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Official Records

Disarmament Commission

394th meeting

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New York

Chair: Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

General exchange of views (continued)

Mr. Di Mascio (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission and assure you, Sir, of its full support for the work of this session.

France aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/CN.10/PV.391). In our national capacity, we would like to add the following comments on the issues at stake in this session and the work of the two Working Groups.

Fist, with regard to nuclear disarmament, we are meeting against a backdrop of unprecedented weakening of arms control and non-proliferation instruments. Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric in the context of its war against Ukraine is a reminder of the imperative to avoid a nuclear war and an arms race. France reiterates its commitment to the statement of the nuclear-weapon States of 3 January 2022, which states that nuclear war cannot be won and must never be waged. We urge all nuclear-weapon States to adhere to that statement.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. France remains committed to working within that framework towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, with undiminished security for all. That goal of general and complete

disarmament can be achieved only through a pragmatic and realistic approach, taking into account the strategic context.

France, as a responsible nuclear-weapon State, has taken concrete steps to that end, notably by reducing its arsenal to the level of what is strictly necessary for its security.

With a view to the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we call on all nuclear-weapon States to work towards effective measures, in particular in terms of transparency concerning their arsenals and a reduction of strategic risks.

Moreover, France continues to promote clear priorities on nuclear disarmament. France supports the initiation of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We remain committed to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which we ratified 25 years ago. We also support the efforts that seek to create zones free of weapons of mass destruction in various regions, including in the Middle East.

We must also remain mobilized in the face of proliferation crises, which continue to threaten our collective peace and security. North Korea is pursuing its nuclear programme and since 2022 has carried out more than 50 series of ballistic missile launches, in violation of Security Council resolutions. France urges North Korea to cease its destabilizing activities and to commit to a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization process. We also deplore the fact that a

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Russian veto in the Security Council recently prevented the renewal of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), charged with investigating violations of Council resolutions in that area (see S/PV.9591). That veto deprived all States Members of the United Nations of impartial information on North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

France is also deeply concerned about the ongoing escalation of Iran's nuclear programme, which is continuing without credible civilian justification and in violation of the limits set forth in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We urge Iran to return to respecting its international commitments and to cooperate sustainably and in good faith with the International Atomic Energy Agency in accordance with its obligations. We remain determined, together with our partners, to find a diplomatic solution to this.

With regard to emerging technologies, France supports the decision to devote Working Group II discussions to promoting a common understanding on emerging technologies in the context of international security. We thank the outgoing Commission Chair, the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, for his efforts in identifying that topic through consensus.

As the Secretary-General's annual report (A/78/268) on the role of science and technology illustrates, emerging technologies have complex implications for international security. They can be used maliciously, but they can also contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is therefore important that our discussions on this subject adopt a "technology-neutral" approach. Our efforts must focus on promoting the responsible use of these technologies, and on ensuring that their development respects international law, in particular international humanitarian law.

Our discussions at this session must also take account of work underway in other United Nations forums and avoid any duplication.

With regard to artificial intelligence applications, France reiterates its support for the work underway within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, on emerging technologies in the field of autonomous lethal weapon systems.

In the field of information and communication technologies, France is actively involved in the work of the current Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications

Technologies 2021–2025. In particular, we hope that the Group's efforts will help deepen our common understanding of how international law applies in the cyber domain, and further the development of effective confidence-building measures in order to more effectively implement the consensual normative framework of responsible State behaviour.

Mr. Bockarie (Sierra Leone): I would like to thank other delegations for their valuable contributions in enriching the discussion on how we can reach a position of fairness and openness in our deliberations and put aside our differences to promote peaceful coexistence among nations, big and small, rich and poor, developed, developing and underdeveloped.

It is important to note that we are talking about how we can sustain our generational existence as humans and promote our national and international endeavours as independent States.

To that end, Sierra Leone aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States with regard to achieving the objectives outlined in the recommendations on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We would like to add some comments in our national capacity.

Sierra Leone is disappointed about the lack of progress in achieving a common position on the general principle of adopting a strong legal framework in the implementation of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Not reaching a common position on a disarmament and non-proliferation strategy can only undermine progress towards achieving a peaceful and secured global environment.

The international mandate to live in a free world with no imminent threat of the use of nuclear weapons would assure Africa and other non-nuclear States of a brighter economic and political future and, more importantly, one free from nuclear catastrophe.

The slow implementation rate greatly dampens the early momentum expressed by Member States in their unwavering support to mitigate the threats of an era of conflicts around the world — in the Middle East, Africa, Ukraine and the Balkans, among others.

Most member countries, especially in Africa, continue to advocate the implementation of recommendations proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement that would ensure that a general international consensus is reached by banning the threat of use,

promote the monitoring of indiscriminate uses of materials developed by industries, sometimes unregulated, liable to aid the manufacture of weapons, with the capacity to fuel instability around the globe.

We are even more concerned about the illicit trading of nuclear related materials, promoted by the growing trend of technological advancements in the information and communication technologies domain that will likely prolong further setbacks in implementation if an agreement on a swift and coordinated monitoring mechanism is not reached.

Sierra Leone welcomes the paragraph 48 contribution from the Non-Aligned Movement to promote the peaceful nuclear uses that would provide non-nuclear States better options to establish strong capacity-building institutions to foster research facilities in the education and agricultural sector to deal with climate change issues and other development activities.

Sierra Leone is also of the view that nuclear States and those countries who claim to be nuclear free, should review their nuclear status inventory account commitments, without prejudice, in order to honour the international monitoring benchmarks and for clear international vision on their nuclear weapons capabilities. This proposal will strengthen the jurisdiction of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as a nuclear watchdog, and dispel misconceptions.

Lastly, Sierra Leone believes that the provision of an international fund to establish and promote national coordination that bring to fore all players, academics, legal practitioners and other professional bodies to promote public awareness activities would strengthen international resolve in the disarmament and non-proliferation discourse.

Mr. Vichankaiyakij (Thailand): First and foremost, our delegation extends its warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the 2024 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. Thailand is determined to render our full support and cooperation to you and the other members of the Bureau so as to ensure a fruitful and productive session.

Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/CN.10/PV.391).

The importance of this meeting cannot be overstated. We gather here at a time marked by escalating geopolitical tensions and a substantial decline in trust among States. Across the globe, multiple conflicts persist, exacting a heavy toll on human lives, well-being, fundamental rights and human security. Amid those challenges, the risk of nuclear catastrophe has reached an unprecedented level since the height of the Cold War, thus threatening humankind.

Doubts have been raised on the relevance and efficacy of the multilateral regime, as well as of the United Nations as an integral part of the global disarmament machinery. Against that backdrop, how could the United Nations fulfil its ultimate objective to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war?

To ensure that the United Nations and the whole international disarmament architecture continue to be relevant in our pursuit of sustainable peace and security for all, allow me to highlight several key points.

First, we must stand united and work collectively to reinvigorate our resolve to realize the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. If we are to safeguard the sanctity of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, another failure of the NPT review cycle is not an option.

Thailand urges all parties, especially nuclear-weapon States, to redouble their efforts to advance the implementation of the NPT, including by increasing transparency and accountability and revitalizing the working methods. The upcoming second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, in July, provides an opportunity to renew our obligations and commitments and reverse the prospect of nuclear doomsday, of which Oppenheimer — both the scientist and, indeed, the film — has reminded us.

Secondly, we must adopt an open-minded approach and stand ready to explore ideas and initiatives, while recognizing them as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Thailand continues to advocate a multi-track approach to promote universality, synergy and complementarity among various disarmament and non-proliferation frameworks, whether it be the NPT, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons or such initiatives as the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament.

In addition, we believe that the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace offers a promising entry point for our deliberations during this substantive session of the UNDC. We eagerly anticipate further engagement in the upcoming Summit of the Future, with full confidence that its Pact for the Future will serve as a catalyst for advancing the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

Thirdly, this is no time to remain complacent about the implications of new and emerging technologies. With their potential to transform conflict and warfare, those technologies, including artificial intelligence, must be regulated and utilized with greater responsibility to avoid humanitarian and other unintended consequences. In that regard, Thailand supports the deliberations on developing internationally agreed measures, particularly transparency and confidence-building measures, to mitigate the risks of miscalculation, misunderstanding and misperception. At the same time, we wish to reiterate that greater control of new and emerging technologies should not mean that any Member State has to forfeit the right to enjoy peaceful use. More important, new and emerging technologies should not automatically be considered evil. There exist opportunities to harness those technologies to strengthen the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, particularly in verification and monitoring capabilities. The key is in the constructive utilization of those technologies, as opposed to the misuse thereof.

I wish to conclude by reiterating that the UNDC bears a pivotal responsibility for bolstering our collective endeavour towards realizing a more secure and peaceful world. We look forward to working together with the Chair, members of the Bureau and Member States to ensure that this substantive session has a constructive and positive outcome.

Mr. Kulkarni (India): We extend our felicitations on your election, Sir, as the Chair of the 2024 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Our warm wishes also go to the elected Vice-Chairs and the Chairs of the two Working Groups, Georgia and El Salvador. The Indian delegation assures you of our constructive participation during the session.

We thank Her Excellency High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her thoughtful remarks earlier yesterday (see A/CN.10/PV.391).

India attaches high importance to the UNDC as the specialized deliberative body of the triad of disarmament machinery put in place by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament. The Commission plays a unique role as the only body with universal membership for in-depth deliberations on relevant disarmament issues.

The Commission has made significant achievements in its recent past, having successfully adopted several guidelines and recommendations. In its most recent cycle, which concluded in 2023, the Commission agreed on consensus recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. It is important that we sustain that momentum and strive collectively towards a successful outcome of the cycle commencing this year as well.

The States Members of the United Nations, in the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament (resolution S-10/2), reaffirmed collectively that the ending of the arms race and the achievement of real disarmament are tasks of primary importance and urgency. In that regard, India has been consistent in its support for global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. India strongly believes that that can be achieved in a time-bound manner, through a step-by-step process that is underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework.

India's working paper presented to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in 2007 (CD/1816) outlines our approach through a number of proposals that remain very relevant today. In line with our vision, India has supported the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention in the Conference on Disarmament, which has received consistent support from the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

India's annual draft resolution in the General Assembly on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, submitted since 1982, requests the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Our annual draft resolution on reducing nuclear danger, submitted since 1998 in the General Assembly, draws global attention to the hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons and calls for steps to reduce the risk of the

unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through their de-alerting and de-targeting. Those two draft resolutions manifest our commitment to the common goal of nuclear disarmament.

Without prejudice to the importance that we attach to the goal of nuclear disarmament, India has also supported the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty based on document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. In that context, it is unfortunate that, yet again this year, the CD was prevented from commencing substantive work by the delegation of Pakistan.

My delegation notes that Working Group II will begin its work on a new topic, namely, recommendations on common understandings related to emerging technologies in the context of international security. The UNDC's decision to examine the issue of emerging technologies is an acknowledgement of their impact on international security, and India acknowledges the concerns that have arisen as a result of technologies. The Commission, owing to its structure and mandate, is particularly suited for the consideration of issues that arise from the military use of such technologies. Notably, it is not one technology, but several, that are usually understood to fall under the description of emerging technologies. Furthermore, different technologies are at different stages of the technology life cycle. The effects of some of those technologies may become clearer only with greater maturity and deployment. Innovation and change are occurring at an unprecedented pace, and those technologies could be combined with each other and with older technologies and platforms. It is important that we take into account all those aspects in our work on the subject in the UNDC. Emerging technologies can have a transformational impact on socioeconomic development, particularly for developing countries. The work of the Commission should therefore avoid stigmatizing such technologies.

India was privileged to chair the Group of 20 (G-20) in 2023. The G-20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration acknowledges that transformational potential of technology in areas as diverse as climate change and sustainable development, and in the creation of digital public infrastructure that can improve public service delivery in developing countries. Indeed, many of the emerging technologies are dual-use in nature. It follows that for a developing country like India, access to technology that can have such transformational potential

is a substantial concern. We speak for the global South in seeking assurances that developmental priorities will not be affected by processes on emerging technologies, including in the military domain.

The discussion in the UNDC on the topic should be anchored in military reality and the fact that those technologies may have been deployed in conflict situations. We also need to take into account the considerable amount of work done or under way in other relevant established platforms, and we should be careful in respecting mandates, avoid prejudging or prejudicing proceedings in other forums and avoid duplication. The discussion should also be consistent with the universal composition and mandate of the Commission. Our work should identify and expand areas of convergence and help to deepen our understanding of the complex issues that are involved.

In that connection, we draw attention to the resolution on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, traditionally submitted by India and most recently adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session (resolution 78/268). The resolution, *inter alia*, acknowledges the accelerating pace of technological change, which necessitates a system-wide assessment of the potential impact of developments in science and technology on international security and disarmament, with due regard to avoiding duplication and complementing efforts already under way in United Nations entities and in the framework of the relevant international conventions. The resolution also calls upon Member States to remain vigilant in understanding new and emerging developments in science and technology that could imperil international security, and it underlines the importance of Member States engaging with experts from industry, the research community and civil society in addressing that challenge. In that connection, we would also like to acknowledge the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/78/268.

Before I conclude, let me briefly refute the comments made earlier by one Member State during the ongoing general exchange of views. By doing so, that Member State once again chose to misuse and undermine a United Nations forum by raising extraneous issues. The baseless comments are indeed rich, given that the only terrorism in our region is that exported into my country by that Member State, which has an established history of harbouring, aiding and actively supporting terrorists and is responsible for inflicting countless cross-border terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

For the record, let me reiterate here that the entire territory of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral and inalienable part of India.

India's positions on and contributions to disarmament efforts are well known, and some of them have also been highlighted in my intervention. Out of respect for the work of the Commission, I shall refrain from responding to any attempt at continuing the false propaganda against my country through exercise of the right of reply at this forum.

Returning to the work at hand, India hopes that our work this year at the Commission will advance our deliberations and contribute to the pursuit of collective security in an increasingly turbulent environment. India stands ready to contribute to that process and work with fellow Member States to achieve our collective objectives.

Ms. Kesse Antwi (Ghana): My delegation joins previous speakers in warmly congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the Vice-Chairs and Chairs of the Working Groups, on your assumption of the leadership of the Commission at this session. We assure you of our support and cooperation. We are also grateful to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, for her insightful remarks at the beginning of the session.

Ghana associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.391). We make the following additional remarks in our national capacity.

Over the years, and taking into account in particular its evolution since 1952, the Disarmament Commission has been an important platform for achieving critical consensus on principles, guidelines and recommendations, despite the prolonged periods of stagnation we also see now. Indeed, during the 2023 substantive session, the challenges facing the Commission were evident, driven by myopic interests, competing strategic priorities and the relentless pursuit of military advantage over collective security, exacerbated by an increasingly unstable international security landscape. That highlights the ongoing complexities in advancing nuclear disarmament and should underscore the continued relevance of the Commission as an indispensable deliberative body within the United Nations system to drive global disarmament efforts forward.

Achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation requires a multifaceted approach, including strengthening existing arms control agreements, fostering international cooperation through diplomacy, enhancing verification and monitoring mechanisms, promoting disarmament education and awareness, addressing the root causes of proliferation and engaging in multilateralism. However, it is imperative to ensure that nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear security efforts do not infringe upon the inalienable right of States to develop, research and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

While nuclear disarmament demands the collective efforts of the international community, the primary responsibility lies with nuclear-weapon States. We wish to emphasize that the active engagement of nuclear-weapon States in disarmament treaties is vital, not only because of their significant interests but also because of the responsibility they bear in fulfilling long-standing disarmament obligations. It is also crucial for nuclear-weapon States to adhere to the principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in all actions pertaining to their nuclear disarmament obligations. Those measures should be carried out in a time-bound manner to maintain focus and sustain momentum.

My delegation underscores the critical importance of revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament, particularly in the current global context, in which the spectre of triggering an arms race looms large. The Conference on Disarmament and its predecessors have proven to be very useful in the past, negotiating such major multilateral arms limitation and disarmament agreements as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It is a reality that when Member States have been willing to negotiate, the Conference on Disarmament has produced results.

Despite facing criticism, multilateralism remains crucial for addressing global challenges effectively, by fostering cooperation and collective action among nations. Engaging in bilateral and multilateral negotiations between nuclear-armed States could involve verifiable reductions in stockpiles, increased transparency measures and mutual verification mechanisms.

There is also a need to shift focus from national security to human security when considering disarmament issues. That includes taking a critical look at the economic costs of weapons systems, the long-lasting environmental risks of nuclear strategies and conflicts between the use of weapons of mass destruction and international humanitarian law. Shifting our main focus to those issues could help to address the incentives for proliferation and enhance international security.

My delegation joins others in welcoming the commencement of general discussions in Working Group II regarding recommendations on common understandings related to emerging technologies in the context of international security. We express hope for productive deliberations leading to the development of a shared understanding on that critical topic.

As we delve into the discourse surrounding emerging technologies within the realm of international security, it is imperative to recognize their dual-edged nature. Those technologies hold the promise of transforming industries, streamlining processes and bolstering efficiency. However, the dual-use aspect of those technologies raises concerns regarding their proliferation and potential misuse for nefarious purposes. That poses significant ethical and security challenges, as well as ecological risks, among others. The significant challenges and risks posed by emerging technologies, therefore, underscore the urgent need for responsible governance and international cooperation in their development and deployment in order to govern their use effectively.

I would like to conclude by echoing the sentiments once expressed by former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who aptly remarked that disarmament is not a sign of weakness; it is a demonstration of strength and wisdom. As we embark on a new cycle of the Disarmament Commission, it is imperative that we demonstrate flexibility and political will. We extend our full support to the work of the Commission and the Chair and look forward to constructive engagement with other Member States during the substantive sessions ahead.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to this eminent post. I hope that under your leadership we will manage to maintain the positive dynamic in the work of the Disarmament Commission and achieve a successful conclusion of the tasks before us. The Russian delegation is ready to extend any support you might require.

Russia has consistently advocated a streamlining of the central role of the United Nations in international security and the strengthening of the arms control and disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. A primary task in that regard is the strengthening of United Nations disarmament mechanisms, key among which is the Disarmament Commission.

Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation cannot be considered outside of the context of the current reality and strategic stability. In a race for global domination and military supremacy, Washington and its allies are expanding their network of alliances focused against third countries and actively implementing a whole host of programmes that undermine global stability and regional security. The most acute threat is the destructive path taken by the United States and NATO to escalate the Ukrainian crisis in order to, allegedly, strategically defeat Russia, thereby running the risk of a direct military confrontation between nuclear States. That policy inherently contradicts the logic enshrined in the joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States of 3 January 2022, which sets out the need to prevent any armed conflict between nuclear-weapon States and to ensure mutual respect and recognition of each other's security interests. The actions of the West run counter to those principles and have led to a worsening of the conflict around Ukraine.

Against that backdrop, Washington's line on arms control seems doubly hypocritical. The many steps taken by the United States to pick apart agreements that get in its way are accompanied by cynical attempts to promote initiatives that are only beneficial to the American side, focused on creating unilateral advantages. Washington's calls to reduce strategic risks are also inadequate, while in fact the United States continues to deliberately create them with its provocations and military pressure on other countries. They are interested only in how to make such pressure as safe as possible for themselves. In order to prevent the further deterioration of the situation and maintain long-term stability, systemic and comprehensive efforts are needed to build a renewed and stress-resistant international security architecture, based on the universal principles of multilateralism, genuine equality and consideration for the fundamental interests of all parties. We believe the United Nations Disarmament Commission plays a decisive role in the search for ways to lift the arms control and disarmament system out of crisis.

Russia has always been in favour of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The long history of the successful functioning of the NPT demonstrates its importance for all nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear weapon States parties. They should all contribute equally to reducing international tensions, strengthening stability and establishing a realistic global disarmament agenda, in accordance with the mutually agreed goals set out in article VI of the NPT. It is clear that nuclear disarmament cannot be considered in isolation from the current international situation.

We see no promise in approaches that suggest taking a short cut to a nuclear-free world by outlawing nuclear weapons. We cannot agree with the calls on nuclear-weapon States to immediately and unconditionally abandon their respective arsenals without taking into account their legitimate security concerns, which runs counter to the principle of not undermining any State's security that is enshrined in the consensus documents of the NPT review process. A new NPT review cycle began in 2023. We hope that States parties will be committed to preserving the NPT. The main current threat to the NPT is that Western countries are using it to pursue their own political agendas, which are unrelated to nuclear non-proliferation issues. If that trend continues, there is a high risk that the outcome of the current review cycle will be similar to the previous two others. In order to prevent that from happening, the States parties, especially the Western bloc countries, need to reconsider their unrealistic demands and expectations, while showing a willingness to engage more openly and deferentially during the upcoming events, the next one of which will be held in Geneva.

Russia welcomes the readiness of Member States to begin discussions in the framework of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on new technologies in the context of international security. We attach particular importance to closely monitoring scientific and technological developments related to arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and the dual use of such weapons' components. On the one hand, we must identify and analyse the risks associated with various areas of research and technologies in order to reduce them to an acceptable level, without compromising scientific and technological progress. On the other hand, there is a need to raise awareness and promote the spread of knowledge and progress that

can help strengthen international security. We believe that the upcoming discussions on that topic within the Commission should not duplicate the discussions on issues related to new technologies that are already being held in parallel forums. In particular, we believe that the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, which was established at our initiative in the framework of the First Committee, was the only specialized negotiating mechanism in that area. That understanding was enshrined in the consensus recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group and the annual General Assembly resolutions on international information and security.

We believe that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is the optimal forum for discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems. Transferring that topic to any other international platform, including the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the United Nations as a whole, seems counterproductive.

We believe that issues related to preventing an arms race in outer space require further discussion in the framework of a specialized open-ended working group and group of government experts, while the question of biotechnology and the establishment of a mechanism for reviewing relevant scientific and technological achievements in the framework of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention should be discussed in the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We plan to continue to contribute to the work of those forums.

We are convinced that the United Nations Disarmament Commission can make a meaningful contribution to multilateral efforts in the areas of disarmament and arms control, in accordance with its mandate. We look forward to the preparation of recommendations in Working Groups I and II. We believe that given the political will, the participants in the work of the Commission will be able to overcome their differences, actively engage in constructive work on the agenda and achieve effective consensus results.

Mr. Wazima Szatmari (Brazil): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the current session of the United Nations

Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their elections.

Brazil stated last year that the international environment invited both reflection and action (see A/CN.10/PV.378). Unfortunately, while our reflections may have advanced, our actions have not. To say that the disarmament machinery is at a standstill would be optimistic. In many areas, we have seen progress go into reverse since we last met, especially when it comes to nuclear disarmament. That can be seen in the fact that almost all States in possession of nuclear weapons are seeking qualitative or quantitative improvements in their nuclear arsenals. Global expenditures on nuclear weapons have risen over the past years to reach almost \$83 billion in 2022. The expenditures are part of a worrisome trend, in which nuclear weapons have increasingly been normalized in ways not seen since the Cold War. They have been normalized by nuclear rhetoric from different States, as well as by the new investments in new and increased capabilities, new basing modes and locations, new legislative debates about nuclear weapons and new nuclear-sharing arrangements. Perhaps most relevant to us here, they have been normalized by the complete lack of action on disarmament.

We have added to the failure of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons the lack of outcome documents adopted here by Working Group I of the UNDC in 2023 or by the Preparatory Committee in Vienna. The collective silence on new disarmament steps is part of the normalization of nuclear weapons. It not only erodes the disarmament machinery but also has a pernicious effect on non-proliferation. When nuclear-armed States are unwilling to take disarmament measures or even reaffirm existing commitments, they send powerful signals to proliferators about how they should view the value of nuclear weapons. Yet to cross our arms and resign ourselves would further contribute to that normalization of the bomb. We must find ways to turn the tide and send clear signals about the urgency of disarmament. We must do that not despite the challenging environment but because of it. The more challenging the environment gets, the greater the need for urgent measures to ensure that our tensions will not escalate into the nuclear realm.

Luckily, we have many possible starting points to begin shoring up such trust. We could start by recognizing the value of the scientific bodies involved in arms control

verification and non-proliferation. Brazil believes that the Commission should recommend further discussions on nuclear disarmament verification and the future establishment of a nuclear disarmament verification scientific body as an integral part of the disarmament machinery. The discussions on verification could build on both the principles of disarmament verification agreed to in 1988 by the UNDC and the 2019 report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament (see A/74/90). The UNDC is well-positioned to take up that topic once again. A technical dialogue on nuclear disarmament verification could open doors for further political action on disarmament.

In addition, the Chair's paper on which the Commission worked in the previous cycle contained useful recommendations on disarmament, confidence-building and risk reduction, in particular in the final lists of actions that nuclear-armed States should take. Those measures, while no substitute for concrete disarmament measures, could serve as a basis for a more streamlined, more action-oriented document, focused on a limited and pragmatic set of recommendations. Coupled with a confirmation of existing disarmament commitments, that shorter document could send an important signal about the directionality of disarmament discussions, even if it does not offer an exhaustive summary of the current state of nuclear disarmament.

With regard to Working Group II, we welcome the fact that consensus was reached around a topic for the next cycle. The flexibility displayed by all Member States during the selection process was a promising sign that we are still able to find compromise.

Brazil has been actively engaged in discussions around new technologies and their impacts on international peace and security, including cybersecurity, space technologies, autonomous weapons and three-dimensional printed weapons, to cite just a few of them. In particular, we have been closely following the application of artificial intelligence in the military domain, both because of its potential risks and benefits and because of the breakneck speed at which it has developed and has been put to use on battlefields, with little reflection or normative development. More than ever before, we are convinced that those technologies must be discussed in inclusive multilateral settings, such as the UNDC, since their cross-cutting nature means that they affect every single Member State. We

need the input of all States if we are to fully understand those technologies and we need it sooner rather than later, given the pace of technological development.

In that connection, too, Brazil stresses the importance of acting pragmatically, for two reasons.

First, due to the breadth of the topic, there is a real risk of pursuing too many different avenues, complicating the production of concrete recommendations at the end of the three-year cycle.

Secondly, we must also be pragmatic in order to avoid the duplication of work already being undertaken in other processes in the General Assembly. That means being mindful of the work done by the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021–2025 and the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours, as well as the work done by other ongoing groups of governmental experts and in other forums.

We believe that pragmatic action could be taken either by selecting one or two topics under “new technologies” and focusing on them over the current cycle or by focusing on a set of recommendations that could apply to a range of technologies. The latter set of recommendations could include measures to improve the sharing of information and increase transparency around the military use of new technologies, whatever they may be. Both approaches involve certain trade-offs — the first by potentially narrowing the focus too much, the second by potentially broadening it excessively.

If we have stressed pragmatism often in this statement, it is because of the urgency of the task ahead of us, both in the nuclear domain and in the area of new technologies. Multilateralism requires momentum, which must be built up. The UNDC appears to understand that principle as it has set up three-year cycles to allow the Commission to gain momentum in the first year and accelerate it in the second year in order to deliver in the third year. As we embark on a new cycle, our first task is to begin to build up that momentum. In Working Group II, we can and should keep up the momentum from last year’s success. In Working Group I, we will need a strong push to make up for the years of standstill. We are ready to help with that push and hope that others will also be ready.

Mr. Rahimi Majd (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the 2024 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and the Vice-Chairs of the Commission and Chairs of the Working Groups on their elections. My delegation appreciates the able leadership of the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Rakhmetullin of Kazakhstan, and stands ready to fully cooperate with you, Mr. Chair, during the current substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.391).

No weapon ever conceived is as inhumane and indiscriminate in its impact as an atomic bomb. Nuclear weapons are the only ones ever invented that can wholly destroy life on this planet. However, the year 2023 witnessed an unprecedented and alarming nuclear race, coupled with the blatant threat of the use of nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon States have not only failed to honour their commitments to halt and reverse nuclear disarmament but have also proceeded to renew and modernize their nuclear arsenals. It is seriously concerning to note that last year, the United States alone allocated more funds to nuclear weaponry than all other nuclear-armed nations combined. In addition, the final report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States disturbingly suggested the potential use of nuclear weapons should conventional means fail to meet objectives. Moreover, a brazen nuclear threat emerged from the Israeli regime in October 2023 against Gaza, coupled with another by the regime’s Prime Minister in September 2023, directed at my country. Those threats constitute a flagrant violation of the fundamental principles of international law, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Charter of the United Nations. Those facts underscore that even after eight decades since the use of nuclear weapons and despite considerable international efforts, the objective of nuclear disarmament remains elusive.

The original and fundamental balance of principles within the NPT has been distorted by some nuclear-weapon States, led by the United States, towards an over emphasis on non-proliferation principles, while neglecting disarmament and peaceful use principles. In turn, that distortion of balance of principles has

been used by certain States to undertake misguided policies and actions that have unlawfully prejudiced the legitimate legal interests of non-nuclear-weapon States, under the NPT's grand bargain.

To change the course towards restoring the original balance of principles and prioritization underlying the NPT's grand bargain, nuclear disarmament must become the paramount concern of the international community. That necessitates an urgent effort towards initiating negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the development of a comprehensive convention aimed at achieving the total, irreversible and verifiable elimination of all nuclear weapons. There remains no simpler or more compelling articulation of the case for action than the one presented more than two decades ago. As long as nuclear weapons remain, it defies credibility that they will not one day be used by accident or miscalculation or design, and any such use would be catastrophic for our world as we know it.

The lack of compliance with existing commitments by nuclear-weapon States is the main policy impediment that has hindered progress in the disarmament machinery in years past. It is regrettable that nuclear-weapon States have not only failed to fulfil their disarmament commitments but have also undertaken nuclear-sharing arrangements, which contradict their non-proliferation obligations. Iran calls upon nuclear-armed States to undertake nuclear disarmament and cease their modernization programmes. Furthermore, it urges nuclear-weapon-endorsing States to stop hosting other countries' nuclear weapons on their territories and to renounce the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons on their behalf.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a fundamental step towards nuclear disarmament and peace and security. It is regrettable that the noble goal and initiative of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone has been blocked for many years by the Zionist regime, which, backed by the United States Government, continues to accumulate all kinds of weapons of mass destruction without being a party to any legally binding international disarmament instrument and without being subject to any safeguards or verification mechanism. Collective measures must be taken to harness the Israeli regime's unlawful nuclear activities and heinous crimes over seven decades, including the flagrant violations recorded in the past six months in Gaza. The regime should join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon member and put all its nuclear facilities and activities under international safeguards.

Yesterday we witnessed another crime committed by the Israeli regime. On 1 April 2024, the Islamic Republic of Iran's diplomatic premises in Damascus were intentionally targeted by missile air strikes launched by the Israeli regime, resulting in the martyrdom and tragic loss of at least five Iranian personnel and the complete destruction of the diplomatic premises in question. Those horrific crimes and cowardly terrorist attacks are a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the foundational principle of the inviolability of diplomatic and consular premises — as outlined in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents — and pose a significant threat to regional peace and security. Considering the far-reaching international implications of such reprehensible acts, which could exacerbate tensions in the region and potentially ignite further conflict involving other nations, the Islamic Republic of Iran urges the international community to condemn in the strongest terms possible that unjustified criminal and terrorist attack perpetrated by the Israeli regime.

We would like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. Chair, and to the outgoing Chair for your efforts in reaching consensus on the agenda item for Working Group II. We believe that, at the current stage, engaging in general discussions in Working Group II would be useful for fostering a deeper understanding of both the potential benefits and challenges posed by emerging technologies in the context of international security. Given that the full scope of emerging technology remains uncertain for many countries, especially developing ones, Iran believes that rushing to select and commit to a specific course of action would be counterproductive at present.

Mr. Tito (Kiribati): At the outset, both the delegations of Kiribati and Kazakhstan would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for 2024. We would also like to congratulate the co-Chairs of Working Groups I and II on their election to lead their respective Working Groups.

This year, the United Nations Disarmament Commission meets amid a challenging security environment. Nuclear risks are at an all-time high due to the increased salience of and emphasis on nuclear weapons in military postures and doctrines, coupled with the modernization and maintenance of

nuclear weapons. The continued existence of nuclear weapons and the lack of meaningful advances in the disarmament machinery undermine the security of all States and increase the risk of a nuclear catastrophe. We strongly believe that the only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and the legally binding assurance that they will never be used again under any circumstances. In that regard, we underscore the International Court of Justice's 1996 advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

We are dismayed that a number of States are part of extended nuclear security guarantees and have adopted nuclear stationing arrangements. We are also highly concerned about the placement of nuclear weapons on the territory of non-nuclear-armed States. Due to the current security environment, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* set the Doomsday Clock at 90 seconds to midnight. Once again, the world remains the closest it has ever been to a nuclear apocalypse. As Rachel Bronson, Chief Executive Officer of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, shared in a statement in January 2024: "It is urgent for Governments and communities around the world to act". The sword of Damocles looms over all States. Therefore, we must consider the fate of humankind as we begin our substantive work in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

There is hope. In 2023, an overwhelming number of States voted in favour of resolution 78/240, entitled "Addressing the legacy of nuclear weapons: providing victim assistance and environmental remediation to Member States affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons", which was co-sponsored by Kiribati and Kazakhstan. We thank all delegations that supported that resolution, which was the first to provide justice to survivors of nuclear weapons. It encourages further international cooperation and discussions to assist victims and to assess and remediate the environments contaminated by the use and testing of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, including through bilateral, regional and multilateral frameworks. In that regard, we encourage States to have a substantive discussion on the need to help affected communities and remediate contaminated environments in Working Group I of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

In addition to that historic resolution, another major milestone was reached in 2023. At the second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), States

parties engaged in an interactive debate and adopted a political declaration and a package of key decisions that strengthened the implementation of the Treaty. States parties recognized the complementarity between the TPNW and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We look forward to the third Meeting of States Parties, which will be held in March 2025 under the chairpersonship of Kazakhstan. As Kiribati and Kazakhstan are prominent members of both the TPNW and the NPT, we strongly believe that the TPNW advances the implementation of article VI of the NPT by closing the missing legal gap. The TPNW also provides robust humanitarian provisions to help the victims of nuclear weapons, which are contained in articles 6 and 7. We encourage States to discuss the complementary nature of the TPNW to key multilateral treaties, especially the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in Working Group I.

Turning our attention to new and emerging technologies, our two States voted in favour of resolution 78/241, entitled "Lethal autonomous weapons systems". We will attend the Vienna Conference on Autonomous Weapons Systems, on the theme "Humanity at the crossroads: autonomous weapons systems and the challenge of regulation", which will be held later this month.

Our two delegations look forward to robust discussions in both Working Groups and key progressive recommendations at subsequent sessions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in order to help the world. We must reverse the current trajectory. We must remove the sword that hangs over all of our heads in this room. We must safeguard the world and provide a bright future for our children and future generations.

Given the tragic impact of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the compelling scientific evidence that past nuclear tests have imperilled and will continue to impact human life and well-being, and the recent reaffirmation by the nuclear-weapon States that there is no winner in a nuclear war, there is only one commonsensical way out of this self-imposed human-made evil and threat: we must agree that nuclear weapons are evil and must be unconditionally banned and eliminated.

We can no longer live in a world in which some States are pushing for a resumption of the arms race that defined the Cold War era. During the peak of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union

engaged in a dangerous arms race. In November 1955, two years after Russia's first hydrogen test in response to the United States hydrogen tests, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev announced, on a visit to India, that Russia would never be the first to abuse that power. He further stated that

“We shall be glad if these bombs are never exploded over cities and villages. Let them lie. Let them affect the nerves of those who want to unleash war. If someone begins a war, he will get the proper answer.”

That type of behaviour and rhetoric should be avoided at all costs in the modern era. Why is it taking so long for us — intelligent human beings — to agree that nuclear weapons are evil and should be unconditionally banned and eliminated? Why are we allowing the nuclear-weapon States to upgrade their weapons — both quantitatively and qualitatively and in flagrant violation of their commitments under article VI of the NPT?

We would like to conclude by sharing an excerpt from President John F. Kennedy's 1963 commencement address at American University, in which he stated that

“And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air”.

Mr. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Honduras reaffirms its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and to continue working for general and complete disarmament, non-proliferation and the implementation of international agreements on disarmament and arms control, including small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, in order to maintain peace and collective security for the good of all humankind. As a founding State of the United Nations, my country is committed to upholding and strengthening compliance with international law, in particular international humanitarian law, and to ensuring human responsibility and accountability in the use of force.

We echo the concerns raised by others about the increase in global military expenditure. We believe that such expenditure could be better used towards the common good in areas of urgent need and to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Honduras has been unwavering in

reaffirming its commitment to disarmament by acceding to international instruments emanating from the United Nations, as well as from hemispheric and regional bodies, on matters relating to disarmament, confidence-building measures and arms control.

As others have pointed out here today, the possible use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons irrefutably undermines the work and objectives of this multilateral forum. The only way to end the risk posed by nuclear weapons is their total elimination. Honduras condemns nuclear weapons tests and calls for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction through multilateral negotiation and under the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency.

My country, as a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, supports initiatives aimed at creating other zones free of such weapons. We reaffirm the right of each State to conduct research on and produce and utilize nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes, and to engage in responsible scientific cooperation.

We welcome with genuine optimism the outcomes of the first and second Meetings of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). We firmly believe that the TPNW contributes significantly to promoting the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and underscore the complementarity of the TPNW with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We call for the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to make significant and substantive progress in the area of nuclear disarmament and to adhere to the principle of indivisibility of international security, whereby all States have the responsibility to contribute to strengthening the international order, based on cooperation and regulated by legally binding norms.

The work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission is an integral part of our broader commitment to ensuring a revitalized and robust disarmament machinery. In that regard, my delegation underscores the urgent need for the current session of the Commission to find common ground towards achieving concrete outcomes, including on the two subjects on which we will deliberate over the next few days. In view of the lack of progress made in achieving the total elimination of nuclear arsenals in accordance with the relevant multilateral legal obligations, we urge the Commission to comply with its legal obligations on

nuclear disarmament and to implement the unequivocal commitment made in 2000 and reiterated in 2010. We underscore that progress in nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential in order to strengthen international peace and security. In that context, we stress that general disarmament is a top priority. We also stress the importance of achieving universal accession to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We welcome with interest the general discussion in Working Group II on the effects of emerging technologies and express our support for the joint efforts aimed at developing of a common understanding on that issue. We are concerned about the consequences of the deployment of high-technology defence systems, which could lead to an increase in the number of weapons whose range — until the moment they are detonated — is unknown to the majority of humankind. That is why cutting-edge technologies must adhere to a rule-of-law approach based on international law and for the benefit of humankind, peace and security, and not the opposite. For that matter, if any technology were to place nuclear weapons into orbit around Earth, which would be unprecedented, that would be dangerous and unacceptable. For that reason and in the face of modernization and technological development of new types of weapons and their autonomization, we once again reiterate our position that human beings must remain responsible for taking decisions on the use of force.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, you can count on the full support of Honduras for your work and that of the members of the Bureau, which includes two women from my region who are committed to achieving disarmament. My country firmly believes that women's participation in disarmament leads to significantly better peace outcomes.

Mrs. Liolocha (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to welcome the convening of this year's substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which marks the start of a new three-year cycle during which we are called to reflect collectively on how to move forward confidently on the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. First and foremost, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election, and to assure you of its full support and cooperation. We also congratulate the Chairs of the two Working Groups,

who will be working alongside you, Mr. Chair, to ensure that at the end of our work concrete recommendations can be adopted by consensus. Allow me to also express my delegation's full appreciation to Ambassador Akan Rakhmetullin of Kazakhstan for his exemplary leadership of the previous session and of the preparatory process for the current session.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the representative of Angola on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.391) and would like to add the following comments its national capacity.

As the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs pointed out yesterday (see A/CN.10/PV.391) in her opening statement, this year's session of the Disarmament Commission is once again taking place in a difficult geopolitical context, with growing global tensions and increased competition when it comes to strategic weapons, and that is linked to a decline in confidence among nuclear-weapon States.

We therefore understand that there is a risk of armed violence between nuclear-weapon States. In the face of that exceptional risk, my delegation reiterates once again the need to continue to promote multilateralism as a fundamental principle of negotiation in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. In that respect, we reaffirm the centrality of the Disarmament Commission, as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery to consider specific disarmament issues and submit concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

The nuclear-weapon States are therefore called on to demonstrate the political will and flexibility to promote this multilateralism to work towards the implementation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation obligations and commitments.

Given that it was possible to adopt by consensus the recommendations aimed at promoting the practical implementation of confidence-building measures to prevent an arms race in outer space at the 2023 session, there is therefore a need to continue to work together to reach an agreement to achieve the objective of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

States are encouraged to implement the unequivocal commitment they made in 2000 and reiterated in 2010 to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We have no more time to lose. Now is the time — not later, because later will be too late, bearing in mind that a nuclear war cannot be fought and cannot be won.

For its part, the Democratic Republic continues to support the objective of complete nuclear disarmament, which is a prerequisite for the maintenance of international peace and security. It therefore recalls the historic entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and welcomes the holding of the first two meetings of the States parties, while reaffirming its full support for the adoption of the Vienna Declaration. We pledge to continue working to achieve its universalization.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo stresses the importance of respecting the inalienable right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the central role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency through its technical support and ongoing cooperation.

As far as emerging technologies in the context of international security are concerned, my delegation is encouraged to see that subject taken up within the framework of the Working Group II theme but would like to see the outlines of those discussions clarified to avoid overlap with other meetings on the same topic.

It is therefore urgent for us to put in place robust mechanisms to regulate this field in order to achieve responsible use of emerging technologies, given that those technologies, as Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu noted in her statement, are dual-use technologies which can be useful to society just as they can fall into the hands of malicious users and therefore threaten international peace and security.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of Congo fully supports the work of the Disarmament Commission. It reaffirms its commitment to participate actively and constructively throughout our discussions. Once again, we invite all other Member States to demonstrate their political will and commitment to the principle of transparency in dealing with disarmament and international security issues, with a view to achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Tun (Myanmar): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and other members of the Bureau on your election for this session of the

Disarmament Commission. I wish to assure you, Sir, of our delegation's full support and cooperation for a successful outcome of this session.

Myanmar associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.391).

We are living in a challenging time. The resurgence of weapon-based threats is on the rise, together with the geopolitical tensions and cybersecurity threats. Clearly, at this juncture, we all have to redouble our efforts towards achieving our goal of creating a safer world free from all forms of security threats. The role of the Disarmament Commission has never been more critical than it is now.

I would like to congratulate the Chair of the two Working Groups on their election. We are confident that the two Working Groups of this session will bring progress to the work of the Disarmament Commission through the flexibility, constructive cooperation and perseverance of all Member States.

The nuclear threat poses the utmost security risks. It is not solely the existence of nuclear weapons but also the use or the threat of use of those weapons that gives rise to the biggest security concerns. That places the nuclear threats at the forefront of the most significant risks to the existence of humankind, potentially surpassing or contributing to other concerns, including environmental disaster, humanitarian disaster, economic crises and health problems.

That is why the only way to safeguard us from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. For the sake of international peace and security, now is the time for all of us to reaffirm our commitment to intensify our multilateral endeavours on nuclear disarmament, the total elimination of nuclear weapons and non-proliferation, as well as the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Having said that, we all are frustrated and disappointed with the failure to adopt the final documents of the ninth and tenth Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Myanmar firmly believes that the NPT is the indispensable mechanism for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. To move forward, we need stronger multilateral efforts and must express more flexibility,

in order to fulfil our commitments and obligations under the NPT. Taking this opportunity, we would like to ask all nuclear-weapon States to fully implement their obligations under the NPT.

In the same vein, we call on all States that have not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), especially the remaining annex 2 States, to ratify the CTBT without delay for its entry into force.

Myanmar believes that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is contributing to strengthening norms against nuclear weapons.

As a State party to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Myanmar fully agrees that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones contributes towards disarming nuclear weapons, which is our collective goal on the nuclear disarmament agenda.

As a nation enduring various kinds of atrocities committed by its military against its people, Myanmar is fully aware of the consequences, including humanitarian consequences, of the proliferation of weapons.

Using the fighter jets, munitions, weapons, heavy artillery and associated technologies, assisted by and imported from certain countries, the military junta has been committing crimes against humanity and war crimes against the people of Myanmar.

The situation in Myanmar is totally heartbreaking. No word can adequately convey the suffering undergone by the people. It is indeed an unspeakable tragedy that the people are experiencing. I therefore stress again that a comprehensive arms embargo against the military junta is the only way to stop its brutality against the people.

Mr. Charumbira (Zimbabwe): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the 2024 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. We also extend our congratulations to the members of your Bureau, as well as the Chairpersons of the Working Groups. Please be assured of Zimbabwe's full support as you lead us in the work ahead.

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Angola and Indonesia, on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively. I will deliver the following statement in our national capacity.

Zimbabwe joins the clarion call for the total elimination of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Such weapons pose an existential threat to all humankind and also to the environment, should they be unleashed. It is, therefore, imperative that their elimination be pursued with renewed vigour, commitment and in full transparency. My delegation also notes with concern the continued and unwarranted loss of lives due to the proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. The urgent need to clamp down on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in line with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, cannot be overemphasized. We look forward to the fourth Review Conference of the Programme of Action later this year.

The advances in emerging technologies implore us to proactively ensure that such technologies are primarily used for socioeconomic development. Artificial intelligence, which holds significant possibilities for enhancing efficiency, requires us to introspect and ensure that it is not used for the furtherance of illicit activities. Measures are therefore required to clamp down on the malicious uses of information and communication technologies. The emerging threats presented by lethal autonomous weapons systems and illicit 3D weapons printing technology require our concerted action in the context of disarmament.

In the same vein, the Republic of Zimbabwe underscores the importance of international cooperation and technical support for developing countries to attain capabilities for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in sectors such as energy, health and agriculture. Such efforts promote sustainable development, while ensuring nuclear safety and security. Equally, educational curriculum should be developed to emphasize, on the one hand, the inherent dangers of a world with nuclear weapons, while, on the other hand, promoting the more positive, productive and peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

This session of the Disarmament Commission has the opportunity to address the concerns that have been raised and to ensure that the trajectory of global disarmament is maintained and, indeed, gains further momentum. The delegation of Zimbabwe once again assures you of its full support as you guide our deliberations and steer this important meeting.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Caccia (Holy See): First, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission and assure you of my delegation's full support.

Amid growing military expenditures and rising conflict around the globe, it is important to recall that deterrence is an illusion. Rather than preventing conflict, the availability of weapons encourages their use and increases their production. Weapons create mistrust and divert resources. Tragically, their use results in the killing and maiming of hundreds of thousands of people every year. These ill-effects of weapons proliferation, stockpiling and use make disarmament a moral duty, which calls upon all members of the great family of nations, to move from an equilibrium of fear to an equilibrium of trust", the only basis upon which lasting peace can be achieved.

The illusory logic of deterrence is often used to justify the unjustifiable: the continued possession of nuclear arms, any use of which would have catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences. These weapons do not distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. As a result, any use of nuclear weapons would contravene the law of war, as recognized by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The Holy See reiterates its call for all States to reject nuclear deterrence and join the TPNW, thereby contributing to the replacement of a negative conception of security with a positive one.

The disarmament and non-proliferation regime, centred on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), has allowed humankind to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear technology, while limiting the spread of nuclear weapons, in spite of challenges. The achievements of that regime were not accidental or preordained; rather, they resulted from deliberate cooperation on the part of the international community.

At a time when emerging technologies offer both exciting opportunities and grave risks, with serious implications for the pursuit of justice and harmony among people, the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime offers the international community lessons to draw upon for limiting military risks and promoting peaceful benefits. Any global framework governing the development and use of emerging technologies must be

grounded in the inherent dignity of each human being and the fraternity that binds us together as members of the one human family.

Many parallels can be drawn between the international governance of nuclear technology and the urgent need to develop a normative and operational framework regarding the use of artificial intelligence. It is worth noting that the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which focuses on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, preceded the adoption of the NPT, and the work of both international mechanisms are mutually complementary.

In that regard, the Holy See reiterates its proposal to consider the creation of an international agency on artificial intelligence, while simultaneously urging the global community of nations to work together in order to adopt a binding international treaty that regulates the development and use of artificial intelligence in its many forms. While such a treaty is beyond the scope of this Commission, principles, guidelines and recommendations formulated here can contribute to the formation of such a governance regime, which can help ensure that emerging technologies serve humankind, as a whole, rather than particular interests.

Peace is built not with weapons, but through patient listening, dialogue and cooperation, which remain the only means worthy of the human person in resolving differences. With that in mind, the Holy See renews its unceasing call for arms to be silenced, for the production and trade of that instrument of death and destruction to be rethought and for the path of gradual but complete disarmament to be resolutely pursued.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the State of Palestine.

Mr. Kasabri (Palestine) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for this year. I also congratulate the Vice-Chairs and the Chairs of the Working Groups. The State of Palestine assures you and the other members of the Bureau of its full support.

The State of Palestine associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of Arab States (see A/CN.10/PV.391).

The State of Palestine reaffirms that the only way to eliminate the danger and threat posed by nuclear weapons to humankind, international peace and

security is their total and irreversible elimination. If we want to live in a safer world, and if we want to build and safeguard a better future for coming generations, that can be achieved only by eliminating those weapons. The road that the disarmament machinery is taking remains difficult and fraught with challenges and obstacles. However, that should only motivate us to redouble our efforts to overcome those difficulties.

In that context, the State of Palestine urges all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to act at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels and within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and all the relevant international conventions and norms to advance the commitments and obligations incumbent upon each of us. We also call on those countries that have not yet acceded to the NPT to do so without preconditions. While the NPT remains the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was born of the profound responsibility to find effective tools to establish binding legal frameworks aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, in accordance with what the Non-Proliferation Treaty affirms, in particular in its article VI. That renders the TPNW a lever that becomes complementary to the NPT. The State of Palestine actively participated in the negotiation of the TPNW and will continue to call for its universalization.

We underscore the importance and contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to strengthening the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We recall the need to support all efforts to implement global commitments to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In that context, the State of Palestine welcomes the holding of four consecutive conferences on the establishment of the zone under the chairmanship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the State of Kuwait, the Lebanese Republic and Libya and with the participation of all Member States except Israel. We reiterate that the Conference is a framework that allows the participation of all parties and makes decisions by consensus. The Conference therefore excludes no one, even if one party — namely Israel, of course — decides to boycott it for one obvious reason: its desire to continue to illegally possess nuclear weapons while considering itself to be above the law, which places the security and safety of our region at risk and undermines

the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We reaffirm that getting rid of nuclear weapons is neither optional nor conditional. Similarly, the possession of nuclear weapons is neither a legal right nor a merit, and their elimination is a moral, political and legal responsibility.

The State of Palestine welcomes the Commission's decision to hold deliberations on the impacts of emerging technologies in the context of international security, and it hopes that those discussions will lead to ensuring that those emerging technologies will never be used to the detriment of our humanity, our planet or our environment. To that end, it is essential to establish international legal frameworks for the use of those technologies, especially in the military domain and in relation to autonomous weapons systems.

In conclusion, this year's Commission can be an opportunity to bolster our consensus and strengthen our efforts to move towards a safe and peaceful world. Let us spare no effort to achieve a positive outcome.

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

Mr. Abdelaziz (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your chairmanship of the first substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and by congratulating Georgia and El Salvador on their assumption of the chairmanship of the two working groups of the Commission. We assure you and the members of the Commission of the full support of the League of Arab States and its member States for your efforts to make this session a success.

I associate myself with the statement delivered by the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Group of Arab States in New York (see A/CN.10/PV.391).

The Disarmament Commission is approaching the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment, amid tense international circumstances, disruption in international and regional balances and geopolitical confrontations that entrench international polarization and regional instability. All of that is reflected in the increasing tendency to resort to the use or threat of use of military force, including the threat of using nuclear weapons, to impose certain situations in one region or another, amid the state of paralysis of the international collective security system of the United Nations. It is

unfortunate that all of that coincides with the repeated failures of the various disarmament mechanisms, the most recent of which is the failure of the Commission's Working Group I, on nuclear disarmament, to reach a consensus during the 2023 session, following the failure of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2022.

We all know that the lack of political will among the five nuclear-weapon States to implement their international and regional commitments under many treaties is the main reason for the failure to take any positive steps towards nuclear disarmament. Compounding the regional tensions in the Middle East is the failure of the international collective security system to respond decisively to dangerous statements, including the remarks made by the far-right Israeli Government's Minister of Heritage last November, to the effect that dropping a nuclear bomb on the population of the Gaza Strip was one of Israel's existing military options in the war — which we refer to as a genocidal war — that Israel has been waging against civilians in Gaza since 7 October 2023. At the same time, Israel refuses to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Israel also continues to refuse to attend the United Nations Conference on the Establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East, which recently held its fourth session, pursuant to decision 73/546.

The League of Arab States emphasizes that it is necessary to begin effectively addressing Israel's opaque nuclear capabilities in order for it to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. It also stresses the importance of accelerating the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference as part and parcel of the NPT indefinite extension, the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan and dozens of relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The League of Arab States and its member States trust in the role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as one of the main mechanisms for addressing disarmament issues in order to establish a world free of weapons of mass destruction. As the United Nations prepares to convene the Summit of the Future in September to reform the multilateral

international system and reactivate the stalled collective security system through the New Agenda for Peace, and as we all look ahead to the second meeting to be held later this year of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference, the 2024 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission should send a positive and strong message. It must reaffirm a united international will through its two Working Groups I and II on disarmament issues, especially nuclear disarmament, following the strong message sent by the Commission at its 1996 session, which I had the honour to personally chair and which adopted the guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones following the success of the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995.

The League of Arab States looks forward to strongly supporting Working Group I in order to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Commission must urge Israel to accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA, as well as to accept the United Nations invitation pursuant to decision 73/546 to attend the fifth session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held at Headquarters in November. That session will be held in the light of the guidelines that were approved by Israel at the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1996, principal among which is that nuclear-weapon-free zones should be established “on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned”, which gives each of the parties the necessary guarantees to take part freely and without preconditions in those negotiations.

Given the current delicate global phase as a result of the growing tensions among the nuclear Powers that could lead either deliberately or inadvertently to a catastrophe — the Arab League stresses that the only way to consolidate trust in the NPT among States is for the nuclear-weapon States to implement their commitments contained in the outcome documents of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences based on committing to article VI of the NPT on the elimination of nuclear arsenals during a specific time frame and to devote the huge material and human resources used in the development of those weapons to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Radical changes are needed by nuclear States to their nuclear doctrines and military alliances. Those States must not pursue unjustified expansion of such alliances, because that would lead to the Cold War situation, which paralysed the international multilateral security system. Furthermore, military confrontation has no place in outer space, especially after we adopted transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space last year.

Every effort must be made to universalize the NPT and fully implement all the elements of its indefinite extension. Failure to do that will risk the collapse of the indefinite extension deal, especially the Middle East resolution. Meanwhile, the nuclear-weapon States must fulfil their commitments under paragraph 10 of the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan and uphold the principle of no first use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That principle and commitment must be reaffirmed and included in the resolution on negative security guarantees of non-nuclear-weapon States adopted by the Security Council in conjunction with every session of the NPT Review Conference.

In conclusion, the Arab League supports the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States on the need to reach substantive and effective recommendations that promote transparency and confidence-building measures related to emerging technologies in the context of international security, above all with respect to the use of emerging technologies, including investment in artificial intelligence (AI) and its effect on military applications, especially lethal autonomous weapons. That should also include the consideration of the negative effects of the excessive use of AI on automatic weapons control, based on the principle of human responsibility. That will promote the ability of the developing countries to reduce the digital and technological gap in order to guarantee their safe access to the peaceful nuclear technology that is necessary for development.

The Chair: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention is limited to five minutes.

Mr. Al Ashkar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take the floor to respond to the statement of the representative of the Israeli entity yesterday (see

A/CN.10/PV.393). My delegation strongly rejects the contents of his statement, and we wish to share the following comments to correct that information.

The representative of Israel claimed that the Middle East is facing a culture of non-compliance and expressed his concern about that. He was desperately trying to spread disinformation and shift attention away from the risks of the nuclear arsenal that his entity is managing without any international supervision. The Israeli entity is not qualified to give lessons on compliance with international legal obligations, as his entity is the only one in the Middle East with a vast arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. It refuses to accede to any relevant international treaties and refuses to submit its nuclear installations and stockpiles to international oversight. It also refuses to join any efforts to create a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. That is all anyone needs to see the true face of Israel.

The arguments of the representative of the Israeli entity to justify his entity's refusal to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East cannot conceal Israel's disregard of the regional and international will to establish such a zone. Israel is founded on aggression and occupation and has for decades refused to implement the dozens of Security Council resolutions calling for its withdrawal from the lands it occupies. Through its State terrorism and repeated military attacks against the Syrian territories, it disregards international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The most recent example of that was the attack yesterday against the Iranian consulate in a district of the Syrian capital, Damascus, inhabited by civilians, resulting in the martyrdom of or injuries to all Syrians and Iranians on the premises, as well as civilians who were in the area when the attack took place.

The baseless accusations that the representative of the Israeli entity makes against Syria reflect the hysteria of his entity when faced with the terrible failure of its war against the Palestinian people in Gaza. The Israeli brutality makes no distinction between civilian objects or protected diplomacy in line with international law, which is not surprising for an outlaw entity that does not respect international legitimacy. Throughout its aggressive wars, Israel's history has been based on making no distinction between civilian and military targets. As for the lies contained in the statement of Israel's representative concerning the use of chemical

weapons in Syria, they do not deserve to be answered. They are categorically rejected as we know what their purpose is and they lack credibility because they come from an anti-Syrian entity.

With regard to the allegations concerning cooperation between Syria and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), I would like to note only that Israel must subject its facilities to the oversight of the Agency's safeguards regime in order to fulfil its alleged commitment to the non-proliferation regime in the Middle East. After acknowledging responsibility for its aggression against Syria following a decade of denial and lying, Israel should cooperate with the IAEA to clarify the nature of the missiles that it launched during that aggression instead of spreading lies about my country.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the State of Palestine.

Mr. Kasabri (Palestine): All Palestinians are in mourning. Christians in Palestine did not celebrate Christmas or Easter this year, in the land where Jesus was born, crucified and resurrected. The prominent Palestinian Reverend Munther Isaac delivered a sermon during an Easter vigil for Gaza, in which he said,

“It has been 175 days since this genocide began — 175 days of bombardment, siege and starvation. I would never have thought that we would still be witnessing this by Easter. I thought surely that this violence would have stopped by now. I thought world leaders have some conscience. At the end of the day, I was wrong apparently”.

As of today, more than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 75,000 have been injured, in air land and sea attacks by Israeli occupation forces in Gaza. The vast majority of the victims are women and children — more than 13,500 children have been killed to date. Hardly a family remains in Gaza that is not traumatized by loss and some families have been entirely wiped out — killed by Israeli bombs, missiles, drones, lethal autonomous weapons and even internationally prohibited weapons and ammunition, as well as other weapons that continue to be shipped to it by its allies, with no regard for their own legal, humanitarian and moral obligations or the direct, deadly and destructive impact of their actions. In Gaza, a genocide is being perpetrated in full view of the world. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, has concluded that,

“[t]he overwhelming nature and scale of the Israeli assault on Gaza and the destructive conditions of life it has inflicted reveal an intent to physically destroy Palestinians as a group”. (A/HRC/55/73, para. 93)

Nowhere is safe in Gaza. No one is safe in Gaza, Everyone could be a target — the elderly, women, children, medical staff members, doctors, teachers, students, babies in incubators, patients in intensive care units, United Nations personnel. The list is long. And yet the Israeli occupation army targeted today a convoy of the World Central Kitchen carrying hundreds of tons of humanitarian food relief, which resulted in the tragic killing of seven of its staff members. We have been informed that the seven people killed are from Australia, Poland, the United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Palestine. The Chief Executive Officer of the organization, Erin Gore, said,

“This is not only an attack against the WCK, this is an attack on humanitarian organizations showing up in the most dire of situations where food is being used as a weapon of war. This is unforgivable.”

There is not a single rule or principle of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, that it has not deliberately and repeatedly breached, no indignity that it has not inflicted on our people. Israel's enjoyment of impunity and the failure to hold it accountable, added to the unconditional support of some, has given it the insolence to affront the whole world, which is widely in support of a ceasefire in Gaza. It had the rudeness to announce, minutes after the adoption of Security Council resolution 2728 (2024) on 25 March, its refusal to abide by the resolution, which calls for a ceasefire for the month of Ramadan, exactly as it refused to abide by the International Court of Justice's first and second provisional measures in the case presented by South Africa, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*. Both those Security Council and International Court of Justice decisions are legally binding. We demand measures for upholding international law, rules and resolutions and ensuring an immediate ceasefire in Gaza to allow humanitarian aid to our people, who have been starving for months and who have been fasting during the holy month of Ramadan without being able to break the daily fast with anything, and to allow humanitarian aid to help medical personnel treat injured people and prevent

the spread of disease. We refuse to allow any transfer of our people. We have to prevent Israel from expelling our people from their own home and land once again.

Mr. Li Linlin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China resolutely opposes and categorically rejects the unfounded accusations made by the representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union against China's nuclear policy (see A/CN.10/PV.392 and A/CN.10/PV.391, respectively). I would like to make the following points in response.

On multiple previous occasions, as well as in the meeting this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.393), China has emphasized that it has always limited the size of its nuclear arsenal to the minimum necessary for its national security. China has not participated in the past — and will not participate in the future — in the nuclear arms race. China has always adhered to the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time, under any circumstances, and has made the unequivocal and unconditional commitment not to use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States. As long as no country uses nuclear weapons against China, it will not be threatened by Chinese nuclear weapons, which is the most meaningful form of transparency. May I ask which other nuclear-weapon State is capable of such transparency? If all nuclear-weapon States could make the same commitment as China, the world would certainly be a safer place. The purpose of China's retention of nuclear weapons is to deter others from using or threatening the use of nuclear weapons against China and ensure its national strategic security. China's strengthening of its strategic nuclear capacity is necessary for its national defence and military forces under the current circumstances, for the replacement of old and outdated equipment, as well as for ensuring the reliability and safety of its nuclear arsenal. China's limited nuclear forces are entirely defensive in nature and do not target any country.

In their statements, the representatives of the United States and other countries' hyped up the nuclear threat allegedly posed by China. That is nothing but a trick — the thief crying "Stop, thief". The international community should instead be really concerned about the negative tendencies of the United States vis-à-vis nuclear weapons. The United States has always insisted on the policy of first use of nuclear weapons, which runs counter to the expectations of the international community. The United States has spent trillions of dollars to upgrade the trinity of nuclear forces,

developing new types of nuclear weapons while lowering the threshold of their use. It continues to push forward the deployment of global anti-missile defence systems and seeks to deploy land-based intermediate-range missiles in Europe and Asia and the Pacific, thereby jeopardizing regional and global security, balance and stability. The United States has yet to ratify the Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

The United States has also continued its extended deterrence towards its allies and has attempted to replicate the nuclear-sharing policy in Asia and the Pacific. It has been cooperating with other States on nuclear submarines, which involves the transfer of weapons and nuclear materials to non-nuclear-weapon States. Instead of being concerned about China's nuclear policy, we encourage the United States to reflect on itself and take practical steps to respond to the concerns of the international community.

China's nuclear arsenal is of a totally different order of magnitude from those of the United States and Russia, and it is neither fair nor reasonable to ask China to participate in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The United States and Russia, with more than 90 per cent of the world's nuclear weapons, should assume their special and primary responsibility to continue to drastically and substantially reduce their nuclear arsenals and create conditions for other nuclear-weapon countries to engage in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. China is of the view that a moratorium without a clear definition or scope and that is not verifiable is of little practical significance. Instead, it is detrimental to the political momentum of the international community's efforts to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty. The fact that some nuclear-weapon States can transfer weapon-grade fissile materials to each other without any restriction makes their proposal for a moratorium doubly hypocritical.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation categorically rejects all the baseless accusations made against us today and yesterday (see A/CN.10/PV.393). We must respond to the provocative statements made by the representatives of some Western countries about Russian-Belarusian cooperation in the military nuclear sphere.

In fact, it is the NATO countries that have been pursuing a destabilizing policy in that area for many years, through a self-proclaimed nuclear alliance. For decades, members of the North Atlantic bloc have practised and continue to develop so-called nuclear-sharing, a practice dependent on American nuclear weapons being deployed at six military facilities in five countries on the European continent, of which the United States is not a part. Nuclear weapons, which Washington keeps at forward bases thousands of kilometres from its national territory and is actively modernizing, are capable of being quickly used to defeat an increasingly wide range of strategic targets in the territory of Russia and Belarus. Moreover, it is no secret that it is precisely such tasks that are being worked out in the course of the relevant exercises, with the involvement of the second echelon of NATO countries, which are ready to provide air escort and cover for the nuclear-weapon delivery platforms of the United States. At the same time, nearly all the members of the alliance are involved in the direct planning for the use of nuclear weapons.

The issue of joint nuclear missions has become increasingly important in the current conditions, as Russia must take into account the sharp escalation of threats related to the West's policy of inflicting a so-called strategic defeat on our country, including the possibility of a direct military clash between nuclear Powers. Our closest allies in Belarus are also experiencing increasing military and political pressure from the United States and NATO, including through the efforts of countries directly bordering the Union State of Russia and Belarus, some of which have long and openly sought to deploy part of the United States nuclear arsenal on their own territory. We showed restraint for a long time. For years, we tried in vain to persuade Washington to follow our example and return all its nuclear weapons to its national territory; we therefore had to take other steps. The measures taken by Russia and Belarus are necessary and retaliatory in nature. They are taken strictly in the framework of the logic of deterrence. They are measured steps that are not in line with NATO practice, as they are being carried out on the territory of the two brotherly countries of the Union State, which form a single defence space. The issue of reviewing joint decisions taken by Russia and Belarus in the nuclear sphere is completely unrealistic without the United States and NATO abandoning the harmful course of purposefully

undermining our security and without the complete withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from Europe and the elimination of the corresponding infrastructure.

In connection with Western countries' criticism of Russia's decision to suspend the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), we wish to make the following points. That decision was the natural outcome of the deterioration in Russian-American relations caused by the United States, including the serious exacerbation of military and political disagreements. Washington's extreme hostility and its policy of fomenting and maliciously escalating the conflict in Ukraine and then directly undermining our national security have all radically changed the circumstances under which the new START was concluded. The United States has undermined the fundamental principles of the Treaty and the understandings enshrined in it, without which it would not have been concluded. In particular, it has ignored the principle of indivisible security, the commitment of the parties to building relations based on trust and cooperation and the recognized relationship between START and anti-ballistic missiles. In addition, Washington has for a long time violated the key quantitative restrictions of the Treaty in a significant way by illegitimately excluding more than 100 strategic offensive weapons from the count. Moreover, having provided military-technical and intelligence assistance to the regime in Kyiv, the Americans are blatantly carrying out provocative strikes on Russian strategic facilities that have been declared under the new START. At a time when the NATO nuclear bloc, consolidated on an anti-Russian basis, has announced its intention to inflict a so-called strategic defeat on us, we have been forced to seriously consider the combined nuclear arsenal of the United States, the United Kingdom and France, with which they are jointly capable of turning on Russia. Therefore, the suspension of the new START is a forced, legitimate and fully justified step on our part.

The calls by the United States and its allies for bilateral arms control talks, supposedly in isolation from the negative military-political context and the overall depressing state of relations between Russia and the United States, are cynical and inadequate. The goal is to place new restrictions on the Russian nuclear arsenal under catchy slogans, while disregarding the West's aggregate advantage in non-nuclear potentials. We do not reject the idea of arms control in itself but we do not see any basis for its implementation without comprehensive efforts to strengthen the security and

stability architecture, which should be carried out with respect for Russia's fundamental interests and should aim to eliminate the most serious problems created by the United States, which lie at the heart of our key disputes with the West. We do not see that Washington has the necessary political will or readiness to radically revise its extremely hostile anti-Russian course, which blocks the very possibility of substantive and results-oriented cooperation on security issues.

The situation surrounding the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which leaves much to be desired, is the result of a lack of any significant steps towards ratification by the United States, the main initiator of the Treaty, since 1999. At the same time, Washington maintains its test site in Nevada in a state of readiness, without abandoning the idea of conducting a full-fledged nuclear test as part of the modernization of its arsenal. We are tired of waiting for the United States to fulfil its promises and ratify the CTBT. We consider references by United States politicians and diplomats to the alleged impossible task of taking a decision through the United States Congress to be excuses. It was Washington's irresponsible policy towards the CTBT that led us to withdraw our ratification of the Treaty. At the same time, we would like to underscore that Russia remains a signatory to the Treaty, with all the rights and obligations that entails. My country continues to participate fully in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and to observe the national moratorium on nuclear testing, which dates back to 1992. Russia's commitment to the CTBT is exemplified by the completion in December 2023 of our segment of the international monitoring system — a key element of the Treaty's verification mechanism.

I wish to provide a number of clarifications of the situation concerning the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. As a result of the referendums held, the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics and the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions became part of Russia as new entities. The Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has also been transferred to Russian jurisdiction. A management organization that ensures its operation has been created. Stopping the Ukrainian attacks and provocations against the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the city of Enerhodar, where the plant's employees and their families live, also remains a relevant issue. Kyiv's rash actions would not be possible if it were not for the constant political support provided

to Ukraine by Western countries. It is precisely such support that inspires the Ukrainian authorities with a false sense of impunity, inciting them to reach new levels of recklessness.

Ukraine has blocked all the initiatives of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) aimed at strengthening the safety of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, from the draft trilateral agreement to two separate bilateral agreements between Russia and the IAEA and Ukraine and the IAEA. The Ukrainian authorities also rejected the proposal by the Agency's Director General to establish an operational and physical nuclear safety protection zone at the plant. Moreover, Kyiv did not support the five principles to ensure the safety of the plant outlined by Mr. Grossi at a Security Council meeting held on 30 May 2023 (see S/PV.9334). Mr. Grossi's recommendations were grounds for the IAEA secretariat to finally make public the information that it has about the Ukrainian attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, as well as to openly condemn Kyiv's senseless actions.

For our part, we have always supported the IAEA Director General's proposals aimed at strengthening the nuclear safety of the plant. We have never deployed and do not plan to deploy military contingents or military equipment intended for offensive actions on the territory of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Only those forces that are necessary for its protection, as well as for the elimination of the possible consequences of Ukrainian attacks, are currently stationed at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We will continue to ensure the protection of the plant in such a way as to prevent Kyiv and the collective West from posing threats to its safe functioning. Despite the obstacles that Ukraine has placed in our way, Russia has done everything in its power to ensure the safe and effective presence of the IAEA at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant since September 2022. We stand ready to continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Agency's secretariat on the matter.

Mr. Jong Chol Mun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to exercise its right of reply in response to the provocative statements made today by the representatives of Japan, the Republic of Korea and certain other countries, including the United Kingdom, Ukraine and France.

My delegation categorically rejects those stereotyped, groundless and absurd accusations against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which

were intended to mislead the international community and allow the countries concerned to evade all their responsibility for the deterioration of the situation in the Korean peninsula. As we stated yesterday (see A/CN.10/PV.392), it is not the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but the United States and its lackey States that sparked military confrontation, thereby deteriorating the situation in the peninsula. In recent years, the United States, along with the Republic of Korea, has become increasingly bellicose and frantic in its attempts to provoke and invade the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Since the beginning of this year, the United States, together with its lackey States, including the Republic of Korea, conducted a host of joint war drills with the mobilization of all sorts of strategic hardware such as nuclear strategic bombers, aircraft carriers and submarines, thereby turning the Korean peninsula into a general depot of the strategic nuclear assets of the United States and the most unstable zone of nuclear war danger. There are schemes for several more provocative war drills this year.

It is quite clear, in terms of military common sense, that large-scale joint drills such as Freedom Shield are not annual exercises of a defensive nature, as touted by the United States and the Republic of Korea. What cannot be overlooked is that such dangerous military moves coincide with the operationalization of the so-called Nuclear Consultative Group, whose mission is to plan, operate and implement a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. All the facts clearly prove that given their nature, character, scale and content, the frantic war drills staged by the United States in the Republic of Korea are not just military drills but are nuclear-war-oriented for a pre-emptive strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, pursuant to the United States' political and military option to provoke confrontation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and ultimately ignite war. Therefore, no one can dispute the Democratic People's Republic of Korea right to self-defence and to build up its physical strength to deter those aggressive military actions, which is quite natural and reasonable. In the face of those alleged regular and annual hostile military acts, which are taking place with an unprecedented frequency and intensity, our actions in response will also be taken regularly and annually, with overwhelming frequency and intensity at a highly unprecedented level. Any missile test or training launches by our military are part of measures for strengthening the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea's national defence capabilities, which is entirely our sovereign right and should never be subject to denunciation or interference by anyone.

Japan is unqualified to fuss over the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's self-defence measures. Japan has already ripped off the mask of a pacific State that has been much touted by successive Governments since the end of the Second World War, and it has even taken the brakes off its so-called defensive policy. As a country that inflicted unspeakable damage on the Korean and Asian peoples in the past century, Japan is scheming to possess weaponry for a pre-emptive strike, while continuously increasing its defence expenditure. That dangerous military move really plays havoc with regional peace and stability. Worse still, Japan continues to discharge nuclear-contaminated water in defiance of strong protests by neighbouring and Pacific countries. Japan must immediately stop its dangerous militaristic moves and discharging nuclear-contaminated waters; otherwise, it will face greater condemnation and rejection from the international community.

Mr. Kalmar (Israel): I would like to respond to a number of comments made today and yesterday (see A/CN.10/PV.393) by previous speakers. I will keep my statement short, as I really do not intend to shift the meeting any further from its professional focus, as others have done — including the representatives of Iran and Syria and others such as the representatives of Lebanon and Tunisia — all with regard to Israel's war against Hamas.

No shameful or politically motivated accusations, such as those made by the speakers I mentioned, will tilt, shift or take away my country's legitimate right to defend itself against the terrorists who seek to destroy a country and people, such as those who perpetrated the attack on 7 October. It is unfortunate that the speakers I mentioned not only do not condemn terrorism but they support it. It is our understanding that the United Nations Disarmament Commission should professionally discuss the means to create a safer and more secure world. If the speakers I mentioned wish to use this important forum to support terrorism, that damages the forum's integrity in our eyes.

Iran is in no moral position to lecture or preach about nuclear threats, as Iran is in itself accountable for the mistrust in the Middle East arms control architecture and has violated its commitments to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and

its safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, as demonstrated by the Agency over and over again. Its track record throughout the years is well known — it lies and hides its true intentions. Furthermore, I would like to remind all the delegations here that Iran is the world's primary terrorism-sponsoring State, as demonstrated by its support for Hamas over the years, before and since the 7 October massacre. Iran is the world's biggest proliferator of small arms and light weapons, heavy weapons, rockets, missiles and other related technologies, such as unmanned aerial vehicles. All that is done in the name of promoting its radical agenda and destabilizing the entire Middle East and beyond.

With regard to Syria, there is not enough irony in the world to describe the representatives of that country talking about weapons of mass destruction or moral conduct. They are the representatives of a Government that killed hundreds of its own people with chemical weapons. The representatives of Syria may wish to respond to questions about the existence of undeclared nuclear activities in Syria, which are relevant and worrisome, as well as to the open questions related to the nature and operational status of specific sites and materials in Syria. We should all urge them to answer such questions.

Finally, it is regrettable that the representative of the Palestinian Authority chose to deliver a statement containing such false accusations. Nearly six months after the 7 October massacre, the Palestinian representatives, including today, continue to reject condemning Hamas for its heinous crimes or even mentioning Hamas in their statements — as if Hamas never existed. Did Hamas really never exist? We should all certainly urge them to do so one day.

Mr. Kim Hoon (Republic of Korea): I will be brief. It is deeply regrettable that we are obliged to respond to the baseless allegation made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Let us put the record straight.

Whatever the Democratic People's Republic of Korea does is illegal, poses a great threat to international peace and security, constitutes a violation of Security Council resolutions and gravely undermines the non-proliferation regime that we are supposed to discuss together. Let us not put the cart before the horse. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ever-growing unlawful nuclear and missile threats are

the very reason why we are strengthening extended deterrence cooperation — and not the other way around. The allegation by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that we are doing so because we have a hostile policy towards his country is simply not true, because there is no such a thing as a hostile policy. If he claims that the Freedom Shield exercises are an example of that — we will have to look at why those exercises started. If he looks it up on Google, he will find out why.

Mr. Rahimi Majd (Islamic Republic of Iran): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply in response to the unsubstantiated allegations made by the representatives of the United Kingdom, Ireland, Ukraine, France and the Israeli regime about Iran's nuclear programme, its defensive missile programme and the Ukraine conflict.

While categorically rejecting those accusations, my delegation once again emphasizes that Iran's nuclear programme is fully peaceful and in line with its inalienable right to develop research on, produce and utilize nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as granted under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Those unsubstantiated allegations have been used by certain States to undertake policies and actions that have unlawfully prejudiced the legitimate legal interests of my country under the grand bargain of the NPT. Moreover, those politically motivated, baseless and unsubstantiated accusations serve to distract the attention and resources of the international community from addressing genuine and pressing concerns, namely, the failure of nuclear States to uphold their obligations under the NPT, the Israeli regime's nuclear weapons programme and the ongoing atrocities and systematic genocide perpetrated by the Israeli apartheid regime against the Palestinian people.

I would like to reiterate and highlight once again that the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently taken a stance of impartiality since the outset of the Ukraine conflict and that its principled position remains unchanged. Any claim with regard to Iran's involvement in the sale, export or transfer of arms in contravention of its international obligations is completely unfounded and categorically rejected.

I would also like to highlight that the representative of the Israeli regime resorted to a disinformation campaign to distort the reality of the terrorist and apartheid nature of his country's regime. In Israel's

recent heinous and terrorist missile attack against Iran's diplomatic premises in Damascus, several Iranian personnel, all of whom had diplomatic immunity and were present at the Iftar programme during the holy month of Ramadan in the building in question at the time of the attack, were martyred. That attack violates the immunity of diplomatic personnel and premises and clearly violates international regulations, including the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963.

Mr. Sarwani (Pakistan): I feel compelled to take the floor in response to the comments made by the representative of India.

The observations made by the representative of Pakistan during the general debate may be uncomfortable for India but they remain irrefutable facts. It is a fact that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute has been on the agenda of the Security Council for more than 75 years. It is also a fact that the Security Council decided in all relevant resolutions that the final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined by its people through a United Nations-supervised plebiscite, and India is bound to comply with that decision in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations. Let me reaffirm that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory and is not by any means a so-called integral part of India. Repeating a wrong position would not make it acceptable at any point or in any forum. Contrary to India's assertion, the situation in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and India's massive arms build-up, aggressive posturing and war-fighting doctrines are entirely relevant to the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as they carry grave implications for regional and international peace and security and therefore impinge on efforts to achieve disarmament.

With regard to the draft programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) during the negotiations conducted by the Indian presidency in January and February, we witnessed once again an obsession with a fissile material cut-off treaty on the basis of the Shannon mandate — which is a cost-free measure for nuclear-weapon-possessing States that have amassed huge quantities of fissile material stocks far in excess of their defence needs — unlike Pakistan, whose national security will be directly and adversely affected by a treaty that provides only for a cut-off in fissile material production. The CD was once again made hostage to a single issue that has been the principal cause

of reinforcing its long-standing deadlock. Achieving progress in the CD is contingent on the flexibility and compromise of all delegations. The failure to achieve consensus in the CD also reflects on the lack of sincere and inclusive efforts by its presidency to bring all Member States on board.

With regard to terrorism, Pakistan has rendered innumerable sacrifices in the international fight against terrorism and has achieved unparalleled success in defeating that menace. The threat of terrorism that Pakistan faces today is orchestrated, supported and financed by our eastern neighbour, which is a known State sponsor of terrorism. Previously it used to perpetrate terrorism against its immediate neighbours. Now its terrorist franchise has gone global to countries farther away. Pakistan has concrete evidence of the sponsorship of the terrorist organizations that have carried out multiple attacks against its civilian and military targets. The spy captured on our soil, Naval Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav, testified to their vast terrorist network.

We hope that the international community will play its due role in addressing such attempts to undermine the peace and security of the entire region which has a direct impact on the prospects for disarmament at the regional and global levels.

Ms. Fisher (United States of America): I am afraid that I am compelled to take the floor to respond to the Russian representative's allegations. As we have repeatedly seen, Russia continues to recycle its tired, blatantly false claims against the United States, Ukraine and the West to divert attention away from its war crimes in Ukraine and its irresponsible nuclear activities.

As Secretary Blinken has noted, Russia's strikes are hitting schools, hospitals and residents in Ukraine. They are destroying critical infrastructure, which supplies drinking water, electricity and gas to keep civilians from freezing to death.

Already the human costs of the Kremlin's unwarranted, unprovoked and unjustified war in Ukraine are staggering. The United Nations has confirmed that more than 10,000 civilians have been killed and many more have been wounded. The actual numbers are probably much higher. Members of Russia's forces have committed war crimes. It is clear that the war against Ukraine is proving more challenging for Putin than he expected. The war has taken a significant toll on Russian troops and has not gone according to the Kremlin's expectations. Putin's decision has already resulted in more than 300,000 Russian casualties.

Two things are increasingly clear. First, the Ukrainian people are not going to give up. Secondly, this is Putin's war, and he could single-handedly end it by withdrawing Russian forces from all of Ukraine's sovereign territory.

Regarding the claims concerning NATO, that is a defensive alliance that States voluntarily seek to join to deter aggression and coercion against them, to advance and preserve peace and stability. Russia did not raise NATO as an issue of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) until 2015 — 45 years after the Treaty had entered into force. After its seizure of Crimea, we should recognize Russia's attention to that issue for what it is, which is again a diversionary tactic from its own actions.

In response to the Iranian representative's statement that the United States ignores the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as disarmament, the United States has donated \$242 million to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to promote peaceful uses with another \$50 million to be donated by the end of this year. We are one of the largest contributors to peaceful uses, and again we have cut our nuclear arsenal by 88 per cent. That is hardly ignoring peaceful uses or disarmament. We are currently researching and developing new technologies for future disarmament agreements.

Iran probably needs to take a look at its own activities. Again, I reiterate, after five years of stonewalling, Iran has failed to provide the IAEA with the clarifications required by its safeguard obligations necessary to resolve outstanding questions regarding possible undeclared nuclear materials and activities. In addition, Iran continues to expand its nuclear programme by installing additional advanced centrifuges and producing highly enriched uranium for which it has no credible purposes. No other country in the world today produces uranium enriched up to 60 per cent for the purposes that Iran claims.

Iran's undeclared modifications of advanced centrifuge cascades at Fordow last year was a clear violation of its safeguards obligations; and the IAEA's subsequent detection at the facility of uranium particles enriched to more than 80 per cent intensified tensions and pushed unprecedented boundaries. We call on Iran to take steps back to build international confidence rather than to continue to undermine the IAEA's essential assurances.

Finally, I believe that I just heard our Chinese colleague claim that Washington planned on stationing nuclear weapons in Asia. The United States has no plans to forward-deploy nuclear weapons in Asia or on any Asian ally's territory.

The Chair: I now have on my list of requests to exercise the right of reply Japan and Saudi Arabia for first statements in exercise of the right of reply and then the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation for second statements in exercise of the right of reply. And we have the sword hanging of a hard stop at 6 p.m. I kindly urge representatives to please keep their remarks brief and preferably within the time limit.

Ms. Matsuzaki (Japan): I am obliged to exercise the right of reply in response to the unfounded statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I would like to emphasize that in the more than 70 years since the end of the Second World War, Japan has faced the facts of history in a spirit of humility, consistently respected democracy and human rights and contributed to the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the international community.

Under its Constitution, Japan has adhered to the basic precepts of maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy, not becoming a military Power that poses a threat to other countries and observing the three non-nuclear principles. Under those precepts, Japan will never change the course it has taken as a peace-loving nation. Our defence capability is and will be for Japan's defence as it looks towards the future in the face of the most severe and complex security environment we have seen since the end of the Second World War. We ensure transparency of the content of our defence-related expenditures by adhering to strict civilian control of the military.

Regarding the safety of discharging Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS)-treated water into the sea, although I do not see the relevance of that argument to today's topic, I would like to make clear that this matter should not be subject to political discussion. I will not go into detail on the discharge of ALPS-treated water but let me emphasize that the IAEA concluded in its comprehensive report and its latest report on the first review mission after the start of discharge that Japan's approach to the discharge of ALPS-treated water into

the sea is consistent with relevant international safety standards and the discharge will have a negligible radiological impact on people and the environment.

Mr. Moharram (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The Arab Group condemns in the strongest terms the Israeli occupation's ongoing perpetration of terrible crimes against defenceless civilians in the Gaza Strip, which has resulted in 33,000 martyrs and more than 75,000 wounded, not to mention the other massacres committed by the Israeli occupation forces against the defenceless civilians in the Gaza Strip. The representative of the Israeli entity is trying to obfuscate those facts.

In that regard, the Arab Group holds Israel, the occupying Power, responsible for committing those crimes and demands that the international community oblige Israel to enter into an immediate ceasefire and to comply with resolution 2728 (2024). We demand that humanitarian aid be allowed to enter and that the forced displacement of the Palestinian people be put to an end. The supplying of weapons to Israel must stop, and the State of Palestine, along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, must be recognized on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant international resolutions. Palestine should also become a full-fledged member of the United Nations.

The Chair: I now turn to the list of speakers requesting the floor to exercise their second right of reply, with a five-minute time limit.

Mr. Mun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to exercise its second right of reply. It is deeply disappointing that the Republic of Korea and Japan are stubbornly distorting facts with unjustifiable sophistry, which my delegation once again strongly rejects.

The security situation the current peninsula is rapidly deteriorating due to reckless military provocations by the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with outside forces. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been exposed to direct threat from the United States, the largest nuclear Power, and under constant risk of war for several decades. That is why the possession of strong military capabilities, including a nuclear deterrent, is the inevitable option

for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be able to protect the security and future of the State and its people.

My delegation would like to stress once again that the right to self-defence, recognized by international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, is to protect the sovereignty of our State. Therefore, there can be no compromise in that respect. As for the so-called Security Council resolutions, my country has never recognized those illegitimate documents and rejects them entirely as merely political products pursued by hostile forces against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with the aim of strangling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at any cost.

It is historical fact that the Republic of Korea, through its successive Governments or regimes has persistently pursued extremely hostile policies towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, perceiving the latter as its arch enemy. The Republic of Korea and Japan are urged to reflect upon their own hostile rhetoric and actions, rather than finding fault with others with absurd accusations. They are advised to not meddle in others' affairs with unfounded arguments, but rather to mind themselves first.

Mr. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are compelled to take the floor once again for our right of reply in order to respond to the completely unfounded comments from the United States, which have no bearing on reality.

Our American colleague is again trying to replace reality with certain inventions, which are shaped by the media in Western countries and, clearly, by their own imagination. With regard to the reasons for the special military operation in Ukraine, yesterday we went into detail on these reasons, and I invite the delegates to look into the position expressed there.

On the groundless accusations regarding violations of international law and international humanitarian law by the Russian armed forces, that is all a fabrication, with no factual corroboration or relation to reality. The Russian armed forces act strictly in line with international law, including international humanitarian law.

Instead, the delegation of the United States of America should be looking at Ukraine, which is under its patronage, and the conduct of the armed forces of that country, including the many violations recorded

by international bodies, the Russian Federation and other States regarding strikes on civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as terrorist operations, on the territory of their own country and the territory of the Russian Federation. One need only read the news to see that every day there is a terrorist attack on civilian objects on the territory of Russian Federation. There were a few such cases today, which again injured a number of civilians.

Another important issue is that Ukraine is not complying with its international obligations on the fundamental legal documents on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Anti-personnel mines are being used by the Kyiv regime's armed forces, without limit. Then why are the States in this room that are parties to that Convention not speaking up about it? That is on their conscience.

On statistics of losses among Russian armed forces during the special military operation in Ukraine, we expected condolences from the United States of America, rather than attempts to skew these figures and speculate on the terrible consequences of this operation. With regard to the remarks of the representative of the United States, we ask that the Russian Federation present its own statistics and for the United States to not try to count, on our behalf, the losses that our country has suffered in carrying out this operation. We would also invite the representative to look at official data from the Russian Ministry of Defence instead of trying to once again replace those official statistics with fabricated statistics pulled out of thin air.

As for defining NATO as some kind of defence alliance, that is only the official title that appears in the document of the alliance. Unfortunately, there is also the grim reality. Moreover, the alliance has openly called itself a nuclear alliance. There are military exercises, with nuclear sharing, focused, *inter alia*, on training on how to use nuclear weapons, and involving non-nuclear States in the planning for the use of this type of weapon.

To respond to the statement of the delegation of the United States, saying that NATO is supporting peace and stability, I would like to hear some specific examples of where NATO's activity has brought peace and stability. Perhaps we should ask this delegation of

Serbia, whose country suffered bombing at the hands of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, the Western countries are not even able to agree to carry out a meeting of the Security Council on this topic, which has been blocked for procedural reasons.

I would also like to respond to some of the unfounded statements of Western countries regarding the cooperation between Russia, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. On many occasions, we have set out our valuations on that issue, such as in letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council. We note the fabricated, evidence-free and politically biased nature of the American-European claims, which are founded on suspicions, with nothing to back them up, empty claims and conclusions that do not hold water. All of these are presented as facts. Thus far, no one has provided any convincing material proof. Indeed, today, during the briefing, Mr. Kirby openly said that they do not have the relevant evidence to confirm that such supplies took place. These insinuations are nothing more than another cynical and hypocritical attempt to increase pressure on our countries and distract attention from the senseless escalatory reaction of Washington and its allies in various regions of the world. It is they that are the real source of threats to international peace and security.

On the question of extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), the position of Russia was set forth in detail at the Security Council meeting on 28 March (see S/PV.9591). We are convinced that it is high time for the Council to update the sanctions regime regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Our country has on many occasions put forward various ideas on that, trying to adapt the restrictions to the quickly changing reality on the ground. However, time and again, all of our attempts came up against the absolute refusal of countries in the West to move away from their destructive and punitive mindset towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Panel of Experts of the 1718 Committee was used as a weapon in this situation. The Panel stopped being able to carry out its direct responsibilities because it was not able to carry out a sober analysis of the sanctions regime. Against that backdrop, Russia advocated that the Security Council take the decision to have an open and frank review of the Council's sanctions in respect of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

moving the restrictions to an annual basis. However, the United States and its allies did not want to listen to us and did not include our ideas in the draft resolution (S/2024/255) that was put to the vote in the Security Council on 28 March. In the circumstances, support of the American document was not possible because there was no added value to the work of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 Committee.

Mr. Kim Sunghoon (Republic of Korea): We are forced to exercise the right of reply in response to the statement just made by the representative of the Russian Federation about the renewal of the mandate of the Panel of Experts. I can clearly attest that I was present at the negotiations and that I took part in all negotiations on the text. Despite all the compromises that we presented, the Russian Federation did not make any compromise at all. We have to call into question why the Russian Federation went to great lengths to veto the renewal of the mandate of the Panel of Experts, which has been in place for the past 14 years, given that there has been a suspicion of arms dealings between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. Nothing has changed over the past few years, except for that. That is why we strongly suspect that the ulterior motive of the Russian Federation's veto is merely that of hiding and destroying the CCTV before it is caught red-handed.

The Chair: There are no other speakers on the list speakers in the exercise the right of reply.

Before we adjourn the meeting, allow me to deliver a few brief concluding remarks.

I thank all delegations for the kind words addressed to the Chair and for adhering broadly to the time limit prescribed for the statements. I also thank the Secretariat very much for the professional support during these two days of a general exchange of views.

Several concrete ideas and suggestions were floated in the statements delivered by delegations. We indeed had a very rich and substantive exchange of views. Those ideas and concrete suggestions will be very useful and can be elaborated on and discussed during the meetings of the two Working Groups under the able guidance of the respective Chairs. It is hoped that we will have substantive and results-oriented deliberations in the working groups, with the continued active and constructive engagement of all delegations.

We will meet again in the plenary setting on Friday, 19 April. The Bureau, however, shall meet from time to time, as required, to take stock of the proceedings of the Working Groups. I of course remain available and accessible to all delegations, should they so require.

Before I adjourn the meeting, I would like to inform delegations that the first meeting of Working Group I will be held in this conference room tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.