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First Committee

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Chair: Mr. Rattray (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

I now give the floor to Mr. Wang Xiaoyu.

Agenda items 87 to 104 (continued)

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

The Chair: Before we begin, I would like to wish everyone here a very happy United Nations Day.

In accordance with the indicative timetable for thematic discussions, we will begin with the panel discussion on the “Regional disarmament and security” cluster. After that we will hear statements on the cluster on other weapons of mass destruction, followed by the remaining clusters.

I now have the pleasure to welcome to the Committee the members of the panel on regional disarmament and security, who are Mr. Wang Xiaoyu, Officer-in-Charge of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, also representing the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific; Mr. Marco Kalbusch, Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa; and Ms. Carolyne Mélanie Régimbal, Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. I will first give our panellists the floor, after which we will switch to an informal mode to afford delegations an opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

Mr. Wang Xiaoyu (Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific): It is an honour for me to address the First Committee on regional disarmament under agenda item 97, and specifically on the activities of the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). In keeping with their mandate, the Regional Centres support regional disarmament measures at the request of Member States, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region in order to enhance States’ security and contribute to regional and international peace and security.

The operating costs of the Regional Centres are funded in part by the regular budget of the Organization, while their substantive activities rely solely on voluntary contributions. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to those States that have made financial or in-kind contributions to the Regional Centres in support of their programmes. Capacity-building is central to the success of promoting and implementing global disarmament and non-proliferation norms and instruments at regional, subregional and national levels, so the three Regional Centres have focused their programmes on capacity-building assistance to Member States and regional organizations on request. The programmes are mainly in the following areas.

First is the provision of capacity-building and legal and technical assistance to Member States to enable

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them to implement global and regional instruments related to both conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction. Secondly, they promote dialogue and confidence-building through the organization of global and regional conferences and workshops on both global and regional challenges. Thirdly, they undertake advocacy and outreach activities, including through peace and disarmament education programmes. Since our last report to the First Committee (see A/C.1/68/PV.18), the Centres have undertaken more than 90 activities funded from extra-budgetary contributions, focusing on assisting Member States, on request, in building their national capacities. We have also made great efforts to build and strengthen partnerships with other United Nations entities, regional and subregional organizations, civil society organizations and so forth, aimed at improving delivery and synergy of programmes on the ground.

UNODA has made progress in integrating disarmament and arms-control programmes into the overall United Nations regional and subregional strategies, where relevant. The three Regional Centres will continue their close coordination and cooperation with Member States that request assistance and with relevant regional organizations, as well as donors. We also look forward to the First Committee's continued support for and engagement in the activities undertaken by the Regional Centres.

Since I have the floor, please allow me, Sir, to speak on behalf of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. As the Committee may know, the former Director of the Centre has been appointed to another post in the Secretariat, and the current Interim Director has only just arrived in Kathmandu, which is why he could not make it to this meeting. I will now speak for the Centre on his behalf.

Since our last report to the First Committee in October 2013, the Centre, with the support of Member States and other partners, has continued to undertake a number of activities in accordance with its mandate. These include, first, promoting dialogue and confidence-building. In cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the Centre organized the twelfth Republic of Korea-United Nations Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues, under the theme "Non-proliferation regime in the twenty-first century: challenges and the way forward". It is a long theme. The Conference was held in Jeju in the Republic of Korea. In anticipation of the

tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the Conference focused its discussions on the review of the resolution's implementation over the past decade and on the vision for the next. It also addressed other disarmament and non-proliferation regimes and initiatives, including Security Council sanctions regimes, International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, proliferation financing and the Nuclear Security Summit.

In cooperation with China's Arms Control and Disarmament Association and its Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Centre was the joint organizer of an international workshop, held in Beijing in June, on information and cybersecurity. The workshop provided a platform for officials, practitioners and academia to discuss and build mutual understanding on cybersecurity issues of pressing concern. More than 70 representatives from 25 Member States participated. The workshop addressed policy aspects of cybersecurity issues, existing and emerging challenges, the role of the United Nations in promoting dialogue and cybersecurity, and national, regional, and international responses. The workshop provided a forum to exchange views and enhance understanding at a time when information and cybersecurity pose increasing challenges.

The second area is capacity-building. In May, the Centre organized a capacity-building workshop on small-arms control in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The purpose of the two-day workshop was to assist various Government agencies in Myanmar involved in small-arms control to effectively implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects at the national level. The workshop received financial support from Switzerland, and a total of 18 national agencies participated.

The event also proved to be an excellent opportunity to share best practices between national and local officials, as well as participating international experts. The Centre also organized, with the financial support of New Zealand and Switzerland, a regional meeting to promote the Arms Trade Treaty in Manila in November 2013. The meeting brought together representatives of 19 States to engage in dialogue on the Arms Trade Treaty, including practical legislative, administrative and other steps that States could take to prepare for ratification and future implementation.

They also discussed common challenges countries face and the possible tools for assistance in the process. Synergies between the Arms Trade Treaty and the existing control regimes were discussed. The Centre was called upon to continue facilitating regional and national efforts regarding the Arms Trade Treaty and treaty support to issues surrounding weapons of mass destruction instruments. The Centre also supported national workshops on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention for several countries in the region, including Nepal and Mongolia. These workshops are part of the European Union-funded Biological Weapons Convention Action, which supports the Biological Weapons Convention at the national, regional and international levels. These national workshops brought together relevant national agencies to discuss the ratification process and develop action plans for national implementation of both treaties.

The third area is peace and disarmament education. As a pilot project, the Centre worked with Nepal's Ministry of Education to integrate peace and disarmament education content into the existing curriculum and textbooks of eighth-grade Nepalese students. With these efforts, the Centre is reaching out to tens of thousands of schoolchildren in Nepal with the concepts of peaceful conflict resolution, a culture of non-violence and the devastating consequences of gun violence. The results achieved and the interest created for peace and disarmament education in the Ministry of Education led it to request the Centre's continued assistance. As such, the Centre has developed the second phase of the project. It plans to cooperate with UNESCO and the Ministry of Education in Nepal to expand education to ninth- and tenth-graders in Nepalese schools. Down the line, the Centre will also consider offering this successful model to other countries in the region upon request in order to reach many more children.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Mr. Kalbusch.

Mr. Kalbusch (United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa) (*spoke in French*): It is a pleasure to brief the First Committee this morning on the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), for the benefit of the African States, and to express my profound appreciation and gratitude for the support the Centre has received since October 2013.

(*spoke in English*)

Over the past 12 months, UNREC has continued to support Member States and regional organizations in Africa in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control, and peace and security. Its priorities have been informed by the recent developments in the Sahel and Central Africa. Its activities contribute to the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, in coordination with other United Nations system agencies, as well as the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention on Small Arms Control and the Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-proliferation of Arms in Central Africa.

UNREC remained active in coordination forums on peace and security issues on the continent, such as the African Union Regional Economic Community Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and for various United Nations agency task forces dedicated to small arms, Africa and security-sector reform. These activities required a staff increase, and UNREC was able to increase its staff to 12, ensuring a wide geographic distribution that includes staff members from Africa, Europe and Latin America, and out of which only three are funded through the regular budget.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, UNREC activities contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action; the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and its action plan; and African subregion instruments such as the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition, Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair or Assembly, and the Nairobi and Southern African Development Community Protocols.

UNREC has intensified its cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and continued to work closely with African and African subregion organizations. Since its last briefing to this Committee, UNREC has conducted training and capacity-building activities on the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines for Southern and

East African troop-contributing countries, as well as for United Nations Mine Action Service staff based in Africa, and on the international small-arms-control standards and international tracing instrument for West African national commissions, both as part of a European Union joint action on small arms and light weapons implemented by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).

Together with UNODC, UNREC has provided support to several national commissions on small arms and light weapons in West Africa through assistance and small-arms marking in order to develop standard operating procedures, training manuals and modules, stockpile management and security, national action plans, training and ammunition guidelines, and national legislation review. Through these activities, the Centre has trained 570 Government experts for more than 30 African countries on physical security and stockpile management, small-arms standards, ammunition guidelines, and the tracing of small arms using training modules developed by UNODA. A further 39 United Nations staff members working in Africa were trained on the international ammunition technical guidelines, international small-arms-control standards and the international tracing instrument. Following UNREC national capacity-building activities, two African States adopted national actions plans on small arms; and as a joint result of our efforts with UNODC, we expanded the use of marking machines to three more African Member States.

As in 2012 and 2013, the Arms Trade Treaty continued to be important to the Centre's work. UNREC advocated for the signature and ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty and provided substantive support to the advocacy activities of regional and non-governmental organizations. Currently, 35 African States have signed the Treaty and five have submitted instruments of ratification. In the past year, UNREC worked with the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit and the Geneva branch of UNODA to promote implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention in Africa and supporting States. A total of 45 Government experts have participated in these activities aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Convention. A subregional event on the Convention in East Africa will be organized before the end of the year.

(spoke in French)

We are providing support to African States in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). UNREC organized three workshops on report preparation, one in English, another in French and the last in Portuguese. The Governments of South Africa, Gabon and Togo hosted those workshops in the spirit of South-South cooperation. The participants, which included individuals from 18 African countries, one Asian country and one Caribbean country, were able to communicate with experts from Brazil, the Congo, Gabon, and South Africa, as well as experts from the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on the requirements for submitting reports. Three Member States invited UNREC and Committee experts to participate in specific activities in their countries.

Moreover, six subregional African organizations were informed about the Security Council resolution. A hundred and forty officials from 20 African Governments and six subregional organizations participated in those activities, which were organized in close cooperation with the African Union Commission. Since the language group workshops began, two African countries have submitted their initial reports to the 1540 Committee, and one has submitted an update on its initial report. Together with civil-society organizations, UNREC celebrated the first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and organized awareness-raising activities on chemical weapons within the framework of the commemoration of the centenary of the start of the First World War.

In the area of armaments education and public information activities, UNREC has strengthened its cooperation with United Nations information centres and its volunteer programmes and resident coordinators, academia, the media and civil society organizations. It has organized information sessions for journalists and debates on the role of women in disarmament in Africa. Furthermore, 12 students from eight countries have participated in an UNREC internship programme since January.

(spoke in English)

UNREC would like to express its appreciation to its donors — Australia, Germany, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Togo — as well as to the Economic Community of Central African States for a European Union-funded project, and to the United Nations

Development Programme and Côte d'Ivoire for a project funded by Japan. Some activities conducted with UNODA headquarters, or related to the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention or resolution 1540 (2004), were funded by contributions to other UNODA trust funds. UNREC also benefited from full-time Centre staff generously financed by Finland and Germany. We received in-kind support from Brazil, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, South Africa and Togo, as well as private institutions. The Centre is currently in discussions with new and existing donors on the financing of several projects in 2015.

Based on the various requests we have received, our priorities for the next 12 months include tailor-made assistance to African Member States, in cooperation with the African Union and African subregional organizations, in the ratification and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty; in implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, regional small arms and light weapons instruments, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Treaty of Pelindaba; and our continued support on disarmament issues to the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and in the integrated strategy for the Sahel.

UNREC has also been approached by Member States and subregional organizations with requests to address the emerging issue of arms control, maritime security and piracy on the continent. We will continue to work further on general disarmament, disarmament education and outreach. All these activities will continue to be conducted in close cooperation and coordination with national Governments and the African Union, particularly in the light of the recently adopted Agenda 2063, and with other regional organizations and colleagues in the United Nations system.

I would like to echo the Secretary-General's call on all Member States to continue and increase their financial and in-kind support to UNREC, as well as to recall the African Union's appeal to States of the region to finance their Centre. With everyone's support we can make a real difference to our work.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Ms. Régimbal.

Ms. Régimbal (United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin

America and the Caribbean) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a pleasure to be speaking to the First Committee again and to be able to share with members some of the achievements and activities over the past year of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).

(*spoke in English*)

Since we last met (see A/C.1/68/PV.18), 50 activities in more than 15 countries have kept UNLIREC busy this year. The activities cover the entire gamut of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Besides the long-standing small-arms technical support that UNLIREC experts have provided to States that request it, this year many novel products and practical tools were added, including a multi-State Caribbean assistance package relating to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), as well as a new implementation course on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) for Latin American States.

In Costa Rica earlier this month, UNLIREC launched its first-ever regional training course, targeted to regulating and control authorities, on outlining the main obligations in the ATT, particularly as they pertain to export and import controls and risk assessments. The course breaks the ATT down into practical and implementable pieces. Authorities are introduced to the scope of application, definitions and classifications of conventional arms, control lists and normative frameworks, while also participating in mock risk-assessment transfer exercises at the course's end. Similarly, a model end-user certificate is proposed, with a view to standardizing documentation in the control measures needed for international transfers to be conducted in keeping with ATT obligations.

The UNLIREC course complements resources developed by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) here at Headquarters. It was designed and developed with support from Mexico, Germany and Spain and benefited from the input of numerous ATT experts. We are extremely proud to have been the first out of the gate in the region to be able to launch such a course, and in particular to be able to do so specifically in Costa Rica, a country that has been so intimately tied to the ATT process since it was first conceived. UNLIREC is now translating the course manual and adapting it for use in the Caribbean region. In that regard, we are seeking donor contributions to

support the course's implementation. Once the course has been translated into English, it will be transferred to our sister centres in Asia and Africa to ensure the new tool's global reach.

Keeping up with this momentum, next month in Mexico City UNLIREC will be joining forces with Australia and experts from and working in the region with the specific purpose of discussing implementation of article 7.4 of the ATT, on assessing the risks that certain arms transfers can pose for women and children. The discussions will feed into the creation of a new risk-assessment tool to be shared with all other States of the region.

Building on the work, methodologies and, most importantly, the institutional partnerships forged with Caribbean States over the years in the delivery of small-arms technical assistance, UNLIREC has launched a new programme to boost implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in the Caribbean region. The programme is being implemented hand in hand with the Caribbean Community's 1540 Coordinator, and benefits greatly from the advocacy work that position has accomplished in the region. At this time UNLIREC is lending legal, policy and technical support to five States in the Caribbean. That support includes the drafting of new legislation, the development of policies for implementing non-proliferation instruments and strategic controls, the creation of voluntary 1540 national action plans and training focused on maritime import security. The programme is also designed to foster dialogue on the establishment of regional control lists and standardized regional licensing protocols.

UNLIREC is pleased to be working with partners such as the International Maritime Organization, the Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre, INTERPOL and the Governments of Argentina, Canada, South Africa, Spain and the United States of America, as well as, of course, the experts from the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). We are currently extending the programme to reach other States in the Caribbean region and hope to roll out the project, or a similar one, in Central and South America.

The year 2014 also marked the completion of UNLIREC's three-phase Caribbean stockpile-management and small-arms-destruction assistance package. I am pleased to report that all of the objectives outlined by States in partnership with UNLIREC were

met, and in many cases surpassed. Results include the destruction of more than 50,000 weapons and 62 tons of ammunition; the installation in 13 States of permanent and sustainable technical capacity for conducting independent destructions; improvements in the security and safety of more than 120 stockpile facilities; and the training of almost 1,000 security-sector officials in a variety of measures to combat illicit arms trafficking and mitigate diversion. Additionally, in partnership with Trinidad and Tobago, a permanent armoury-management training centre was established to provide ongoing capacity-building to all Caribbean States. The successful assistance package was made possible with the financial support of donors such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Further south, UNLIREC continued to work with national security and small-arms control authorities in both Argentina and Peru in the areas of stockpile management and weapons destruction. Overall, that support has led to more than 10,000 weapons being destroyed and 30 stockpile facilities becoming compliant with the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG). In the spirit of delivering as one, Peru is also site of a new United Nations multi-agency response to citizen security challenges in its northern provinces.

(spoke in Spanish)

As part of the support it provides to the implementation of the Central American security strategy, UNLIREC has developed a new technical guide for security-sector officers to better integrate firearms- and ammunition-related aspects and evidence in criminal investigations. This guide was developed in collaboration with the Costa Rican Office of Judicial Police and Investigation, which worked closely with various States of Central America. The guide incorporates all components of ISACS and IATGs and will be introduced in a subregional training programme to take place in Costa Rica in March 2015.

From a legislative perspective, UNLIREC continued to contribute to the States of Central America, the Caribbean and South America by setting up and making available spaces for dialogue in order to develop public safety policies and security topics with multisectoral authorities in various Central and South American countries. In total, more than 250 security

sector officials took part in these dialogues. Moreover, we also had the opportunity to work with several States in the region on modernizing their legislation.

(spoke in English)

If disarmament is to be effective, integral solutions are a must, which means empowering women as forces of change and ensuring their equitable representation in all decision-making processes, strengthening their effective participation in organizations in the field of disarmament, and ensuring the same access to training opportunities as their male counterparts. Recognizing the valuable contribution of women to promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, as called for in resolution 65/69, UNLIREC was unremitting in offering women-only training opportunities to combat illicit small arms trafficking in both Central America and Southern American countries. UNLIREC would like to thank the Governments of Germany and Australia for making these unique trainings a reality. UNLIREC continues to showcase the contribution of women in disarmament and non-proliferation and small-arms control, as witnessed in the November 2014 unveiling of UNLIREC's second publication celebrating women who have dedicated their professional careers to making our region a safe one.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our donors for their generous support, without which none of the aforementioned activities would have been possible and appeal to States, in particular those of the Latin American and Caribbean region, to continue supporting the Centre. I reiterate UNLIREC's commitment to continuing to develop and implement innovative tools to counter illicit arms proliferation and make our region a safer one. I look forward to receiving the Committee's feedback on the Centre's impact in the field and on how we can better focus our efforts to meet the Committee's disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control needs.

The Chair: In keeping with the established practice of the First Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations an opportunity to have an interactive discussion with our panellists through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.

The Chair: We will now hear from delegations on the list of speakers for the cluster on "Other weapons

of mass destruction", under which we have a total of 36 delegations inscribed to speak.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker on the list, I call on the representative of the Russian Federation, who has asked for the floor to make a necessary clarification regarding the statement made yesterday by the delegation (see A/C.1/69/PV.15). I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: A comment appeared today on the First Committee website concerning the statement on conventional weapons made yesterday by the Russian delegation (see A/C.1/69/PV.15). The comment contained a politically distorted quotation. I shall read out the comment as it appears in English:

(spoke in English)

"Despite a ceasefire agreement signed between Ukraine and Russia, the United States had supported an unconstitutional coup d'état in Ukraine."

(spoke in Russian)

That is a gross distortion of one of the main provisions of the Russian delegation's statement yesterday. Let me point out that it was not an interpreting mistake. The interpretation was very professional and without distortion. I will read out the actual interpretation of the paragraph in which the sentence was used.

(spoke in English)

"After the Foreign Ministers of Germany, France and Poland signed on 18 February this year the agreement on the settlement of the political situation in Ukraine, the agreement was totally violated the very next day and the United States, together with the European Union, supported the armed and anti-constitutional coup d'état in Ukraine and helped the ultranational forces to come to power in Kyiv that literally exploded the country from inside."

(spoke in Russian)

That was what was stated by the Russian delegation, and its thrust is the fact that Russia is not a party to an internal political conflict in Ukraine. We understand that there are forces that would like to stoke an armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, between two sovereign States. I want to guard against such provocations, especially here, during serious

discussions in the First Committee. Pitting Russia and Ukraine against each other will not work. Russia and Ukraine are two sovereign States, two fraternal peoples whose links go back thousands of years, with linguistic, social, cultural, political, economic and myriad family ties. I would like the First Committee to remember this fact and take it into account.

The Chair: Before I open the floor to speakers on the next cluster, I would like to urge all speakers once again to kindly observe the time limits governing this segment of our work — five minutes for speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes for statements being made on behalf of several delegations. If the need arises, the Chair will assist delegations in concluding their remarks.

We now turn to the cluster entitled “Other weapons of mass destruction”.

Mr. Isnomo (Indonesia): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on this very important cluster theme.

Mindful of the threat to humankind posed by the existing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), particularly nuclear weapons, and underlining the need for the total elimination of such weapons, NAM reaffirms the need to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and therefore recognizes the necessity of monitoring the situation and triggering international action as required.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) note with satisfaction the effective operation of the Convention as the only comprehensive multilateral treaty banning an entire category of WMDs, providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes. They call upon all concerned possessor State parties to ensure the complete destruction of their remaining chemical weapons within the final extended deadline and invite all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Convention to do so as soon as possible with a view to achieving its universality.

While paying due respect to the victims of chemical weapons and their families, they stress the importance of achieving and maintaining a high level of readiness of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to provide timely and needed assistance and

protection against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons, including assistance to the victims of chemical weapons. NAM States parties to the CWC call for the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention without any discrimination or restriction. In this regard, they attach high importance to the adoption by the NAM States parties to the CWC of a plan of action on article XI, on economic and technological development, for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of that Article.

NAM States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention consider that the Convention represents an important component of the international legal architecture related to WMDs. They recognize that the lack of a verification system continues to pose a challenge to the effectiveness of the Convention. They call for the resumption of the multilateral negotiations to conclude a non-discriminatory legally binding Protocol, dealing with all articles of the Convention, in a balanced and comprehensive manner to sustainably strengthen the Convention, including through verification measures. They urge the party rejecting negotiations to reconsider its policy. They further emphasize the need for enhancing, without restrictions, international cooperation and assistance and exchanges in toxins, biological agents equipment and technology for peaceful purposes without any discrimination, in conformity with the Convention.

NAM calls upon all Member States to support international efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and urges them to take and strengthen national measures, as appropriate, to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and materials and technologies related to their manufacture. In the context of Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004), 1673 (2006), 1810 (2008) and 1977 (2011), adopted in the areas covered by multilateral WMD treaties, 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 this regard, or the role of the General Assembly.

NAM cautions against the continuing practice of the Security Council of utilizing its authority to define the legislative requirements for Member States

in implementing its decisions. In this 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.

Mr. Aljowaily (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt is making this statement on behalf of the States members of the Group of Arab States, which aligns itself with the statement delivered just now by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Allow me at the outset, Mr. Chair, to reiterate the confidence of the members of the Group of Arab States in your leadership of the First Committee.

The Arab Group reaffirms its principled cardinal position that we should seek and realize a world free of weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, biological or chemical, with special attention to the target of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Arab Group has always supported these multilateral agreements and will continue to participate appropriately in their work. It is important to recall that the General Assembly's first special session on disarmament clearly defined by consensus its goals as eliminating weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and specified that the highest priority should go to nuclear disarmament. The Arab Group has always stressed that in any discussion on the elimination of WMDs, priority should go to eliminating nuclear weapons. However, we have also expressed similar readiness and have taken an active role in efforts to tackle other weapons of mass destruction.

On the basis of that central position, the Arab Group has translated its beliefs and convictions into practical measures aimed at ridding the Middle East of all forms of weapons of mass destruction within the framework of the plan of action adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. There can be no doubt that in that regard, achieving universality for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) through Israel's accession to it as a non-nuclear State would result in a more peaceful and secure world and would help to support the disarmament regime and credibility of the NPT.

While the Arab Group abides by the objectives and principles included in the aforementioned legal

obligations, Israel maintains its position of refusing to accede to the NPT. The practical measures set out in the Plan of Action adopted at the 2010 Review Conference to comply with the Treaty's three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy are related to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. That would create an exceptional opportunity to establish a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. That document clearly reflects the direct link between Israel's accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear State and the compliance of all the other States of the region with the provisions of the multilateral agreements governing WMDs and the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan. In order to overcome certain baseless allegations, the Arab Group agreed to expand the coverage to include other weapons of mass destruction by incorporating efforts to achieve parallel progress in disarmament relating to all other WMDs as well as in nuclear disarmament.

The Arab Group reiterates once again that the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, is a collective responsibility. We have complied actively with our part of the deal, and on behalf of the Arab Group the Iraqi delegation has submitted a report to the Secretariat on the Group's activities and efforts. It is now incumbent on the remaining parties to assume their responsibilities with regard to establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as part and parcel of the general implementation of the 2010 action plan obligations that will be evaluated during the Review Conference to be held in 2015.

The Arab Group welcomes all efforts and initiatives aimed at supporting and accelerating the work being done to create a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East. In that regard, we have deposited official letters, as noted by the Secretary-General (A/68/781), that reflect our commitment to this effort. In taking that additional step, the Arab Group has shown once again that it is committed to implementing the multilateral agreements concerning all weapons of mass destruction, something that has so far not been reciprocated with a similar commitment from Israel, which is the only country in the region that is not party to any of those agreements or to our agreements on nuclear disarmament. It has not sent similar letters to the Secretary-General or the Security Council.

It is now the responsibility of the United Nations to push for the fulfilment of the obligations regarding the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs by compelling the only party that has yet to join the international consensus on it to do so. We are convinced that the First Committee will play its part by adopting draft resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, as it has done in previous years by a great majority of Member States.

Mrs. Babb-Riley (Barbados): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM has a long-standing commitment to working in the multilateral arena to address the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. Concrete evidence of that can be seen in its member States' ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The States members of CARICOM neither produce nor possess weapons of mass destruction. We strongly believe that the use of such weapons is unjustifiable, and we are acutely aware of the devastating humanitarian, economic and other consequences of their use. In today's globalized world, no country has the luxury of remaining indifferent to this threat. The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria represents a timely reminder of the urgent need for the international community to deepen its resolve and commitment to totally eliminating such weapons, as well as all nuclear, radiological and biological weapons and their delivery systems.

There can be no question that the proliferation and use of such weapons constitute a grave threat to international peace and security and demand concerted and resolute action. Moreover, the capabilities and tactics of terrorists are becoming ever more sophisticated and posing an ever-evolving and asymmetric threat to national and international peace and security. The acquisition by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction is a very real possibility that must be met with firm political will, constant vigilance

and international collaboration. It is of the utmost importance that Member States take and strengthen national measures to prevent terrorists' acquisition of such weapons, their means of delivery and materials and technologies related to their manufacture. In these efforts, cross-sectoral partnerships among Governments, industry and communities are essential. In recognition of this urgency, CARICOM member States continue to make significant progress in meeting those important non-proliferation obligations under the three non-proliferation regimes and as mandated by Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Notwithstanding other significant challenges facing our countries on the security front, particularly in relation to preventing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as the trafficking of illegal narcotics, CARICOM States continue to commit considerable resources to implementing legislation, attendant regulations and administrative controls to prevent the transshipment, transit, import, export, and brokering of dual-use materials and other strategic goods that can be used to produce weapons of mass destruction.

Of particular importance is our ongoing focus on the development of adequate export-control infrastructure, control lists governing strategic items, and the training of enforcement and operational personnel to detect, identify and interdict these prohibited commodities and to prosecute violations where appropriate. Progress in meeting these key objectives has been significantly aided by our ongoing cooperation with the CARICOM-United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 Implementation Programme, which has coordinated meaningful assistance with other key partners, including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, INTERPOL and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Given the Programme's role in advancing regional non-proliferation efforts and its recent designation as the Regional Focal Point for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee to aid CARICOM member States' work in the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005), it is critical that the Programme continue to receive adequate support to assist Member States in undertaking these important obligations.

This need for continued and expanded support was further underscored by the recent adoption of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) which, inter alia, calls for the development of legislation and appropriate enforcement mechanisms to prevent the facilitation and movement of foreign terrorist fighters to conflict zones. Requisite assistance to CARICOM members in meeting these obligations, as well as those pertaining to non-proliferation and the broader fight against terrorism, will undoubtedly demand a sustained engagement from the international community in aiding the work of the CARICOM Coordinator.

CARICOM looks forward to continued engagement with the United Nations system and other partners in this area, and will remain committed to regional and international efforts to counter the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Ms. Stener (Norway): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway. A full version of this statement has been posted on PaperSmart.

Last year's terrible chemical weapons attacks in Syria shocked the entire world and reminded us that the use of weapons of mass destruction continues to be a serious threat. Laboratories in Finland and Sweden were among those that provided chemical analysis in support of the United Nations investigation of alleged use, which was led by Mr. Ake Sellström. The elimination of Syria's declared chemical weapons, in line with Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), has almost been completed.

It was essential to remove the chemical weapons from Syria to ensure that they would not again be used against the civilian population or fall into the hands of militant groups. This is the first time a country's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction has been removed in such a way. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Mission for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic completed its mandate on 30 September. The Nordic countries would like to thank Special Coordinator Sigrid Kaag for her extraordinary efforts and leadership, and all the Joint Mission staff for their tireless work, which has been vital to the international community's success in eliminating Syria's declared chemical weapons arsenal.

The international cooperation on this mission was excellent. Denmark, in close collaboration with Norway,

had a leading role in coordinating the maritime task group that carried out the transport operation. Denmark and Norway provided merchant ships to transport the chemical weapons, as well as navy escort ships, for an extended period of time. Finland contributed a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear team to the maritime task group. China, Russia and the United Kingdom made invaluable contributions as well. We would like to thank our partners in this mission for their constructive and valuable contributions.

The Nordic countries assisted the Joint Mission in other areas as well. Denmark and Sweden put significant air transport capacity at the disposal of the Joint Mission. Finland provided a vessel protection detachment to support the Cape Ray vessel, and the Finnish waste management company Ekokem is involved in the ongoing work on the destruction of the Syrian chemicals. The operation represented new and uncharted territory. We therefore believe it will be important to carry out a lessons-learned exercise, as this could offer invaluable insights for similar operations in the future.

The Nordic countries are deeply concerned that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) fact-finding mission has confirmed reports of recent systematic and repeated use of chlorine gas against civilians in Syria. The use of this toxic chemical as a weapon is a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). All perpetrators of abuses and war crimes in Syria, including the use of chemical weapons, must be held accountable. We fully support the intention of the Director-General of the OPCW that the fact-finding mission should continue its work.

We share the view that the information presented by the fact-finding mission is clear-cut, including the reports from witnesses that attacks are invariably linked to the use of helicopters. Only the Syrian regime possesses the capability to use helicopters in this way. We call on Syria to cooperate with the international community to achieve the destruction of the remaining production facilities. We also urge Syria to cooperate fully on the verification of its chemical weapons declarations and the discrepancies they contain.

Meanwhile, the civil war in Syria continues, with devastating effects. The humanitarian costs are increasing every day. The efforts to find a political solution to the conflict must therefore continue. While

the situation in Syria will remain the most important issue for the OPCW in the near future, we must not lose sight of the important task of following up the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Nordic countries urge the Russian Federation, the United States of America and Libya to expedite the destruction of their arsenals and to meet their destruction targets. We also urge the countries that are not party to the Convention to accede and become members of the OPCW. Moreover, State parties that have not fully implemented the Convention must do so.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is a cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Biotechnology is a rapidly evolving science, and ambitious and forward-looking initiatives are required to strengthen the Convention. We believe that States parties should focus on areas where unity is possible and on practical steps that can strengthen the Convention in a constructive manner. We will seek to ensure that the ongoing efforts to reinforce the biological and toxin weapons regime will include the strengthening of the Secretary-General's investigative mechanism for alleged use of biological weapons.

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa is a strong reminder of how serious the spread of communicable disease can be. Ebola is not only a health crisis, but also a humanitarian, economic and security crisis. The Global Health Security Agenda was launched in February this year. It represents a joint effort by nations, international organizations and civil society to accelerate progress toward a world that is safe and secure from threats of infectious disease, an initiative supported by the Nordic countries. We will all have roles in supporting the Global Health Security Agenda, and the Nordic countries are playing an active role in that effort.

Ms. Hew A Kee (Suriname): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Allow me on behalf of UNASUR member States to recall that in the Declaration on Security of the Americas, signed in 2003, our countries declared "our objective to make 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

"fulfill concretely the shared commitment of member states to make the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons".

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

UNASUR States strongly condemn the existence of chemical and biological weapons and reiterates that their use is a crime against humanity. The catastrophic consequences of their use 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 the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We also support its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation, and encourage the continued work towards its universalization.

As reiterated during the seventh UNASUR Summit Meeting, in Paramaribo, our region considers the use of chemical weapons in all their forms to be a war crime and a crime against humanity, and affirms the need to address the issue in the light of international law in an impartial and transparent manner. Accordingly, we express concern at the possibility of chlorine gas having been used in attacks against civilians in Syria in the current year. We also condemn the attack against the fact-finding mission established by the OPCW.

The Union welcomes the accession of Syria to the Chemical Weapons Convention and acknowledges the important progress achieved on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We reiterate the importance of the adoption in September 2013 by the Executive Council of the OPCW of the decision on the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons, endorsed by Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). In that context, we commend the efforts of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic, which successfully completed its mandate last September.

While highlighting the growing participation of States in the Convention, we call upon States that have not yet acceded, to do so promptly. We also express our appreciation for the efforts made by 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, which 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 within the agreed time frame. We also call upon all States that may possess 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 Technical Secretariat's contribution to the development and effectiveness of the Organization, which helps to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention and to ensure the full implementation of its provisions, including those for international verification of compliance, while serving as a forum for consultation and cooperation to States parties.

UNASUR States appreciate the international cooperation and assistance provided by OPCW, including through the promotion of events on assistance and protection against chemical weapons, which are convened annually across several UNASUR States. We believe that such initiatives contribute to the promotion of a safer environment in our region.

UNASUR welcomes the outcome of the third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in The Hague from 8 to 19 of April 2013. 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. We ensure our readiness to continue cooperating actively and constructively to advance the goals of the full implementation and universalization of the Convention.

We share with many other States the idea that effective international action against biological threats needs to be universal, legally binding and non-discriminatory. There is a need to design and implement additional measures to ensure effective enforcement of the banning. We therefore support the prompt resumption of negotiations on a Protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention that establishes an effective verification regime aimed at universal implementation of the Convention.

UNASUR member States have actively participated in the 2013 meeting of the States Parties, held last December, and in the 2014 Meeting of Experts, held in August. We welcome the discussions that took place in line with the standing agenda adopted at the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, in particular those related to strengthening cooperation and assistance under article X, which is an essential tool for the realization of the objectives of the Convention.

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: I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

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

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery continues to be a growing threat to international peace and security. Recent cases of the use of chemical weapons in Syria reinforce the call for a resolute and global approach to that threat.

The European Union stands united in condemning in the strongest terms all use of chemical weapons in Syria, which constitutes a violation of international law, a war crime and a crime against humanity. There can be no impunity, and perpetrators of the attacks must be held accountable.

The international community over the past year has cooperated effectively and acted promptly in carrying out the destruction of Syria's declared chemical-weapons stockpile, in line with resolution 2118 (2013) and the decisions of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The removal and subsequent destruction of the declared Syrian chemicals constitute a significant step towards the necessary complete and irreversible dismantling of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The EU contributed €17 million for the joint United Nations-OPCW plan for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. In addition, several EU member States made important financial and other contributions to support the plan and accepted the destruction of materials on their territories.

However, there is still work to be done. In particular, the European Union is gravely concerned about the systematic and repeated use of a toxic chemical as a weapon since last April, as confirmed in the second report of the OPCW fact-finding mission set up to establish the facts around these allegations. New, similar allegations continue to be made. The EU shares the view that the evidence presented by the fact-finding mission is substantial. It included reports of the use of helicopters, a capability that only the Syrian regime possesses. We support the Director-General's decision that the fact-finding mission should continue its work, and we remain determined to sanction those responsible for these horrific acts. Syria must also ensure that its chemical-weapons programme is completely and irreversibly dismantled, including the remaining production facilities.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a key component of the non-proliferation and disarmament framework. Its integrity and strict application must be fully guaranteed. The EU and its member States are the largest contributor to the OPCW and will continue to substantially support its activities financially and in kind. Achieving the goals of time-bound destruction and universality remains a principal challenge, and we encourage those countries that have not yet adhered to or ratified the Convention to do so without delay. We

call upon possessor States to expedite destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles. Chemical weapons destruction operations should continue to be conducted in a sincere and transparent fashion and within the framework of the existing verification regime. We also underline the importance of the full national implementation of the Convention.

The EU is engaged in supporting improvements in biosafety and biosecurity. New EU-financed projects are currently being implemented with the support of the World Health Organization. The recent Ebola outbreak illustrates the potential impacts of biological pathogens in a globalized world. In this context, we welcome the Global Health Security Agenda initiative and Security Council resolution 2177 (2014), which determined that the unprecedented extent of the Ebola outbreak in Africa constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

The EU attaches high priority to further strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and its full implementation and universalization, making specific efforts to convince States that have not adhered to or ratified the Convention to do so without delay. Several EU projects since 2006 ensure consistent support for and a financial contribution to the promotion of the Convention's objectives. In this context, the role of civil society should also be reinforced. The EU remains convinced of the need to enhance compliance with the BTWC and calls upon all States parties to meet the requirements set by successive Review Conferences that returns on confidence-building measures are to be submitted annually. Effective national implementation is also fundamental for the integrity of the Convention.

The current intersessional process, in the run-up to the 2016 Review Conference, offers an opportunity to identify innovative approaches such as the proposed peer review mechanism. The EU looks forward to discussing it further at the next meeting of States parties. The cross-regional interest in the biennial item on how to strengthen the implementation of article VII earlier this year shows that there is room for a substantive discussion and the identification of concrete avenues for work.

The EU has continued to make progress with the implementation of its Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Centres of Excellence initiative, which aims at reinforcing the

institutional capacity of partner countries to prevent, detect and fight against the CBRN risk and strengthen the overall security architecture. This project is the largest non-proliferation initiative ever undertaken by the European Union. Around €100 million has been dedicated to its implementation.

The risk of non-State actors acquiring 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 these challenges. This year, marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Since the beginning, the European Union has been a staunch supporter of the robust and effective implementation of the resolution with the objective of strengthening global efforts in this regard. 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 resolution 1540 (2004).

The EU will continue to promote international efforts to prevent the acquisition and use by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction and to strengthen both the international framework and national capabilities. To that end, the EU will actively support among other initiatives the adoption of the biennial draft resolution entitled "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources", under the lead sponsorship of France and Germany (A/C.1/69/L.34/Rev.1).

The EU strongly believes 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 short- and medium-range missiles conducted over the past few years outside all existing transparency and prenotification schemes and in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, especially by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, deepen our concern. The use of hundreds of ballistic missiles by the Syrian Government also raises deep concerns as it represents an immediate threat to its civilian population and is destabilizing peace and security in the region.

The Hague Code of Conduct is the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument

concerning the spread of ballistic missiles. The EU strongly supports the Code and believes that this important instrument, to which all EU member States are subscribing States, should become universal. Despite the increasing recognition of the Code and the support by the General Assembly, a number of key States with important activities in the area of ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles have not yet joined it. The EU will promote the universalization of the Code and, where possible and appropriate, a closer relationship between the Code and the United Nations system, through our unanimous support for the biennial draft resolution, and similarly to previous years, our outreach event to be held in the margins of the First Committee. We call on all States that have not yet done so to adhere to it as soon as possible.

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

We continue to support other international mechanisms designed to prevent the proliferation of WMDs, such as the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, which has become an important platform of coordination and cooperation. The EU Centres of Excellence continue to contribute within the Global Partnership. Export controls, particularly those based on the Australia Group lists, are also very important tools to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I wish to remind delegations to kindly limit their statements to five minutes when speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations.

Mr. Varma (India): India associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We are circulating a fuller version of our statement while I take this opportunity to read out some of its important points.

India attaches great importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological

Weapons Convention (BWC) as examples of non-discriminatory treaties in the field of disarmament for the total elimination of specific type of weapons of mass destruction. India reaffirms that disarmament is a primary goal of the Chemical Weapons Convention and should remain the priority until the complete destruction of all chemical-weapon stockpiles is achieved. India completed the destruction of its chemical weapon stockpiles in 2009, within the stipulated time frame under the CWC. The remaining possessor States should fulfil their obligations within the shortest possible time. Full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article XI is essential for the realization of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. Universality is also fundamental to the success of the Convention. India has responded positively to the request of Myanmar for assistance in the steps it needs to complete to join the Convention.

The use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone must be condemned, and the international norm against the use of chemical weapons must not be breached. India contributed to international efforts undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapon stockpiles.

India remains committed to improving the effectiveness of the BWC and strengthening its implementation and universalization. India shares the widespread interest among States parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention through the negotiation and conclusion of a protocol for that purpose. India is up to date in its confidence-building measure submissions. As a topical subject, sharing perceptions regarding the ongoing outbreak of Ebola virus may be of interest to all, including in the context of the BWC.

India has strong and law-based national export controls consistent with the highest international standards. We filed our report pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in November 2004 and have submitted periodic updates since then, the last being in 2013. India is committed to maintaining the highest international standards with reference to control of chemical, biological and toxin items. In this regard, India has made considerable progress in its engagement with the Australia Group and other export-control regimes with a view to seeking full membership.

Mr. Ahn Young-jip (Republic of Korea): Over the past 12 months, we have witnessed unprecedented achievements in the extraordinary effort to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons, with the complete destruction of its Category 1 chemicals and the near-completion of destruction of Category 2 chemicals. These developments constitute a significant step towards the complete dismantlement of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, and I would like to thank all the staff members of the Joint Mission and Special Coordinator Sigrid Kaag for their courage, dedication and hard work. The work of the Joint Mission has set an excellent precedent for close collaboration to achieve the shared goal of disarmament.

Despite those achievements, however, my delegation is deeply concerned over the fact-finding mission's discovery of the use of chlorine gas in a village located in northern Syria. My Government supports the ongoing efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to clarify any discrepancy in the declaration of the Syrian Government and the continued work of the fact-finding mission.

In order to prevent the use of chemical weapons, achieving universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention remains a key priority, and my delegation appreciates the efforts of the OPCW in this regard. The Republic of Korea urges all those that have not yet joined the Convention, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to do so without delay and join the united efforts to free the world of chemical weapons.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is the first international convention to ban a certain type of weapon of mass destruction and stands as an important landmark in the history of international disarmament efforts. However, the BWC regime faces unique challenges with advances in biotechnology and the life sciences, as well as the inherently dual-use nature and widespread availability of this technology. My delegation is deeply concerned over the recent report that an Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant laptop contained massive data on biological weapons, including instructions on how to obtain the deadly toxin ricin from castor beans.

In the light of increasing potential threats, the BWC needs to be reinforced to adequately address those challenges while guaranteeing the peaceful use

of biotechnology. This requires innovative thinking, which is different from the traditional arms-control approach and is multifaceted at both the regional and international levels. It is my delegation's consistent view that our efforts to strengthen the BWC regime should start with an effective implementation of the Convention by, inter alia, enacting and enforcing appropriate national legislative measures. In this regard, the Republic of Korea jointly proposed a working paper on national implementation with other like-minded countries at the 2014 BWC Meeting of Experts. It is our sincere hope that this working paper can be a useful basis for further discussion on the matter.

Universality of the Convention is another pillar for a stronger BWC regime. In this regard, my delegation welcomes Myanmar's recent progress towards the ratification of the Convention. We believe that raising awareness will substantially complement States' efforts to strengthen the BWC regime.

The Republic of Korea strongly supports the strengthened intersessional process, as agreed at the seventh BWC Review Conference in 2011. It is our hope that through this intersessional process, common understanding will be furthered and concrete measures explored for effective action in the run-up to the eighth BWC Review Conference in 2016.

We found one of the themes of this year's intersessional discussions — cooperation and assistance — to be especially timely and adequate. Cooperation with and assistance from relevant organizations in the case of an alleged use of biological weapons are very important considering the real risk of misuse of advanced life sciences. The discussions on how to strengthen the implementation of article VII provide an opportunity for the international community to prepare for responding to one of the most pressing challenges of our time. My delegation hopes to carry forward substantive discussions through the intersessional process towards further progress at the upcoming eighth Review Conference.

Finally, my delegation believes that the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS), launched this year through the initiative of the United States, will contribute to establishing multisectoral coordination at the domestic level and cooperation with other countries and international organizations. My Government supports this initiative and will host a GHS ministerial level meeting in Seoul next year. We hope that efforts to

strengthen the BWC implementation and other regional and international initiatives will generate mutually reinforcing synergy, thus enabling us to enhance our capacity to fight biological threats.

Mrs. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation will circulate the full version of this statement in order to respect the established time limits.

Mexico reiterates that a twenty-first century system of international peace and security should not be built or depend upon weapons of mass destruction with indiscriminate and inhumane effects. This new architecture must be built upon justice and social development, international law and application of the rule of law. That is why the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) are milestones and the main pillars of the new international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture that we are building. With these Conventions, we have established ground rules for the prohibition and elimination of inhumane instruments of war. We have made significant progress in achieving the overall objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation, but we must make greater efforts in this direction to achieve a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has proved to be the most successful, advanced and effective instrument of disarmament. It not only prohibits chemical weapons, but also coordinates their destruction under a regime that constitutes the highest standard on verification. Inspection can be performed anytime and anywhere and does not allow for the possibility of refusal by the party in question.

This regime represents the heart and credibility of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which in recent months has played a leading role in the verification process of the elimination of the arsenal and chemical weapons facilities in Syria. Mexico would like to express its appreciation for the leadership of OPCW Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü and his staff at the Technical Secretariat, especially those who have been in the field, in bringing the compliance programme to destroy weapons and production facilities for chemical weapons in Syria to a successful conclusion.

The complete destruction and removal of chemical weapons from Syria on 23 June, days before the deadline established by the Security Council, were an

unprecedented and historical landmark in the collective effort to make strong progress towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction. The OPCW still faces the challenge of physically destroying the 12 chemical weapons-production facilities in Syria, as well as clarifying the information presented by Syria to the Organization in its opening statement and subsequent amendments. We welcome Syria's willingness to clarify the inconsistencies observed in its statements. We believe that it contributes to transparency in the presentation of information, compliance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the strengthening of the regime established by that instrument.

We welcome the report of the OPCW fact-finding mission that investigated allegations of the use of chlorine gas against the civilian population in Syria. Confirmation of the repeated and systematic use of the toxic substance against civilians in three villages in northern Syria requires strong condemnation and an in-depth investigation into the perpetrators and the determination of liability by the relevant international bodies.

Mexico places great importance on the promotion of the full implementation of the Convention in all its dimensions, both in the total elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles, and in verification, assistance and international cooperation for peaceful purposes with regard to those aspects of chemicals-related activities not prohibited under the Convention.

The Biological Weapons Convention constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the international disarmament, non-proliferation and global public health regime. We therefore regret that States parties have not reached consensus on agreements that would allow for the establishment of the tools needed to verify the implementation and enforcement of the Convention.

The current situation in several West African countries affected by the Ebola virus calls for serious consideration of the issue of global public health. My country reiterates that safety in the twenty-first century must be approached from a multidimensional perspective that includes aspects of public health, biotechnology, epidemiology, monitoring and early warning, and control of dual-use materials.

Mexico believes that it is crucial for the Convention to establish synergies with the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization

of the United Nations, the World Organization for Animal Health, and other agencies relevant to its application, this in addition to a military-aspect-based approach. We reiterate the importance of encouraging greater involvement and participation by civil society, and the scientific, academic and private sectors in the promotion and implementation of the Biological Weapons and Chemical Weapons Conventions. Only if we consider the voices of civil society that advocate for change in the world will we achieve further progress in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I will deliver a shortened version of my speech. The complete version will be available on the QuickFirst website.

Last year, the international community welcomed Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the 27 September Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council decision legally mandating the complete elimination of Syria's chemical-weapons programme. Those decisions were a historic and unprecedented achievement that allowed for the removal and verified destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons. However, serious concerns remain, including Syria's continued use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people in direct contravention of its obligations under Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the decisions of the OPCW Executive Council.

On 10 September, the OPCW fact-finding mission confirmed the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The United States commends the courage and dedication of the mission and its professional and impartial efforts, and strongly support the decision of the OPCW Director-General to have the fact-finding mission continue its work. The second report contains a compelling set of conclusions and evidentiary findings that implicate the Syrian Government in deadly chemical-weapons attacks during April and May. The fact-finding mission concluded that the testimony of primary witnesses and supporting documentation confirms with a high degree of confidence that chlorine was systematically and repeatedly used as a weapon in northern Syria. The fact-finding mission emphasized that

"in describing the incidents involving the release of toxic chemicals, witnesses invariably connected the devices to helicopters flying overhead".

It is well known that only the Syrian military possesses the capability to use helicopters in such attacks.

The use of chlorine or any other toxic chemical as a weapon is a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and violates Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Such a breach raises serious concerns about the willingness of Syria to comply with its fundamental treaty obligations not to possess or use chemical weapons. We are also concerned about gaps, discrepancies and inconsistencies in Syria's declaration, which give rise to important questions and concerns about its accuracy and completeness.

The Syrian Arab Republic must provide the international community with credible evidence to support its assurances that it has fully abandoned its chemical weapons programme. Complete and accurate declarations must be provided, and destruction of Syria's remaining chemical-weapon-production facilities must be completed. The Syrian chemical-weapons file remains open and will not be closed until all of these issues are addressed and Syria complies with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

As we pursue these important goals, we must not lose sight of the threat posed by biological weapons, whether in the hands of States or non-State actors. The Biological Weapons Convention embodies an aspiration as profound as that of the Chemical Weapons Convention — to completely exclude the possibility of biological agents and toxins being used as weapons. The United States strongly supports the Biological Weapons Convention. The seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention took steps to strengthen the Convention's contribution to international security, establishing an ambitious agenda of important topics for ongoing work.

However, this agenda has not been matched by the resources or political will needed to deliver results. We can strengthen our intersessional process. We can, like so many other international entities, adopt decisions on the things we agree upon, while continuing to discuss those on which we do not. And even if we do not agree on how to go about it, we agree on the need to find ways to strengthen confidence that parties to the Biological Weapons Convention are living up to their obligations. Let us take the tools that we have, strengthen them where necessary, and put them to use.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation consistently supports strengthening and universalizing international non-proliferation regimes. The unswerving compliance of all States with their commitments under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We view those international Conventions as vital instruments for ensuring international security and stability.

Russia is unswervingly committed to fulfilling its commitments to destroying, under international oversight, all of its stockpiles of chemical weapons as soon as possible. We call on all States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to fully implement its provisions, including by adopting relevant national legislation and establishing national bodies for its implementation. We call on States that have not yet signed the Convention to do so as soon as possible. In particular, we note that a major achievement in the field of strengthening the non-proliferation and disarmament regime was the dismantling of Syria's chemical-weapons programme.

We are grateful to Norway for detailing the technical aspects of the dismantling of the Syrian chemical-weapons arsenal. However, we should not forget that the entire operation was made possible only following a highly complex political agreement between Russia and the United States of America and relevant intergovernmental arrangements between Russia and Syria. As a result, Syria, in the midst of very complex internal political conditions, confirmed its ability to take a genuinely historic decision and relinquish its chemical weapons. In short order and in full compliance with its commitments, Syria abandoned its chemical-weapons arsenal. Official representatives of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) repeatedly stressed the high level of cooperation received from the Syrian Government. As a result, we saw the elimination of the emergency dimension of the so-called Syrian chemical dossier.

The issue should now be addressed under regular procedures within the OPCW. We would like to caution against efforts to hype up this issue again. Undoubtedly, any evidence of the use of chemical substances against

civilians should be objectively analysed by experts on the basis of a thorough investigation under the auspices of the OPCW, which commands the necessary expertise in that field. Until the conclusion of such investigations, any judgements passed regarding such cases should be considered politicized and baseless conjecture.

Turning to the Biological Weapons Convention, it is no secret that many achievements in the field of biotechnology have the potential for dual use. The main weakness of the Convention is the ongoing absence of a mechanism to control and monitor compliance with Convention commitments. Full-fledged negotiations on strengthening the Convention have not been held since 2001. It is therefore clear that the Convention has not grown any stronger in the meantime.

As members know, in May Russia launched an initiative to canvass the opinions of the States parties to the Convention, informally and on a preliminary basis, concerning the resumption of full-fledged discussions on a legally binding additional protocol to the BWC. The preliminary findings of that survey were discussed in August at the Meeting of Experts of States parties. We believe that in the time remaining until the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention, we must pursue, in informal consultations among all interested States, discussions on resuming multilateral negotiations to develop a possible legally binding protocol with a view to strengthening the Convention. A decision to resume such talks could be taken at the 2016 Review Conference. We note with satisfaction that our initiative has already garnered broad support. In particular, we note the statements made during the general debate in support of our initiative.

An important element of international efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime is full-fledged compliance with the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, which bans the use in war of chemical and biological weapons. All of us know that the Convention itself does not contain a direct ban on the use of biological weapons. In that regard, it draws on the authority of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. We believe that the Geneva Protocol should be further strengthened through its universalization. States should also lift their earlier reservations that would allow for retaliatory use of chemical and biological weapons, which currently look rather absurd, as the Convention outlaws chemical and biological weapons. In that context, we welcome

the decision by Portugal to lift its national reservations to the Geneva Protocol. We call on all States concerned to follow Portugal's example in that respect.

Allow me to reiterate the Russian Federation's willingness to fully cooperate, as part of the United Nations, with all interested States on the issue of non-proliferation.

Mrs. Del Sol Dominguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to align myself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Cuba reiterates its call for general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international controls that include the prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction. We condemn the use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, wherever and by whomever they are employed.

States' efforts in disarmament processes should be aimed at the total and complete elimination of such weapons and the prevention of the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate the need for all States to fulfil their obligations related to arms control, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all their aspects.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has an important role to play in promoting the economic and technological development of States parties, particularly those who are the least developed. It is urgent that we adopt an action plan to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article XI of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We support any action directed towards achieving the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We encourage the international community to continue to assist Syria in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We note with satisfaction the successful implementation of the agreements reached for the destruction of stockpiles of Syrian chemical weapons under the corresponding commitments, which were implemented in record time and under exceptionally difficult conditions.

That achievement was made possible largely by the cooperation extended by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Joint Mission of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

We believe that the total destruction of chemical weapons, including abandoned chemical weapons, within the established deadlines should remain the main objective of the OPCW. It is imperative that the biggest possessors of chemical weapons strictly comply with the destruction deadlines, which have already been extended; otherwise, the credibility and integrity of the Convention could be jeopardized. The discriminatory restrictions, contrary to the letter and spirit of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which some States continue to impose on certain States parties with respect to the transfer of the peaceful use of materials, equipment and technology in the chemicals sphere are unacceptable and should be revoked. We wish to stress that the objectives of the Convention can be better achieved through a multilateral, universal, comprehensive, non-discriminatory negotiated agreement.

Cuba wishes to reiterate its unequivocal commitment to the strict application of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and supports all efforts undertaken to achieve its universality. The possibility of any use of bacteriological or toxic agents as weapons should be completely ruled out. We recognize the satisfactory results achieved by the seventh Review Conference on the Biological Weapons Convention, particularly with respect to international cooperation. However, Cuba wishes to stress that a great deal remains to be done with respect to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article X.

We wish to reiterate the importance of promoting international cooperation for peaceful purposes in the context of the Biological Weapons Convention, including scientific exchanges. For developing countries that are party to the Convention, the implementation of article X is a priority. Cuba believes that the only way to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention is through the adoption of a legally binding protocol that closes the remaining lacunae in the instrument, including the basic pillars of the Convention, such as international cooperation and the verification of all articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

My country shares the legitimate concern of the international community about the risk of terrorist groups acquiring weapons of mass destruction. We insist that such risks cannot be eliminated by applying a selective approach limited to horizontal proliferation and that overlooks vertical proliferation and disarmament. If we really want to combat the possible use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists, it is necessary that urgent progress be made in the area of disarmament, including the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

Cuba stresses the need to ensure that no action taken by the Security Council undermines the central role of the General Assembly or existing multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, we reiterate that the selective and discriminatory initiatives promoted by groups of countries outside the multilateral framework, far from helping, actually weaken the role of the United Nations in combating weapons of mass destruction in all their aspects.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm the commitment of Cuba to the objective of the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We will make every possible contribution to strengthen the central role of the United Nations in that regard.

Mr. Sano (Japan): The Chemical Weapons Convention has significantly contributed to peace and security through the destruction of chemical weapons and materials in an effectively verifiable manner.

Japan firmly believes that it is essential to strengthen efforts to achieve the universality of the Convention. For that purpose, it is important to provide incentives, including expertise and technical assistance, to encourage non-party States to join the Convention. In that regard, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) conducted a mock industry inspection in Myanmar in August. Japan supported and participated in that inspection, sharing its experiences as a State party that had received numerous daily industry inspections. We believe that this will positively contribute to the future participation of Myanmar in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We praise the continued efforts made by the major chemical-weapon-possessor States for the destruction of their stockpiles. With over three quarters of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons worldwide verifiably destroyed, completing the destruction of

chemical weapons will remain the core objective of the Convention.

Japan believes that it is important to destroy the Syrian chemical-weapons materials and their production facilities as soon as possible. Japan has contributed approximately \$18 million to the United Nations and the OPCW for their destruction efforts. We are pleased to note that declared chemical materials have been removed from Syria and that the destruction process outside of Syria is now very close to its completion. It is necessary for us to continue to be fully engaged in carrying out the remaining tasks.

With regard to the reports of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, we are gravely concerned about the situation that was disclosed by the second report of the fact-finding mission. The report concluded that activities in contravention of the Chemical Weapons Convention have been carried out repeatedly and systematically. We condemn the chemical-weapon attacks and cannot overlook such a serious issue. Japan supports the continuation of the work of the fact-finding mission in Syria and exploration of how to tackle this situation.

Japan takes its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention seriously, and is committed to the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in China, having invested significant human and financial resources in that respect. Although abandoned chemical-weapons-destruction projects entail various challenges and uncertainties, they have been making steady progress. We underscore that these unprecedented and extremely challenging projects can be carried out only through close cooperation and coordination with China. In that respect, Japan reaffirms its commitment to pursuing its fullest possible efforts to bring the projects forward, with the cooperation of China.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention has also played a vital role for international peace and security. Japan welcomes the useful discussion during the current intersessional process, as we are now in the important stage of promoting a common understanding for effective action towards the next Review Conference. We will actively participate in discussions on various topics with regard to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, with a particular focus on responses to the rapid advances in science and technology.

Advances in science and technology in life science have enormous benefits to humankind; however, their

dual-use aspect points to added biological threats via their misuse or illicit use, in particular by non-State actors. Therefore, the universalization of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention has become more important to enhancing international security than ever before. In that regard, Japan welcomes the recent announcement by Myanmar on its upcoming ratification of the Convention. We strongly encourage other non-party States to follow suit and accede to the Convention at the earliest opportunity.

Ms. Maryam Abdulrahman Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to commend your efforts, Sir, in conducting the work of the First Committee.

I align myself with the statement delivered earlier by the representatives of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States and of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The issue of disarmament and non-proliferation is of great importance to the international community. Recent decades have shown the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. We could better learn from the experiences of the two World Wars, which claimed millions of victims. The international community has made tremendous efforts to create international instruments to confront those dangers. One of the best ways is to refrain from producing weapons of mass destruction, including biological, chemical and toxin weapons.

While my country reiterates its principled position on the need for international cooperation in addressing these threats, the special characteristics of our region, which is roiling with political struggles, should be taken into account. That is why the State of Qatar is prepared to effectively participate in any effort that will eliminate the threat of use of weapons of mass destruction, and to strengthen peace and security in that area.

The State of Qatar firmly believes that world peace and stability cannot be achieved as long as there are weapons of mass destruction or the threat of an arms race. The multiple threats we face require all of us to make every effort to face these dangers and obstacles and defend human dignity. What the people of the world need today, in these challenging times, is not an arms race, but strong economies that provide employment, prosperity and dignified lives to the people. Strategic balance does not rely on the weapons

that a country acquires, but the success of Member States in using their capacities to enhance international cooperation and prosperity for their people. The studies conducted by specialized research centres show that pursuing weapons policies leads primarily to deficits. Sustainable development, as it is being advocated and prioritized by the United Nations, cannot be realized as long as countries seek to acquire more weapons of mass destruction.

The State of Qatar is eager to implement all its international obligations and has made a point of adhering to all the relevant multilateral agreements in this area, including the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the destruction of all such weapons. We take this opportunity to express the hope that all countries will accede to the relevant international multilateral agreements.

Regarding an issue faced by many areas in the world, especially the Middle East, my delegation expresses its concern that terrorist organizations may acquire weapons of mass destruction, which would have grave consequences for peace and security in the region. We call on the international community and the countries of the region to take all necessary measures to stop those terrorist organizations from acquiring such weapons and to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which states that nuclear, chemical and biological weapons constitute a threat to international peace and security and calls on the international community to refrain from supporting non-State actors in the acquisition, production or use of such weapons of mass destruction.

The Chair: I call on the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/69/L.34.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union. The statement I will deliver now has been abridged to comply with your recommendations, Mr. Chair, on time limits for statements.

Unfortunately, the fact-finding mission in Syria has confirmed that chlorine has been used systematically

and repeatedly as a chemical weapon in Syria in 2014. The conclusions of the fact-finding mission's report are unequivocal. The use of helicopters leaves no doubt as to the Syrian regime's responsibility. It would be unacceptable for the perpetrators of those crimes to enjoy impunity. In addition, Syria must assure the international community that its chemical programme is completely and irreversibly dismantled by explaining the gaps in its initial declaration and destroying its chemical-weapons production facilities without delay.

France has proposed setting up a peer review mechanism within the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. That proposal aims to increase the trust and transparency between States parties and to facilitate the sharing of best practices regarding the implementation of the Convention.

In August, France submitted the report of the first such peer review exercise, held in Paris in December 2013 with the participation of nine experts from various geographical areas. France welcomes the positive response that that idea has received within the framework of the Convention and the announcement made by the BENELUX countries on the holding of another peer review. The discussions that took place in August on the issue of implementing article VII and the transregional interest generated by this issue must continue.

The issue of delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction is also central to this debate. The Security Council, in particular through its resolutions 1540 (2004), 1887 (2009) and 1977 (2001), has described the proliferation of missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction as a threat to international peace and security. Iranian and North Korean ballistic programmes in particular are progressing in violation of Security Council resolutions. Missiles are therefore an issue of collective concern that must be urgently addressed.

Finally, I would like to introduce the biennial draft resolution (A/C.1/69/L.34) on preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources, which France is submitting this year jointly with Germany. Our objective is to keep the international community mobilized against that threat, given the serious radiological consequences that the hostile use of certain radioactive sources for terrorist purposes could involve.

While this is not a subject covered by this thematic debate, allow me to return to a point that I addressed earlier this week in order to share an important bit of news. I had indicated that France had signed, on 6 May, the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, and that it intended to ratify it very quickly, before the end of the year. I am very pleased to announce to the Committee that on 17 October, the President of France, Mr. François Hollande, signed the French instrument of ratification for the Protocol, which will be delivered in a few days' time to the Government of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, which is the depository for that instrument.

Mr. Ruiz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take this opportunity to emphasize that my country strongly rejects the use of weapons of mass destruction in any circumstances and by any actor. They are not weapons designed for self-defence, and they do not allow for distinguishing between combatants and civilians. For that reason, Colombia is a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and is a member of political forums and initiatives aimed at outlawing them.

Since 1983, Colombia has joined in the efforts of the international community to ratify the Biological Weapons Convention and calls upon States that have not done so to accede to that international instrument. The importance of the Convention lies in it being the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction — hence its historical significance for the entire disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Colombia meets all its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention. As proof of this, my country submits its annual reports on confidence-building measures in a timely and comprehensive manner. Moreover, in 2014 Colombia made significant progress in the process of establishing a national authority to effectively implement the obligations of the Convention.

I take this opportunity to recognize and thank the European Union for its Joint Action in Support of the Biological Weapons Convention, through which it has managed to spread and enhance knowledge of this Convention. That has furthered the process of establishing a national authority to ensure the

effective domestic implementation of this international instrument in Colombia. In 2014, three activities were conducted in Colombia under this assistance programme.

My country would like to also acknowledge the support of the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and various States parties to the Convention in the work to assist and exchange best practices with a view to establishing a national authority on the subject in Colombia.

Colombia reaffirms the historical importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its value as the second multilateral treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and the first instrument to promote international cooperation and to establish a strict system of verification and inspection without undermining the peaceful uses of chemistry. I note the almost universal nature of the Convention, which already has 190 States parties, and I invite remaining States to join that historic treaty in a gesture of historical commitment and because of the danger of chemical weapons being diverted to non-State armed actors.

Let me also express Colombia's support for the initiatives of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) aimed at outlawing that category of weapons, including its clear and consistent mechanism to enhance peace and security on our planet. My country has been working on strengthening national capacities and promoting initiatives for cooperation with the OPCW.

Colombia reiterates its support for Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which recognizes the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems falling into the hands of non-State armed actors. The resolution is of significant importance, as it complements in an effective manner the binding instruments on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) published Colombia's related action plan, which lays out cooperation measures to strengthen national capacities for the implementation of the resolution. The plan lays out cooperation priorities and the relevant national stakeholders and potential partners for the implementation of each

area of cooperation. The Government of Colombia, with support, including financial support, from the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the 1540 Committee, will hold an event on 6 November to officially submit its national plan of action.

Finally, in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 1540 (2004), on assistance to States in implementing the

resolution, I take this opportunity to call on potential partners in the field — countries, organizations and non-governmental organizations — to support us in the implementation of the action plan. Likewise, my country would like to offer the experience we have gained for bilateral cooperation with States carrying out similar processes.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.