trump for his maximum pressure, have in practice continued to impose those sanctions and shown no readiness to abandon them, while they insist that Iran should fulfil its commitments first.

The United States Administration must realize that the gambit of using sanctions to leverage further Iranian concessions did not work under former President Trump and will not work under President Biden. The best way forward is not to use sanctions as leverage against Iran in the course of nuclear talks, but rather to lift them all and to do so immediately.

It is up to the JCPOA's other participants and the United States to ensure that Iran effectively enjoys the benefits from its implementation and that the deal does not collapse due to the unacceptable approach of the United States.

Despite all challenges, Iran has continued its constructive cooperation and technical agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Despite all allegations against Iran, we are fulfilling our Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA as the specific instrument that legally applies to Iran's nuclear programme.

Mr. Dandy (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take the floor to respond to the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom. It is regrettable that such statements add more evidence of the United Kingdom's persistence in its policy on the Middle East.

The United Kingdom continues to wage war on the Syrian people at every level. We face a campaign of insidious allegations and falsehoods concerning the use of chemical weapons, even though we know full-well that those allegations are intended to distract the international community from those who actually used those weapons.

I would like to remind the representative of the United Kingdom that Syria signed up to the Chemical Weapons Convention and complied with all its obligations under that Convention. We continue to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to bring this matter to a conclusion as soon as possible.

Nevertheless, some States continue to flagrantly politicize this subject. They continue to level unfounded allegations against Syria that serve the interests of terrorist groups. Those countries also cast doubt on our cooperation with the OPCW, publish reports demonstrating a lack of professionalism and continue to create illegitimate mechanisms.

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

(*spoke in English*)

We have heard the last speaker on the combined clusters 5, 6 and 7 and have concluded the thematic discussions segment of the Committee ahead of schedule.

Programme of work

The Chair: I have been informed by the Secretariat that it is not possible to begin the Committee's action phase before 27 October, as all draft resolutions and decisions submitted are in the process of being issued

and assessed for financial implications. Unless I hear any objection, I therefore propose to cancel the two remaining in-person meetings scheduled to be held for thematic discussions on Thursday, 19 October and Friday, 22 October.

It was so decided.

The Chair: On Thursday, 21 October, at 10 a.m., the third virtual formal meeting via Zoom will be held for an exchange with the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, as well as the Directors of the three United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, the President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chair of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

The next plenary meeting of the First Committee will be held on Wednesday, 27 October, at 10 a.m., in the General Assembly Hall, when the Committee will begin the third and final phase of its work, namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted.

In that regard, the Committee will be guided by the informal papers that will be issued by the Secretariat listing the draft resolutions and decisions on which action will be taken each day. We will take action on the drafts under each cluster listed therein. The Secretariat will revise the informal paper on a daily basis in order to update the drafts that are ready for action at each of our meetings during this stage. In keeping with past practice, at the start of our meeting on Wednesday, 27 October, in the morning, I will explain the procedure that will guide our work during the action stage.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.