



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

First Committee

16th meeting

Thursday, 24 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Dabbashi (Libya)

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

Agenda items 89 to 107 (continued)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with the programme of work and timetable for this phase of our work, as contained in document A/C.1/68/CRP.2, the Committee is scheduled to hear two introductory statements on the “Conventional weapons” cluster. The first was delivered yesterday, as members will recall, and today we will begin by hearing the second. Thereafter, the Committee will hear the remaining speakers under the clusters on “Disarmament machinery”, “Other weapons of mass destruction” and “Outer space (disarmament aspects)”.

I now have the pleasure of welcoming the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, Mr. David Robin Wensley of South Africa, to make the second introductory statement on the “Conventional weapons” cluster.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa), Chair, Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development: Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor in the context of this briefing, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as

Chair of the First Committee and to extend similar congratulations to the members of your Bureau. We have seen that you have thus far guided our deliberations with great success.

At the outset, as Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, it would be remiss of me not to thank my predecessor in this position, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina, who has left a huge mark on the work of previous groups of governmental experts (GGEs) over the past 10 years. It has been an enormous challenge to live up to the work that he managed to achieve.

By its resolution 66/39 of 2 December 2011, the General Assembly requested a group of governmental experts to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register on Conventional Arms and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, relevant deliberations within the United Nations, the views expressed by Member States and reports of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, with a view to taking a decision at its sixty-eighth session. I have the honour to transmit herewith this report (A/68/138 and Add.1).

As the Committee is aware, 15 Member States were appointed to the Group, which held three sessions: the first in Geneva from 8 to 12 April, and the second and third in New York from, respectively, 6 to 10 May and 24 to 28 June. These regular triennial reviews of

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the Register's operation serve the important purpose of assessing the Register's successes, identifying its shortfalls and improving its effectiveness. The fact that the triennial review was postponed and only took place four years after the 2009 GGE is a result of a full 2012 United Nations conventional arms calendar. During those three sessions, a number of divergent views were raised in the context of the Register's relevance, its universality and its further development. Like previous GGEs, this Group agreed that the Register remains an important global measure to strengthen and improve confidence-building among States.

However, while previous GGEs recognized that the Register is the only global transparency measure on conventional-arms transfers, developments over the past months have contributed to transforming that picture. This GGE's deliberations took place against the backdrop of the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). While it can be argued that the ATT is more an arms-control instrument than merely a confidence-building measure, its adoption, nonetheless, has had and will continue to have a direct impact on the operation of the Register.

The report contains an analysis of the issues that were under consideration. The issue of most concern was the downward trend in reporting to the Register, with a mere 52 national reports submitted in 2012. The GGE considered the issue of raising awareness of the Register as a transparency and confidence-building measure among States, the need to build capacity on reporting, the issue of general reporting fatigue and, most of all, the decline in the submission of annual reports and means of encouraging States to submit them. As far as universalizing the Register is concerned, the Group expressed the view that the Secretariat plays a crucial role in maintaining and promoting the Register and that its capacity to do so needs to be enhanced.

The Group also considered at length the modification of the categories on combat aircraft and attack helicopters to include unmanned aerial vehicles. While such reporting is implicit in the Register, a direct reference to include those proved elusive. Similarly, a proposal for including a standardized reporting form for the submission of voluntary information on military holdings and on procurement through national production — innocuous as it may seem to some — could not command consensus in the Group.

The main issue that successive GGEs have grappled with for more than a decade has been the inclusion of

small arms and light weapons as an eighth category of the Register. It is no secret, and it has been referred to in Ambassador Moritán's previous reports on the GGEs that he chaired. Some may have thought that the successful outcome of the 2012 second Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects may have provided an impetus to that debate. However, that again proved not to be the case.

The excessive accumulation, uncontrolled spread and destabilizing effect of those weapons around the world is an issue that affects developing countries, including in Africa, and its exclusion from the Register, in my opinion, remains a serious concern. The Group specifically recommended that the 2016 Group consider including small arms and light weapons in the Register.

The Group was also of the view that future GGEs should be geographically more representative. A case in point was that my country was the only African country represented on the GGE, while my regional group constitutes more than a quarter of the membership of the United Nations.

On a positive note, it is satisfying that thus far 61 States have submitted national reports for 2012. I wish to highlight that our concern as a GGE on the participation in the Register was expressed in appending to our report an illustrative list of measures that we felt could promote reporting to the Register. It is my hope that Member States will take cognizance of some of the suggestions.

The international community — among others, my own continent — is faced with many challenges related to the maintenance of peace and security. I submit to the membership the present report of the Group of Governmental Experts in my capacity as Chair, in my belief that the Register remains as relevant as ever as a transparency measure in addressing the threats posed to us all.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion with Mr. Wensley, through an informal question and answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 10.14 a.m. and resumed at 10.15 a.m.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): The Committee will now hear from the remaining speakers on the list under the cluster on “Disarmament machinery”, followed by the clusters on “Other weapons of mass destruction”, “Outer space (disarmament aspects)” and “Conventional weapons”.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My statement contains two parts. To start, I will read the statement of States interested in supporting the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Subsequently, I will make a statement in my national capacity as a member of the delegation of the Russian Federation.

I begin with the first part of my statement on behalf of the States supporting the Conference on Disarmament. I will read the statement in English.

(*spoke in English*)

“This is a joint statement of interested States in support of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva.

“Recalling the joint statement of like-minded States made in the First Committee during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, we reaffirm our commitment to commencing the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament without further delay.

“We are certain that tangible results in multilateral disarmament and strengthening the international regimes for arms control and non-proliferation can be achieved only by taking due account of the national security priorities of each member within the framework of the existing multilateral disarmament mechanism, with the Conference on Disarmament as its key element.

“We believe that the Conference — as the single multilateral negotiating forum with the fundamental principle of consensus among its membership — cannot be replaced by any other forum in addressing the complex tasks already on its agenda.

“We commend the efforts of all of the 2013 Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament to reach consensus on the programme of work. At the same time, we are concerned about the lack of progress in that regard.

“We welcome the establishment of the Informal Working Group on the elaboration and adoption of a CD programme of work. We hope that this decision will help in finding a mutually acceptable solution. We call on the States participating in the work of the Conference to reach an agreement on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work and to resume its substantive work on the key agenda items: nuclear disarmament, a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

“In order to resume substantive work in accordance with its rules of procedure, pending the adoption of such a programme of work, structured and result-oriented discussions are to be encouraged in the Conference. We call on all States concerned to make further efforts, with full responsibility, to unblock the work of the Conference.

“This statement is being made by interested States: Algeria, Armenia, Belarus, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Syria and Ukraine. The list of supporters of the statement is open.”

Now I will read my national statement.

(*spoke in Russian*)

For many years now we have been talking about stagnation in the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We are attempting to solve this problem by dealing with the root causes and going beyond the stalemate. Our Russian analysis has demonstrated that the reasons for such stagnation do not lie in the United Nations structure. The reasons are much more serious.

The United Nations disarmament machinery is undermined by deep-rooted political factors. Disarmament on the whole is such a delicate area of international relations that the smallest deviation of States from their obligations or violations of international norms and conventions immediately have a negative impact on the whole negotiation process. Any experienced negotiator will tell you how sensitive he is to the sincerity of negotiating partners. The only viable and substantive agreement of the past decades in the sphere of disarmament was the Russian-American

Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. That was truly an historic moment. But now the major question is: will we be able to achieve such a breakthrough in the future?

Now I will reveal a secret. The unique nature of the negotiations process and the situation in 2009 were not only characterized by the fact that there was unprecedented will on the part of leaders of two States, but also by the fact that Russia and the United States of America, in the past intractable enemies, trusted one another, in spite of all of that. We believed in the sincere desire of both sides not only to establish a strong foundation for bilateral strategic relations, but also to show the whole world the seriousness of our intentions and the responsibility of two nuclear States to support strategic stability in the whole world. It is very lamentable that not everyone correctly evaluated this process.

As a result, instead of support for the process of genuine, phased disarmament, today we are seeing totally unjustified but very flagrant initiatives of the nuclear Global Zero sort and the delegitimization of nuclear armament. Who would second-guess the good intentions of such initiatives? However, we all know that the path to hell is paved with good intentions. The most worrisome thing is that, as a result, already diminishing resources are being wasted instead of solving those serious problems. If we do not resolve these problems, we will not only be unable to achieve the noble goal of full and complete disarmament, but we will not even be able to take the most elementary first steps in this direction.

It would seem that some radical dreamers have just sort of shot off to some other planet, but at this time the reality for us, in conditions of rising global strategic uncertainty and regional turmoil, is that many States, not having found guaranteed protection of their national security interests, are losing confidence in the effectiveness of the United Nations machinery. Thus the prospect for a genuine multilateral disarmament process is simply being annulled. Such a vicious process needs to be eradicated at its roots; otherwise the impact in our interlinked world could be irreversible and quite lamentable for everyone.

Allow me to take up substantive issues. In our view, the results of the activities of the open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament are clear evidence of the fact that there is no alternative, nor can there be, to the Conference on Disarmament as the disarmament

negotiating forum for key disarmament aspects of the agenda. In that situation, it is of utmost importance for all of us together to engage in reasonable compromises and to promptly breathe new life into the substantive work of the Conference, thereby retaining the prospects for the beginning of negotiations in this forum on key topics. We welcome the efforts of all Presidents of all sessions in 2013 of the Conference on Disarmament for drawing up a draft programme of work acceptable to all.

We note two aspects important to us: continuing the work to seek a solution to the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, and the fact that practically all the drafts presented at the session took into account, to various extents, the Russian proposal on the launching of substantive work on four key issues on the basis of the deliberative mandate.

We welcome the adoption of the decision in the Conference to establish an informal working group on drafting a programme of work. It is our hope that in the months remaining before the beginning of the 2014 session, a decision will be taken that is agreeable to all regarding the programme of work.

I would like to recall that in the interest of our common goal, Russia has already engaged in compromise and has not insisted on negotiating a mandate on the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. However, in our view, a draft treaty on preventing an arms race or the placing of weapons in outer space would be the most reasonable basis upon which to commence such negotiations. In that context, reasonable compromise is important.

The start of discussions on preventing the production of fissile material would, in our opinion, represent a step forward in that direction and would hardly prejudice the prospect of future negotiations and activities.

We would encourage all to work towards a common objective — the launching of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament. Let us begin with the heart of the matter, namely, substantive work on all four agenda items. Would that truly be a misstep? We call upon delegations to once again think about agreeing to consider, as a preliminary step towards the programme of work, deep discussions on the four key agenda matters. We believe that would enable the start of the work itself, while at the same time ensuring the prospect of future negotiations in the Conference.

We are convinced that the only possible path to reinstating the prestige of the Conference on Disarmament is dialogue to allay the security concerns of particular participants and reaching agreement, on that basis, on the programme of work. That idea is at the root of the joint statement of interested States in support of the Conference that I have just read today. We suggest that all interested States support our statement.

I should like to raise one other small issue — and the word “small” is in quotation marks. It is a matter requiring the attention of the First Committee, and that is the fate of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). Allow me to share with the Committee that yesterday, yet another meeting was held with UNIDIR Director Theresa Hitchens and Assistant Secretary-General Kim Won-soo. I was able to participate in the meeting as the only representative of the UNIDIR Board of Trustees here in New York. The dialogue was essentially constructive. However, there is as yet no documented guarantee that criticism from the First Committee was not only heard but taken into account.

In that regard, we would suggest that it is suitable for the First Committee to continue to closely watch any steps taken by United Nations Secretariat staff with respect to UNIDIR. The United Nations disarmament machinery is clearly at a difficult stage. Therefore, any attempt to drag UNIDIR — our unique autonomous and specialized entity on matters of disarmament — into the process of the United Nations internal restructuring effort involving research and library institutions must be strictly monitored by the First Committee and by the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters — which also forms the UNIDIR Board of Trustees. If such attempts were to be made with respect to UNIDIR, then I truly believe they should be stopped at the source.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Ireland to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.27.

Ms. O'Brien (Ireland): It is my pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.27, entitled “Report of the Conference on Disarmament”. As I have already had the opportunity to address the Committee on the work of the Conference in 2013, as part of the panel on disarmament machinery on Monday, 21 October (see A/C.1/68/PV.12), I shall now briefly introduce the draft resolution on the report of the Conference. It is my

hope that the draft resolution will be adopted this year without a vote, as it has been for many years.

Following initial informal consultations in Geneva and further consultations here in New York, it is my belief that the draft resolution as tabled is a fair and balanced reflection of the report of the Conference in 2013 (A/68/27). The text builds upon the resolutions adopted without a vote in previous sessions of the Committee. During the debate on the disarmament machinery, many delegations have referred to the important role that the Conference has played in the past. The Conference's role as the international community's multilateral disarmament negotiating forum is reaffirmed in the draft resolution, as it has been in previous years.

At the same time, it is a matter of concern that the Conference was not able to adopt a programme of work in its 2013 session, despite — as the draft resolution notes — the intensive efforts of member States and successive Presidents in 2013. The draft resolution welcomes the decision adopted by the Conference on 16 August to establish an informal working group on a programme of work, to which many delegations have referred during this debate on the disarmament machinery. The draft resolution also welcomes the Conference decision to request the current and incoming Presidents to consult during the intersessional period. As I indicated in my remarks on 21 October, I shall be consulting with member States in the coming weeks.

As in previous years, the draft resolution before the Committee calls upon the Conference on Disarmament once again to overcome its ongoing deadlock by adopting and implementing a programme of work at the earliest possible date in its forthcoming session. It also requests the Secretary-General to continue to ensure the provision of all necessary support services to the Conference.

As the current President, it is my hope that this Committee can again send clear signals to the Conference. The draft resolution provides the Committee with the opportunity to reaffirm the importance it attaches to the Conference. It also sends a message that there is a need to explore possibilities for overcoming the Conference's deadlock by adopting and implementing a balanced and comprehensive programme of work at the earliest possible date in next year's session.

It is my hope that the Committee can adopt the draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament without a vote.

Mr. Öskiper (Turkey): It is a pleasure for me to share our views on the disarmament machinery today in this gathering. For the sake of brevity, I will try to be as succinct as possible, keeping in mind our time constraints. I will therefore deliver an abridged version of my prepared statement.

Turkey shares the concern of many others in this room vis-à-vis the continuing stalemate that lingers over the United Nations disarmament machinery. The Conference on Disarmament (CD), once a success story and a source of pride for all of us, has been dormant for too long now. The same, unfortunately, applies to the Disarmament Commission.

Against that backdrop, Turkey believes that multilateralism and progressive interactions among States carry sufficient ways and means to repair the ailing components of the machinery. Enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery and the relevant institutions and mechanisms should be a shared objective. Therefore, there is inevitably a need for a collective response. What is currently lacking is the political will of some States, without which the stalemate seems endless and progress seems distant. Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that in the past this very mechanism has successfully produced tangible outcomes in negotiating and bringing about conventions that remain in force. We therefore believe that it is not yet time to despair. It is, however, time to rekindle collective efforts to revitalize the whole mechanism.

As for the Conference on Disarmament, Turkey believes that the problems hampering progress are not created by its procedures or internal dynamics. We must acknowledge that there is a certain malaise throughout the disarmament forums and machinery at both international and regional levels. The stalemate in the CD is the reflection of the strategic bottlenecks at different yet interrelated levels. For instance, if the international community fails in its initiative to convene the conference on a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, that will have negative repercussions in all disarmament forums.

Therefore, we must see the big picture and not assess the work of the CD abstracted from the other disarmament efforts. Certainly, the resumption of the

substantive work of the CD, with the consent of all its members, will contribute to improved international efforts for nuclear disarmament. To that end, we see the urgent need to come up with a consensual programme of work. Such a development will pave the way for the commencement of negotiations. It is our conviction that only then will the CD be revitalized. We should spare no effort within the CD that would generate more mutual understanding and confidence, without ignoring developments taking place outside the CD.

Turkey believes that the Conference on Disarmament possesses the mandate, rules of procedure and membership to discharge its duties. At this stage, where we need progress and need it fast, it is Turkey's sincere wish that we do not dilute our focus on the main substantive issues by introducing into our deliberations additional points of contention that do not command consensus.

Unfortunately, another important pillar of the United Nations disarmament machinery that has not functioned as we would have desired is the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Despite the fact that it is a deliberative body whose function is considering and making recommendations, it has not been able to reach agreement for over a decade. Furthermore, the participation and interest of States has steadily diminished over the years. We welcome the substantive debate that took place during the 2013 session. We hope that the current three-year cycle, ending next session, will demonstrate that the UNDC is a relevant body able to fulfil its mandate, as it has for past decades.

The First Committee, on the other hand, remains a significant component of the disarmament machinery. Turkey values the institution of introducing resolutions. Nevertheless, we believe that the international community needs to be mindful to avoid creating a self-imposed maze of duplication through the resolutions we draft. To that end, Turkey believes that if necessary, we should be in a position to consider some flexibility in order to make the necessary consensual amendments to the contents of the draft resolutions and the timetable of introducing them.

By way of conclusion, let me reiterate our call for solidarity and cooperation. There may be challenges ahead, but despairing is not the way to overcome them. Striving to bring about change in an understanding of mutual and beneficial thought and progress is.

Mr. Pinheiro da Silva (Portugal): Portugal strongly believes that the multilateral approach to the concerns of the international community remains the best means to achieve long-lasting peace and security. That entails constructive participation in the decision-making process of the multilateral disarmament machinery, which has to work in an inclusive manner. Indeed, not only must States engage with one another in searching for the best possible solutions, but they must also not prevent others from contributing to the discussion of issues that are of concern to everyone.

In that connection, Portugal regrets that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) took no decision on the appointment of a special rapporteur tasked to examine the enlargement modalities of the CD without prejudice to the outcome, as the called for by the informal group of observer States to the CD — with whose statement my own aligns. It is undeniable that such revitalization of the CD is as desirable as it is needed.

Indeed, that is one of the consequences of the agonizing impasse in the CD, to which we all bear witness year after year. The CD's failure to agree on a programme of work does a disservice to the higher aims that presided over its creation and to the achievements that are part of the history of the CD. Portugal hopes that "a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation" will be produced by the informal working group so tasked by the CD and subsequently agreed upon.

It is also painfully clear that negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty must start at once and that a moratorium on the production of fissile material should be observed in the meantime.

Portugal hopes that our deliberations in the First Committee can put us in the path to the long-awaited solution.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): We have now heard the last speaker on the list for the "Disarmament machinery" cluster.

Before turning to the speakers list on the "Other weapons of mass destruction" cluster, allow me to call the Committee's attention to the fact that we have gone far beyond the time available according to the schedule. According to the schedule, we should have finished consideration of "Other weapons of mass destruction" and "Outer space (disarmament aspects)" already.

As the Committee is aware, very long lists of speakers remain under those agenda items. Therefore, we must urgently speed up our work. The Chair would really prefer not to use the gavel to remind representatives that they have exceeded their time limit. That is why we ask members to kindly keep to the time limit of 10 minutes per statement. That will allow the Committee to best use its limited time so that we can conclude our work by 6 November, as stipulated by the Bureau for the sixty-eighth session. I therefore count on the support and understanding of all delegations.

As I noted during our organizational meeting on 4 October (see A/C.1/68/PV.2), those Committee members with relatively long statements should make every effort to deliver a concise summary of their texts and instead submit the full statement in written form for posting on the First Committee web portal, QuickFirst. I would kindly ask all Committee members for their support in that matter.

I now give the floor to the first speaker on the list for the thematic discussion on other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

While being mindful of the threat posed to humankind by existing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), particularly nuclear weapons, and stressing the need for total elimination of such weapons, NAM underlines the need to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and supports the need to monitor the situation and trigger international action as required.

Recalling the international community's long-standing determination to achieve the effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical and biological weapons, NAM renews its previous calls upon all States to strictly observe the principles and objectives of the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare and reaffirms the vital need to uphold its provisions. NAM also calls upon those States that maintain reservations to the Protocol to withdraw them.

NAM States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention call for the universalization of the Convention and its full, balanced, effective and

non-discriminatory implementation. They reaffirm the importance of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention and underline the importance of effective implementation of the decision on the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of article XI of the Convention. Stressing that cases of non-compliance endanger the credibility and integrity of the Convention, NAM States parties strongly call on all concerned possessor States to take every necessary measure to ensure their strict compliance with their obligations under the Convention and the decision on the final extended deadline adopted at the sixteenth session of the Conference of States Parties, according to which the destruction of remaining chemical weapons shall be completed in the shortest time possible, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

While expressing disappointment that to date the obligation of total destruction of all chemical weapons has not been met, NAM States parties reaffirm that verification of the destruction of all the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles, as well as old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons, should continue to be the top priority of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). They declare their firm conviction that international support to provide special care and assistance to all victims suffering from the effects of exposure to chemical weapons is an immediate humanitarian need requiring urgent attention by the States parties and the OPCW. In that context they welcome the establishment, at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons and a voluntary trust fund for that purpose.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction reaffirm that the possibility of any use of bacteriological agents and toxins as weapons should be completely excluded and reaffirm the conviction that such use would be repugnant to the conscience of humankind. They call for balanced, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all the Convention's provisions and stress the significance of the establishment of its verification mechanism, as the lack of a verification system continues to challenge its effectiveness. They recognize the particular importance of strengthening

the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a non-discriminatory, legally binding protocol and universal adherence to the Convention and, in that regard, urge the party rejecting the resumption of the negotiations for such a protocol to reconsider its policy towards that Convention in the light of persistent requests by other parties. NAM States parties call for the implementation of the decisions related to the article X of the Convention, especially by emphasizing the need to enhance international cooperation, assistance and exchanges in toxins, biological agents, equipment, science and technology for peaceful purposes.

In the context of resolutions adopted by the Security Council in the areas covered by multilateral WMD treaties, including resolutions 1540 (2004), 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008) and 1977 (2011), NAM underlines the need to ensure that any action by the Security Council does not undermine the United Nations Charter, existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction and international organizations established in that regard, or the role of the General Assembly. NAM cautions against the Council's continuing practice of using its authority to define the legislative requirements for Member States in implementing its decisions. In that regard, NAM stresses that the issue of acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors should be addressed in an inclusive manner by the General Assembly, taking into account the views of all Member States.

Finally, NAM emphasizes that the exercise of political will by all States and their working together cooperatively are very important for attaining a WMD-free world.

Mr. Hasan (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. Chair, allow me first of all to reaffirm the confidence and trust of the Arab Group in your wise leadership and in your skills to guide us in our work towards a successful outcome.

The Arab Group upholds its firm and principled position, that is, the utmost priority must be accorded to attaining a world free of weapons of mass destruction, one free from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, paying particular attention to the ultimate aim of establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The Arab Group has always supported the goals established in these treaties and will continue to contribute towards the attainment of that objective.

The universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) through Israel's adherence to it as a non-nuclear-weapon State would enhance global security, as well as the credibility of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is worth recalling the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which clearly defined, on a consensual basis, priorities in the area of disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. That special session accorded the utmost priority to nuclear-weapons disarmament.

The Arab Group has always underscored the need to give top priority to the elimination of nuclear weapons within the topic of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, the Arab Group has always played an active role in efforts to eliminate other weapons of mass destruction. Accordingly, it has translated that conviction into specific actions seeking to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in the context of the 2010 plan of action of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

While the Arab Group continues to abide by the principles, objectives and legal commitments referred to previously, Israel continues to refuse to adhere to the NPT. The action plan that was adopted during the 2010 NPT Review Conference lays out practical measures concerning the three pillars of the NPT: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The action plan links those three pillars to further action in terms of the 1995 decision concerning the Middle East region. The action plan provides an unprecedented opportunity that should serve to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the delicate balance that was struck within that document provides for a direct relationship between the need for Israel's adherence to the NPT, in its capacity as a non-nuclear-weapon State, and the adherence of all Member States of the region to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

As regards the implementation of the commitments that have been made under the action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Secretary-General was tasked with convening a regional conference in 2012 on "establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction". The Arab

States, for the first time, agreed to expand the concept to include other weapons of mass destruction in order to overcome the unjustified claims that it would be possible to identify Israel's as yet ambiguous nuclear capacity should a regional threat arise as a result of other weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, the Arab States have reaffirmed that paragraph 8 of section IV of the Review Conference Final Document highlights the need to achieve progress in the two tracks, that is on nuclear disarmament and disarmament of other weapons of mass destruction.

The Arab Group once again reiterates that the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is a collective responsibility. The Arab Group has already shouldered its responsibilities in that regard. On behalf of the Arab Group, Libya submitted a report to the Secretary-General outlining the Group's efforts in this area. As for the establishment of this nuclear-weapon-free zone, following the postponement of the conference for unacceptable and tenuous reasons, the other parties must also now shoulder their responsibilities to ensure that the conference is convened as promptly as possible, without further delay, in 2013, with the participation of all Member States in the region. That will ultimately serve to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as a key component of the implementation of the 2010 action plan. Those are the commitments that will be assessed during the 2015 Review Conference.

Finally, the Arab Group welcomes all efforts and all initiatives that have been made to support and expedite the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Those include the Egyptian initiative that was announced to the General Assembly during the current session, and to invite the States of the Middle East, as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council, to submit official letters expressing support for the announcement of the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear-weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and to deposit such letters with the Secretary-General. This initiative will also assist countries of the region that are not party to the international treaties concerning weapons of mass destruction and will encourage them to adhere to this treaty before the end of the year.

Ms. Sweeb (Suriname): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Allow me on behalf of UNASUR member States to recall that in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, signed in 2003, our countries declared our objective of making the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons. In addition, through resolution 2107 (2005), adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, we decided unanimously to fulfil concretely the shared commitment of member States to make the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons.

UNASUR States especially congratulate the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on having been recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its important work.

UNASUR States strongly condemn the existence of chemical and biological weapons and reiterate that their use is a crime against humanity. The catastrophic consequences of the use of those weapons must be prevented through their complete elimination. UNASUR reaffirms its commitment to the prohibition of the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and to their total elimination, as agreed in the Convention on Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We also support the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention and encourage the continued work towards its universalization.

UNASUR condemns the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Union welcomes the accession of Syria to the Convention. We also hope that the decision on the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons adopted on 27 September 2013 by the Executive Council of the OPCW and endorsed by Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) will be implemented in an expeditious and safe manner. While highlighting the growing participation of States in the Convention, we call upon States that have not acceded to it to do so promptly. We also express our appreciation for the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in promoting the universalization of the Convention and the full implementation of all its provisions.

We reiterate the importance of the agreement reached in December 2011 that stipulated a framework for the completion of the destruction of the remaining chemical arsenals, while preserving the integrity of the Convention and the credibility of the OPCW. In that regard, we call upon the chemical-weapon countries to fulfil their obligations under the terms stipulated by

the Convention and to destroy their arsenals. We also call upon all States possessing chemical weapons to eliminate them and to join the Convention promptly, without any condition.

UNASUR notes that the provisions of the Convention should be applied so as to avoid hampering the economic or technological development of States parties and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, as well as those relating to international scientific and technical information and chemicals and equipment for the production, processing or use of chemicals for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.

UNASUR States express their appreciation to the contribution of the OPCW Technical Secretariat towards the development and effectiveness of the Organization. It helps to achieve the objective and purpose of the Convention and to ensure the full implementation of its provisions, including those for the international verification of compliance, and serves as a forum for consultation and cooperation for States parties. UNASUR States appreciate the international cooperation and assistance provided by the OPCW, including through the promotion of annual events on assistance and protection against chemical weapons.

UNASUR welcomes the outcome of the third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in The Hague from 8 to 19 of April. We underline in particular the adoption by consensus of its final report, which addressed all aspects of the Convention and made important recommendations on its continued implementation.

UNASUR also reaffirms the fundamental importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). We ensure our readiness to continue cooperating actively and constructively to advance the goals of full implementation and universalization of that Convention. We share with many other States the idea of designing and implementing additional measures to ensure effective enforcement of the ban. The Convention lacks the means to ensure or assure compliance with the commitments by the signatory States. We support the negotiation of a protocol to the BWC that establishes an effective verification regime.

UNASUR member States actively participated in the 2012 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, held in Geneva in December. We welcome the discussions that took place in line with the standing agenda adopted at the Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties, particularly those related to strengthening cooperation and assistance under article X.

UNASUR remains convinced that national measures translate obligations undertaken by States into practical and effective actions. Therefore we reiterate our support for the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, which has lent its assistance to Member States.

In conclusion, UNASUR reaffirms that the conventions for the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons are vital international legal instruments to guide multilateral efforts in the struggle for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international control.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Kos (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their means of delivery continues to be a growing threat to international peace and security. Current grave cases of the use of WMDs reinforce the calls for a resolute and global approach. The risk that non-State actors may acquire weapons of mass destruction adds a further critical dimension. It is vitally important to enhance international cooperation, both in the framework of the United Nations and among all Member States, in order to address those challenges.

The EU welcomed the investigation launched by the Secretary-General into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria and its report on the events in Damascus on 21 August (see A/67/997), which presented reliable evidence confirming that a large-scale chemical attack was perpetrated on that day with the use of Sarin. The investigation illustrates the viability of the Secretary-General's mechanism as an important instrument.

The European Union welcomes Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) of 27 September on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, as they represent a major step towards a robust, sustainable and unified international response to the crisis in Syria. Those important decisions provide for the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria, impose a binding declaration and verification regime on the Syrian Arab Republic, and demonstrate the will of the international community to respond to threats posed by those weapons of mass destruction. Legally binding and enforceable, Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) qualifies the use of chemical weapons as a threat to international peace and security, urges the regime to comply with those obligations, condemns the attacks of 21 August, calls for accountability for that crime and envisages a forceful international reaction in the event of non-compliance. We reiterate our readiness to support actions foreseen under the Security Council resolution as well as under the decision of the OPCW Executive Council.

The European Union takes this opportunity to warmly congratulate the OPCW on being awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The award came as the Organization continues its joint mission with the United Nations to destroy Syria's chemical weapons, which can contribute to a peaceful and durable solution of that aspect of the Syrian crisis. We reiterate the EU's commitment to assist in that challenge unprecedented in the history of the OPCW and stand ready to receive requests for EU support with resources and funding.

The increasing use of ballistic missiles by the Syrian Government also raises deep concerns, as it represents an immediate threat to its civilian population and has the potential to destabilize peace and security in the region. That threat is all the more serious since most of those missiles are capable of carrying the chemical warheads that the Government publicly claimed to possess.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a key component of the non-proliferation and disarmament framework. Its integrity and strict application must be fully guaranteed. We welcome that the third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, held in The Hague in April 2013, took place in a positive atmosphere. It conducted a thorough review of the functioning of the Convention and adopted a consensus

report containing an ambitious and substantive forward-looking agenda for the OPCW. The EU was pleased to note that several of its priorities were duly reflected in the report, notably on destruction deadlines, scientific and technological developments and the maintenance of key expertise in the Technical Secretariat. The final report included a reference to Syria in the part containing the Political Declaration.

The first-ever presence of a United Nations Secretary-General at the Review Conference underlined the high interest of the international community in chemical weapons, disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The EU and its member States are the largest contributors to the OPCW. Having allocated €12 million to date, the EU will continue to support the activities of the Organization.

The time-bound destruction of chemical weapons remains one of the principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We call upon possessor States to complete the destruction of their chemical-weapons stockpiles in the shortest time possible. Chemical-weapons destruction operations should continue to be conducted in a sincere and transparent fashion and within the framework of the existing verification regime.

The EU attaches high priority to the further strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and to its full implementation. The EU welcomes the accession of Cameroon, Nauru, Guyana and Malawi to the Convention. The potential risk emanating from biological agents and toxins used as weapons poses new challenges to international peace and security. Following the Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, held in Geneva in December 2011, the EU has engaged constructively in the intersessional process by actively promoting universality, national implementation and full compliance with the Convention.

For us, national implementation is also an issue of great importance. The new intersessional process offers the opportunity to consider ways and means, including innovative approaches, to enhance national implementation through voluntary exchanges of information, such as the proposed peer-review mechanism, and the sharing of best practices among State parties. For us, confidence-building measures remain an important instrument to promote the purpose

of the Convention. The constructive Meeting of Experts last August in Geneva identified some key issues that will help further advance our work at the Meeting of States Parties.

Based on the decision adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2012, several ongoing EU projects ensure continued support and financial contributions to promote the BWC objectives through the organization of regional workshops, enhanced assistance programmes and various enabling tools and activities, with the valuable assistance of the Implementation Support Unit as the implementing agency. The EU is also supporting improvements in biosafety and biosecurity. New financing projects with a view to further supporting World Health Organization activities in the areas of laboratory biosafety and biosecurity should be adopted by the end of this year.

The EU has continued to make progress with the implementation of the its CBRN Centres of Excellence initiative, enhancing the institutional capacity of partner countries to mitigate chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks, whether they are criminal, accidental or natural in origin. Regional secretariats were opened in Amman and Manila. Thirty-four projects amounting to €40 million were launched, and contracting is under way. The initiative should reach a total budget of nearly €100 million by the end of 2013.

We continue to fully support the actions taken under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The resolution is fundamental to the development of effective mechanisms to prevent and counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery to non-State actors. In that context, the EU dual-use export-control regime has been strengthened and now covers the control of exports, transfer, brokering and transit of dual-use items. New projects have been adopted with a view to continuing to promote the full implementation of the resolution and to provide assistance to third countries in complying with their obligations under the resolution. In doing so, the EU closely cooperates with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and with other major donors to ensure efficiency and avoid overlapping.

We continue to support other international mechanisms designed to prevent the proliferation of WMDs, such as the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and

Materials of Mass Destruction, which has become an important platform of coordination and cooperation. The EU CBRN Centres of Excellence continue to contribute within the G-8 Global Partnership as a tool to facilitate exchange of information regionally and possibly avoid duplication among donors. Export-control regimes, such as the Australia Group, are very important tools to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons.

We strongly believe that the proliferation of missiles, especially those capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, continues to be a serious concern to us all and a threat to international peace and security, as reaffirmed in Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004), 1887 (2009) and 1977 (2011). A number of tests of medium- and intermediate-range missiles conducted over the past years outside all existing transparency and pre-notification schemes and in violation of Security Council resolutions, especially by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, only deepens our concern.

We believe that a multilateral response and international norms are the most adequate and effective way to address the issue of ballistic-missile proliferation. The EU strongly supports The Hague Code of Conduct, one of the very few existing multilateral instruments in the field of ballistic-missile proliferation. The Code should become a truly multilateral forum, where matters relating to ballistic-missile proliferation can be discussed in order to foster confidence-building and transparency. All EU member States have subscribed to the Code, and the EU has continued to pursue and support its three aspects: universality, implementation, and enhanced and improved functioning. To date, 136 States have subscribed to The Hague Code of Conduct. While the EU welcomes such strong international support, it thinks further work is needed for the Code to reach universality. We call on all States that have not yet adhered to it to do so as soon as possible.

Export controls are also essential to prevent missile proliferation. We think that the Missile Technology Control Regime plays a key role, and we continue to promote the membership of EU member States in export-control regimes. We are also in favour of examining further multilateral steps to prevent the threat of missile proliferation and to promote disarmament efforts in the missile field.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the challenges posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass

destruction remain, and they must be addressed in a cooperative manner. It is our collective task to ensure that we prevent and disrupt illicit transfers, control exports more effectively, counter illegal networks of diversion and trafficking, and combat proliferation financing.

Mr. Farghal (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): As this is the first time that I have taken the floor, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship. Allow me to assure you of Egypt's trust in your wise stewardship of this Committee and in your ability to direct it to great success.

Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group.

Egypt's principled position is that we attach the utmost priority to attaining a world free of nuclear weapons and of other weapons of mass destruction. That is why we were among the first countries to ratify the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Moreover, we uphold the principles and purposes enshrined in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), which we signed in 1977. We have always welcomed efforts aimed at eliminating other weapons of mass destruction, and that belief has now been translated into an initiative, in 1990, to ensure that the Middle East will become a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that the imbalance among the legal obligations of Member States in the Middle East has prevented Egypt from adhering to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions. It is therefore unacceptable that all countries but one in the Middle East are parties to the protocols to those two Conventions. At the same time, Egypt is being asked to adhere to those two Conventions to demonstrate its good faith. We have upheld the spirit and the letter of the two Conventions. We believe that the only obstacle impeding our adherence to them is the imbalance in legal obligations imposed on States of the region concerning the Conventions on the use of those weapons of mass destruction, because there is only one State that

has not subscribed to those Conventions. Therefore, it is unreasonable that all the States of the region but one should strive to implement them.

We have sought to adopt practical measures to ensure that the Middle East will become a zone free from weapons of mass destruction. The action plan was adopted by consensus during the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We reiterated our position in the initiative announced by our Minister for Foreign Affairs in his statement to the General Assembly on 28 September 2013 (see A/68/PV.18). In that statement, he called upon all Middle Eastern States and the five permanent members of the Security Council to deposit official letters with the Secretary-General supporting the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Following that, the States of the region that have not yet ratified any international treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction committed to signing and ratifying those instruments simultaneously, before the end of the year, and to depositing guarantees to that end with the Security Council. Included in those commitments are Israel's adherence to the NPT, the BWC and the CWC, Syria's adherence to the CWC and Egypt's adherence to the BWC and the CWC. We call upon the Secretary-General to coordinate those activities so that they coincide and ensure a successful outcome.

We believe that Syria's recent adherence to the CWC is an essential step and an opportunity that must be seized in order to support the special efforts that have been made to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. That will serve to refute the pretext that it is currently impossible to create such a zone.

That is why we reaffirm our commitment to launching serious negotiations for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and of other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We look forward to positive engagement on the part of the single State in the region that is not a party to the NPT and in keeping with the terms of reference of the conference that was to be held in 2012 but was postponed.

Ms. Crittenberger (United States of America): A year ago in this forum, as reports of chemical-weapons use in Syria were prompting increasing concerns, the

United States emphasized the very real possibility that the world might be faced with a situation in which the use of chemical weapons could become a reality. With the confirmation of the senseless killing on 21 August of over 1,000 Syrians, including hundreds of young children, by the use of chemical weapons, the world saw that horrible possibility become reality. The United States and the international community quickly and unconditionally condemned such actions. We continue to stand firm on such use as reprehensible. It goes against what has been an international norm for nearly a century. The use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

It remains our overarching goal, and that of 98 per cent of the world community, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons. That is why the United States took the action that led to the historic United States-Russia Framework for the Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons and, subsequently, the adoption on 27 September of the decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), which imposes legally binding obligations on Syria to cooperate fully in the rapid elimination of its chemical-weapons programme under stringent verification procedures.

The fact that while just a short time ago the Syrian regime did not even acknowledge it possessed chemical weapons and now inspectors are on the ground and overseeing the initial stages of destruction is a step forward. Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) requires that the Syrian Government provide the OPCW, the United Nations and designated personnel with immediate and unfettered access to any and all sites in Syria, which is critical for the elimination of the Syrian chemical-weapons programme.

The OPCW reports that the process of destroying Syria's chemical-weapons programme began on 6 October. We believe that OPCW, United Nations and other designated personnel on the ground will see whether the Syrians are prepared to allow that kind of access and consent to efforts to move forward rapidly and comprehensively. It is now up to the Syrian Government, and there is clearly more work to be done. The international community will be paying close attention to whether the Syrian regime is abiding by all of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the OPCW Executive Council decision and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

In this regard, we welcome and strongly support the successful efforts of the Director-General of the OPCW, Ahmet Üzümcü, and the extraordinary work being done by him and the experts in the OPCW Technical Secretariat. The recent awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the OPCW for its long-standing efforts to eliminate chemical weapons is further validation of its commitment and resolve to eliminate an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. The OPCW has been instrumental in verifying the elimination of chemical weapons around the world and is dedicated to the vision of a world free of chemical weapons and the prevention of the re-emergence of such weapons.

It is also equally important to recognize the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, and his staff of professionals who are partnering with the OPCW in the important work going on in Syria. We acknowledge the bravery and professionalism of the staffs that make up the OPCW-United Nations team and the important mission they have undertaken despite the dangers involved. Their efforts are to be commended and remembered.

On other CWC-related matters, the OPCW held its third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the CWC in April 2013. Its final document provides a strong, balanced and forward-looking call for continued and improved implementation of the Convention. It provides guidance on chemical weapons for the next five years and focuses on chemical-weapons destruction, verification, the chemical industry, economic cooperation and preserving the expertise of the Technical Secretariat.

I would like to emphasize that the United States remains encouraged by the progress made by the OPCW in working towards a world free of chemical weapons. Since the entry into force of the CWC, the OPCW has accomplished a great deal and remains an indispensable body with a global responsibility. With a near universal membership of 190 member States, and with Somalia and Syria joining this year, with over 81 per cent of all declared chemical-weapon stockpiles having been verifiably destroyed and with over 5,200 inspections conducted at military and industry sites since entry into force, we are certainly pleased with what the OPCW has accomplished. That progress is due to the combined efforts and commitment of States parties, along with the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

For its part, the United States has safely destroyed nearly 90 per cent of its chemical-weapons stockpile

under OPCW verification. We continue our steadfast commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and will continue working in a transparent manner towards the complete destruction of our remaining chemical weapons.

The United States also remains fully committed to the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. Such a goal will take the commitment of all States parties and a continued effort in a number of areas to include universality.

We recognize that preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons requires a strong inspectorate, a credible industrial verification regime and enactment by all States parties of the necessary domestic legal regimes to fully enforce the Chemical Weapons Convention. Those are all areas of vital importance for the success and longevity of the Convention and the organization responsible for its implementation. In the CWC preamble, all States parties state that they are

“[d]etermined for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons, through the implementation of the provisions of this Convention”.

We must stand together to make that goal a reality.

The United States, as one of the depositaries of Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), would like to congratulate Cameroon, Guyana, Malawi, the Marshall Islands and Nauru for becoming States parties to the Convention, thereby bringing the number of parties to 170. We urge all to make efforts toward the universality of that important treaty.

The seventh BWC Review Conference, in 2011, was an opportunity for greater imagination and collective effort in confronting the threat of biological weapons and for continuing the important work of adapting our international efforts to a changing world and a changing threat. While the Review Conference did not achieve everything we had hoped it would, we were satisfied with the outcome and believe the stage is set for enhancing the important work of the BWC intersessional process.

The Review Conference adopted a five-year work plan, with agenda items for 2012-2013 on international cooperation and assistance, developments in science

and technology, strengthening national implementation, and confidence-building measures. Since then, we have made progress on the work plan, both at the December 2012 Meeting of States Parties to the BWC, which produced a constructive final report, and at the Meeting of Experts in August, which held useful discussions on many details of the agenda items in a positive atmosphere.

Briefings and discussions on international cooperation and assistance at the two meetings have demonstrated the diversity and extensiveness of ongoing global exchanges in the life sciences, including in areas of particular importance to the Convention, such as biosecurity. With regard to science and technology, parties acknowledged that the rapid pace of technological change presents both challenges and opportunities for the BWC. An important focus was the challenge presented by dual-use research of concern and the utility of voluntary codes of conduct, education and awareness-raising for addressing it.

States parties also continued to share information on the status of national implementation of the Convention and on the assistance available for effectively implementing it, and considered ways in which they could promote confidence in their compliance through transparency about implementation. Finally, a range of proposals to enhance the value of confidence-building measures to States parties were discussed, though it is still unclear why many parties do not submit confidence-building measures and what challenges they may face in making use of them.

More broadly, the 2013 BWC meetings reflected the Convention's link to global health security, emphasizing the need to strengthen adherence to international norms, such as the international health regulations, and the value of working with international organizations such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health. The United States recognizes that the unique nature of the biological threat makes it essential to accelerate progress to achieve global health security, including international capacity to prevent, detect and respond to infectious disease threats whether the result of a naturally occurring outbreak, accidental release or an intentional event.

We look forward to reaching clear understandings and pragmatic, meaningful actions to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention in each of these areas and to demonstrate the value of effective multilateralism

at the Meeting of States Parties in December. It is also important for parties to remember that, while it is important to agree on new understandings and new actions, we all have much work to do, acting individually and in like-minded groups, to implement the obligations of the Convention and the understandings already reached. We should never lose sight of those challenges.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): Before introducing the next speaker, I would remind representatives to please take note of the microphone lighting system before them. When the light begins to blink, it is a signal that the speaker's time has expired. The Chair should not be required to inform speakers that they have used up their time.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union.

My delegation considers that the issue of weapons of mass destruction other than nuclear weapons is of fundamental importance, as current events have demonstrated. In Syria, the use of weapons of mass destruction by a Government against its own people is intolerable. The firm and determined reaction of several countries, including France, made possible the adoption of a decision by the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on 27 September, as well as Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

The resolution clearly condemns the chemical-weapons attack perpetrated on 21 August. It rejects impunity and calls for the prosecution of those responsible. It acknowledges the existing threat to international peace and security and imposes important legally binding decisions aimed at dismantling Syria's stockpiles of chemical weapons. It also decides that in case of non-compliance, the Security Council would impose new measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Furthermore, we welcome the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. France calls on all States that have not yet done so to join the 190 States already party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We welcome Somalia's accession.

The third CWC Review Conference, held in April, was a great success. France defended ambitious positions aiming to support the transition of the OPCW from a disarmament regime, already well advanced, to a

regime to combat proliferation. That would be achieved mainly through a strengthened industrial verification regime and national implementation.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), whose seventh Review Conference took place in December 2011, represents another central component of the international regime against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. France calls on all States that have not yet done so to ratify or adhere to the Treaty. France welcomes the adherence of Cameroon, Guyana, Malawi, the Marshall Islands and Nauru in 2013.

At the seventh Review Conference, France proposed establishing a peer-review mechanism to consolidate the BWC regime by strengthening trust among the States parties and enabling detailed exchanges of information and best practices on the Convention's implementation.

France would like to recall its commitment to the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons in war, of which France is the depositary. That instrument remains essential, as the major conventions prohibiting the two types of weapons I have mentioned are not yet universal. France thus calls on all Member States that have not yet done so to adhere to the Protocol without further delay and for States maintaining reservations to withdraw them.

No one should imagine that the use of weapons of mass destruction will remain unquestioned or unpunished. In that context, France continues to fully support an investigation mechanism that could assist the Secretary-General in the event of alleged use. France reiterates that it will respond, according to its abilities, to a specific request for help in implementing that instrument.

The issue of the means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction is also central to this debate. On several occasions, the Security Council, in particular via resolutions 1540 (2004), 1887 (2009) and 1977 (2011), has described the proliferation of missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction as a threat to international peace and security.

We all know that the Iranian and North Korean ballistic programmes in particular continue to progress. The Syrian Government's ongoing activities linked to development of its missiles, with the probable support of third countries, are also a very disturbing,

particularly in the context of revelations regarding its programmes for weapons of mass destruction. France condemns North Korea's new launch of a long-range missile on 12 December 2012, which constituted a further violation of Security Council resolutions.

Missiles thus represent an issue of collective concern that must be urgently addressed. We must intensify our efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of multilateral arrangements, particularly the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and the Missile Technology Control Regime. Major challenges remain to be met. In particular, we support efforts to universalize the Code of Conduct. We are determined to continue raising the international community's awareness of this threat and to encourage transparency in the area of ballistic missiles.

Ms. Arnekleiv (Norway): An important message from both the general debate of the Committee and, not least, this thematic cluster is that any use of chemical weapons is deplorable and that those responsible for such horrendous acts should be held accountable to the International Criminal Court.

Norway welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) of 27 September on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. Syria acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) on 14 October, and we expect it to fully comply with its provisions. There can be no doubt that the use of chemical weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The recent incidents when chemical weapons have been used illustrate the urgent need to further strengthen the norm against chemical weapons, as laid out in the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Last year we celebrated the 15-year anniversary of the CWC's entry into force, while this year we congratulated the OPCW on the well-deserved award of the Nobel Peace Prize. The OPCW has played a crucial role in ridding the world of one category of weapons of mass destruction.

Norway welcomes the successful outcome of the CWC Review Conference in April, which will strengthen our resolve to achieve and maintain a world free of chemical weapons. The Conference provided us with a forward-looking agenda for the OPCW. In that respect, we must ensure that the organization continues

to have the political and financial support necessary to carry out its mandate. Over recent years Norway has provided voluntary funding to the OPCW in its work to promote national implementation and to advance peaceful cooperation in accordance with article XI of the Convention.

An important message from the Review Conference regards accelerating its disarmament pillar. The destruction of existing stockpiles is far from complete and will remain the core objective of the organization for years to come. We reiterate that time-bound destruction of chemical weapons remains one of the core principles of the CWC. Norway strongly encourages possessor States to do their utmost to meet their destruction targets as soon as possible and in a verifiable manner.

Verification also plays a crucial role in providing confidence that all State parties are living up to their non-proliferation obligations under the Convention. Norway will continue to advocate that the OPCW further strengthen its capacity in that area, including the possibility to carry out challenge inspections. Likewise, Norway maintains the conviction that the question of incapacitating chemical agents deserves more attention.

Norway is also pleased that civil society was given a voice at the last Review Conference. We remain convinced that the community of non-governmental organizations has an important role in sustaining the norm against chemical weapons.

The incident of 21 August has shown that the ban on a category of weapons of mass destruction is not, in itself, sufficient to prevent its use. While much focus has rightly been devoted to chemical weapons, we must do the necessary preparatory work with respect to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). Fortunately the Seventh Review Conference of the BWC provided us with a road map to the further consolidation of that instrument. With respect to universalization, Norway welcomes the accession of Cameroon, Nauru, Guyana and Malawi.

Norway remains committed to the current intersessional process adopted at the Review Conference. That process has provided a practical and innovative arena for enhanced cooperation in promoting national implementation of the BWC. We are pleased with the constructive manner in which the Meeting of Experts helps in advancing the work of the BWC.

Furthermore, Norway attaches great importance to confidence-building measures as a means to demonstrate full compliance with the obligations set by the BWC. While recognizing that the confidence-building measures are voluntary in nature, Norway urges all State parties to make use of the reporting mechanism.

Over the past years, Norway has greatly appreciated working closely with the BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and with Indonesia in promoting biosafety and biosecurity and peaceful cooperation, as stipulated in article X of the Treaty. The ISU has clearly demonstrated its added value in serving the States parties to the BWC and in working closely with other international agencies such as the World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Organization for Animal Health. It is important that we continue to provide the ISU with the necessary political and financial support.

I would like to say few words on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Norway is ready to move forward on deliberations on how to prevent an arms race in outer space and supports the annual resolution in the General Assembly on that topic. At the same time, we should not delay in enhancing transparency measures on civilian outer space activities. We are grateful for the work carried out by the European Union on an international code of conduct for outer space activities and look forward to the open-ended consultations to be held in Bangkok later this year.

Lastly, Norway joins others in calling for the full universality of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

Mr. Gailunas (Lithuania): Lithuania aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (EU) on behalf of the EU and its member States. Let me now elaborate on some matters of particular importance to Lithuania.

Chemical weapons have been outlawed for almost a century, and their use is a serious violation of international law and a war crime. Lithuania condemns their recent use in Syria and commends the efforts of the international community aimed at ensuring that such attacks never happen again. In this context, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) are now more than ever at the forefront of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Therefore, we would like to add our voice to those

congratulating the OPCW on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

We welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the 27 September decision by the OPCW Executive Council as a major step towards a robust, sustainable and unified international response to the crisis in Syria. We note the accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to the CWC and call on it to fully comply with the obligations under Council resolution 2118 (2013), the OPCW Executive Council decision and the Convention on Chemical Weapons. Lithuania also welcomes the successful conclusion and adoption of the consensus final report of the third Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the CWC, held in The Hague in April 2013.

We regret that the final deadline for the destruction of chemical weapons was missed in 2012 and expect that the destruction of the remaining stockpiles will be completed in the shortest time possible under the verification by the OPCW Technical Secretariat. At the same time, as the stockpiles of chemical weapons diminish and new threats emerge, the OPCW will have to adapt. In particular, it will have to focus on preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons, while maintaining the capacity to respond to crises.

Lithuania continues to emphasize the need to address challenges resulting from chemical munitions dumped at sea. We believe that a framework allowing for the voluntary sharing of information and best practices would be a much needed addition to build on and reinforce current regional efforts. This year, Lithuania intends to introduce in the Second Committee a draft resolution on chemical munitions dumped at sea.

The potential misuse of life sciences and the risk of the development of biological weapons are another major challenge for the international community. Lithuania stands committed to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) as the cornerstone of the international efforts to prevent biological agents from ever being developed and used as weapons. We underline the importance of international cooperation and support to strengthen national structures and capabilities for preventing, detecting and treating infectious human, animal and plant diseases. Lithuania also remains committed to working with a long-term view to develop measures to verify compliance with the BWC.

Another focus should be on working to strengthen the defences against infectious diseases by identifying,

assessing and communicating current and emerging threats to human health posed by those diseases. The concerted work of the national health protection bodies and international organizations to strengthen and develop continent-wide disease surveillance and early warning systems remains essential to this point.

Recognizing the serious threat of bioterrorism, Lithuania reaffirms its commitment in strengthening biosecurity, including by fully implementing the relevant international requirements. Lithuania also fully adheres to the principle that safety is a precondition for the responsible and sustainable use of biotechnology and stands ready to share our experience in the field.

Mrs. Ledesma Hernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The existence of weapons of mass destruction poses a serious threat to international peace and security. Cuba reiterates its call for general and complete disarmament under effective and strict international control, including the prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction. We condemn the use of chemical weapons and any other weapon of mass destruction regardless of where and by whom it is used.

The disarmament efforts of States should be aimed at achieving the complete and total elimination of such weapons and the prevention of the appearance of new types of weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate the need for all States to uphold their obligations in terms of arms control, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all their aspects.

Cuba welcomes the outcome of the third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which enabled us to reaffirm the principles and basic objectives enshrined in the Convention and upheld the balance of its four fundamental pillars: destruction, verification, assistance and international cooperation. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) plays an important role in the promotion of economic and technological development among its States parties, in particular among the least developed countries. A plan of action must be adopted to guarantee the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Cuba does not possess and has no intention of ever possessing any type of weapon of mass destruction. As a State party to the international legal instruments that prohibit such weapons, Cuba renews its firm

commitment to the full and effective implementation of all of the provisions thereof. In turn, we support all actions aimed at achieving the universalization of the Convention. In this regard, we welcome Syria's adherence to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The total destruction of chemical weapons, including abandoned chemical weapons, within the established deadlines is and will remain the principal objective of the OPCW. It is essential that the largest chemical-weapons possessors strictly comply with the destruction deadlines, which have already been extended. Otherwise, they will jeopardize the credibility and integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is thus also urgent to ensure the elimination of any discriminatory provisions that are counter to the spirit and letter of the Convention, which certain States continue to impose on certain States parties with respect to the transfer for peaceful uses of materials, equipment and technologies in the chemical sphere. We highlight the fact that the objectives of the Convention can be better attained through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

Cuba reiterates its unequivocal commitment to the strict implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and supports all actions undertaken to ensure its universalization. The possible use of any biological or toxicological agents as weapons must be fully excluded. We welcome the satisfactory outcome of the Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, particularly in terms of international cooperation.

However, Cuba believes that a great deal still needs to be done to achieve a full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article X of the Convention. We uphold the importance of promoting, in the context of the Biological Weapons Convention, international cooperation for peaceful purposes, including scientific exchanges. For developing countries that are parties to the Convention, the implementation of article X is a priority. We believe that the only way to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention is through the adoption of a legally binding protocol that closes the gaps that that instrument still has, to include its basic pillars, including international cooperation, and verification of all articles of the Convention in a broad and balanced manner.

My country shares the legitimate international concern over the risk that terrorist groups might acquire weapons of mass destruction. We stress that such risks cannot be eliminated through the selective application of measures that limit horizontal proliferation while ignoring vertical proliferation and disarmament. If we really plan to combat the possible use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists, urgent processes and procedures in the disarmament field are needed, including the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

Cuba underscores the need to ensure that any measure adopted by the Security Council should not in any way undermine the central role of the General Assembly and existing multilateral treaties pertaining to weapons of mass destruction. In the same vein, we reiterate that selective, discriminatory initiatives promoted by groups of countries outside the multilateral context, far from making a positive contribution, undermine the role of the United Nations in the struggle against weapons of mass destruction in all their aspects.

To conclude, we reaffirm Cuba's longstanding commitment to the objective of the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We will contribute at every opportunity to strengthening the central role belonging to the United Nations in that regard.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1.68/L.10.

Ms. Körömi (Hungary): Following the practice of previous years, Hungary has the honour to introduce, under agenda item 106, draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.10, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The draft resolution was submitted for the Committee's consideration on 10 October. The text is based on resolution 67/77, adopted in 2012, updated to reflect the latest developments. Before submitting the draft resolution, our delegation held informal discussions on the text both in Geneva and here in New York. We tried to accommodate the views expressed at those consultations, in order to reflect the general sentiment of Member States in relation to the implementation of this Convention. I would

like to thank all the delegations who took part in the consultations for their cooperation.

This year's draft retains all the elements of resolution 67/77, which was adopted by consensus. It contains only minor changes, namely, an update in the second preambular paragraph of the number of States parties, and a reference in paragraph 4 to the intersessional meetings held since the previous resolution was adopted. The change in paragraph 11 ensures that the agenda item will appear on the agenda of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Hungary wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the Convention on the Prohibition, the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and Their Destruction. My delegation hopes that as in the past, this year the Committee will again adopt the resolution without a vote.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): In addition to aligning itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union, the Netherlands would like to underline the following recent developments.

First, we congratulate the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), based in The Hague, on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. It is a just and timely reward for OPCW's continuous efforts to achieve the goals of the Chemicals Weapons Convention, especially now, as the OPCW is playing a crucial and important role in the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. This Nobel Peace Prize can also be seen as a reward for the success of diplomacy in the area of security policy.

The Netherlands warmly welcomes the decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW of 27 September and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, based on the agreement reached between the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Kerry, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Lavrov. We supported the implementation of those decisions with a financial contribution to the OPCW of €1.5 million.

Furthermore, the Netherlands is providing logistical and personnel support to the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission in Syria. We congratulate our compatriot Mrs. Sigrid Kaag over her appointment by the Secretary-General as Special Coordinator of that Joint Mission. Mrs. Kaag has extensive experience within international organizations, as well as in the region.

We wish her every success in the extremely challenging tasks that have been entrusted to her.

The opportunity is historic. The challenge is enormous. They require the full support of all of us. But it is first of all up to the Syrian regime to demonstrate to the United Nations, to the OPCW and to the members of the international community its sincere and full cooperation in the destruction of its entire arsenal of chemical weapons and production facilities. The horrific use of chemical weapons in Syria, or anywhere in the world, should never be repeated. Those responsible for their use should be held accountable.

Mr. Schmid (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The use of chemical weapons in the ongoing conflict in Syria is a serious violation of international humanitarian law. Switzerland strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons in all circumstances. It is now of utmost importance to prevent any further such violations and not to allow such crimes to remain unpunished. Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) constitutes an important step towards that goal and an important step towards the universality of the Convention. It is essential that Syria now fully complies with all its obligations under the CWC.

Switzerland also welcomes Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the decision by the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the destruction of the Syrian chemical-weapons stockpiles. The OPCW plays a key role in this area, and we are persuaded that the States will provide it all the support required for that mission. Switzerland has already contributed one million Swiss francs to the OPCW Special Trust Fund and is prepared to provide material assistance if need be.

In April, States parties to the CWC gathered in The Hague for the third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Switzerland welcomes the adoption by consensus of a final document that, *inter alia*, underscores the importance of strengthening regional cooperation and assistance under article X, as well as of continuously supporting the OPCW in its preparations to conduct challenge inspections and investigations of alleged use of chemical weapons. In addition, my country fully supports the Review Conference's endorsement of the initiative to strengthen the OPCW in its role as a global repository of knowledge relating to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

If the Conference as a whole was a success, it clearly fell short of making progress on a number of crucial issues. In particular, Switzerland reaffirms its view that, in order to establish transparency and confidence among States parties, it is essential to launch a comprehensive and focused debate on incapacitating chemical agents and their status under the CWC. Switzerland fears that the silence and uncertainty surrounding the use of toxic chemicals, other than riot-control agents, to maintain order compromise the objectives of the Convention. Let me assure you, Mr. Chairman, that Switzerland will continue to push for a debate on that issue in the framework of the OPCW.

Furthermore, if the objectives of the CWC are to be fulfilled, it is essential that they are implemented at the national level. That is why Switzerland urges all States parties to be vigilant about implementing all national obligations under the Convention. The destruction of national chemical-weapons stockpiles is still a pertinent issue for a number of States parties to the CWC. Switzerland regrets that the final deadline for the destruction of all declared chemical weapons has not been met by all States parties. However, we welcome the fact that States parties have agreed on the way forward on the issue, and we call on States still possessing chemical weapons to redouble their efforts to destroy all remaining stockpiles as soon as possible.

To conclude on this subject, allow me to add that Switzerland welcomes the past and future contributions of the OPCW with a view to enabling the holding of the conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East — a goal that is in line with the Convention's goal of universality.

The challenges we face collectively to strengthen and implement the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) remain considerable. While Switzerland welcomes the constructive atmosphere that prevailed during the intersessional programme this year, confronting those challenges will require enormous additional efforts if we are to promote the adoption of common views and effective measures. I would like to explore certain key issues in that regard.

First, we welcome the efforts of the BWC presidency to allow for an increased number of States to assert their views. The active involvement of all States parties is central to the effective implementation of the treaty.

Secondly, the implementation of the provisions of the Convention at the national level is a fundamental

prerequisite for the effective and permanent prohibition of biological weapons. In that context, Switzerland welcomes the conceptual discussion on what constitutes compliance with the BWC, a discussion in which it is also actively involved. That debate is fundamental, given the rapid scientific and technological progress in the field of biology. Ensuring that States parties comply scrupulously with the terms of the BWC is crucial to international security.

Thirdly, it is vitally important that the BWC keeps up with the rapid pace of progress of science and technology in the field of biology. This development raises a number of challenges regarding the application and long-term sustainability of the Convention. We believe that the current intersessional mechanism does not ensure the sustainability and efficiency required to meet this challenge. Other, more effective options should be explored. We have set up a specific structure to review, systematically and comprehensively, scientific and technological advances and their impact on the BWC.

Fourthly, Switzerland attaches particular importance to confidence-building measures, as they represent an essential tool to foster transparency and trust among States parties to the BWC. The current mechanism is still marked by shortcomings and participation remains low, despite the important initiatives that have emerged during the last five years. Additional measures must be taken to guarantee fuller participation and to ensure that this mechanism matches expectations. We also need to agree on common views on the treatment of large amounts of information submitted by States parties and on how to deal with ambiguities, doubts and suspicions.

Chemical and biological weapons represent a serious threat to international security and to human security. The international community has to ensure that the danger posed by these weapons and the use of toxic chemicals and pathogenic microorganisms for hostile purposes is eradicated forever. To that end, the global ban on chemical and biological weapons must be maintained, and all Member States that have not yet adhered to both the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention must do so as soon as possible.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Poland to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.32.

Mr. Zieliński (Poland): As this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Bureau on the assumption of your important duties. Poland fully supports your work.

Poland fully associates itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

It is an honour and pleasure for me to introduce, on behalf of the delegation of Poland, draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.32, entitled “Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction”. The continued work on and sole sponsorship of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) resolution is a Polish contribution to the efforts to free the world of chemical weapons.

The draft resolution underlines the exceptional role of the CWC in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. For more than 16 years, the Convention has been contributing to enhancing international peace and security, recently by providing a basis for the disarmament of the chemical programme in Syria. The Convention confirmed in practice its relevance and validity. Its unique and exceptional role has also been recently recognized by the Nobel Committee by awarding the Peace Prize to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Every year, the United Nations community has expressed unequivocal support for the implementation of the CWC and the prohibition of chemical weapons by adopting the resolution without a vote. This year the draft resolution is of special importance. It confirms the unity of the United Nations in the extraordinary situation when chemical weapons were used in Syria and Syria acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention. After the consensus support on 27 September for both the OPCW Executive Council decision and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), we believe the First Committee resolution on implementation of the CWC should also enjoy consensus support.

This year’s draft resolution also reflects the outcome of the third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which took place in The Hague in April under the chairmanship of Poland. The final document of the Conference, which was adopted by consensus, contributes to further strengthening

the mission of the OPCW and implementation of the CWC. It provides guidance for future dimensions of that implementation and is well reflected in the draft resolution. That is why the draft is longer than in previous years. At the same time, we wish to reiterate that the draft resolution will evolve to reflect the changes in the implementation of the Convention and will be more concise in the years to come.

During the extensive open-ended informal consultations attended by many delegations, we received broad support and willingness to join consensus on the proposed draft resolution. Let me express our gratitude to all delegations participating in those consultations. They confirmed the existence of broad political support at the United Nations for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The draft resolution presented today is an expression of that support.

The delegation of Poland asks for the adoption of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention without a vote.

Mr. Catalina (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and would like to make the following observations in its national capacity.

First, with regard to chemical weapons, we want to congratulate the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for having recently been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which is recognition of the importance of its contribution to international peace and security.

Spain welcomes the start of the work to destroy the Syrian chemical weapons, in implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). We await with much interest the first report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission, led by Special Coordinator Ms. Kaag, which will be submitted in the near future to the Security Council. We will also follow attentively the upcoming presentation by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the outcome of the investigations carried out by the team led by Professor Sellström regarding the remaining allegations of the possible use of chemical weapons in Syria on various dates other than the confirmed attack of 21 August. We call on the Syrian authorities to cooperate with the inspection teams in order to conclude the destruction of the chemical weapons within the agreed deadlines.

Moreover, Syria's accession to the international regime on the prohibition of chemical weapons was one of the pending matters for promoting the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Spain believes that in this regard a pragmatic approach must be imposed by keeping with a realistic agenda of incremental steps.

With regard to biological weapons, Spain considers that the universalization of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, still incomplete, and the establishment of an effective verification system are two clear objectives towards which we must continue to work. We also believe that it is important to strengthen the ethical foundations of scientific research in areas of medicine, biology and biochemistry, as well as their legitimate commercial uses, as constituent elements of a preventative policy in the area of non-proliferation.

In accordance with its obligations under the 1972 Convention, Spain drafted a working paper, co-sponsored by Chile, Colombia, Italy and Mexico, which was presented at the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention in December 2012. That document, which is being circulated in the room along with this statement of Spain, suggests the adoption of a code of conduct for scientists, for general application, concerning the medical, veterinary and agricultural sciences, mathematics and engineering relevant to the Biological Weapons Convention. We believe that a common code, well balanced and consensus-based, not only supports better professional development but is also a useful tool benefiting national and international security.

Finally, I would like to address the fundamental role played by Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in the context of the fight against the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists and organized crime. Spain is collaborating in the development of effective and efficient mechanisms to prevent and curb proliferation among non-State actors of substances and dual-use technologies that could be used to make weapons of mass destruction. Those efforts include plans for security, the necessary infrastructure, chemical and biological installations and control of exports of defence and dual-use material.

Spain would like to underscore the importance of international cooperation in that area, and to that end we are cooperating with other countries to strengthen those preventive and control capacities. Therefore, Spain is preparing, in collaboration with Mexico, a

seminar to be held in Madrid in January 2014, at which we will address all those issues.

Mr. Kellerman (South Africa): On the particular issue of other weapons of mass destruction, my delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier this morning by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The recent events in the Syrian Arab Republic have once again reminded us of the importance of the international instruments governing other weapons of mass destruction and the devastating humanitarian consequences associated with the use of such weapons. To my delegation, it is clear that the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction should remain one of our key priorities. That includes the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

South Africa was alarmed at the recent escalations in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. We condemn the use of chemical weapons. We believe that no cause could ever justify the use of any weapon of mass destruction by any actor under any circumstance. We welcome the accession of Syria to the Chemical Weapons Convention and believe that it is imperative that all parties and the international community provide their fullest support and cooperation to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as it fulfils its mandate in verifying, securing and destroying all chemical weapons in Syria as soon as possible, within the agreed time frame.

We were also pleased at the successful outcome of the third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We call on the OPCW and the individual States parties, to work together to realize the agreements that were reached.

In that regard, South Africa welcomes the progress that has been made by the three possessor States parties that did not meet the 29 April 2012 deadline set by the Convention as the final extended deadline for the destruction of their chemical weapons. We call on those States to continue to undertake the necessary steps to meet the agreed plan-completion dates for their individual destruction activities.

Another challenge remaining for the OPCW that demands the urgent and concerted efforts of all States parties is that of the universality of the Convention.

States parties should therefore redouble their efforts to encourage States not yet party to the Convention to join it. South Africa congratulates Somalia on its joining the Convention.

South Africa also calls for the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all articles of the Convention in order to ensure that it remains relevant to all of its States parties. We continue to encourage international cooperation and assistance, and we call on the OPCW to assist the States parties that have never possessed chemical weapons and do not have declarable chemical activities to develop their chemical capacity and industry. We believe that will significantly enhance the ability of those States parties to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security and will highlight the contribution that the safe use of chemicals can make to meeting their development needs.

In the same vein, we would like to emphasize the need for the OPCW's continued readiness to provide assistance and protection against chemical-weapons attacks and threats to all its States parties, as it has a particular role in preventing access by non-State actors to chemical weapons and providing assistance in the event of a chemical attack.

South Africa also remains committed to strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) to ensure that our common goal of preventing the threat posed by biological weapons is achieved. My delegation remains particularly concerned about the threat posed by naturally occurring organisms, as well as by those that could be deliberately manufactured and manipulated for use as weapons of mass destruction. It is critical that our common goal of eliminating the threat posed by biological weapons be achieved.

Besides the obvious security benefits of the BWC, that Convention also contains important provisions for technical cooperation and assistance that could strengthen the international community's ability to combat the debilitating impact of disease on people's health and on countries' socioeconomic development. South Africa therefore believes that greater international coordination and assistance are required to alleviate the burden of the threat posed by biological weapons. Initiatives such as exchanges in biological sciences and technology, the promotion of capacity-building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis, and the containment of infectious diseases, among many others, could be further explored.

The intersessional process that was agreed to during the seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention provides an opportunity for States parties to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in some important areas. It remains our hope that States parties will fully utilize the intersessional process and the measures agreed on during the Review Conference in order to advance the aims of the Convention.

In that regard, we welcome the increasing attention given to the development and cooperation features of the Convention. In South Africa's view, article X should promote the right of States parties to participate in the fullest exchange of equipment, materials and scientific information for peaceful purposes. We believe that article X is directly relevant to public health, particularly in the developing world, where resources are often scarce and insufficient, and could provide the overlap between international health, technological advancement and prevention of the spread of infectious diseases worldwide. South Africa remains committed to close collaboration with countries worldwide and within the African continent on implementing the Convention and advancing its goals.

The universalization of the BWC and the CWC is crucial to the effective eradication of all biological and chemical weapons. We therefore call on those countries that are not yet party to the Conventions to join them without further delay.

Mr. McConville (Australia): Mr. Chairman, Australia commends your leadership of the First Committee. In view of the time constraints, I will present an abridged version of the prepared speech that is now being distributed.

Events this year have provided a graphic reminder of the very real threat to global and regional peace and security posed by weapons of mass destruction. These events are a grave reminder of why we must remain committed in our efforts to counter the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons. They also remind us why we must remain clear that there are no circumstances justifying the use of such weapons. Australia remains deeply concerned by those threats, which, as contemporary events demonstrate, are current and pressing.

Like many countries, Australia has expressed outrage over the use of chemical weapons in Syria, including the attack in Damascus neighbourhoods on

21 August. The use of chemical weapons is an egregious violation of international law, and it is vital that the perpetrators of such crimes do not escape justice.

Australia has welcomed the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2118 (2013) on eliminating Syria's chemical weapons, as well as the related decision by the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Those decisions have established extraordinary procedures for eliminating Syria's chemical weapons under an accelerated timetable. They have also made clear that the use of chemical weapons by anyone in any circumstances is abhorrent and will not be tolerated by the international community.

Our focus must now turn to the full and prompt implementation of those decisions. We commend the United Nations and the OPCW for the work they have already done in challenging circumstances to begin the destruction of Syria's chemical-weapons arsenal. The time frames are tight but will be achievable as long as the Syrian authorities cooperate unconditionally with both organizations and fulfil their obligation to ensure the complete, final, verifiable and enforceable destruction of their chemical weapons and all related materials and equipment.

Countering the threat posed by chemical and biological weapons demands undiminished commitment to strengthening the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and its successor resolutions, as well as related export control regimes.

As the only verifiable disarmament treaty to comprehensively ban an entire category of weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention plays an integral role in the international security regime and global non-proliferation efforts. Australia is committed to working with others to uphold the strength and integrity of the CWC. With that in mind, Australia is pleased to support Poland, which is once again presenting its annual draft resolution on the implementation of the CWC.

We were also pleased to participate actively in the third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in April. States parties can be satisfied with the achievements of the Convention since its entry into force, but continued effort is required

to safeguard the longevity of the CWC and ensure that there will be no re-emergence of chemical weapons. We strongly encourage all States parties that have not fully implemented their article VII obligations to continue their efforts to establish a national authority and legislation that covers all key areas of the Convention. Australia remains committed to ensuring the continued success of the OPCW.

As the cornerstone of multilateral efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological and toxic weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention is another key instrument in the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. While recent developments pose clear challenges to the BWC, they also underline its contemporary relevance. Advances in biosciences and biotechnology continue to make the pursuit of biological-weapons programmes ever more feasible for a growing number of countries if they decide on such a course. In that regard, Australia was pleased to participate actively in this year's Meeting of Experts.

Regional exchanges make an increasingly important contribution to multilateral efforts to counter the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons. Australia plays an active role in the Asia-Pacific region. This year we were pleased to join regional partners in participating in workshops organized by the OPCW and the Governments of Malaysia and Indonesia.

Australia's commitment to bolstering non-proliferation is reflected in its active support for numerous international arrangements establishing global best practice in the control of exports of items related to weapons of mass destruction, ballistic-missile technologies and other sensitive goods and technologies. We chair the Australia Group, a cooperative and voluntary group that strengthens global security by making it harder and more expensive for would-be proliferators. More recently, the Group has been working to highlight the chemical-weapons threat in Syria and to encourage all countries to intensify scrutiny of exports to Syria to ensure that they do not contribute to that threat.

Our activity in the year ahead will see the ongoing process of updating and refining the control standards and the broadest possible programme of outreach. To that end, we plan to convene an inaugural Australia Group Dialogue meeting in conjunction with our regular intersessional implementation meeting in Budapest in November. Our efforts have seen an increasing number of countries draw on the work of the Australia Group.

The Australia Group's guidelines in export controls also provide an international benchmark to assist United Nations Member States to meet their obligations pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). That resolution remains paramount to combating the challenge of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Full implementation by Member States of resolution 1540 (2004) remains an enduring international security priority. It is for that reason also that Australia plays an active role in the Proliferation Security Initiative.

But despite those efforts, significant challenges remain. It is our collective job to ensure that we cooperate and coordinate our efforts to address and respond to those new challenges.

Mr. Toro-Carnevali (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by Suriname on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

My delegation considers that the vertical and horizontal proliferation of weapons of mass destruction threatens international peace and security and the survival of humankind. Thus, our country reiterates its call for the elimination of those devastating weapons, including chemical and bacteriological weapons, in keeping with the relevant international instruments that prohibit their production, stockpiling and use. Therefore we also condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere in the world, regardless of the circumstances or motives. Their use is a war crime and a crime against humanity.

As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition, Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons, Venezuela fully meets its obligations under that multilateral disarmament treaty, to which we attach the utmost importance because of its far-reaching goals: the total elimination of those bellicose systems, and international cooperation on the part of the chemical industry for peaceful purposes to advance economic and social development.

The Government of Venezuela endorses the calls made by the member States of UNASUR with respect to the importance of complying with the December 2011 agreement that established a framework for finishing the destruction of remaining chemical arsenals, in

keeping with integrity of the Convention and the credibility of the of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Moreover, our country welcomes the decision of the Syrian Arab Republic to adhere to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is a positive contribution to the effort to universalize that important legal instrument.

With respect to the complete elimination of bacteriological weapons, Venezuela reaffirms its full compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons (BWC), which completely bans the use of bacteriological agents or toxins as weapons. To contribute to the full implementation of the Convention, we need to rapidly negotiate a protocol that guarantees a multilateral verification mechanism to strengthen it. In the same vein, we stress the importance of international cooperation in technical and scientific exchanges for peaceful purposes in that area.

To conclude, we reiterate our condemnation of international terrorism in all its manifestations. Venezuela is convinced that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction is the best way to ensure that such bellicose systems cannot be acquired by terrorist groups. Therefore, the countries that possess such weapons have the primary responsibility for full compliance with the commitments they have made as States parties to the international legal regime that prohibits such weapons.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who wishes to make a statement in exercise of his right of reply.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic): The allegations made by the representative of France are baseless and unfounded.

The Second World War ended in 1945. In it all types of weapons, including nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, were used, and they killed more than 60 million human beings. Fortunately, Syria was never a party in any way to that horrific war. The United Nations was established after the end of that war, and still no one has been brought to justice.

We all know that the French colonial rule over many countries, including Syria, lasted far beyond the date of establishment of the United Nations and that France, while maintaining its colonial rule, committed massacres, killing hundreds of thousands of human

beings, including by conducting experiments on humans. Still, no one has been brought to justice. In that context, I would like to remind the representative of France that his country's colonial rule of Syria ended more than a half-century ago. I call on his Government to join the international efforts of diplomacy instead of supporting terrorism in my country, and to give up the belligerent and escalatory positions it adopts against my country.

The representative of the United States stated that Syria, just a month ago, did not even acknowledge its possession of chemical weapons and that it has now acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention and is working with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations on the elimination of those weapons. But the representative of the United States at the same time failed to mention that Israel has been denying that it has possessed nuclear and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) for the past few decades, with the knowledge of her Government. It would therefore have been suitable for her to demand that Israel accede to all the conventions

and agreements governing WMDs, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Since the establishment of this Organization, a few Member States have repeatedly used a wide variety of weapons — including internationally banned ones, from cluster munitions to depleted uranium and other types — against many other Member States in wars that were allegedly waged to save human lives. Even with the existence of the United Nations, still no one was brought to justice. It seems that international justice is tailored to fit all Member States except those few States that always defy impunity and accountability.

Finally, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic maintains its firm belief in the principles of this honourable Organization. It still believes that the only way out of any crisis is through a political and diplomatic solution that preserves the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all Member States, and it thanks all Member States that share those beliefs and are striving to reach a peaceful end to the crisis in Syria.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.